



An umbrella fund with segregated liability between sub-funds

Registration number C142346

COMMENTARY – THIRD QUARTER 2021

Global equity markets slowed their strong performance streak of the past few quarters; for the three-month period ending September 30, 2021, the MSCI World and ACWI Indices returned 0.09% and -0.95% respectively, while the Polaris Global Value UCITS Fund returned -0.90%. Markets rotated in favor of value stocks midway through the year, only to revert back to a growth bias in June, July and August, as the COVID-19 Delta variant raged on. By September, vaccination rates rose, while the global economy continued to reopen in fits and starts – evidence of which was noted in everything from manufacturing to travel to the classrooms. The prospect of rising interest rates and higher commodity prices followed, both of which should bode well for cyclical value stocks.

THIRD QUARTER 2021 PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

While markets tilted towards value stocks in September, performance from high-growth oriented companies still dominated the index for the majority of the quarter, led by information technology (IT) and healthcare; the portfolio was underweight and underperformed in these sectors. The portfolio outperformed in traditional value sectors, including financials, industrials and materials, which comprise almost half of the portfolio. From a country perspective, around half of the portfolio is in the U.S. and U.K. where we outperformed. However, this was offset by underperformance in Ireland, South Korea, Austria, Italy and the Nordic region.

Half of the top 10 portfolio contributors hailed from the financials sector, many of which rose on the expectation of higher interest rates in 2022. In the U.S., Capital One Financial and JP Morgan Chase noted robust credit quality across their consumer and corporate portfolios, with abnormally low credit charge-offs. This positive metric overrode an undercurrent of lackluster loan growth. Elsewhere around the world, Siam Commercial Bank was up more than 19% after the company converted into a holding company, with the bank separated from its fintech subsidiaries. This structure allows the company's higher growth fintech businesses to be more flexible and nimble, less affected by banking regulations. Macroeconomic recovery in Colombia boosted the share price of its dominant banking institution, Bancolombia, which also caters to other Latin America jurisdictions. The main profitability drivers for the next few quarters will be loan growth and net interest margin expansion. One caveat: provisions may increase as Panama ends its moratorium, but Bancolombia is well positioned to absorb these losses without detriment. In Switzerland, Chubb advanced nearly 10% after experiencing fewer catastrophic loss claims, while increasing premiums. Another boon for the company: a number of pandemic claims have been challenged in the lower courts, most of which have been dismissed in favor of the insurers. Lastly, Chubb announced a \$5 billion buyback on top of the \$2.5 billion already on the books; investors approved of this latest program.

Substantial gains from Canadian methanol producer, Methanex Corp., counterbalanced losses elsewhere in the materials sector. Methanol prices rose nearly 10% from last quarter, an outcome of supply/demand constraints. Methanex was a prime beneficiary, even though one of its own plants in New Zealand contributed to the supply shortage. The company also announced the expansion of their Geismar 3 project in Louisiana, pointing to constructive economics assuming higher methanol prices. Even with the plant expansion, Methanex put together a share buyback of 5% of the company, indicating that the company is well capitalized. By contrast, HeidelbergCement and Lundin Mining Corp. declined. Copper producer Lundin Mining cited decent production with slightly better cost performance and a strengthening balance sheet. However, the company reduced guidance for its Candelaria copper-gold mine in Chile on lower throughput and grade dilution assumptions related to processing issues that we believe will be resolved.

Consumer staples was led by Tyson Foods and Greencore Group. Greencore offered a markedly improved trading update, as the U.K. economy reopened and mobility restrictions eased. The company pointed to growth in food-to-go and convenience categories, new business wins and late-stage development of an eco-friendly sandwich skillet. Tyson Foods reported improved sales and earnings for the three months ending July 3, 2021 on the back of higher beef, pork and chicken volumes. Demand from the restaurant industry, in combination with fewer COVID-19 production inefficiencies, bolstered chicken and prepared food sales. Strong beef prices were the highlight of the quarter. Sector results were tarnished by declines at KT&G Corp and Coca-Cola Europacific Partners (CCEP). Management at CCEP indicated that revenue per case was above pre-pandemic levels. Sales and revenues are predicted to be even greater in 2022, with the acquisition of Coca-Cola Amatil, adding a footprint in the Asia-Pacific region, specifically Australia and Indonesia. Yet concerns about inflation on key items such as packaging, transportation and sweeteners weighed on investor sentiment. Commodity inflation is expected to be in the mid to high single digits even with hedging; the company intends to pass on most of these costs as price increases in 2022.

Daito Trust Construction Co., the sole real estate holding in the portfolio, had an 8% gain during the quarter. We purchased the Japanese construction and real estate company in the first quarter of 2021 at a discount, when face-to-face sales lagged due to COVID-19; the company continued to encounter headwinds in the second quarter. We were vindicated in our timing, as Daito Trust recovered by the end of September on the back of decent new order numbers and higher real estate rental housing occupancy. Additionally, Japan has seen new COVID cases subsiding rapidly, with close to 68% of its population having received at least one dose of the vaccine, which should spur resumption of normal business operations.

Crocs Inc. boosted results in the consumer discretionary sector. Up more than 23% during the quarter, Crocs posted record revenues that beat the highest estimates and raised its full year forecast despite supply disruptions. Revenue growth was strong in all regions especially the Americas; the company continued to capitalize on the work-from-home trend where comfortable footwear is the norm. Sony Group Corp. added to sector returns, as the Japanese company announced resilient quarterly results across all divisions (TVs, cameras, sensor imaging) and revised up full-year guidance. Additionally, Sony is anticipating record sales of its PlayStation 5, while also introducing five blockbuster video games in 2022. Conversely, Magna International, a Canadian auto parts supplier, declined more than 18% during the quarter. The company announced a bid for Veoneer; investors questioned the rational for a transaction that will be dilutive to earnings in the short-term. Subsequently, they were outbid by a \$4.2 billion offer from Qualcomm. Magna also revised down 2022 North American auto production due to recent semiconductor chip shortages. However, we believe this disruption to be temporary and that lost production volumes will likely be recouped. Concerns about semiconductor shortages and elevated raw material costs also weighed on South Korea's Kia Corp. and Hyundai Mobis.

Among other noteworthy stocks, U.K.-based Babcock International Group bounced back after its fiscal year earnings announcement, up more than 25%. The company negated the need for an equity raise, while pointing to improved sales and growth prospects with a healthy pipeline of naval export contracts to Ukraine, Greece, Indonesia and Poland. Babcock set the expectation for higher margins, based on a post COVID-19 workforce recovery and proactive cost-cutting measures. In contrast, Jazz Pharmaceuticals declined more than 26%, making it one of the worst portfolio performers for the quarter. The Irish company launched Xywav in 2020, and has outperformed estimates for four consecutive quarters. A "product of its own success", Jazz now faces near-term competition from authorized generics ahead of the slated 2023 timeframe. The market is interpreting this news as an intellectual property threat to Jazz's oxybate franchise; however, we view this as a positive as recent surveys suggest most patients prefer Jazz's Xywav formulation over the generic version.

Solid results from Brother Industries could not offset IT sector losses attributable to SK Hynix and Samsung Electronics. Brother Industries was up approximately 12% after posting results that exceeded very conservative estimates. Work-from-home trends spurred on consumers to purchase new printers and ink supplies; Brother took advantage of the current demand trends, raising average selling prices. Additionally, its industrial machinery division order book has picked up. SK Hynix posted quarterly profits that beat analyst estimates and gave a bullish outlook for the rest of the year. Strong memory chip demand is projected through the end of 2021 on data center build-outs and the use of more sophisticated chips in mobile devices. Samsung reported a 73% year-on-year jump in second quarter 2021 net profit as demand for electronics prolonged a global chip shortage. Yet investors are concerned that memory chip demand may flag if a global shortage of processing and other

microchips continues, curtailing production of other revenue drivers. This weighed down the stock price of both Korean companies, which are the world's largest two memory chipmakers.

During the quarter, the portfolio exited U.S. regional bank, Ameris Bancorp, Germany's diversified chemical company, Lanxess AG, and Finnish pulp machinery maker Valmet as each met or exceeded Polaris' valuation targets. Verizon Communications was also sold to make room for LG Electronics (LGE). LGE, a global leader in home appliances, continues to take market share from existing global powerhouses such as Whirlpool and Electrolux. Another new buy, Discovery Inc. is a content developer and distributor in the U.S. with differentiated product offerings. Discovery's merger with Warner Media will give it the scale to compete with larger peers. Alrosa PJSC, a low-cost producer of rough diamonds, was purchased on favorable supply/demand constraints, as well as appealing fundamentals (healthy balance sheet, dividend yields greater than 10% and aggressive free cash flow payout structure). The industry is a duopoly with Alrosa and De Beers controlling two thirds of the rough diamond market.

INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGY

We are cautiously optimistic about the global economy, challenges notwithstanding. Ongoing waves of COVID-19 may cause headwinds, but we believe that rising vaccination rates should dull the impact. People are returning to the workforce, which should ease the supply chain bottlenecks currently faced. In the interim, supply/demand constraints will continue to tax companies reliant on raw materials; the winners will be materials, industrials, chemicals and oil refiners that can charge higher commodity prices. We remain overweight in these sectors, with many companies in our portfolio able to leverage this short-term demand. Our bottom-up stock research continues to identify a number of potential investment opportunities across myriad sectors; we anticipate adding a handful of fundamentally sound, attractively-priced companies in the coming months. Such efforts are expected to enhance the valuation, risk profile, and ultimately performance, of the global portfolio.

Directors: Bernard R. Horn, Jr. (American); Kathleen Jacobs (American); Jason Crawshaw (American); Neil Clifford; Frank Kenny.

Registered Office: George's Quay House, 43 Townsend Street, Dublin 2, Ireland

FOOTNOTES: The information presented is supplemental. It should not be considered as a recommendation to purchase or sell a particular security mentioned, may change at any time and may not represent current or future investments. References to individual securities throughout this document are intended to illustrate contributors to recent performance or market trends and to provide examples of thematic or security-specific catalysts identified by the investment team as part of its investment process. References to specific securities should not be viewed as representative of an entire portfolio, nor should the performance of any particular security be viewed as representative of the performance experienced by any other security or portfolio. Past performance is not indicative of future results. The MSCI World Index, gross dividends reinvested, measures the performance of a diverse range of global stock markets in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the Far East. The MSCI ACWI Index, gross dividends reinvested, captures large- and mid-cap representation across 23 developed markets and 26 emerging markets countries. One cannot invest directly in an index.