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Global Manpower Employment Outlook Survey Indicates Softer Job Prospects Ahead for U.S., China, Italy, Norway and Spain

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MILWAUKEE, March 11, 2008 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Employers will be taking a step back in hiring in the second quarter in many of the world's largest economies, according to the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey of global hiring trends released today by Manpower Inc. (NYSE: MAN). Notably, employers in the United States, China, Italy, Norway and Spain have indicated that they will be adding fewer employees in the quarter ahead, marking a more negative tone than in survey results throughout the past year.

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"There has been a decided shift in employer sentiment in this quarter's survey, with employers in many countries, including the U.S., pulling back their hiring plans in a bigger way than we have seen in several years," said Jeffrey A. Joerres, Chairman & CEO of Manpower Inc. "The important change we are seeing is not about reductions in workforces, like we would typically expect in a recessionary period, but rather an increase in the percentages of employers who are planning to put a hold on hiring and forge ahead with the people they already have. This is definitely a 'wait and see' approach as they evaluate where their economies are headed, rather than a panic attack at this point," he added.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey, the most extensive, forward-looking employment survey in the world with interviews of more than 55,000 employers per quarter, unveiled results for five new countries this quarter -- Czech Republic, Greece, Guatemala, Poland and Romania -- bringing the total number of countries and territories in the survey program to 32. Of these new countries, Polish and Romanian employers reported the most optimistic hiring intentions for the second quarter of 2008. "The addition of these dynamic, emerging markets to our survey will provide valuable insight into the hiring plans of employers in these countries and how they compare with trends elsewhere in the world," said Joerres.

The most favorable second quarter hiring plans globally were reported by employers in Singapore, India, Peru, Romania, Costa Rica, Argentina, Poland, Hong Kong, Australia, Greece and South Africa, with those in Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia reporting their most optimistic hiring plans since the survey began there. Conversely, employers in Spain and Italy report the weakest job prospects in the next three months.

Of the 17 countries surveyed in the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region employers in Romania, Poland, Greece, S. Africa and Norway are most optimistic about adding to their workforces. In contrast, hiring optimism among Irish and Spanish employers fell considerably from one year ago, with the Outlook in Spain being the weakest in the region.

"The positive hiring prospects reported in the newly surveyed countries of Romania, Poland and Greece reflect employer demand for talent in markets where foreign direct investment and labor migration are increasing the competition for available talent," said Joerres.

In Asia Pacific, the survey data reveals varying degrees of positive hiring expectations. Employer optimism increased from the first quarter and one year ago in four of eight countries and territories surveyed. The strongest employer hiring plans were again reported in India and Singapore, while employers in China reported the weakest hiring outlook in the region for the third consecutive quarter. The forecasts for Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia were the most optimistic reported by employers since the survey began in these geographies in 2003.

"Year-over-year hiring expectations are weaker across every industry sector surveyed in China, signaling a slowdown for the quarter ahead. However, Australia, Singapore and Hong Kong are expecting improved hiring prospects," said Joerres. "Job prospects in the Services sector across the Asia Pacific region are expected to improve, in particular, as employers in six of eight countries and territories are reporting stronger Outlooks compared to 12 months ago."

Across the Americas, employers in Peru, Costa Rica and Argentina are most optimistic about hiring in the next three months, while those in Canada are the least optimistic. Meanwhile, Mexican employers continue to report steady, upbeat hiring expectations.

"The strength seen in the Mexican labor market should continue with employers in the Transport & Communication, Commerce and Mining sectors reporting their most optimistic hiring plans in six years," said Joerres. "On the other hand, their neighbors to the north in the U.S. and Canada are less optimistic, with the Construction sectors in these countries revealing the steepest year-over-year declines in hiring confidence."

The next Manpower Employment Outlook Survey will be released on the 10th of June 2008 to report hiring expectations for the third quarter of 2008. The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is available free of charge to the public through their local Manpower representative in participating countries. To receive e-mail notification when the survey is available each quarter, interested individuals are invited to complete an online subscription form at <http://investor.manpower.com/investors/alerts.cfm>.

About the Survey

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is conducted quarterly to measure employers' intentions to increase or decrease the number of employees in their workforce during the next quarter. It is the most extensive forward-looking survey of its kind, unparalleled in its size, scope, longevity and area of focus. The Survey has been running for more than 45 years and is one of the most trusted surveys of employment activity in the world. The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is based on interviews with more than 55,000 public and private employers worldwide and is considered a highly respected economic indicator.

The Manpower Employment Outlook Survey is currently available for 32 countries and territories: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The program began in the United States and Canada in 1962, and the United Kingdom was added in 1966. Mexico and Ireland launched the survey in 2002, and 13 additional countries were added to the program in 2003. New Zealand joined the program in 2004, China, India, Switzerland and Taiwan were added in 2005, and Argentina, Peru, Costa Rica and South Africa joined in 2006. The Czech Republic, Greece, Guatemala, Poland and Romania joined in 2008. For more information, visit the Manpower Inc. Web site at <http://www.manpower.com> and enter the Research Center.

About Manpower Inc.

Manpower Inc. (NYSE: MAN) is a world leader in the employment services industry; creating and delivering services that enable its clients to win in the changing world of work. Celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2008, the \$21 billion company offers employers a range of services for the entire employment and business cycle including permanent, temporary and contract recruitment; employee assessment and selection; training; outplacement; outsourcing and consulting. Manpower's worldwide network of 4,500 offices in 80 countries and territories enables the company to meet the needs of its 400,000 clients per year, including small and medium size enterprises in all industry sectors, as well as the world's largest multinational corporations. The focus of Manpower's work is on raising productivity through improved quality, efficiency and cost-reduction across their total workforce, enabling clients to concentrate on their core business activities. Manpower Inc. operates under five brands: Manpower, Manpower Professional, Elan, Jefferson Wells and Right Management. More information on Manpower Inc. is available at <http://www.manpower.com>.

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