

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS

The Directors are pleased to present their report together with the audited consolidated financial statements of the Company and its subsidiaries for the year ended 31 December 2008.

### Principal Activities

The principal activities of the Group are the provision of banking and related financial services. An analysis of the Group's performance for the year by business segments is set out in Note 49 to the financial statements.

### Results and Appropriations

The results of the Group for the year are set out in the consolidated income statement on page 94.

The Board has recommended keeping sufficient funds for operation in the future and does not propose any final dividend for the year ended 31 December 2008. With the interim dividend per share of HK\$0.438 paid during 2008, the total dividend per share amounted to HK\$0.438 for the whole year.

### Closure of Register of Members

The Register of Members of the Company will be closed from Friday, 15 May 2009 to Thursday, 21 May 2009 (both days inclusive), during which period

no transfer of shares will be registered. In order to qualify for attending the forthcoming annual general meeting, all transfer documents, accompanied by the relevant share certificates, must be lodged with the Company's Share Registrar, Computershare Hong Kong Investor Services Limited, at Rooms 1712-1716, 17th Floor, Hopewell Centre, 183 Queen's Road East, Hong Kong, not later than 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, 14 May 2009.

### Reserves

Details of movements in the reserves of the Group are set out in the consolidated statement of changes in equity on pages 97 to 98.

### Donations

Charitable and other donations made by the Group during the year amounted to approximately HK\$21 million.

### Properties, Plant and Equipment

Details of movements in properties, plant and equipment of the Group are set out in Note 32 to the financial statements.

### Share Capital

Details of the share capital of the Company are set out in Note 42 to the financial statements.

As at the latest practicable date prior to the issue of this Annual Report and based on publicly available information, the public float of the Company was approximately 34%. The Directors consider that there is sufficient public float in the shares of the Company.

### Distributable Reserves

Distributable reserves of the Company as at 31 December 2008, calculated under section 79B of the Hong Kong Companies Ordinance, amounted to approximately HK\$2,747 million.

### Five-year Financial Summary

A summary of the results, assets and liabilities of the Group for the last five years is set out on page 3.

### Directors

The present Directors of the Company are set out on page 54. The biographical details of the Directors and senior management are set out on pages 55 to 58 of this Annual Report. The term of office for each Non-executive Director is approximately three years.

Mr. Lee Raymond Wing Hung will retire as an Executive Director and the Chief Financial Officer of the Group with effect from 1 June 2009 as announced by the Company on 6 February 2009.

In accordance with Article 98 of the Company's Articles of Association, at each annual general meeting, one-third of the Directors or the nearest number to but not less than one-third of the Directors shall retire from office by rotation and be eligible for re-election. Accordingly, Messrs. Xiao Gang, Li Zaohang, Zhou Zaiqun, Koh Beng Seng and Tung Savio Wai-Hok will retire by rotation at the forthcoming annual general meeting and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

Each of the retiring Independent Non-executive Directors, namely, Mr. Koh Beng Seng and Mr. Tung Savio Wai-Hok, has given an annual confirmation of his independence to the Company. Based on such confirmation and the information available to the Board, and by reference to the "Policy on Independence of Directors" adopted by the Board which sets out more stringent independence criteria than those contained in the Listing Rules, the Board considers that Mr. Koh and Mr. Tung are independent. Further, in view of their extensive knowledge and experience, the Board believes that their re-election is in the best interests of the Company and the shareholders as a whole.

#### **Directors' Service Contracts**

No Director offering for re-election at the forthcoming annual general

meeting has a service contract with the Company or any of its subsidiaries which is not determinable by the employing company within one year without payment of compensation other than the normal statutory compensation.

#### **Directors' Interests in Contracts of Significance**

No contracts of significance, in relation to the Group's business to which the Company, its holding companies, or any of its subsidiaries or fellow subsidiaries was a party and in which a Director had a material interest, whether directly or indirectly, subsisted at the end of the year or at any time during the year.

#### **Directors' Interests in Competing Business**

Messrs. Xiao Gang, Li Zaohang and Zhou Zaiqun are executive directors of BOC. Mdm. Zhang Yanling is a member of the senior management of BOC.

BOC is a joint stock limited liability commercial bank in the Mainland of China providing a full range of commercial banking and other financial services through its associates throughout the world. Certain of the Group's operations overlap with and/or are complementary to those of BOC and its associates. To the extent that BOC or its associates compete with the Group, the Directors believe that the Group's

interests are adequately protected by good corporate governance practices and the involvement of the Independent Non-executive Directors.

Further, the Board's mandate also expressly provides that unless permissible under applicable laws or regulations, if a substantial shareholder or a Director has a conflict of interest in the matter to be considered by the Board, the matter shall not be dealt with by way of written resolutions, but a Board meeting attended by Independent Non-executive Directors who have no material interest in the matter shall be held to deliberate on the same.

Save as disclosed above, none of the Directors is interested in any business apart from the Group's business, which competes or is likely to compete, either directly or indirectly, with the Group's business.

#### **Directors' Rights to Acquire Shares**

On 5 July 2002, the following Directors were granted options by BOC (BVI), the immediate holding company of the Company, pursuant to a Pre-Listing Share Option Scheme to purchase from BOC (BVI) existing issued shares of the Company at a price of HK\$8.50 per share. These options have a vesting period of four years from 25 July 2002 with a valid exercise period of ten years.

Particulars of the outstanding options granted to the Directors under the Pre-Listing Share Option Scheme as at 31 December 2008 are set out below:

Name of Director	Date of grant	Exercise price (HK\$)	Exercisable period	Number of share options					
				Granted on 5 July 2002	Balances as at	Exercised during the year	Surrendered during the year	Lapsed during the year	Balances as at
					1 January 2008				31 December 2008
SUN Changji	5 July 2002	8.50	25 July 2003 to 4 July 2012	1,590,600	1,590,600	–	–	–	1,590,600
HE Guangbei	5 July 2002	8.50	25 July 2003 to 4 July 2012	1,446,000	723,000	–	–	–	723,000
LI Zaohang	5 July 2002	8.50	25 July 2003 to 4 July 2012	1,446,000	1,446,000	–	–	–	1,446,000
ZHOU Zaiqun	5 July 2002	8.50	25 July 2003 to 4 July 2012	1,446,000	1,446,000	361,500	–	–	1,084,500
ZHANG Yanling	5 July 2002	8.50	25 July 2003 to 4 July 2012	1,446,000	1,446,000	–	–	–	1,446,000
Total				7,374,600	6,651,600	361,500	–	–	6,290,100

Save as disclosed above, at no time during the year was the Company, its holding companies, or any of its subsidiaries or fellow subsidiaries a party to any arrangements to enable the Directors to acquire benefits by means of the acquisition of shares in, or debentures of, the Company or any other body corporate.

### Directors' and Chief Executive's Interests in Shares, Underlying Shares and Debentures

As at 31 December 2008, the Directors, the Chief Executive and their respective associates had the following interests in the shares and underlying shares of the Company, as recorded in the register required to be kept by the Company pursuant to section 352 of the SFO or as otherwise notified to the Company and the Stock Exchange pursuant to the Model Code for Securities Transactions by Directors of Listed Issuers:

Name of Director	Number of shares/underlying shares held					Total	% of the issued share capital
	Personal interests	Family interests	Corporate interests	Other interests			
SUN Changji	1,590,600 <sup>1</sup>	–	–	–	–	1,590,600	0.015%
HE Guangbei	723,000 <sup>1</sup>	–	–	–	–	723,000	0.007%
LI Zaohang	1,446,000 <sup>1</sup>	–	–	–	–	1,446,000	0.014%
ZHOU Zaiqun	1,085,000 <sup>2</sup>	–	–	–	–	1,085,000	0.010%
ZHANG Yanling	1,446,000 <sup>1</sup>	–	–	–	–	1,446,000	0.014%
Total	6,290,600	–	–	–	–	6,290,600	0.060%

Notes:

- Such interests represented the respective Directors' interests in underlying shares in respect of the share options granted to him/her pursuant to the Pre-Listing Share Option Scheme, details of which are set out in the section titled "Directors' Rights to Acquire Shares" above.
- Such interests included Mr. Zhou's interests in 500 shares and interests in 1,084,500 underlying shares in respect of the share options granted to him pursuant to the Pre-Listing Share Option Scheme, details of which are set out in the section titled "Directors' Rights to Acquire Shares" above.

Save as disclosed above, as at 31 December 2008, none of the Directors or the Chief Executive of the Company or their respective associates had any interests or short positions in the shares, underlying shares or debentures of the Company or any of its associated corporations (within the meaning of Part XV of the SFO) as recorded in the register required to be kept by the Company pursuant to section 352 of the SFO or as otherwise notified to the Company and the Stock Exchange pursuant to the Model Code for Securities Transactions by Directors of Listed Issuers.

### Substantial Interests in Share Capital

The register maintained by the Company pursuant to section 336 of the SFO recorded that, as at 31 December 2008, the following parties had the following interests (as defined in the SFO) in the Company set opposite their respective names:

Name of Corporation	No. of shares of HK\$5 each in the Company (% of total issued shares)	
Central SAFE	6,953,617,435	(65.77%)
BOC	6,953,617,435	(65.77%)
BOCHKG	6,949,330,256	(65.73%)
BOC (BVI)	6,949,330,256	(65.73%)

Notes:

- Following the reorganisation of BOC in August 2004, Central SAFE holds the controlling equity capital of BOC on behalf of the State. Accordingly, for the purpose of the SFO, Central SAFE is deemed to have the same interests in the Company as BOC.
- BOC holds the entire issued share capital of BOCHKG, which in turn holds the entire issued share capital of BOC (BVI). Accordingly, BOC and BOCHKG are deemed to have the same interests in the Company as BOC (BVI) for the purpose of the SFO. BOC (BVI) beneficially held 6,949,330,256 shares of the Company.
- The interest in the Company held by BOC included 4,000,000 shares held by BOC Insurance, a wholly-owned subsidiary of BOC, which had been disposed of by BOC Insurance during the reporting period.
- BOC holds the entire issued share capital of BOCI, which in turn holds the entire issued share capital of BOCI Asia Limited and BOCI Financial Products Limited. Accordingly, BOC is deemed to have the same interests in the Company as BOCI Asia Limited and BOCI Financial Products Limited for the purpose of the SFO. BOCI Asia Limited had an interest in 91,500 shares of the Company and an interest in 117,000 shares held under physically settled equity derivatives while BOCI Financial Products Limited had an interest in 78,679 shares of the Company.

All the interests stated above represented long positions. Save as disclosed above, as at 31 December 2008, no other interests or short positions were recorded in the register maintained by the Company under section 336 of the SFO.

### Management Contracts

No contracts concerning the management or administration of the whole or any substantial part of the business of the Company were entered into or existed during the year.

## Share Options

Pursuant to written resolutions of all the Company's shareholders passed on 10 July 2002, the Company has approved and adopted two share option schemes, namely, the Share Option Scheme and the Sharesave Plan. No options have been granted by the Company pursuant to the Share Option Scheme or the Sharesave Plan during the year.

The following is a summary of the Share Option Scheme and the Sharesave Plan disclosed in accordance with the Listing Rules:

	Share Option Scheme	Sharesave Plan
Purpose	To provide the participants with the opportunity to acquire proprietary interests in the Company, to attract and retain the best available personnel, to encourage and motivate the participants to work towards enhancing the value of the Company and its shares, to allow the participants to participate in the growth of the Company and to align the interests of the Company's shareholders with those of the participants.	To encourage broad-based employee ownership of the Company's shares, to increase employee awareness and participation in the Company's share price performance, to provide employees with an additional vehicle for asset accumulation and to align the interests of all employees with those of the Company's shareholders.
Participants	Subject to compliance with applicable laws, any full-time or part-time employee, executive or officer of the Group, executive or non-executive director of the Group, or full-time or part-time employee, executive, officer or director of BOC or any of its subsidiaries serving as a member of any committee of the Group.	Any employee, executive, officer or director of the Group, having such qualifying period of service (if any) as the Board may determine from time to time and not having been granted any options under the Share Option Scheme.
Total number of shares available for issue and percentage of issued share capital as at 31 December 2008	The maximum number of shares in respect of which options may be granted under the Share Option Scheme, the Sharesave Plan and any other share option schemes and savings-based share option plans of any company in the Group (the "Other Schemes and Plans") shall not in aggregate exceed 10% of the shares in issue on 10 July 2002, that is, 1,057,278,026 shares.	Same as Share Option Scheme.

	Share Option Scheme	Sharesave Plan
Maximum entitlement of each participant	The total number of shares issued and to be issued upon the exercise of the options granted and to be granted to any one participant under the Share Option Scheme and the Other Schemes and Plans (including exercised, cancelled and outstanding options) in any twelve-month period up to and including the date of grant shall not exceed 1% of the shares in issue from time to time.	The maximum number of shares (rounded down to the next whole number) which can be paid for at the exercise price with monies equal to the aggregate of the savings contributions the participant has undertaken to make by the Maturity Date (defined as below) and interest which may be accrued thereon. Provided that the total number of shares issued and to be issued upon the exercise of the options granted and to be granted to any one participant under the Sharesave Plan and the Other Schemes and Plans (including exercised, cancelled and outstanding options) in any twelve-month period up to and including the date of grant shall not exceed 1% of the shares in issue from time to time. The amount of the monthly contribution to be made by a participant shall not be less than 1% and not more than 10% of the participant's monthly salary or such other maximum or minimum amounts as permitted by the Board.
Period within which the shares must be taken up under an option	Such period as shall be prescribed by the directors and specified in the letter of offer.	The thirty-day period (excluding the anniversary days) immediately after the first and second anniversary days from the date of grant or such other date as determined by the Board, or the thirty-day period immediately after the third anniversary of the date of grant or such other date as determined by the Board (the "Maturity Date"), or such other period(s) as may be determined by the Board.

	Share Option Scheme	Sharesave Plan
Minimum period for which an option must be held before it can be exercised	Such minimum period as shall be prescribed by the directors and specified in the letter of offer.	One year.
(a) Amount payable on acceptance of the option	(a) HK\$1.00	(a) HK\$1.00
(b) Period within which payments or calls must or may be made	(b) Payment or an undertaking to make payment on demand of the Company must be received by the Company within the period open for acceptance as set out in the letter of offer which shall not be less than 7 days after the offer date.	(b) Payment or an undertaking to make payment on demand of the Company must be received by the Company not later than the date specified in the letter of invitation as the directors may determine.
(c) The period within which loans for such purposes must be repaid	(c) Not applicable.	(c) Not applicable.
Basis of determining the exercise price	The exercise price is determined on the date of grant by the directors and shall not be less than the highest of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the nominal value of the Company's shares;</li> <li>(b) the closing price of the Company's shares as stated in the Stock Exchange's daily quotations sheet on the date of grant, which must be a business day; and</li> <li>(c) the average closing price of the Company's shares as stated in the Stock Exchange's daily quotations sheets for the five business days immediately preceding the date of grant.</li> </ul>	Same as Share Option Scheme.
Remaining life	The Share Option Scheme shall remain in force for a period of ten years commencing on the first day of dealings in the Company's shares on the Stock Exchange which was 25 July 2002.	The Sharesave Plan shall remain in force for a period of ten years after the date of approval and adoption of the Sharesave Plan by the Company's shareholders which was 10 July 2002.

Please refer to the section "Directors' Rights to Acquire Shares" for details of the options granted by BOC (BVI) over shares of the Company pursuant to the Pre-Listing Share Option Scheme.

### Purchase, Sale or Redemption of the Company's Shares

During the year, neither the Company nor any of its subsidiaries has purchased, sold or redeemed any of the Company's shares.

### Compliance with "Code on Corporate Governance Practices"

The Company is in full compliance with all the code provisions set out in the "Code on Corporate Governance Practices" contained in Appendix 14 of the Listing Rules and also complies with nearly all the recommended best practices set out in the said Code. For further details, please refer to the "Corporate Governance Report" contained in this Annual Report.

### Major Customers

During the year, the five largest customers of the group accounted for less than 30% of the total of interest income and other operating income of the Group.

### Connected Transactions

The Independent Non-executive Directors have reviewed the transactions which the Company disclosed in a public announcement on 2 January 2008 and confirmed that these transactions were:

- (i) entered into in the ordinary and usual course of business of the Group;
- (ii) conducted either on normal commercial terms or, if there were not sufficient comparable transactions to judge whether they were on normal commercial terms, were on terms that were fair and reasonable so far as the Company's shareholders are concerned;

(iii) entered into either in accordance with the terms of the agreements governing such transactions or (where there were no such agreements) on terms no less favourable than those available to or from independent third parties, as applicable; and

(iv) in each case where an annual cap had been set, that such cap was not exceeded.

In accordance with paragraph 14A.38 of the Rules Governing the Listing of Securities on The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited, the Board of Directors engaged the auditors of the Company to perform certain factual finding procedures on the above continuing connected transactions on a sample basis in accordance with Hong Kong Standard on Related Services 4400 "Engagements to Perform Agreed-Upon Procedures Regarding Financial Information" issued by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The auditors have reported their factual findings on the selected samples based on the agreed procedures to the Board of Directors.

### Budgetary Discipline and Reporting

The annual budget of the Group is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors prior to its implementation by the Management. Financial and business targets are allocated to business units and subsidiaries. There are defined procedures for the appraisal, review and approval of major capital and recurring expenditures. Proposed significant expenditures outside the approved budget will be referred to the Board or the relevant Board committee for decision. Financial performance against targets is reported to the Board regularly.

### Compliance with the Banking (Disclosure) Rules and the Listing Rules

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2008 comply with the requirements set out in the Banking (Disclosure) Rules under the Banking Ordinance and the applicable disclosure provisions of the Rules Governing the Listing of Securities on The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited.

### Auditors

The financial statements have been audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers. A resolution for their re-appointment as auditors for the ensuing year will be proposed at the forthcoming annual general meeting.

On behalf of the Board



**XIAO Gang**  
Chairman

Hong Kong, 24 March 2009