# Interim Financial Statements for the period 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2006









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Company Registration Number C 17003

# **Interim Financial Statements**

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### **REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE**

These Interim Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards for interim financial statements (IAS 34 - 'Interim Financial Reporting'), and have been extracted from the FIMBank p.l.c. Group's unaudited accounts for the six months ended 30 June 2006, as approved by the Board of Directors on 11 August 2006.

For the half-year ended 30 June 2006, the FIMBank Group posted an after tax-profit of USD3.13 million, an increase over the USD1.64 million registered in 2005. FIMBank Group (the "Group") includes FIMBank p.l.c. (the "Bank"), its subsidiaries and affiliates as disclosed in the last audited financial statements.

#### THE GROUP

Group Operating Income after net impairment losses increased by 35% from USD7.42 million in 2005 to USD10.04 million. One of the traditional revenue contributors, Net Interest Income, continued to decrease during the period under review as FIMBank's wholly-owned subsidiary, London Forfaiting Company Limited (LFC), was largely supported by the Group for its increased funding requirements. Correspondingly, Net Trading Income more than doubled, due to the performance of LFC's enlarged forfaiting portfolio. Group Operating Expenses increased by 25% to USD7.69 million, reflecting the increased activity and operating base of the Group, including new ventures and additional staff as well as performance-based compensation. The contribution of associated undertakings, namely Global Trade Finance Limited, India, where the Group has a 38.5% equity participation, to Group income continued to improve during the period under review, from USD0.57 million in 2005 to USD1.09 million in 2006, resulting in consolidated pre-tax profit for the Group of USD3.44 million (2005 – USD1.85 million).

The expansion in operating activity is also reflected in the balance sheet, with Total Assets growing to USD582 million as at 30 June 2006. The increase in the funding base is all-round, with customer account balances rising 13% to USD126 million, and recently-introduced funding initiatives such as promissory note programmes (USD6.17 million) and the Syndicated Loan Facility which doubled from USD30 million in 2005 to USD60 million. However, by far the largest source of funding growth came from correspondent bank relationships in new emerging markets which were contributing over USD200 million in call balances and term deposits as at balance sheet date. The increase in funding availability is reflected in the growth in Loans and Advances to Customers (up from USD41.6 million to USD64.5 million); Financial Assets at fair value through profit or loss, comprising mainly bonds and LFC's forfaiting portfolio (up to USD182.2 million) and Loans and Advances to Banks, which have now reached USD312.6 million. Group Shareholders' Funds stand at USD57.7 million, a marked increase from USD54.8 million (in December 2005).

Group Commitments, consisting mainly of confirmed letters of credit, documentary credits, commitments to purchase forfaiting assets and risk participations, stood at USD176.5 million at the balance sheet date (USD125.6million at 31 December 2005).

The main operating ratios also show significant improvements. Cost/Income ratio (including share of profits from associated undertakings) is down from 76.9% in 2005 to 67.8%. Basic Earnings per Share are up from UScents 2.49 to UScents4.02 whilst Return on Equity increased from 3.3% to 5.4% for the first 6 months of the year (i.e. not annualised).

#### THE BANK

Net Operating Income after impairment losses increased by 30.7%, from USD5.87 million in 2005 to USD7.67 million. All main sources of banking revenue, i.e. Net Interest Income, Fees and Commissions and foreign exchange earnings, grew appreciably over the corresponding 2005 period. This positive operating performance was in part balanced by a 46% increase in Operating Expenses which increase, in large part, reflects the involvement of the Bank in providing administrative and financial support to subsidiaries, particularly LFC, and costs incurred by the Bank in the process of obtaining new operating licences in latin american and middle east countries. Post-tax profit for the Bank is USD1.72 million, compared to USD1.79 million for the same period in 2005. Balance sheet activity in the Bank largely mirrors that of the Group, making due allowance for the intragroup relationship between the Bank and LFC.

The Board of Directors (the "Board") notes that these interim figures demonstrate the strong growth being registered by the Group in all its business areas and, particularly, reflect the result of the strategy of market and product diversification which is providing considerable scope for profit maximisation. Whilst core banking revenues continued to grow during the period under review, an increasing portion of Group net income was contributed by subsidiaries and affiliates. The Board also considers positively the growth in the Group asset base, although it observes that correspondent bank flows are subject to volatility and recent levels of activity may not be sustainable in future periods. The Group's projects for developing business via alliances with strong partners in new markets, as well as the focus on diversifying from the traditional banking and trade finance products, continue to be main drivers of the FIMBank Group's results. The Board also continues to explore avenues of capital improvement, which would further support the growth and overall risk profile of the business. The Board is optimistic about the overall business strategy and there are encouraging prospects that the strong momentum achieved in the first half of 2006 will continue for the remainder of the year.

# **INCOME STATEMENT**

	GROUP		BA	NK
	1 Jan 2006	1 Jan 2005	1 Jan 2006	1 Jan 2005
	to	to	to	to
	30 Jun 2006	30 Jun 2005	30 Jun 2006	30 Jun 2005
	USD	USD	USD	USD
Interest income	4,897,355	2,374,674	6,989,065	3,464,217
Interest expense	(4,847,864)	(1,421,089)	(4,726,451)	(1,421,089)
Net interest income	49,491	953,585	2,262,614	2,043,128
Fee and commission income	5,441,346	4,566,168	4,731,037	3,919,559
Fee and commission expense	(494,829)	(274,681)	(458,166)	(241,347)
Net fee and commission income	4,946,517	4,291,487	4,272,871	3,678,212
Forfaiting gains	4,732,292	2,212,510	-	-
Other net trading income	705,699	200,803	672,606	262,683
Dividend income	482,311	76,423	987,304	302,029
Loss on disposal of non-trading financial asset	-	(712)	-	-
Other operating income	84,343	50,000	17,068	50,000
Net operating income before net impairment losses	11,000,653	7,784,096	8,212,463	6,336,052
Net impairment losses	(961,982)	(366,745)	(540,869)	(466,922)
Net operating income	10,038,671	7,417,351	7,671,594	5,869,130
Staff costs	(4,334,007)	(3,275,456)	(2,939,364)	(1,858,950)
Other administrative expenses	(2,981,498)	(2,596,167)	(2,569,423)	(1,807,956)
Depreciation on property, plant and equipment	(202,125)	(266,699)	(120,184)	(203,182)
Amortisation of intangible assets	(26,915)	-	(12,775)	-
Adjustment to goodwill	(144,082)		-	
Total operating expenses	(7,688,627)	(6,138,322)	(5,641,746)	(3,870,088)
Operating profit	2,350,044	1,279,029	2,029,848	1,999,042
Share of profit of associate	1,085,557	569,783		_
Profit before tax	3,435,601	1,848,812	2,029,848	1,999,042
Income tax expense	(306,605)	(207,524)	(306,605)	(207,524)
Profit for the period attributable to equity holders of the company	3,128,996	1,641,288	1,723,243	1,791,518
<b>.</b>		2.10		
Basic earnings per share	<u>4.02c</u>	<u>2.49c</u>	2.21c	2.71c
Diluted earnings per share	3.90c	2.48c	2.26c	2.71c

# **BALANCE SHEET**

At 30 June 2006

	G	ROUP	BANK		
	30 Jun 2006	31 Dec 2005	30 Jun 2006	31 Dec 2005	
	USD	USD	USD	USD	
ASSETS					
Balances with the Central Bank of Malta and cash	112,376	358,219	84,158	215,071	
Loans and advances to banks	312,614,676	113,761,635	288,314,230	111,528,162	
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	182,238,104	119,650,397	18,342,554	10,130,000	
Loans and advances to customers	64,510,902	41,564,011	194,772,221	101,622,616	
Investments available-for-sale	149,030	133,600	149,030	133,600	
Investments in subsidiaries	-	-	37,393,054	37,392,666	
Investments in associate	8,676,980	6,762,457	7,853,934	6,259,188	
Intangible assets	5,511,814	5,183,515	378,154	-	
Property, plant and equipment	2,800,623	2,850,537	1,375,761	1,351,629	
Deferred tax asset	2,574,396	2,522,740	671,496	619,840	
Current tax recoverable	150,947	366,637	150,947	366,637	
Other assets	1,354,339	1,156,558	1,557,398	694,116	
Prepayments and accrued income	1,442,058	904,957	3,521,355	1,406,345	
Total assets	582,136,245	295,215,263	554,564,292	271,719,870	

# LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Liabilities				
Amounts owed to banks	380,989,009	116,336,809	380,989,009	116,336,809
Financial liabilities at fair value through profit or loss	-	202,727	-	202,727
Amounts owed to customers	126,159,952	111,868,342	104,692,673	89,893,658
Debt securities in issue	6,168,125	944,102	961,125	944,102
Subordinated convertible loan	6,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000	6,000,000
Other liabilities	44,713	386,003	44,713	7,293
Accruals and deferred income	4,248,397	3,961,607	3,969,499	2,232,008
Provisions	780,660	729,637	-	-
Total liabilities	524,390,856	240,429,227	496,657,019	215,616,597
Equity				
Called up issued share capital	43,069,539	35,586,870	43,069,539	35,586,870
Share premium	3,641,398	10,231,432	3,641,398	10,231,432
Currency translation reserve	(427,174)	(176,774)	-	-
Other reserve	2,681,041	2,681,041	2,681,041	2,681,041
Retained earnings	8,780,585	6,463,467	8,515,295	7,603,930
Total equity	57,745,389	54,786,036	57,907,273	56,103,273
Total liabilities and equity	582,136,245	295,215,263	554,564,292	271,719,870

# BALANCE SHEET (Cont.)

At 30 June 2006

	G	ROUP	BANK		
	<b>30 Jun 2006</b> 31 Dec 2005		30 Jun 2006	31 Dec 2005	
	USD	USD	USD	USD	
MEMORANDUM ITEMS					
Contingent liabilities	5,502,562	1,720,516	10,709,562	1,720,516	
Commitments	176,532,150	125,609,890	166,345,176	150,826,326	

The interim financial statements on pages 4 to 13 were approved by the Board of Directors on 11 August 2006 and were signed on its behalf by:

Najects Al. Salah

Najeeb H.M. Al-Saleh Chairman

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John C. Grech Vice Chairman

# STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

GROUP	Called up Issued Share Capital	Share Premium	Currency Translation Reserve	Other Reserve	Retained Earnings	Total
	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD
At 1 January 2005	33,005,316	8,862,371	-	2,681,041	3,764,384	48,313,112
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	1,641,288	1,641,288
Currency translation difference			35,334			35,334
At 30 June 2005	33,005,316	8,862,371	35,334	2,681,041	5,405,672	49,989,734
At 1 January 2006	35,586,870	10,231,432	(176,774)	2,681,041	6,463,467	54,786,036
Profit for the period	-	-	-	-	3,128,996	3,128,996
Currency translation difference			(250,400)			(250,400)
Total recognised income for the period			(250,400)		3,128,996	2,878,596
Exercised share options	120,002	93,745	-	-	-	213,747
Bonus issue	7,136,298	(7,136,298)	-	-	-	-
Dividend paid	226,369	452,519	-	-	(811,878)	(132,990)
At 30 June 2006	43,069,539	3,641,398	(427,174)	2,681,041	8,780,585	57,745,389

BANK	Called up Issued Share Capital USD	Share Premium USD	Other Reserve USD	Retained Earnings USD	<b>Total</b> USD
At 1 January 2005	33,005,316	8,862,371	2,681,041	4,594,077	49,142,805
Profit for the period		-	-	1,791,518	1,791,518
At 30 June 2005	33,005,316	8,862,371	2,681,041	6,385,595	50,934,323
At 1 January 2006	35,586,870	10,231,432	2,681,041	7,603,930	56,103,273
Profit for the period	-	-	-	1,723,243	1,723,243
Exercised share options	120,002	93,745	-	-	213,747
Bonus issue	7,136,298	(7,136,298)	-	-	-
Dividend paid	226,369	452,519		(811,878)	(132,990)
At 30 June 2006	43,069,539	3,641,398	2,681,041	8,515,295	57,907,273

# **CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

	GROUP		BA	NK	
	1 Jan 2006	1 Jan 2005	1 Jan 2006	1 Jan 2005	
	to	to	to	to	
	30 Jun 2006	30 Jun 2005	30 Jun 2006	30 Jun 2005	
	USD	USD	USD	USD	
Cash flows from operating activities					
Interest, commission and trading receipts	12,609,528	9,160,460	9,403,136	6,395,953	
Exchange received	296,338	141,941	201,124	303,023	
Interest and commission payments	(4,639,174)	(1,653,777)	(4,591,839)	(1,620,442)	
Payments to employees and suppliers	(6,478,165)	(7,036,369)	(5,085,013)	(4,081,891)	
Operating profit / (loss) before changes					
in operating assets / liabilities	1,788,527	612,255	(72,592)	996,643	
Decrease / (increase) in operating assets:					
- Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(62,002,516)	(24,569,276)	(7,981,241)	(5,000,000)	
- Loans and advances to customers and banks	(26,201,164)	(17,908,858)	(26,201,164)	(10,450,140)	
- Other assets, prepayments and accrued income	(197,779)	(15,603)	(54,412)	11,144	
(Decrease) / increase in operating liabilities:					
- Amounts owed to customers and banks	62,358,969	13,018,780	62,866,373	7,239,204	
- Debt securities in issue	5,224,023	-	-	-	
- Other liabilities	36,978	(894,686)	37,419	(48,105)	
Net cash flows (used in) / from operating activities					
before income tax	(18,992,962)	(29,757,388)	28,594,383	(7,251,254)	
Income tax paid	(142,571)	(71,748)	(142,571)	(67,277)	
Net cash flows (used in) / from operating activities	(19,135,533)	(29,829,136)	28,451,812	(7,318,531)	
Cash flows from investing activities					
- Payments to acquire property, plant and equipment	(215,479)	(293,504)	(144,316)	(156,659)	
- Payments to acquire intangible assets	(814,296)	-	(390,929)	-	
- Proceeds on disposal of property, plant and equipment	-	16,029	-	-	
- Net advance to subsidiary companies	-	-	(70,033,532)	(20,947,040)	
- Payments to acquire shares in subsidiary company	-	-	(388)	(5,000)	
- Payments to acquire shares in associated company	(1,557,303)	(17,226)	(1,557,303)	(17,226)	
- Payments to acquire shares in available-for-sale investments	(15,430)	-	(15,430)	-	
- Dividends received	966,239	302,031	966,239	302,031	
Net cash flows (used in) / from investing activities	(1,636,269)	7,330	(71,175,659)	(20,823,894)	
Cash flows from financing activities					
- Proceeds from issue of share capital	213,747	-	213,747	-	
- Dividends paid	(132,990)	-	(132,990)	-	
Net cash flows from financing activities	80,757	-	80,757	-	
Decrease in cash and cash equivalents c/f	(20,691,045)	(29,821,806)	(42,643,090)	(28,142,425)	

# CASH FLOW STATEMENT (Cont.)

	GF	ROUP	BANK		
	1 Jan 2006	1 Jan 2005	1 Jan 2006	1 Jan 2005	
	to	to	to	to	
	30 Jun 2006	30 Jun 2005	30 Jun 2006	30 Jun 2005	
	USD	USD	USD	USD	
Decrease in cash and cash equivalents b/f	(20,691,045)	(29,821,806)	(42,643,090)	(28,142,425)	
- Effect of exchange rate changes					
on cash and cash equivalents	746,791	(1,149,193)	737,910	(1,117,725)	
- Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(21,437,836)	(28,672,613)	(43,381,000)	(27,024,700)	
Decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(20,691,045)	(29,821,806)	(42,643,090)	(28,142,425)	
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of period	37,809,500	28,417,969	35,432,879	27,203,410	
Cash and cash equivalents at end of period	17,118,455	(1,403,837)	(7,210,211)	(939,015)	

# Notes to the Interim Financial Statements

For the period 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2006

#### 1. Reporting entity

FIMBank p.l.c. ("the Bank") is a limited liability company domiciled and incorporated in Malta. The unaudited condensed interim financial statements of the Bank as at and for the six months ended 30 June 2006 comprise the Bank and its subsidiaries (together referred to as the "Group") and the Group's interest in associates.

The consolidated financial statements of the Group as at and for the year ended 31 December 2005 are available upon request from the Bank's registered office at 7th Floor, The Plaza Commercial Centre, Bisazza Street, Sliema, SLM 15, Malta.

#### 2. Statement of compliance

These unaudited condensed interim financial statements have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) IAS 34 Interim Financial Reporting and have been extracted from the Group's unaudited management accounts for the six months ended 30 June 2006. They do not include all the information required for full annual financial statements, and should be read in conjunction with the consolidated financial statements of the Group as at and for the year ended 31 December 2005.

The unaudited condensed interim financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 11 August 2006.

#### 3. Significant accounting policies

The accounting policies applied by the Group in these unaudited condensed interim financial statements are the same as those applied by the Group in its consolidated financial statements as at and for the year ended 31 December 2005.

#### 4. Estimates

The preparation of interim financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting policies and the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expense. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

In preparing these unaudited condensed interim financial statements, the significant judgements made by management in applying the Group's accounting policies and the key sources of estimating uncertainty were the same as those that applied to the consolidated financial statements as at and for the year ended 31 December 2005.

During the six months ended 30 June 2006 management reassessed its estimates in respect of:

- Previously unrecognised deferred tax assets related to the carrying forward of unused tax losses (see note 8); and
- The recoverable amount of goodwill (see note 8).

#### 5. Financial risk management

Aspects of the Group's financial risk management objectives and policies are consistent with that disclosed in the consolidated financial statements as at and for the year ended 31 December 2005.

# Notes to the Interim Financial Statements (Cont.)

For the period 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2006

#### 6. Segmental information

The Group's identifiable business segments are forfaiting, factoring, trade finance and IT solutions services. The Group's business and geographical segments are analysed as follows:

#### GROUP

#### Geographical/business segments

Geographical/business segments	Malta		Other countries		Total	
	01.01.06 to 30.06.06 USD	01.01.05 to 30.06.05 USD	01.01.06 to 30.06.06 USD	01.01.05 to 30.06.05 USD	01.01.06 to 30.06.06 USD	01.01.05 to 30.06.05 USD
Interest receivable and similar income originated from:						
<ul> <li>Trade finance</li> <li>Forfaiting activities</li> <li>Fees and commissions receivable</li> </ul>	164,307 -	105,934 -	4,729,941 3,107	2,268,740	4,894,248 3,107	2,374,674
originated from: - Trade finance - Forfaiting activities	154,898 -	310,241	4,576,139 710,309	3,609,318 646,609	4,731,037 710,309	3,919,559 646,609
Trading income originated from: - Trade finance - Forfaiting activities	-	-	672,606 4,765,385	262,683 2,150,630	672,606 4,765,385	262,683 2,150,630
Gross income	319,205	416,175	15,457,487	8,937,980	15,776,692	9,354,155
Interest payable and commission payable originated from: - Trade finance - Forfaiting activities	(316,382)	(293,541) - (293,541)	(158,076)	(33,334)	(5,184,617) (158,076) (5,342,693)	(33,334)
Segmental profit: - Trade finance - Forfaiting activities	2,823	122,634	5,110,451 5,320,725 10,431,176	4,771,846 2,763,905 7,535,751	5,113,274 5,320,725 10,433,999	4,894,480 2,763,905 7,658,385
Share of profits • Factoring Other operating income Common costs: • Trade finance • Forfaiting activities • IT solutions					., , ,	569,783 125,711 (3,960,886) (2,176,982) (454)
Adjustment to goodwill					(144,082)	-
Profit on ordinary activities before tax and net	impairment lo	osses			4,397,583	2,215,557

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# Notes to the Interim Financial Statements (Cont.)

For the period 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2006

#### 6. Segmental information (Cont.)

#### GROUP

#### Geographical/business segments

	M	Malta		Other countries		otal
	01.01.06	01.01.05	01.01.06	01.01.05	01.01.06	01.01.05
	to	to	to	to	to	to
	30.06.06	30.06.05	30.06.06	30.06.05	30.06.06	30.06.05
	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD	USD
Segmental assets:						
- Trade finance	16,272,377	9,052,186	359,806,037	160,562,229	376,078,414	169,614,415
- Forfaiting assets	-	-	192,116,175	113,569,903	192,116,175	113,569,903
- Factoring	-	-	8,676,980	7,477,430	8,676,980	7,477,430
- IT solutions	855,243	-	-	-	855,243	-
	17,127,620	9,052,186	560,599,192	281,609,562	577,726,812	290,661,748
Unallocated assets					4,409,433	4,553,515
				_	582,136,245	295,215,263

#### 7. Investments in associate

In March 2006 the Bank and the Group acquired a further 6,930,000, 6.25% cumulative convertible preference shares of 10 Indian Rupees each, in Global Trade Finance Limited, a company incorporated in India, for a purchase consideration of USD1,557,303.

#### 8. Goodwill

The Group performed its annual impairment test of goodwill on 31 December 2005. For the six months ended 30 June 2006, no significant events took place which might indicate that goodwill may be impaired.

During the six months ended 30 June 2006, one of the subsidiaries recognised a deferred tax asset amounting to USD144,082 (six months ended 30 June 2005: NIL). The Group adjusted the gross carrying amount of goodwill to the amounts that would have been recorded if the deferred tax asset had been recognised as an identifiable asset at acquisition date. The reduction in the carrying amount of goodwill was recognised in the income statement accordingly.

#### 9. Debt securities in issue

During the six months ended 30 June 2006, a subsidiary issued promissory notes amounting to USD5,525,627. These have a maturity period of one year and bear interest between 5.73% and 5.89% per annum.

# Notes to the Interim Financial Statements (Cont.)

For the period 1 January 2006 to 30 June 2006

#### 10. Capital and reserves

#### 10.1 Share capital

		dinary shares JSD0.50 each
	2006 No.	2005 No.
On issue at beginning of period / year	71,173,739	66,010,631
Share options issued for cash	240,004	55,178
Conversion of convertible subordinated loan	-	5,107,930
Bonus issue	14,272,596	-
Shares issued in lieu of dividend	452,738	-
On issue at close of period / year	86,139,077	71,173,739

#### 10.2 Share premium

On 6 April 2006, the Shareholders approved a resolution proposed by the Board of Directors for a one for five bonus issue to eligible ordinary shareholders as at the close of trading on 28 February 2006.

#### **10.3 Dividends**

A scrip dividend for 2005, amounting to USD811,878, net of income tax, was paid in April 2006 (six months ended 30 June 2005: NIL), giving shareholders the choice to receive either cash or new shares.

#### 11. Financial commitments

In 2004, the Board approved an investment of USD2 million in a newly incorporated entity to be engaged in providing international factoring and forfaiting services. Additionally during 2005, the Board approved an investment of USD10 million in a newly incorporated entity to be engaged in providing factoring services in Dubai. At 30 June 2006, both commitments were still outstanding.

# **Independent Report on Review of Condensed Interim Financial Information**

#### To the Directors of FIMBank p.l.c.

#### Introduction

We have reviewed the accompanying condensed balance sheet of FIMBank p.l.c. as at 30 June 2006 and the related condensed consolidated statements of income and cash flows for the six-month period then ended (interim financial information). Management is responsible for the preparation and presentation of this interim financial information in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standard IAS 34 *Interim Financial Reporting*. Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on this interim financial information based on our review.

#### Scope of review

We conducted our review in accordance with the International Standard on Review Engagements 2400. A review of interim financial information consists of making inquiries, primarily of persons responsible for financial and accounting matters, and apply analytical and other review procedures. A review is substantially less in scope than an audit conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in an audit. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion.

#### Conclusion

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the accompanying interim financial information is not prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with IAS 34 *Interim Financial Reporting*.

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Ray Azzopardi (Partner) for and on behalf of

**KPMG** Certified Public Accountants

11 August 2006

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# **YOUR NOTES**