

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

A1: Nature of operations

Prudential plc (the Company) together with its subsidiaries (collectively, the Group or Prudential) is an international financial services group with its principal operations in the UK, the US and Asia. The Group operates in the UK through its subsidiaries, primarily The Prudential Assurance Company Limited (PAC), Prudential Annuities Limited (PAL), Prudential Retirement Income Limited (PRIL) and M&G Investment Management Limited.

In the US, the Group's principal subsidiary is Jackson National Life Insurance Company (Jackson). The Group also has operations in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and other Asian countries. On 20 February 2009, the Company announced that it had entered into agreement, subject to regulatory approval to sell the assets and liabilities of its agency distribution business and its agency force in Taiwan. See note I10 for further details.

Prudential offers a wide range of retail financial products and services and asset management services throughout these territories. The retail financial products and services principally include life insurance, pensions and annuities as well as collective investment services.

Long-term business products written in the UK and Asia are principally with-profits deposit administration, other conventional and unitised with-profits policies and non-participating pension annuities in the course of payment. Long-term business also includes linked business written in the UK and Asia. The principal products written by Jackson are interest-sensitive deferred annuities and whole-life policies, variable annuities, guaranteed investment contracts, fixed index deferred annuities and term life insurance.

Prudential plc is a public limited company incorporated and registered in England and Wales. The registered office is:

Laurence Pountney Hill
London
EC4R 0HH
Registered number: 1397169

A2: Basis of preparation

The consolidated financial statements consolidate the Group and the Group's interest in associates and jointly-controlled entities. The parent company financial statements present information about the Company as a separate entity and not about the Group.

The consolidated financial statements have been prepared and approved by the directors in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted by the European Union (EU). The Company has elected to prepare its parent company financial statements in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (GAAP). These are presented on pages 306 to 315.

As part of its response to the global financial crisis, in 2008, the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) has issued amendments to IAS 39, 'Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement' and IFRS 7, 'Financial Instruments: Disclosures'. 'Reclassification of Financial Assets: Amendments to IAS 39 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement and IFRS 7 Financial Instruments: Disclosures' was issued in October 2008 permitting the reclassification of non-derivative financial assets into the 'loans and receivables' category under which assets are carried at amortised cost if specific conditions are met. The Group has not made any such reclassification of financial assets as permitted by the amendments.

The Group has applied all IFRS standards and interpretations adopted by the EU and effective at 31 December 2008. In addition, the Group has early adopted IFRIC 14 'The Limit on a Defined Benefit Asset, Minimum Funding Requirement and their Interaction'. Further details on the impact of the adoption of this interpretation are provided in notes A5 and I1.

A3: Critical accounting policies, estimates and judgements

a Critical accounting policies

Prudential's discussion and analysis of its financial condition and results of operations are based upon Prudential's consolidated financial statements, which have been prepared in accordance with IFRS adopted for use in the EU. Were the Group to apply IFRS as published by the IASB, as opposed to EU-adopted IFRS, no additional adjustments would be required.

The preparation of these financial statements requires Prudential to make estimates and judgements that affect the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, and revenues and expenses, and related disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities. On an ongoing basis, Prudential evaluates its estimates, including those related to long-term business provisioning, the fair value of assets and the declaration of bonus rates. Prudential bases its estimates on historical experience and on various other assumptions that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances, the results of which form the basis for making judgements about the carrying value of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. Actual results may differ from these estimates under different assumptions or conditions.

Critical accounting policies are defined as those that are reflective of significant judgements and uncertainties, and potentially give rise to different results under different assumptions and conditions. Prudential believes that its critical accounting policies are limited to those described below.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A3: Critical accounting policies, estimates and judgements continued

The critical accounting policies in respect of the items discussed below are critical for the Group's results insofar as they relate to the Group's shareholder-financed business. In particular this applies for Jackson which is the largest shareholder-backed business in the Group. The policies are not critical in respect of the Group's with-profits business. Accordingly, explanation is provided in this note and cross-referenced notes as to why the distinction between with-profits business and shareholder-backed business is relevant.

The items discussed below and in cross-referenced notes explain the effect of changes in estimates and the effect of reasonably likely changes in the key assumptions underlying these estimates as of the latest balance sheet date so as to provide analysis that recognises the different accounting effects on profit and loss or equity. In order to provide relevant analysis that is appropriate to the circumstances applicable to the Group's businesses, the explanations refer to types of business, fund structure, the relationship between asset and policyholder liability measurement, and the differences in the method of accounting permitted under IFRS 4 for accounting for insurance contract assets, policyholder liabilities and unallocated surplus of the Group's with-profits funds.

Insurance contract accounting

With the exception of certain contracts described in note D1, the Group's life assurance contracts are classified as insurance contracts and investment contracts with discretionary participating features. As permitted by IFRS 4, assets and liabilities of these contracts (see below) are accounted for under previously applied GAAP. Accordingly, except as described below, the modified statutory basis (MSB) of reporting as set out in the revised Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) issued by the Association of British Insurers (ABI) in November 2003 has been applied.

In 2005 the Group chose to improve its IFRS accounting for UK regulated with-profits funds by the voluntary application of the UK accounting standard FRS 27, 'Life Assurance'. Under this standard, the main accounting changes that were required for UK with-profits funds were:

- Derecognition of deferred acquisition costs and related deferred tax; and
- replacement of MSB liabilities with adjusted realistic basis liabilities.

The results shown for 2008 and 2007 reflect this basis.

Unallocated surplus represents the excess of assets over policyholder liabilities for the Group's with-profits funds that have yet to be appropriated between policyholders and shareholders. The Group has opted to account for unallocated surplus wholly as a liability with no allocation to equity. This treatment reflects the fact that shareholders' participation in the cost of bonuses arises only on distribution. Shareholder profits on with-profits business reflect one-ninth of the cost of declared bonus.

For Jackson, applying the MSB as applicable to overseas operations, the assets and liabilities of insurance contracts are accounted for under insurance accounting prescribed by US GAAP. For the assets and liabilities of insurance contracts of Asian operations, the local GAAP is applied with adjustments, where necessary, to comply with UK GAAP. For the operations in Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan, countries where local GAAP is not appropriate in the context of the previously applied MSB, accounting for insurance contracts is based on US GAAP. For participating business the liabilities include provisions for the policyholders' interest in realised investment gains and other surpluses that, where appropriate, and in particular for Vietnam, have yet to be declared as bonuses.

The usage of these bases of accounting has varying effects on the way in which product options and guarantees are measured. For UK regulated with-profits funds, for the 2008 and 2007 results, options and guarantees are valued on a market consistent basis. The basis is described in note D2(g)(ii). For other operations a market consistent basis is not applied under the accounting basis described in note A4. Details of the guarantees, basis of setting assumptions, and sensitivity to altered assumptions are described in notes D3 and D4.

Valuation and accounting presentation of fair value movements of derivatives and debt securities of Jackson

Under IAS 39, derivatives are required to be carried at fair value. Unless net investment hedge accounting is applied, value movements on derivatives are recognised in the income statement. Except in respect of variable annuity business, the value movements on derivatives held by Jackson are separately identified within the short-term fluctuations in investment returns identified as part of the Group's supplementary analysis of results described below and in note B1. Derivative value movements in respect of variable annuity business are included within the operating profit based on longer-term investment returns.

For derivative instruments of Jackson, the Group has considered at length whether it is appropriate to undertake the necessary operational changes to qualify for hedge accounting so as to achieve matching of value movements in hedging instruments and hedged items in the performance statements. In reaching the decision a number of factors were particularly relevant. These were:

- IAS 39 hedging criteria have been designed primarily in the context of hedging and hedging instruments that are assessable as financial instruments that are either stand-alone or separable from host contracts, rather than, for example, duration characteristics of insurance contracts;

- the high hurdle levels under IAS 39 of ensuring hedge effectiveness at the level of individual hedge transactions;
- the difficulties in applying the macro hedge provisions under IAS 39 (which are more suited to banking arrangements) to Jackson's derivative book;
- the complexity of asset and liability matching of US life insurers such as those with Jackson's product range; and finally
- whether it is possible or desirable, without an unacceptable level of costs and constraint on commercial activity, to achieve the accounting hedge effectiveness required under IAS 39.

In this regard, the issues surrounding IAS 39 application are very similar to those considered by other US life insurers when the US financial reporting standard FAS 133 was first applied for US GAAP reporting. Taking account of these considerations the Group has decided that, except for certain minor categories of derivatives, it is not appropriate to seek to achieve hedge accounting under IAS 39. As a result of this decision the total income statement results are more volatile as the movements in the value of Jackson's derivatives are reflected within it.

Under IAS 39, unless carried at amortised cost (subject to impairment provisions where appropriate) under the held-to-maturity category, debt securities are also carried at fair value. The Group has chosen not to classify any financial assets as held-to-maturity. Debt securities of Jackson are designated as available-for-sale with value movements, unless impaired, being recorded as movements within shareholders' equity. Impairments are recorded in the income statement.

Presentation of results before tax

The total tax charge for the Group reflects tax that in addition to relating to shareholders' profits is also attributable to policyholders and unallocated surplus of with-profits funds and unit-linked policies. This is explained in more detail in note F5. However, pre-tax profits are determined after transfers to or from unallocated surplus of with-profits funds. These transfers are in turn determined after taking account of tax borne by with-profits funds. Consequently reported profit before the total tax charge is not representative of pre-tax profits attributable to shareholders. In order to provide a measure of pre-tax profits attributable to shareholders the Group has chosen to adopt an income statement presentation of the tax charge and pre-tax results that distinguishes between policyholder and shareholder components.

Supplementary analysis of results and earnings attributable to shareholders

The Group uses operating profit based on longer-term investment returns as a supplemental measure of its results. The basis of calculation is disclosed in note A4(d).

For shareholder-backed business, with the exception of debt securities held by Jackson and assets classified as loans and receivables, all financial investments and investment property are designated as fair value through profit and loss. Short-term fluctuations in investment returns on such assets held by with-profits funds, do not affect directly reported shareholder results. This is because (i) the unallocated surplus of with-profits funds are accounted for as liabilities and (ii) excess or deficits of income and expenditure of the funds over the required surplus for distribution are transferred to or from unallocated surplus. However, for shareholder-backed businesses the short-term fluctuations affect the result for the year and the Group provides additional analysis of results to provide information on results before and after short-term fluctuations in investment returns.

b Critical accounting estimates and judgements

Investments

Determining the fair value of financial investments when the markets are not active

The Group holds certain financial investments for which the markets are not active. These include financial investments which are not quoted on active markets and financial investments for which markets are no longer active as a result of market conditions e.g. market illiquidity. When the markets are not active, there is generally no or limited observable market data for the financial investments. The determination of whether an active market exists for a financial investment requires management's judgement.

If the market for a financial investment of the Group is not active, the fair value is determined in full or in part by using valuation techniques. The Group establishes fair value for these financial investments by using quotations from independent third-parties, such as brokers or pricing services or by using internally developed pricing models. Priority is given to publicly available prices from independent sources, when available but overall, the source of pricing and/or the valuation technique is chosen with the objective of arriving at a fair value measurement which reflects the price at which an orderly transaction would take place between market participants on the measurement date. The valuation techniques include the use of recent arm's length transactions, reference to other instruments that are substantially the same, discounted cash flow analysis, option adjusted spread models and, if applicable, enterprise valuation and may include a number of assumptions relating to variables such as credit risk and interest rates. Changes in assumptions relating to these variables could positively or negatively impact the reported fair value of these instruments.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A3: Critical accounting policies, estimates and judgements continued

The fair values of financial investments, net of derivative liabilities, valued using a valuation technique either internally by the Group or by independent third-parties at 31 December 2008 was £40,252 million (2007: £33,822 million). Of these amounts, financial investments net of derivative liabilities with a fair value of £24,833 million (2007: £19,748 million) were held by the US operations. Financial investments valued using valuation techniques held by UK operations were £15,399 million (2007: £14,139 million) and of this amount £14,695 million (2007: £13,580 million) related to securities held by with-profits operations and £704 million (2007: £559 million) related to securities held by the UK shareholder-backed business. Debt securities of US insurance operations valued internally using valuation techniques in 2008 include certain asset-backed securities which had previously been valued using prices provided by a pricing service or brokers in the context of active markets. The current market dislocations have caused a reassessment of the valuation process for these asset-backed securities. In particular, beginning the end of the third quarter of 2008, the external prices obtained for certain asset-backed securities were deemed to be inappropriate in the current market conditions. For the valuations at 31 December 2008, the US operations have therefore utilised internal valuation models, provided by PPM America, to derive fair values for all non-agency residential mortgage-backed securities and asset-backed securities and certain commercial mortgage-backed securities. The techniques used by PPM America include cash flow models based on spreads and, when available, market indices. Additional details are explained in note G1.

Determining impairments relating to financial assets

Available-for-sale securities

Financial investments carried on an available-for-sale basis are represented by Jackson's debt securities portfolio. The consideration of evidence of impairment requires management's judgement. In making this determination the factors considered include, for example, whether the decline is substantial, the ability and intent to retain the investment long enough to allow for an estimated full recovery in value, the duration and extent to which the amortised cost exceeds fair value, the financial condition and prospects of the issuer, or any other objectively observable conditions that indicate that the investment may be impaired.

For Jackson's residential mortgage-backed securities, the model used to analyse cash flows, begins with the current delinquency experience of the underlying collateral pool for the structure, by applying assumptions about how much of the currently delinquent loans will eventually default, and multiplying this by an assumed loss severity. Additional factors are applied to anticipate ageing effect. After applying a cash flow simulation an indication is obtained as to whether or not the security has suffered a principal payment shortfall. If a shortfall applies an impairment charge is generally recorded.

Unrealised losses that are considered to be primarily the result of market conditions, such as interest rates movements, unusual market volatility, or industry-related events, and where the Group also believes there is a reasonable expectation for recovery and, furthermore, it has the intent and ability to hold the investment until maturity or the market recovers, are usually determined to be temporary. The Group's review of fair value involves several criteria, including economic conditions, credit loss experience, other issuer-specific developments and future cash flows. These assessments are based on the best available information at the time. Factors such as market liquidity, the widening of bid/ask spreads and a change in cash flow assumptions can contribute to future price volatility. If actual experience differs negatively from the assumptions and other considerations used in the consolidated financial statements, unrealised losses currently in equity may be recognised in the income statement in future periods. The preceding note in this section provides explanation on how fair value is determined when the markets for the financial investments are not active. Further, additional details on the impairments of the available-for-sale securities of Jackson are described in notes D3 and G5.

Assets held at amortised cost

Financial assets classified as loans and receivables under IAS 39 are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. The loans and receivables include loans collateralised by mortgages, deposits and loans to policyholders. In estimating future cash flows, the Group looks at the expected cash flows of the assets and applies historical loss experience of assets with similar credit risks that has been adjusted for conditions in the historical loss experience which no longer exist or for conditions that are expected to arise. The estimated future cash flows are discounted using the financial asset's original or variable effective interest rate and exclude credit losses that have not yet been incurred.

The risks inherent in reviewing the impairment of any investment include the risk that market results may differ from expectations; facts and circumstances may change in the future and differ from estimates and assumptions; or the Group may later decide to sell the asset as a result of changed circumstances.

Changes in the estimates of credit risk in any reporting period could result in a change in the allowance for losses on the loans and advances.

Insurance contracts

Product classification

IFRS 4 requires contracts written by insurers to be classified as either 'insurance contracts' or 'investment contracts' depending on the level of insurance risk transferred. Insurance risk is risk, other than financial risk, transferred from the contract holder to the contract issuer. If significant insurance risk is transferred by the contract then it is classified as an insurance contract. Contracts that transfer financial risk but not significant insurance risk are termed investment contracts. Furthermore, some contracts, both insurance and investment, contain discretionary participating features representing the contractual right to receive additional benefits as a supplement to guaranteed benefits:

- a that are likely to be a significant portion of the total contract benefits;
- b whose amount or timing is contractually at the discretion of the insurer; and
- c that are contractually based on asset or fund performance, as discussed in IFRS 4.

Accordingly, insurers must perform a product classification exercise across their portfolio of contracts issued to determine the allocation to these various categories. IFRS 4 permits the continued usage of previously applied GAAP for insurance contracts and investment contracts with discretionary participating features. Except for UK regulated with-profits funds, as described subsequently, this basis has been applied by the Group.

For investment contracts that do not contain discretionary participating features, IAS 39 and, where the contract includes an investment management element, IAS 18, apply measurement principles to assets and liabilities attaching to the contract.

Valuation assumptions

i Contracts of with-profits funds

The Group's insurance contracts and investment contracts with discretionary participating features are primarily with-profits and other protection type policies. For UK regulated with-profits funds, the contract liabilities are valued by reference to the UK Financial Services Authority's (FSA) realistic basis. In aggregate, this basis has the effect of placing a value on the liabilities of UK with-profits contracts, which reflects the amounts expected to be paid based on the current value of investments held by the with-profits funds and current circumstances.

The basis of determining liabilities for the Group's with-profits business has little or no effect on the results attributable to shareholders. This is because movements on liabilities of the with-profits funds are absorbed by the unallocated surplus. Except through indirect effects, or in remote circumstances as described below, changes to liability assumptions are therefore reflected in the carrying value of the unallocated surplus, which is accounted for as a liability rather than shareholders' equity.

A detailed explanation of the basis of liability measurement is contained in note D2(g)(ii).

The Group's other with-profits contracts are written in with-profits funds that operate in some of the Group's Asian operations. The liabilities for these contracts and those of Prudential Annuities Limited, which is a subsidiary company of the PAC with-profits funds, are determined differently. For these contracts the liabilities are estimated using actuarial methods based on assumptions relating to premiums, interest rates, investment returns, expenses, mortality and surrenders. The assumptions to which the estimation of these reserves is particularly sensitive are the interest rate used to discount the provision and the assumed future mortality experience of policyholders.

For liabilities determined using the basis described above for UK regulated with-profits funds, and the other liabilities described in the preceding paragraph, changes in estimates arising from the likely range of possible changes in underlying key assumptions have no direct impact on the reported profit.

This lack of sensitivity reflects the with-profits fund structure, basis of distribution, and the application of previous GAAP to the unallocated surplus of with-profits funds as permitted by IFRS 4. Changes in liabilities of these contracts that are caused by altered estimates are absorbed by the unallocated surplus of the with-profits funds with no direct effect on shareholders' equity. The Company's obligations and more detail on such circumstances are described in note H14.

ii Other contracts

Contracts, other than those of with-profits funds, are written in shareholder-backed operations of the Group. The significant shareholder-backed product groupings and the factors that may significantly affect IFRS results due to experience against assumptions or changes of assumptions vary significantly between business units. For some types of business the effect of changes in assumptions may be significant, whilst for others, due to the nature of the product, assumption setting may be of less significance. The nature of the products and the significance of assumptions are discussed in notes D2, D3 and D4. From the perspective of shareholder results the key sensitivities relate to assumptions for allowance for credit risk for UK annuity business and assumed future investment returns for the Taiwan life operation.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A3: Critical accounting policies, estimates and judgements continued

Jackson

Jackson offers individual fixed annuities, fixed index annuities, immediate annuities, variable annuities, individual and variable life insurance and institutional products. With the exception of institutional products and an incidental amount of business for annuity certain contracts, which are accounted for as investment contracts under IAS 39, all of Jackson's contracts are accounted for under IFRS 4 as insurance contracts by applying US GAAP, the previous GAAP used before IFRS adoption. Under US GAAP the requirements of SFAS 60 'Accounting and Reporting for Insurance Enterprises' and SFAS 97 'Accounting and Reporting by Insurance Enterprises for certain Long-Duration Contracts and for Realized Gains and Losses from the Sale of Investments' apply to these contracts. The accounting requirements under these standards and the effect of changes in valuation assumptions are considered below for fixed annuity, variable annuity and traditional life insurance contracts.

Fixed annuity contracts, which are investment contracts under US GAAP terminology, are accounted for by applying in the first instance a retrospective deposit method to determine the liability for policyholder benefits. This is then augmented by potentially three additional amounts, namely deferred income, any amounts previously assessed against policyholders that are refundable on termination of the contract, and any premium deficiency, i.e., any probable future loss on the contract. These types of contract contain considerable interest rate guarantee features. Notwithstanding the accompanying market risk exposure, except in the circumstances of interest rate scenarios where the guarantee rates included in contract terms are higher than crediting rates that can be supported from assets held to cover liabilities, the accounting measurement of Jackson's fixed annuity products is not generally sensitive to interest rate risk. This position derives from the nature of the products and the US GAAP basis of measurement.

Variable annuity contracts written by Jackson may provide for guaranteed minimum death, income, or withdrawal benefit features. In general terms, liabilities for these benefits are accounted for under US GAAP by using estimates of future benefits and fees under best estimate assumptions. For variable annuity business the key assumption is the expected long-term level of equity market returns, which for 2008 and 2007 was 8.4 per cent per annum (net of fund management fees) determined using a mean reversion methodology. This rate reflects a long-term assumption applied from year to year that is appropriate in the context of 'grandfathered' US GAAP under IFRS 4 for accounting for Jackson's insurance assets and liabilities. Under the mean reversion methodology, projected returns over the next five years are flexed (subject to capping) so that, combined with the actual rates of return for the current and the previous two years the 8.4 per cent rate is maintained. The projected rates of return are capped at no more than 15 per cent for each of the next five years. Further details are explained in note D3(i).

These returns affect the level of future expected profits through their effects on the fee income with consequential impact on the amortisation of deferred acquisition costs as described below and the required level of provision for guaranteed minimum death benefit claims.

For traditional life insurance contracts, provisions for future policy benefits are determined under SFAS 60 using the net level premium method and assumptions as of the issue date as to mortality, interest, policy lapses and expenses plus provisions for adverse deviation.

Except to the extent of mortality experience, which primarily affects profits through variations in claim payments and the guaranteed minimum death benefit reserves, the profits of Jackson are relatively insensitive to changes in insurance risk.

Asian operations

The insurance products written in the Group's Asian operations principally cover with-profits business, unit-linked business, and other non-participating business. The results of with-profits business are relatively insensitive to changes in estimates and assumptions that affect the measurement of policyholder liabilities. As for the UK business, this feature arises because unallocated surplus is accounted for by the Group as a liability. The results of Asian unit-linked business are also relatively insensitive to changes in estimates or assumptions.

The principal non-participating business in the Group's Asian operations, for which changes in estimates and assumptions are important from year to year, is the traditional whole-life business written in Taiwan. The premiums for the in-force business for these contracts have been set by the regulator at different points for the industry as a whole. Premium rates were set to give a guaranteed minimum sum assured on death and a guaranteed surrender value on early surrender based on prevailing interest rates at the time of policy issue. Premium rates also included an allowance for mortality and expenses. The required rates of guarantee have fallen over time as interest rates have reduced from a high of eight per cent to current levels of around 1.4 per cent. The current low bond rates in Taiwan gives rise to a negative spread against the majority of these policies. The current cash costs of funding in-force negative spread in Taiwan is around £50 million a year.

The profits attaching to these contracts are particularly affected by the rates of return earned, and estimated to be earned on, the assets held to cover liabilities and on future investment income and contract cash flows. Under IFRS, the insurance contract liabilities of the Taiwan business are determined on the US GAAP basis as applied previously under UK GAAP. Under this basis the policy liabilities are calculated on sets of assumptions, which are locked-in at the point of policy inception, and a deferred acquisition cost asset is held in the balance sheet.

The adequacy of the insurance contract liabilities is tested by reference to best estimates of expected investment returns on policy cash flows and reinvested income. The assumed earned rates are used to discount the future cash flows. The assumed earned rates consist of a long-term best estimate determined by consideration of long-term market conditions, and rates assumed

to be earned in the trending period. In determining the long-term estimate, external advice of expert macroeconomic consultants has been obtained. At 31 December 2008 it has been assumed that the longer-term bond rate of 5.5 per cent will be attained by 31 December 2018 (2007: 5.5 per cent by 31 December 2013).

The liability adequacy test results are sensitive to the attainment of the trended rates during the trending period and the level of the projected long-term rate.

Details of this sensitivity are shown in note D4(j)(iii).

Deferred acquisition costs

Significant costs are incurred in connection with acquiring new insurance business. Except for acquisition costs of with-profits contracts of the UK regulated with-profits funds, which are accounted for under the realistic FSA regime as described in note A4, these costs, which vary with, and are primarily related to, the production of new business, are capitalised and amortised against margins in future revenues on the related insurance policies. The recoverability of the asset is measured and the asset is deemed impaired if the projected future margins are less than the carrying value of the asset. To the extent that the future margins differ from those anticipated, then an adjustment to the carrying value of the deferred acquisition cost asset will be necessary.

The deferral and amortisation of acquisition costs is of most relevance to the Group's results for shareholder-financed long-term business of Jackson and Asian operations. The majority of the UK shareholder-backed operations is for individual and group annuity business where the incidence of acquisition costs is negligible.

Jackson

For term business, acquisition costs are deferred and amortised in line with expected premiums. For annuity business, acquisition costs are deferred and amortised in line with expected gross profits on the relevant contracts. For interest-sensitive business, the key assumption is the long-term spread between the earned rate and the rate credited to policyholders, which is based on the annual spread analysis. In addition, expected gross profits depend on mortality assumptions, assumed unit costs and terminations other than deaths (including the related charges), all of which are based on a combination of actual experience of the Jackson companies, industry experience and future expectations. A detailed analysis of actual experience is measured by internally developed mortality studies.

For variable annuity business, the key assumption is the expected long-term level of equity market returns as described above.

The level of acquisition costs carried in the balance sheet is also sensitive to unrealised valuation movements on debt securities held to back the liabilities and solvency capital. Further details are explained in notes D3(i) and H1.

Asian operations

The key shareholder-backed Asian operation is the Taiwan life business.

In 2008, a number of changes have been made to the basis of estimating the level of deferred acquisition costs, as described in note D4(i)(b).

The carrying value of the deferred acquisition costs of the Taiwan operation are potentially sensitive to changes in current assumed future interest rates as described above.

Pensions

The Group applies the requirements of IAS 19, 'Employee benefits', to its defined benefit pension schemes. Due to the inclusion of actuarial gains and losses in the income statement rather than being recognised directly in equity, the results of the Group are affected by changes in interest rates for corporate bonds that affect the rate applied to discount projected pension payments and changes in mortality assumptions.

The economic participation in the surplus or deficits attaching to the main Prudential Staff Pension Scheme (PSPS) and the smaller Scottish Amicable Pensions Scheme (SAPS) are shared between the PAC with-profits sub-fund (WPSF) and shareholder operations. The economic interest reflects the source of contributions over the scheme life, which in turn reflects the activity of the members during their employment.

In the case of PSPS, movements in the apportionment of the surplus or deficit for PSPS between the WPSF and shareholders' funds in 2008 reflect the 70/30 ratio applied to the base deficit position as at 31 December 2005 but with service cost and contributions for ongoing service apportioned by reference to the cost allocation for activity of current employees. For SAPS the ratio is estimated to be 50/50 between the WPSF and shareholders' funds.

On 1 January 2008, the Group adopted IFRIC 14 'IAS 19 – The Limit on a Defined Benefit Asset, Minimum Funding Requirements and their Interaction'. IFRIC 14 provides guidance on the recognition of IAS 19 surpluses in, and funding obligations for, defined benefit pension schemes. As a result of the adoption of this interpretation, in respect of the position at 31 December 2008, the Group has not recognised the underlying PSPS pension surplus of £728 million (£615 million net of deferred tax), reflecting the difference between the market value of the scheme assets and the discounted value of the liabilities, which would have otherwise been recognised as an asset on its balance sheet under the previous policy. In addition, the Group has recognised a liability for deficit funding to 5 April 2010 of £65 million (£55 million net of deferred tax) in respect of PSPS. Of these, the amounts attributable to shareholders are £223 million (£160 million net of deferred tax) for the surplus not recognised as an asset and £20 million (£15 million net of deferred tax) for the additional liability for deficit funding. In total the impact on shareholders' equity at 31 December 2008 is a reduction of £175 million.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A3: Critical accounting policies, estimates and judgements continued

Deferred tax

Deferred tax assets are recognised to the extent that they are regarded as recoverable, that is to the extent that, on the basis of all the available evidence, it can be regarded as more likely than not that there will be suitable taxable profits against which the losses can be relieved. The UK taxation regime applies separate rules to trading and capital profits and losses. The distinction between temporary differences that arise from items of either a capital or trading nature may affect the recognition of deferred tax assets. The judgements made, and uncertainties considered, in arriving at deferred tax balances in the financial statements are discussed in note H4.

Goodwill

Goodwill impairment testing requires the exercise of judgement by management as to prospective future cash flows. Further information is disclosed in note H1.

A4: Significant accounting policies

a Financial instruments (other than long-term business contracts classified as financial instruments under IFRS 4)

Investment classification

Upon initial recognition, financial investments are measured at fair value. Subsequently, the Group is permitted under IAS 39, subject to specific criteria, to designate its investments as either financial investments at fair value through profit and loss, financial investments held on an available-for-sale basis, financial investments held-to-maturity or loans and receivables. The Group holds financial investments on the following bases:

- i Financial assets and liabilities at fair value through profit and loss – this comprises assets and liabilities designated by management as fair value through profit and loss on inception. These investments are measured at fair value with all changes thereon being recognised in investment income.
- ii Financial investments on an available-for-sale basis – this comprises assets that are designated by management and/or do not fall into any of the other categories. These investments are carried at fair value. Interest income is recognised on an effective interest basis in the income statement. Except for foreign exchange gains and losses on debt securities, not in functional currency, which are included in the income statement, unrealised gains and losses are recognised in equity. Upon disposal or impairment, accumulated unrealised gains and losses are transferred from equity to the income statement as realised gains or losses.
- iii Loans and receivables – this comprises investments that have fixed or determinable payments and are not designated as fair value through profit and loss or available-for-sale. These investments include loans collateralised by mortgages, deposits, loans to policyholders and other unsecured loans and receivables. These investments are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

The Group has designated certain financial assets as fair value through profit and loss as these assets are managed and their performance is evaluated on a fair value basis. These assets represent all of the Group's financial assets except all loans and receivables and debt securities held by Jackson. Debt securities held by Jackson are accounted for on an available-for-sale basis. The use of the fair value option is consistent with the Group's risk management and investment strategies.

The Group uses the trade date method to account for regular purchases and sales of financial assets.

Use of fair values

The Group uses current bid prices to value its quoted investments. Actively traded investments without quoted prices are valued using external broker bid prices. If there is no active established market for an investment, the Group applies an appropriate valuation technique such as a discounted cash flow technique. Additional details are provided in note G1.

Impairments

The Group assesses at each balance sheet date whether there is objective evidence that a financial asset or group of financial assets not held at fair value through profit and loss is impaired. A financial asset or group of financial assets is impaired and impairment losses are incurred only if there is objective evidence of impairment as a result of one or more events that have occurred after the initial recognition of the asset (a loss event) and that a loss event (or events) has an impact on the estimated future cash flows of the financial asset or group of financial assets that can be reliably estimated. Objective evidence that a financial asset or group of financial assets is impaired includes observable data that comes to the attention of the Group. For assets designated as available-for-sale, the impairment is measured as the difference between the amortised cost of the asset and its fair value which is removed from the available-for-sale reserve within equity and recognised in the income statement.

For loans and receivables carried at amortised cost, the impairment amount is the difference between amortised cost and the present value of the expected cash flows discounted at the original effective interest rate.

If, in subsequent periods, an impaired debt security held on an available-for-sale basis or an impaired loan or receivable recovers in value (in part or in full), and this recovery can be objectively related to an event occurring after the impairment, then the previously recognised impairment loss is reversed through the income statement (in part or in full).

Derivatives and hedge accounting

Derivative financial instruments are used to reduce or manage investment, interest rate and currency exposures, to facilitate efficient portfolio management and for investment purposes. The Group's policy is that amounts at risk through derivative transactions are covered by cash or by corresponding assets.

The Group may designate certain derivatives as hedges. This includes fair value hedges, cash flow hedges and hedges of net investments in foreign operations. If the criteria for hedge accounting are met then the following accounting treatments are applied from the date at which the designation is made and the accompanying requisite documentation is in place:

- i Hedges of net investments in foreign operations – the effective portion of any change in fair value of derivatives or other financial instruments designated as net investment hedges are recognised in equity. The ineffective portion of changes in the fair value of the hedging instrument is recorded in the income statement. The gain or loss on the hedging instrument recognised directly in equity is recognised in the income statement on disposal of the foreign operation.
- ii Fair value hedges – movements in the fair value of the hedged item attributable to the hedged risk are recognised in the income statement.
- iii Cash flow hedges – the effective portion of changes in the fair value of derivatives designated as cash flow hedges is recognised in equity. Movements in fair value relating to the ineffective portion are booked in the income statement. Amounts recognised directly in equity are recorded in the income statement in the periods in which the hedged item affects profit or loss.

All derivatives that do not meet the relevant hedging criteria are carried at fair value with movements in fair value being recorded in the income statement.

The primary areas of the Group's continuing operations where derivative instruments are held are the UK with-profits funds and annuity business, and Jackson.

For the Group's continuing operations, hedge accounting under IAS 39 is not usually applied. The exceptions, where hedge accounting has been applied in 2008 and 2007, are summarised in note G3.

For UK with-profits funds the derivative programme is undertaken as part of the efficient management of the portfolio as a whole. As noted in section D2 value movements on the with-profits funds investments are reflected in changes in asset-share liabilities to policyholders or the liability for unallocated surplus. Shareholders' profit or equity is not affected directly by value movements on the derivatives held.

For UK annuity business the derivatives are held as part of the overall matching of asset returns and duration to match, as far as practical, with liabilities to policyholders. The carrying value of these liabilities is sensitive to the return on the matching financial assets including derivatives held. Except for the extent of minor mismatching, value movements on derivatives held for this purpose do not affect shareholders' profit or equity.

For Jackson an extensive derivative programme is maintained. Value movements on the derivatives held can be very significant in their effect on shareholder results. The Group has chosen generally not to seek to construct the Jackson derivative programme so as to facilitate hedge accounting where theoretically possible, under IAS 39. Further details on this aspect of the Group's financial reporting are described in note A3.

Embedded derivatives

Embedded derivatives are held by various Group companies including Jackson. They are embedded within other non-derivative host financial instruments to create hybrid instruments. Where economic characteristics and risks of the embedded derivatives are not closely related to the economic characteristics and risks of the host instrument, and where the hybrid instrument is not measured at fair value with the changes in fair value recognised in the income statement, the embedded derivative is bifurcated and carried at fair value as a derivative in accordance with IAS 39.

In Jackson, for 2008 and subsequently, the embedded derivative liabilities for Guaranteed Minimum Withdrawal Benefit (GMWB), Guaranteed Minimum Income Benefit (GMIB) reinsurance, and Fixed Index Annuity business are valued by reference to AA corporate bond rates. Previously, the liabilities had been measured by reference to swap rates. The reason for the change is the anomalous swap curves applying in the current dislocated credit markets. Further details are provided in note D3 (g).

Securities lending including repurchase agreements

The Group is party to various securities lending agreements under which securities are loaned to third-parties on a short-term basis. The loaned securities are not derecognised; rather, they continue to be recognised within the appropriate investment classification. The Group's policy is that collateral in excess of 100 per cent of the fair value of securities loaned is required from all securities borrowers and typically consists of cash, debt securities, equity securities or letters of credit.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A4: Significant accounting policies continued

In cases where the Group takes possession of the collateral under its securities lending programme, the collateral, and corresponding obligation to return such collateral, are recognised in the consolidated balance sheet. To further minimise credit risk, the financial condition of counterparties is monitored on a regular basis.

Derecognition of financial assets and liabilities

The Group's policy is to derecognise financial assets when it is deemed that substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership have been transferred. The Group also derecognises a financial asset when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the financial asset expire. Where the Group neither transfers nor retains substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership, the Group will derecognise the financial asset where it is deemed that the Group has not retained control of the financial asset.

Where the transfer does not result in the Group transferring the right to receive the cash flows of the financial assets, but does result in the Group assuming a corresponding obligation to pay the cash flows to another recipient, the financial assets are also accordingly derecognised providing all of the following conditions are met:

- The Group has no obligation to pay amounts to the eventual recipients unless it collects the equivalent amounts from the original asset;
- the Group is prohibited by the terms of the transfer contract from selling or pledging the original asset; and
- the Group has an obligation to remit any cash flows it collects on behalf of the eventual recipients without material delay.

The Group derecognises financial liabilities only when the obligation specified in the contract is discharged, cancelled or has expired.

Borrowings

Although initially recognised at fair value, net of transaction costs, borrowings, excluding liabilities of consolidated collateralised debt obligations, are subsequently accounted for on an amortised cost basis using the effective interest method. Under the effective interest method, the difference between the redemption value of the borrowing and the initial proceeds (net of related issue costs) is amortised through the income statement to the date of maturity.

Financial liabilities designated at fair value through profit and loss

Consistent with the Group's risk management and investment strategy and the nature of the products concerned, the Group has designated under IAS 39 classification certain financial liabilities at fair value through profit and loss as these instruments are managed and their performance evaluated on a fair value basis. These instruments include liabilities related to consolidated collateralised debt obligations and net assets attributable to unit holders of consolidated unit trusts and similar funds.

b Long-term business contracts

Income statement treatment

Premiums and claims

Premium and annuity considerations for conventional with-profits policies and other protection type insurance policies are recognised when due. Premiums and annuity considerations for linked policies, unitised with-profits and other investment type policies are recognised when received or, in the case of unitised or unit-linked policies, when units are issued. These amounts exclude any taxes or duties assessed based on premiums.

Policy fees charged on linked and unitised with-profits policies for mortality, asset management and policy administration are recognised as revenue when related services are provided.

Claims paid include maturities, annuities, surrenders and deaths. Maturity claims are recorded on the policy maturity date. Annuity claims are recorded when the annuity becomes due for payment. Surrenders are recorded when paid and death claims are recorded when notified.

For investment contracts which do not contain discretionary participating features, the accounting reflects the deposit nature of the arrangement, with premiums and claims reflected as deposits and withdrawals and taken directly to the balance sheet.

Acquisition costs

Costs of acquiring new insurance business, principally commissions, marketing and advertising costs and certain other costs associated with policy issuance and underwriting that are not reimbursed by policy charges, are specifically identified and capitalised as part of deferred acquisition costs (DAC), which are included as an asset in the balance sheet. The DAC asset in respect of insurance contracts is amortised against margins in future revenues on the related insurance policies, to the extent that the amounts are recoverable out of the margins. Recoverability of the unamortised DAC asset is assessed at the time of policy issue and reviewed if profit margins have declined.

Under IFRS, investment contracts (excluding those with discretionary participation features) are required to be accounted for as financial liabilities in accordance with IAS 39 and, where relevant, the provisions of IAS 18 in respect of the attaching

investment management features of the contracts. The Group's investment contracts primarily comprise certain unit-linked savings contracts in the UK and Asia and contracts with fixed and guaranteed terms in the US (such as guaranteed investment contracts and annuity-certain).

Incremental, directly attributable acquisition costs relating to the investment management element of these contracts are capitalised and amortised in line with the related revenue. If the contracts involve up-front charges, this income is also deferred and amortised through the income statement in line with contractual service provision.

UK regulated with-profits funds

Prudential's long-term business written in the UK comprises predominantly life insurance policies under which the policyholders are entitled to participate in the returns of the funds supporting these policies. Business similar to this type is also written in certain of the Group's Asian operations subject to local market and regulatory conditions. Such policies are called with-profits policies. Prudential maintains with-profits funds within the Group's long-term business funds, which segregate the assets and liabilities and accumulate the returns related to that with-profits business. The amounts accumulated in these with-profits funds are available to provide for future policyholder benefit provisions and for bonuses to be distributed to with-profits policyholders. The bonuses, both annual and final, reflect the right of the with-profits policyholders to participate in the financial performance of the with-profits funds. Shareholders' profits with respect to bonuses declared on with-profits business correspond to the shareholders' share of the cost of bonuses as declared by the board of directors. The shareholders' share currently represents one-ninth of the cost of bonuses declared for with-profits policies.

Annual bonuses are declared and credited each year to with-profits policies. The annual bonuses increase policy benefits and, once credited, become guaranteed. Annual bonuses are charged to the profit and loss account in the year declared. Final bonuses are declared each year and accrued for all policies scheduled to mature and for death benefits expected to be paid during the next financial year. Final bonuses are not guaranteed and are only paid on policies that result from claims through the death of the policyholder or maturity of the policy within the period of declaration or by concession on surrender. No policyholder benefit provisions are recorded for future annual or final bonus declarations.

The policyholders' liabilities of the regulated with-profits funds are accounted for under FRS 27. FRS 27 is underpinned by the FSA's Peak 2 basis of reporting. This Peak 2 basis requires the value of liabilities to be calculated as:

- A with-profits benefits reserve (WPBR); plus
- future policy related liabilities (FPRL); plus
- the realistic current liabilities of the fund.

The WPBR is primarily based on the retrospective calculation of accumulated asset shares but is adjusted to reflect future policyholder benefits and other outgoings.

The FPRL must include a market consistent valuation of costs of guarantees, options and smoothing, less any related charges, and this amount is determined using either a stochastic approach, hedging costs or a series of deterministic projections with attributed probabilities.

The assumptions used in the stochastic models are calibrated to produce risk-free returns on each asset class. Volatilities of, and correlations between, investment returns from different asset classes are as determined by the Group's Portfolio Management Group but are also market consistent.

The cost of guarantees, options and smoothing is very sensitive to the bonus, market value reduction (MVR) and investment policies the Group employs and therefore the stochastic modelling incorporates a range of management actions that would help to protect the fund in adverse scenarios. Substantial flexibility has been included in the modelled management actions in order to reflect the discretion that the Group retains in adverse investment conditions, thereby avoiding the creation of unreasonable minimum capital requirements. The management actions assumed are consistent with management's policy for with-profits funds and the disclosures made in the publicly available Principles and Practices of Financial Management.

Under FRS 27 for the UK with-profits funds:

- No deferred acquisition costs and related deferred tax are recognised; and
- adjusted realistic basis liabilities instead of MSB liabilities are recognised.

Adjusted realistic basis liabilities represent the Peak 2 basis realistic liabilities for with-profits business included in Form 19 of the FSA regulatory returns, but after excluding the element for the shareholders' share of the future bonuses. This latter item is recognised as a liability for the purposes of regulatory returns but, for accounting purposes under FRS 27, consistent with the current basis of financial reporting, shareholder transfers are recognised only on declaration.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A4: Significant accounting policies continued

Unallocated surplus

The unallocated surplus represents the excess of assets over policyholder liabilities for the Group's with-profits funds. As allowed under IFRS 4, the Group has opted to continue to record unallocated surplus of with-profits funds wholly as a liability. The annual excess (shortfall) of income over expenditure of the with-profits funds, after declaration and attribution of the cost of bonuses to policyholders and shareholders, is transferred to (from) the unallocated surplus each year through a charge (credit) to the income statement. The balance retained in the unallocated surplus represents cumulative income arising on the with-profits business that has not been allocated to policyholders or shareholders. The balance of the unallocated surplus is determined after full provision for deferred tax on unrealised appreciation on investments.

Other insurance contracts (i.e. contracts which contain significant insurance risk as defined under IFRS 4)

For these contracts UK GAAP has been applied, which reflects the MSB. Under this basis the following approach applies:

Other UK insurance contracts

Other UK insurance contracts that contain significant insurance risk include unit-linked, annuity and other non-profit business. For the purposes of local regulations, segregated accounts are established for linked business for which policyholder benefits are wholly or partly determined by reference to specific investments or to an investment-related index. The interest rates used in establishing policyholder benefit provisions for pension annuities in the course of payment are adjusted each year. Mortality rates used in establishing policyholder benefit provisions were based on published mortality tables adjusted to reflect actual experience.

Overseas subsidiaries

The assets and liabilities of insurance contracts of overseas subsidiaries are determined initially using local GAAP bases of accounting with subsequent adjustments where necessary to comply with the Group's accounting policies.

Jackson

The future policyholder benefit provisions for Jackson's conventional protection-type policies are determined using the net level premium method under US GAAP principles and assumptions as of the issue date as to mortality, interest, policy lapses and expenses plus provisions for adverse deviations. For non-conventional protection-type policies, the policyholder benefit provision included within policyholder liabilities in the consolidated balance sheet is the policyholder account balance.

For the business of Jackson, the determination of the expected emergence of margins, against which the amortisation profile of the DAC asset is established, is dependent on certain key assumptions. For single premium deferred annuity business, the key assumption is the expected long-term spread between the earned rate and the rate credited to policyholders. For variable annuity business, the key assumption is the expected long-term level of equity market returns which, for 2008 and 2007, was 8.4 per cent per annum implemented using a mean reversion methodology. These returns affect the level of future expected profits through their effects on fee income and the required level of provision for guaranteed minimum death benefit claims.

Jackson accounts for the majority of its investment portfolio on an available-for-sale basis (see investment policies above) whereby unrealised gains and losses are recognised directly in equity. As permitted by IFRS 4, Jackson has used shadow accounting. Under shadow accounting, to the extent that recognition of unrealised gains or losses on available-for-sale securities causes adjustments to the carrying value and amortisation patterns of DAC and deferred income, these adjustments are recognised directly in equity to be consistent with the treatment of the gains or losses on the securities.

Asian operations

Except for the operations in Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan, the future policyholder benefit provisions for Asian businesses are determined in accordance with methods prescribed by local GAAP adjusted to comply, where necessary, with UK GAAP. For the Hong Kong business, which is a branch of the PAC, and the Singapore and Malaysian operations the valuation principles and sensitivities to changes of assumptions of conventional with-profits and other protection-type policies are similar to those described above for equivalent products written by the UK operations.

For the operations in Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan, countries where local GAAP is not appropriate in the context of the previously applied MSB, accounting for insurance contracts is based on US GAAP. For these three operations the business written is primarily non-participating and linked business. The future policyholder benefit provisions for non-linked business are determined using the net level premium method, with an allowance for surrenders, maintenance and claim expenses. Rates of interest used in establishing the policyholder benefit provisions vary by operation depending on the circumstances attaching to each block of business. Where appropriate, liabilities for participating business for these three operations include provisions for the policyholders' interest in realised investment gains and other surpluses that have yet to be declared as bonuses.

Although the basis of valuation of Prudential's overseas operations is in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 1985 and ABI SORP, the valuation of policyholder benefit provisions for these businesses may differ from that determined on a UK MSB for UK operations with the same features.

Liability adequacy

The Group performs liability adequacy testing on its insurance provisions to ensure that the carrying amounts of provisions (less related DAC and present value of in-force business – see policy on business acquisitions and disposals) is sufficient to cover current estimates of future cash flows. When performing the liability adequacy test, the Group discounts all contractual cash flows and compares this amount to the carrying value of the liability. Any deficiency is immediately charged to the income statement.

Reinsurance

In the normal course of business, the Group seeks to reduce loss exposure by reinsuring certain levels of risk in various areas of exposure with other insurance companies or reinsurers. An asset or liability is recognised in the consolidated balance sheet representing premiums due to or payments due from reinsurers and the share of benefits and claims recoverable from reinsurers. The measurement of reinsurance assets is consistent with the measurement of the underlying direct insurance contracts.

Gains arising on the purchase of reinsurance contracts by Jackson are deferred and amortised over the contract duration. Any loss is recognised in the income statement immediately.

Investment contracts (contracts which do not contain significant insurance risk as defined under IFRS 4)

For investment contracts with discretionary participation features, the accounting basis is consistent with the accounting for similar with-profits insurance contracts. Other investment contracts are accounted for on a basis that reflects the hybrid nature of the arrangements whereby part is accounted for as a financial instrument under IAS 39 and the investment management service component is accounted for under IAS 18.

For those investment contracts in the US with fixed and guaranteed terms, the Group uses the amortised cost model to measure the liability. On contract inception, the liability is measured at fair value less incremental, directly attributable acquisition costs. Remeasurement at future reporting dates is on an amortised cost basis utilising an effective interest rate methodology whereby the interest rate utilised discounts to the net carrying amount of the financial liability.

Those investment contracts without fixed and guaranteed terms are designated at fair value through profit and loss. Fair value is based upon the fair value of the underlying assets of the fund. Where the contract includes a surrender option its carrying value is subject to a minimum carrying value equal to its surrender value.

c Other assets, liabilities, income and expenditure

Basis of consolidation

The Group consolidates those entities it is deemed to control. The degree of control is determined by the ability of the Group to govern the financial and operating policies of an entity in order to obtain benefits. Consideration is given to other factors such as potential voting rights.

The Group has consolidated some special purpose entities (SPEs), such as funds holding collateralised debt obligations (CDOs), where equity investors do not have the characteristics of a controlling financial interest or do not have sufficient equity at risk for the entity to finance its activities without additional subordinated financial support from other parties. These SPEs are consolidated because the Group is deemed to control them under IFRS.

The Group holds investments in internally and externally managed open-ended investment companies (OEICs) and unit trusts. The Group's percentage ownership levels in these entities can fluctuate from day to day according to changes in the Group's and third-party participation in the funds. In instances where the Group's ownership of internally managed funds declines marginally below 50 per cent and, based on historical analysis and future expectations the decline in ownership is expected to be temporary, the funds continue to be consolidated as subsidiaries under IAS 27.

Where the Group exercises significant influence or has the power to exercise significant influence over an entity, generally through ownership of 20 per cent or more of the entity's voting rights, but does not control the entity, then this is considered to be an investment in an associate. With the exception of those referred to below, the Group's investments in associates are recorded at the Group's share of the associates' net assets. The carrying value of investments in associates is adjusted each year for the Group's share of the entities' profit or loss. This does not apply to investments in associates held by the Group's insurance or investment funds including the venture capital business or mutual funds and unit trusts, which are carried at fair value through profit and loss.

The Group's investments in joint ventures are recognised using proportional consolidation whereby the Group's share of an entity's individual balances are combined line-by-line with similar items into the Group financial statements.

Other interests in entities, where significant influence is not exercised, are carried as investments at fair value through profit and loss.

The consolidated financial statements of the Group include the assets, liabilities and results of the Company and subsidiary undertakings in which Prudential has a controlling interest, using accounts drawn up to 31 December 2008 except where entities have non-coterminous year ends. In such cases, the information consolidated is based on the accounting period of these entities and is adjusted for material changes up to 31 December. Accordingly, the information consolidated is deemed to cover the same period for all entities throughout the Group. The results of subsidiaries are included in the financial statements from the date acquired to the effective date of disposal. All inter-company transactions are eliminated on consolidation. Results of asset management activities include those for managing internal funds.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A4: Significant accounting policies continued

Investment properties

Investments in leasehold and freehold properties not for occupation by the Group are carried at fair value, with changes in fair value included in the income statement. Properties are valued annually either by the Group's qualified surveyors or professional external valuers using the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) guidelines. The RICS guidelines apply separate assumptions to the value of the land, buildings and tenancy associated with each property. Each property is externally valued at least once every three years. The cost of additions and renovations is capitalised and considered when estimating fair value. Fair value is based on active market prices, adjusted, if necessary, for any difference in the nature, location or condition of the specific property. If this information is not available, the Group uses alternative valuation methods such as discounted cash flow projections or recent prices in less active markets.

Leases of investment property where the Group has substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership are classified as finance leases (leasehold property). Finance leases are capitalised at the lease's inception at the lower of the fair value of the leased property and the present value of the minimum lease payments. Where a lease has a contingent rent element, the rent is calculated in accordance with individual lease terms and charged as an expense as incurred.

Pension schemes

The Group operates a number of pension schemes around the world. The largest of these schemes is the PSPS, a defined benefit scheme. The Group also operates defined contribution schemes. Defined contribution schemes are schemes where the Company pays contributions into a fund and the Company has no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions should the assets of that fund be insufficient to pay the employee benefits relating to employee service in both current and prior periods. Defined benefit schemes are post-employment benefit plans that are not defined contribution schemes.

For the Group's defined benefit schemes, if the present value of the defined benefit obligation exceeds the fair value of the scheme assets, then a liability is recorded in the Group's balance sheet. By contrast, if the fair value of the assets exceeds the present value of the defined benefit obligation then the surplus will only be recognised if the nature of the arrangements under the Trust deed, and funding arrangements between the Trustee and the Company support the availability of refunds or recoverability through agreed reductions in future contributions. In addition, if there is a constructive obligation for the Company to pay deficit funding, this is also recognised.

The Group utilises the projected unit credit method to calculate the defined benefit obligation. Estimated future cash flows are then discounted at a high-quality corporate bond rate, adjusted to allow for the difference in duration between the bond index and the pension liabilities where appropriate, to determine its present value. These calculations are performed by independent actuaries.

The plan assets of the Group's pension schemes exclude several insurance contracts that have been issued by the Group. These assets are excluded from plan assets in determining the pension obligation recognised in the consolidated balance sheet.

The aggregate of the actuarially determined service costs of the currently employed personnel and the unwind of discount on liabilities at the start of the period, less the expected investment return on scheme assets at the start of the period, is charged to the income statement. Actuarial gains and losses as a result of changes in assumptions or experience variances are also charged or credited to the income statement.

Contributions to the Group's defined contribution schemes are expensed when due. Once paid, the Group has no further payment obligations. Any prepayments are reflected as an asset on the balance sheet.

Share-based payments

The Group offers share award and option plans for certain key employees and a Save As You Earn (SAYE) plan for all UK and certain overseas employees. The arrangements for distribution to employees of shares held in trust relating to share award plans and for entitlement to dividends depend upon the particular terms of each plan. Shares held in trust relating to these plans are conditionally gifted to employees.

The compensation expense charged to the income statement is primarily based upon the fair value of the options granted, the vesting period and the vesting conditions. The Group revises its estimate of the number of options likely to be exercised at each balance sheet date and adjusts the charge to the income statement accordingly. Where the share-based payment depends upon vesting outcomes attaching to market-based performance conditions, additional modelling is performed to estimate the fair value of the awards. No subsequent adjustment is then made to the fair value charge for awards that do not vest on account of these performance conditions not being met.

The Company has established trusts to facilitate the delivery of Prudential plc shares under employee incentive plans and savings-related share option schemes. None of the trusts that hold shares for employee incentive and savings plans continue to hold these shares once they are issued to employees. The cost to the Company of acquiring these treasury shares held in trusts is shown as a deduction from shareholders' equity.

Tax

The Group's UK subsidiaries each file separate tax returns. Jackson and other foreign subsidiaries, where permitted, file consolidated income tax returns. In accordance with UK tax legislation, where one domestic UK company is a 75 per cent owned subsidiary of another UK company or both are 75 per cent owned subsidiaries of a common parent, the companies are considered to be within the same UK tax group. For companies within the same tax group, trading profits and losses arising in the same accounting period may be offset for purposes of determining current and deferred taxes.

Current tax expense is charged or credited to operations based upon amounts estimated to be payable or recoverable as a result of taxable operations for the current year. To the extent that losses of an individual UK company are not offset in any one year, they can be carried back for one year or carried forward indefinitely to be offset against profits arising from the same company.

Deferred taxes are provided under the liability method for all relevant temporary differences, being the difference between the carrying amount of an asset or liability in the balance sheet and its value for tax purposes. IAS 12, 'Income Taxes' does not require all temporary differences to be provided for, in particular, the Group does not provide for deferred tax on undistributed earnings of subsidiaries where the Group is able to control the timing of the distribution and the temporary difference created is not expected to reverse in the foreseeable future. The tax effects of losses available for carry forward are recognised as an asset. Deferred tax assets are only recognised when it is probable that future taxable profits will be available against which these losses can be utilised. Deferred tax related to charges or credits taken directly to equity is also credited or charged directly to equity and is subsequently recognised in the income statement together with the deferred gain or loss.

The tax charge for long-term business includes tax expense on with-profits funds attributable to both the policyholders and the shareholders. Different tax rules apply under UK law depending upon whether the business is life insurance or pension business. Tax on the life insurance business is based on investment returns less expenses attributable to that business. Tax on the pension business is based on the shareholders' profits or losses attributable to that business. The shareholders' portion of the long-term business is taxed at the shareholders' rate with the remaining portion taxed at rates applicable to the policyholders.

Basis of presentation of tax charges

Tax charges in the income statement reflect the aggregate of the shareholder tax on the long-term business result and on the Group's other results.

Under UK Listing Authority rules, profit before tax is required to be presented. This requirement, coupled with the fact that IFRS does not contemplate tax charges which are attributable to policyholders and unallocated surplus of with-profits funds and unit-linked policies, necessitates the reporting of total tax charges within the presented results. The result before all taxes (i.e. 'profit before tax' as shown in the income statement) represents income net of post-tax transfers to unallocated surplus of with-profits funds, before tax attributable to policyholders and unallocated surplus of with-profits funds, unit-linked policies and shareholders. Separately within the income statement, 'profit before tax attributable to shareholders' is shown after deduction of taxes attributable to policyholders and unallocated surplus of with-profits funds and unit-linked policies. Tax charges on this measure of profit reflect the tax charges attributable to shareholders. In determining the tax charges attributable to shareholders, the Group has applied a methodology consistent with that previously applied under UK GAAP reflecting the broad principles underlying the tax legislation of life assurance companies.

Property, plant and equipment

All property, plant and equipment such as owner occupied property, computer equipment and furniture and fixtures, are carried at depreciated cost. Costs including expenditure directly attributable to the acquisition of the assets are capitalised. Depreciation is calculated and charged on a straight-line basis over an asset's estimated useful life. The residual values and useful lives are reviewed at each balance sheet date. If the carrying amount of an asset is greater than its recoverable amount then its carrying value is written down to that recoverable amount.

Leasehold improvements to owner occupied property are depreciated over the life of the lease. Assets held under finance leases are capitalised at their fair value.

Business acquisitions and disposals

Business acquisitions are accounted for by applying the purchase method of accounting, which adjusts the net assets of the acquired company to fair value at the date of purchase. The excess of the costs of acquisition over the fair value of the assets and liabilities of the acquired entity is recorded as goodwill. Should the fair value of the identifiable assets and liabilities of the entity exceed the cost of acquisition then this amount is recognised immediately in the income statement. Income and expenses of acquired entities are included in the income statement from the date of acquisition. Revenues and expenses of entities sold during the period are included in the income statement up to the date of disposal. The gain or loss on disposal is calculated as the difference between sale proceeds, net of selling costs, less the net assets of the entity at the date of disposal.

For life insurance company acquisitions, the adjusted net assets include an identifiable intangible asset for the present value of in-force business which represents the profits that are expected to emerge from the acquired insurance business. The present value of in-force business is calculated using best estimate actuarial assumptions for interest, mortality, persistency and expenses and is amortised over the anticipated lives of the related contracts in the portfolio. An intangible asset may also be recognised in respect of acquired investment management contracts representing the fair value of contractual rights acquired under these contracts.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A4: Significant accounting policies continued

The Company uses the economic entity method to purchase minority interests. Under the economic entity method any difference between consideration and the share of net assets acquired is recorded directly in equity.

Goodwill

Goodwill arising on acquisitions of subsidiaries and businesses is capitalised and carried on the Group balance sheet as an intangible asset at initial value less any accumulated impairment losses. Goodwill impairment testing is conducted annually and when there is an indication of impairment. For the purposes of impairment testing, goodwill is allocated to cash generating units. These cash generating units reflect the smallest group of assets that includes the goodwill and generates cash flows that are largely independent of the cash inflows from other groups of assets. If the carrying amount of the cash generating unit exceeds its recoverable amount then the goodwill is considered impaired. Impairment losses are recognised immediately in the income statement and may not be reversed in future periods.

Acquired intangible assets

Intangible assets acquired on the purchase of a subsidiary or portfolio of contracts are valued at acquisition and carried at cost less amortisation and any accumulated impairment losses. Amortisation calculated is charged on a straight-line basis over the estimated useful life of the assets. The residual values and useful lives are reviewed at each balance sheet date.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents consist of cash at bank and in hand, deposits held at call with banks, treasury bills and other short-term highly liquid investments with less than 90 days maturity from the date of acquisition.

Rights of offset

Assets and liabilities in the consolidated financial statements are only reported on a net basis when there is a legally enforceable right to offset and there is an intention to settle on a net basis.

Segments

In accordance with IAS 14, 'Segment Reporting' the Group reports its results and certain other financial information by primary and secondary segments. The Group's primary segments are its business segments, namely, insurance operations and asset management. The Group's secondary segments are its geographical segments, namely, UK, US and Asia.

Shareholders' dividends

Dividends to shareholders are recognised as a liability in the period in which they are declared. Where scrip dividends are issued, the value of such shares, measured as the amount of the cash dividend alternative, is credited to reserves and the amount in excess of the nominal value of the shares issued is transferred from the share premium account to retained earnings.

Share capital

Where there is no obligation to transfer assets, shares are classified as equity. The difference between the proceeds received on issue of the shares, net of share issue costs, and the nominal value of the shares issued, is credited to share premium. Where the Company purchases shares for the purposes of employee incentive plans, the consideration paid, net of issue costs, is deducted from retained earnings. Upon issue or sale any consideration received is credited to retained earnings net of related costs.

Foreign exchange

The Group's consolidated financial statements are presented in pounds sterling, the Group's presentation currency. Accordingly, the results and financial position of foreign subsidiaries must be translated into the presentation currency of the Group from their functional currencies, i.e. the currency of the primary economic environment in which the entity operates. All assets and liabilities of foreign subsidiaries are converted at year end exchange rates whilst all income and expenses are converted at average exchange rates where this is a reasonable approximation of the rates prevailing on transaction dates. The impact of these currency translations is recorded as a separate component of equity.

Foreign currency borrowings that have been used to provide a hedge against Group equity investments in overseas subsidiaries are translated at year end exchange rates and movements taken directly to shareholders' equity. Other foreign currency monetary items are translated at year end exchange rates with changes recognised in the income statement. Foreign currency transactions are translated at the spot rate prevailing at the time.

d Presentation of supplementary analysis of profit before tax attributable to shareholders

The Group provides supplementary analysis of profit before tax attributable to shareholders that distinguishes operating profit based on longer-term investment returns from other constituent elements of the total profit.

Operating profit based on longer-term investment returns

The Group continues to use operating profit based on longer-term investment returns as a supplemental measure of its results. For the purposes of measuring operating profit, investment returns on shareholder-financed business are based on the expected longer-term rates of return. This reflects the particular features of long-term insurance business where assets and liabilities are held for the long term and for which the accounting basis for insurance liabilities under current IFRS is not generally conducive to demonstrating trends in underlying performance for life businesses exclusive of changes in market conditions. In determining profit on this basis the following key elements are applied to the results of the Group's shareholder-financed operations.

i Debt and equity securities

Longer-term investment returns comprise income and longer-term capital returns. For debt securities the longer-term capital returns comprise two elements. These are a risk margin reserve (RMR) based charge for expected defaults, which is determined by reference to the credit quality of the portfolio, and amortisation of interest-related realised gains and losses to operating results based on longer-term investment returns to the date when sold bonds would have otherwise matured. The shareholder-backed operation for which the risk margin reserve charge is most significant is Jackson National Life. The RMR charge for Jackson is based on long-term average default and recovery data as published by Moody's. Note B1 provides further detail.

Longer-term equity returns comprise aggregate long-term income and capital returns.

ii Derivative value movements

Value movements for Jackson's equity-based derivatives and variable annuity product embedded derivatives are included in operating profits based on longer-term investment returns. The inclusion of these movements is so as to broadly match with the results on the Jackson variable annuity book that pertain to equity market movements.

Other derivative value movements are excluded from operating results based on longer-term investment returns. These derivatives are primarily held by Jackson as part of a broadly-based hedging programme for features of Jackson's bond portfolio (for which value movements are booked directly to shareholders' equity rather than income statement) and product liabilities (for which US GAAP accounting does not reflect the economic features being hedged).

These key elements are of most importance in determining the operating results based on longer-term investment returns of Jackson.

There are two exceptions to the basis described above for determining operating results based on longer-term investment returns. These are for:

- Unit-linked and US variable annuity business.

For such business the policyholder liabilities are directly reflective of the asset value movements. Accordingly, all asset value movements are recorded in the operating results based on longer-term investment returns.

- Assets covering non-participating business liabilities that are interest rate sensitive.

For UK annuity business policyholder liabilities are determined by reference to current interest rates. The value movements of the assets covering liabilities are closely correlated with the related change in liabilities. Accordingly, asset value movements are recorded within the operating results based on longer-term investment returns. Policyholder liabilities include a margin for asset defaults which, if they occur, are recorded as a component of short-term fluctuations in investment returns.

iii Liabilities to policyholders and embedded derivatives for product guarantees

Under IFRS, the degree to which the carrying values of liabilities to policyholders are sensitive to current market conditions varies between territories depending upon the nature of the 'grandfathered' measurement basis. In general, in those instances where the liabilities are particularly sensitive to routine changes in market conditions, the accounting basis is such that the impact of market movements on the assets and liabilities are broadly equivalent in the income statement, and operating profit based on longer-term investment returns is not distorted. In these circumstances there is no need for the movement in the liability to be bifurcated between the element that relates to longer-term market conditions and short-term effects.

However, some types of business movements in liabilities do require bifurcation to ensure that at the net level (i.e. after allocated investment returns and change for policyholder benefits) the operating result reflects longer-term market returns.

Examples where such bifurcation is necessary are:

a Asia

Vietnamese participating business

For the participating business in Vietnam the liabilities include policyholders' interest in investment appreciation and other surplus. Bonuses paid in a reporting period and accrued policyholder interest in investment appreciation and other surpluses primarily reflect the level of realised investment gains above contract specific hurdle levels. For this business operating profit

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A4: Significant accounting policies continued

based on longer-term investment returns includes the aggregate of longer-term returns on the relevant investments, a credit or charge equal to movements on the liability for the policyholders' interest in realised investment gains (net of any recovery of prior deficits on the participating pool), less amortisation over five years of current and prior movements on such credits or charges.

The overall purpose of these adjustments is to ensure that investment returns included in operating results equal longer-term returns but that in any one reporting period movements on liabilities to policyholders caused by investment returns are substantially matched in the presentation of the supplementary analysis of profit before tax attributable to policyholders.

Non-participating business

Bifurcation for the effect of determining the movement in the carrying value of liabilities to be included in operating results based on longer-term investment returns, and the residual element for the effect of using year end rates in the balance sheet.

Guaranteed Minimum Death Benefit (GMDB) product features

For unhedged GMDB liabilities accounted for under IFRS using 'grandfathered' US GAAP, such as in the Japanese business, the change in carrying value is determined under SOP 03-01, which partially reflects changes in market conditions. Under the company's supplementary basis of reporting the operating profit reflects the change in liability based on longer-term market conditions with the difference between the charge to the operating result and the movement reflected in the total result included in short-term fluctuations in investment returns.

b US operations – embedded derivatives for variable annuity guarantee features

Under IFRS, the Guaranteed Minimum Withdrawal Benefit (GMWB) and Guaranteed Minimum Income Benefit (GMIB) reinsurance are required to be fair valued as embedded derivatives. The movements in carrying values are affected by changes in the level of observed implied equity volatility and changes to the discount rate applied from period to period. For these embedded derivatives, as described in note D3(i), the discount rate applied reflects AA corporate bond curve rates. For the purposes of determining operating profit based on longer-term investment returns the charge for these features is determined using historical longer-term equity volatility levels and long-term average AA corporate bond rate curves.

c UK shareholder-backed annuity business

With one exception, the operating result based on longer-term investment returns reflects the impact of all value movements on policyholder liabilities for annuity business in PRIL and the PAC non-profit sub-fund.

The exception is for the impact on credit risk provisioning of actual downgrades during the year. As this feature arises due to short-term market conditions the effect on the altered valuation rate of interest is included in the category of short-term fluctuations in investment returns as shown in note B1.

The effects of other changes to credit risk provisioning including the introduction of the short-term allowance for credit risk described in note D2(g) and D2(i) are included in the operating result, as in the net effect of changes to the valuation rate of interest applied to portfolio rebalancing to align more closely with management benchmark.

iv Fund management and other non-insurance businesses

For these businesses, where the business model is more conventional than for life assurance, it is inappropriate to include returns in the operating result on the basis described above. Instead it is appropriate to generally include realised gains and losses (including impairments) in the operating result with unrealised gains and losses being included in short-term fluctuations. In some instances it may also be appropriate to amortise realised gains and losses on derivatives and other financial instruments to operating results over a time period that reflects the underlying substance of the arrangements.

A5: New accounting pronouncements

The following standards, interpretations and amendments have either been effective and adopted in 2008 or have been issued but are not yet effective in 2008, including those which have not yet been adopted in the EU. This is not intended to be a complete list as only those standards, interpretations and amendments that are anticipated to have an impact upon the Group's financial statements have been discussed.

Accounting pronouncements adopted in 2008

IFRIC 14, IAS 19 - The Limit on a Defined Benefit Asset, Minimum Funding Requirements and their Interaction'

IFRIC 14 provides guidance on assessing the limit in IAS 19 on the amount of the surplus that can be recognised as an asset and clarifies the impact of minimum funding requirements on such assets. It also addresses when a minimum funding requirement might give rise to a liability. IFRIC 14 was adopted by the EU in December 2008 and is effective for accounting periods beginning after 31 December 2008.

The Group early adopted IFRIC 14 for its accounting period ended 31 December 2008. As a result of the adoption of this interpretation, in respect of the position at 31 December 2008, the Group has not recognised the underlying PSPS pension surplus, reflecting the difference between the market value of the scheme assets and the discounted value of the liabilities, which would have otherwise been recognised as an asset on its balance sheet under the previous policy. In addition, the Group has recognised a liability for deficit funding to 5 April 2010 in respect of PSPS.

Further details on the impact of adoption are provided in note I1. The 2007 comparatives have been adjusted accordingly for the adoption of IFRIC 14.

Reclassification of Financial Assets: Amendments to IAS 39, 'Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement' and IFRS 7, 'Financial Instruments: Disclosures'

In October 2008, the IASB issued these amendments to IAS 39 and IFRS 7. The amendments to IAS 39 permit the reclassification of certain 'held for trading' (at fair value through profit and loss but not those voluntarily designated as at fair value through profit and loss under the fair value option) and 'available-for-sale' financial assets into the 'loans and receivables' category carried at amortised cost if specific conditions are met as follows:

- 'Held for trading' financial assets are permitted to be reclassified into the 'loans and receivables' category in only rare circumstances or where the 'held for trading' financial assets would have met the definition of 'loans and receivables' if they had not been required to be classified as 'held for trading' at initial recognition and the entity has the intent and ability to hold it for the foreseeable future or until maturity;
- 'Available-for-sale' financial assets are permitted to be reclassified into the 'loans and receivables' category if they would have met the definition of 'loans and receivables' if they had not been designated as 'available-for-sale' and the entity has the intent and ability to hold the asset for the foreseeable future or until maturity; and
- 'Fair value through profit and loss' financial assets are permitted to be reclassified into the 'available-for-sale' category.

The amendments to IFRS 7 result in additional disclosures in accordance with the amendments to IAS 39.

The amendments to IAS 39 and IFRS 7 are effective 1 July 2008 applied on a prospective basis from the date of reclassification. Any reclassification made on or after 1 November 2008 takes effect from the date of the reclassification. Any reclassification made before 1 November 2008 can take effect from 1 July 2008 or a subsequent date.

The adoption of these amendments did not have an impact on the financial statements of the Group as the Group has not reclassified any non-derivative financial assets as permitted by the amendments.

Accounting pronouncements not yet effective

IFRS 8, 'Operating Segments'

IFRS 8 requires entities to adopt the 'management approach' to reporting the financial performance of its operating segments similar to the requirements under the US standard SFAS 131, 'Disclosures about Segments of an Enterprise and Related Information'. The amount of each operating segment item to be reported is the measure reported to the chief operating decision maker, which in some instances will be non-GAAP. IFRS 8 will require the Group to provide an explanation of the basis on which the segment information is prepared and a reconciliation to the amount recognised in the Group's consolidated financial statements. This standard is effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2009. The Group is currently assessing the impact of these amendments on its financial statements.

Amendments to IAS 1, 'Presentation of Financial Statements: A Revised Presentation'

The revised version of IAS 1 is aimed at improving users' ability to analyse and compare the information given in the financial statements.

The changes require information in financial statements to be aggregated on the basis of shared characteristics and introduce a statement of comprehensive income. The revisions also include changes to the titles of some of the financial statements to reflect their functions more clearly: for example the balance sheet is renamed a statement of financial position, though the new titles are not mandatory. This revised standard is effective for IASB compliant financial statements for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2009. The Group is currently assessing the impact of these amendments on its financial statements.

Amendment to IFRS 2, 'Share-based Payment: Vesting Conditions and Cancellations'

The amendment to IFRS 2 clarifies that vesting conditions are service conditions and performance conditions only. Other features of a share-based payment are not vesting conditions. It also specifies that all cancellations, whether by the entity or by other parties, should receive the same accounting treatment. This amendment is effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2009. The Group is currently assessing the impact of this amendment but it is not expected to have a material impact on the financial statements of the Group.

Notes on the Group financial statements

A: Background and accounting policies

continued

A5: New accounting pronouncements continued

Revised IFRS 3, 'Business Combinations' and Amendments to IAS 27, 'Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements'

The revised IFRS 3 and amended IAS 27 are the outcomes of the second phase of the IASB's and the US Financial Accounting Standards Board's (FASB) joint business combination project. The more significant changes from the revised IFRS 3 include:

- The immediate expensing of acquisition-related costs rather than inclusion in goodwill; and
- recognition and measurement at fair value of contingent consideration at acquisition date with subsequent changes to income.

The amendments to IAS 27 reflect changes to the accounting for non-controlling (minority) interests.

The revised IFRS 3 and amended IAS 27 are effective for business combinations occurring in the accounting period beginning on or after 1 July 2009.

Amendments to IAS 32, 'Financial instruments: Presentation' and IAS 1, 'Presentation of financial statements' - Puttable Financial Instruments and Obligations Arising on Liquidation

The amendments to IAS 32 and IAS 1 requires entities to classify puttable financial instruments and instruments, or components of instruments, that impose on the entity an obligation to deliver to another party a pro rata share of the net assets of the entity only on liquidation as equity, provided the financial instruments have particular features and meet specific conditions. The amendments may have the effect of altering the accounting for external fund holder investments in consolidated funds from minority interests to liabilities. These amendments also have consequential amendments to IFRS 7 and IAS 39.

These amendments are effective for IASB compliant financial statements for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2009. The Group is currently assessing the impact of these amendments on its financial statements.

Amendment to IAS 39, 'Financial instruments: Recognition and Measurement' - Eligible Hedged Items

This amendment to IAS 39 clarifies how the principles that determine whether a hedged risk or portion of cash flows is eligible for designation should be applied in particular situations. This amendment is effective for IASB compliant financial statements for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 July 2009. The Group is currently assessing the impact of this amendment but it is not expected to have a material impact on the financial statements of the Group.

Improvements to IFRSs

In May 2008, the IASB published amendments to a number of standards as part of its annual improvements projects. These amendments are effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2009. The Group is currently assessing the impact of these improvements to its financial statements.

IFRIC 16, 'Hedges of a net investment in a foreign operation'

This interpretation clarifies the accounting treatment in respect of net investment hedging. This includes the fact that net investment hedging relates to differences in functional currency not presentation currency, and hedging instruments may be held anywhere in the Group. This interpretation is effective for IASB compliant financial statements for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 October 2008.

The Group is currently assessing the impact of this interpretation but it is not expected to have a material impact on the financial statements of the Group.

Improving Disclosures about Financial Instruments (Amendments to IFRS 7)

On 5 March 2009, the IASB issued amendments to IFRS 7 which require enhanced disclosures about fair value measurements and liquidity risk. The amendments include the introduction of a three-level hierarchy for fair value measurement disclosures and require additional disclosures about the relative reliability of fair value measurements.

These amendments are effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2009. However, an entity will not be required to provide comparative disclosures in the first year of application. The Group is currently assessing the impact of these amendments on the financial statements of the Group.

Apart from IFRS 8, the Amendments to IAS 1 and the Amendment to IFRS 2, all of the other aforementioned pronouncements have not been adopted for use in the EU at 31 December 2008. Subsequent to the 31 December 2008, the improvements to IFRSs and the amendments to IAS 32 and IAS 1 have also been adopted for use in the EU.