

Risk Factors ►►

The business, financial condition and results of operations of the Group are subject to various business risks and uncertainties. The factors set out below are those that the Group believes could result in the financial condition of the Group or results of operations differing materially from expected or historical results. There may be other risks in addition to those shown below which are not known to the Group or which may not be material now but could turn out to be material in the future.

Market Economy

We operate principally in Hong Kong and Macau. As a result, the financial condition of the Group and results of operations may be influenced by the general state of a local market or economy in the region. Any significant or protracted worsening of the present financial and economic climate within Hong Kong, Macau, and/or other areas, could result in a change to customer spending or usage behaviour, which could have an adverse impact on the business, results of operations and financial performance of the Group.

Highly-competitive Market

The Group faces significant competition. Aggressive tariff plans and customer acquisition strategies adopted by competitors may impact on our pricing plans, customer acquisition and retention costs, rate of customer growth and retention prospects - hence, the service revenue the Group receives as a major provider of telecommunications services. Risk of competition from alternative sources of telecommunications services now, or in the future, could materially and adversely affect the financial performance and growth prospects of the Group.

Accounting

The International Accounting Standards Board has issued, and may issue more, new and revised standards and interpretations. Such factors may require adoption of new accounting policies. There can be no assurance that the adoption of new accounting policies or new International Financial Reporting Standards will not have a significant impact on the financial condition and results of operations of the Group.

Strategic Partners

The Group conducts some business through non wholly-owned subsidiaries and joint ventures, in which it shares control (in whole or in part) and has formed strategic alliances with certain leading international companies, government authorities and other strategic partners. There can be no assurance that any of these strategic or business partners will wish to continue their relationships with the Group into the future, or that the Group will be able to pursue its stated strategies with respect to its non wholly-owned subsidiaries and joint ventures and the markets in which they operate. Furthermore, other investors in the non wholly-owned subsidiaries of the Group and joint ventures may undergo a change of control or financial difficulties, which may affect the financial condition and results of operations of the Group.

Impact of Regulatory Decisions

The Group is permitted to provide telecommunications services and operate networks only under licences granted by regulatory authorities in individual countries/areas. All these licences have, historically, been issued for fixed terms and subsequently renewed. However, further renewals may not be guaranteed, or the terms and conditions of these licences may be changed when renewed. All these licences contain regulatory requirements and carrier obligations regarding the way the Group must conduct business, and in accordance with requirements relating to factors such as network quality and coverage. Failure to meet these requirements could result in damage awards, fines, penalties, suspension or other sanctions including, ultimately, revocation of the licences. Decisions by regulators regarding the granting, amendment or renewal of licences held by the Group, or other parties (including spectrum allocation to other parties or relaxation of constraints with respect to the technology or specific service that may be deployed in the given spectrum band), could result in the Group facing unforeseen competition, and could adversely affect the financial condition and results of operations of the Group.

Rapid Technological Changes

The global telecommunications industry is characterised by rapid increases in the diversity and sophistication of the technologies and services offered. As a result, the Group may face increasing competition from technologies currently being developed, or which may be developed in the future, by both our existing competitors as well as new market entrants. The development and application of new technologies involve time, substantial cost and risk. The technologies we employ may become obsolete or be subject to intense competition from new technologies in the future. Impairment of any of our assets could adversely affect the financial condition and results of operations of the Group. If we fail to develop, or obtain timely access to, new technologies and equipment, or if we fail to obtain the necessary licences and spectrum to provide services using these new technologies, we may lose customers and market share and become less profitable.

Network Performance

Some elements of our networks, such as switching and data platforms, perform critical functions for broad sectors of our network operations. Damage to such critical elements may cause an entire sector of our network coverage to be rendered non-functional and, as a result, we may not be able to provide telecommunications services to a substantial proportion of our customer base. In the event that the Group is unable to provide telecommunications services to a substantial proportion of its customers for an extended period of time, its business and results of operations will be materially and adversely affected.

Past Performance and Forward Looking Statements

The performance and the results of operations of the Group contained within this annual report are historical in nature, and past performance is no guarantee for the future results of the Group. Any forward-looking statements and opinions contained within this annual report are based on current plans, estimates and projections, and therefore involve risks and uncertainties. Actual results may differ materially from expectations discussed in such forward-looking statements and opinions. The Group, the Directors, employees and agents of the Group assume (a) no obligation to correct or update the forward-looking statements or opinions contained within this annual report; and (b) no liability in the event that any of the forward-looking statements or opinions do not materialise or turn out to be incorrect.