

Mentoring cited as important by successful women execs

Aon hosts breakfast for women attending FERMA to network

By Sarah Veysey

[GENEVA]—Mentor programs are an important method of enabling women to attain prominent positions in the insurance and risk management industries, according to a panel of speakers at a networking breakfast.

At the breakfast, hosted by Aon Corp.'s Women's International Network during the 2007 FERMA Forum, speakers noted that visibility was key for women seeking to rise to the top in business.

"Mentoring is incredibly important," said Mirella Visser, who runs her own consulting firm—Mirella Visser

International Management & Consultancy and Centre for Inclusive Leadership—and is also a member of the supervisory board of Royal Swets & Zeitlinger.

In addition, Ms. Visser currently is on the shortlist for a European Campaigner of the year award—an accolade she is vying for against Arnold Schwarzenegger, governor of California, among others.

Eileen McClusker, chief operating officer of XL Insurance's U.K. &



Mirella Visser.

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Ireland region, agreed that having strong mentors is critical to woman's success in industry, and noted that she had been "very lucky" to have good mentors throughout her career.

Marie-Gemma Dequae, president of FERMA and group risk & insurance manager of

Bekaert, said that a shift to more "horizontal" management structures also was facilitating women's advancement in business.