





## FINANCIAL REVIEW



We present the unaudited financial results of the Group for the six months ended 30 June 2023.

## Economic highlights

Foreign exchange demand and supply imbalances persisted in the first half of the year, resulting into a 2.36% cumulative depreciation of the Kwacha by the close of June. As a result, the Kwacha closed the first half at MK1,058.8 against the United States dollar compared to MK1,033.4 at the end of June 2022. Cost pressures on food, utilities tariffs and the weak local currency weighed significantly on headline inflation which closed the period at 27.3% from 23.5% in June 2022. Consequently, the Policy rate was raised from 18% to 22% in April 2023, which triggered increases in the Reference rate and commercial banks Base lending rates. In addition, the liquidity reserve requirement (LRR) for local currency deposits was adjusted upwards from 3.75% to 5.75%.

## Performance

The Group's results demonstrated its resilience as it continued to operate in a challenging environment characterized by foreign currency demand and supply imbalances and inflationary pressures. Despite the underlying challenges, the Group grew its revenues, managed costs growth below inflationary levels and grew its balance sheet supported by a strong funding base which in turn resulted in higher profitability.

The Group's profit after tax of MK26.9 billion was 70% above prior year. Total revenue grew by 56% year on year driven by growth in both net interest income and non-interest revenue. Net interest income grew by 71% year on year driven by growth in loans and advances to customers and financial investments which both grew by 26% and 29% year on year respectively. The growth in interest earning assets was as a result of growth in deposits from customers which also grew by 41% year on year.

Non-interest revenue grew by 38% year on year. Net fees and commissions grew by 20% year on year driven by increase in transaction volumes despite reduction in pricing of selected fees and commissions. Trading revenue grew by 51% year on year anchored by an increase in trading volumes.

Credit impairments were significantly up on prior year due to growth in the performing customer loan book as well as financial investments which resulted in increase of performing related credit impairments. In addition, credit impairments also grew as a result of deteriorating macroeconomic factors which led to increase in forward looking credit impairment charges as well as downgrades on some non-performing customer loan balances. The Group will continue its efforts to recover previously written off loans as well as focus on prudent risk taking and management.

Operating costs were 15% up on prior year impacted by increase in prices of goods and services as well as increase in staff costs emanating from annual remuneration adjustment. The Group's continued focus on cost and process optimisation initiatives led to a lower than inflation cost growth. As a result of higher revenue base and lower cost growth, the cost to income ratio reduced from 50% in prior year to 37% in the current year.

Earnings per share for the half year increased from MK67.57 in 2022 to MK115.05 in 2023.

## Outlook

The operating environment is expected to remain challenging in the second half of the year given the persistent inflationary pressures emanating from high food prices, utility tariff increases and tight foreign exchange supply conditions. A new Extended Credit Facility programme with the International Monetary Fund before the end of the year could bring about currency stability and foster business confidence.

## Dividend

The directors resolved not to pay an interim dividend for the half year ended 30 June 2023. In arriving at this decision, the directors have considered the expected continued currency depreciation emanating from the foreign exchange auctions and the deteriorating macroeconomic factors which will trigger further forward looking credit impairment charges. The directors will continue to review the prevailing and expected market conditions and declare a dividend once macroeconomic conditions improve. A first interim dividend of MK21.31 per ordinary share representing MK5 billion was paid in prior year.

By order of the Board.

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE	DATE
1. C Kapanga	Chairperson		04 August 2023
2. A Mkandawire	Director		04 August 2023
3. P Madinga	Chief Executive		04 August 2023
4. J Mhone	Chief Financial and Value Management Officer		04 August 2023