



Stocks retreat on news from the Fed and China.

Monthly snapshot

- Global equity markets recorded losses in August due to investors' uncertainty regarding the direction of U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) monetary policy, as well as worries about China's weakening economy.
- Global fixed-income assets also posted negative returns over the month. U.S. Treasury yields moved modestly higher in the intermediate and long segments of the curve, while the direction of yields was mixed in the short end.
- We continue to expect inflation to run structurally higher in the years ahead due to persistent labour-market tightness, the need to increase the resiliency and diversity of supply chains, and the need to offset the depressive impact of higher taxes and financing costs on profit margins.

Global equity markets recorded losses in August—just the second monthly downturn thus far in 2023—due to investors' uncertainty regarding the direction of U.S. Federal Reserve (Fed) monetary policy, as well as worries about China's weakening economy. Developed markets outperformed their emerging-market counterparts during the month. The Nordic countries recorded comparatively smaller losses and were the top performers among developed markets in August, bolstered mainly by strength in Denmark. The Pacific ex Japan region was the primary market laggard due largely to significant weakness in New Zealand. Europe led the emerging markets during the month, benefiting from notable gains in Egypt and Turkey. Conversely, stocks in Colombia and South Africa experienced double-digit losses and were the weakest emerging-market performers in August.¹

During a speech at the Kansas City Fed's annual economic symposium at Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in late August, Fed Chair Jerome Powell reiterated the central bank's goal of reducing the annual rate of inflation to 2%, and said that the Fed would consider additional interest-rate hikes if needed. Powell commented, "We are committed to achieving and sustaining a stance of monetary policy that is sufficiently restrictive to bring inflation down to [2%] over time." He also noted that the central bank "will assess our progress based on the totality of the data and the evolving outlook and risks."

China, the world's second-largest economy, has recently experienced relatively weak credit growth, a downturn in exports, and a year-over-year decline in consumer prices. Lower demand for goods and services from Chinese consumers could have a negative impact on other countries' exports of iron ore, crude oil, factory equipment, and luxury goods into the country. U.S.-based manufacturers of chemicals and heavy machinery have cautioned that they may experience a slowdown of sales in China. Additionally, a large property developer filed for protection under Chapter 15 of the U.S. bankruptcy code, which safeguards non-U.S. companies that are undergoing debt restructurings from creditors seeking to sue the firms or to freeze their assets in the U.S.

Most global fixed-income asset classes lost ground in August. However, U.S. high-yield bonds registered positive returns and were the top performers within the U.S. market for the period.² U.S. corporate bonds, mortgage-backed securities (MBS) and U.S. Treasuries declined.³ Treasury yields moved modestly higher in the intermediate and long segments of the curve, while the direction of yields was mixed in the short end (bond prices move inversely to yields). The yield on the 2-year Treasury note dipped 3 basis points (0.03%), and yields on 3-, 5-, and 10-year notes rose 0.03%, 0.05%, and 0.12%, respectively, in August. The spread between 10- and 2-year notes moved from -0.91% to -0.76% during the month, and the yield curve remained inverted.

¹ All equity market performance statements are based on the MSCI All-Country World Index (ACWI).

² According to the ICE BofA U.S. High Yield Constrained Index.

³ According to the ICE BofA U.S. Corporate, Bloomberg US Mortgage Backed Securities, and ICE BofA U.S. Treasury indexes.

Key measures: August 2023

Equity

Dow Jones Industrial Average	-2.01%	↓
S&P 500 Index	-1.59%	↓
NASDAQ Composite Index	-2.05%	↓
MSCI ACWI Index (Net)	-2.79%	↓

Bond

Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index	-1.37%	↓
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Volatility

Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index	13.57	↓
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PRIOR MONTHLY: 13.63

Oil

WTI Cushing crude oil prices	\$83.63	↑
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PRIOR MONTHLY: \$81.80

Currencies

Sterling vs. U.S. dollar	\$1.27	↓
Euro vs. U.S. dollar	\$1.09	↓
U.S. dollar vs. yen	¥145.59	↑

Sources: Bloomberg, FactSet, Lipper

Global commodity prices saw mixed performance in August. The West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude-oil spot price and the Brent crude oil price gained 2.1% and 1.6%, respectively, in U.S. dollar terms, on expectations that production output cuts from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) would continue through the end of 2023. The gold spot price was down 4.1% for the month due to strength in the U.S. dollar. The New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) natural gas price rose 5.1% in August, benefiting from forecasts for more hot weather in the U.S., which would increase demand. Wheat prices fell nearly 10% over the month due to Russia's shipments of large quantities of cheaply priced grain.⁴

Economic data

U.S.

- According to the Department of Labor, the U.S. consumer-price index (CPI) rose 0.2% in July, matching the monthly increase in June. The CPI advanced 3.2% year-over-year—up modestly from the 3.0% annual rise in June, which was the lowest in more than two years. The government attributed the month-over-month increase in inflation to higher costs for housing and, to a lesser extent, motor vehicle insurance. Core inflation, as measured by the CPI for all items less food and energy, was up 0.2% in July, matching the rise in June, and advanced 4.7% over the previous 12 months.
- The Department of Labor reported that U.S. payrolls expanded by 187,000 in August, and the unemployment rate rose 0.3 percentage point to 3.8%. The health care and leisure and hospitality sectors added 71,000 and 40,000 jobs, respectively, during the month. In contrast, transportation and warehousing payrolls declined by 34,000 in August, while the information industry saw a loss of 15,000 jobs. Average hourly earnings rose 0.2% for the month and 4.3% year-over-year. The 12-month increase was slightly lower than the 4.4% annual rise in July.

U.K.

- According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), consumer prices in the U.K. dipped 0.3% month-over-month in July—a sharp decline from the 0.6% increase in June. Inflation increased 6.4% over the previous 12-month period, down from the 7.3% annual upturn in June. Lower gas and electricity costs were the main contributors to the decrease in prices in July. Core inflation, which excludes volatile food prices, rose at an annual rate of 6.4% in July, unchanged from the year-over-year increase for the previous month.
- The ONS also reported that U.K. GDP grew 0.5% in June (the most recent reporting period), up from a 0.1% decrease in May, and increased 0.2% over the previous three-month period. Production output and the construction sector saw upturns of 1.8% and 1.6%, respectively, in June, versus corresponding 0.6% and 0.2% declines in May.

⁴ According to market data from The Wall Street Journal.

Eurozone

- Eurostat estimated that the inflation rate in the eurozone was unchanged at 5.3% for the 12-month period ending in August. Prices for food, alcohol and tobacco rose 9.8%, but the pace of acceleration slowed from the 10.8% annual rate in July. Energy prices decreased 3.3% year-over-year, following a 6.1% decline in July. Core inflation, which excludes volatile energy and food prices, rose at an annual rate of 5.3% in August, down 0.2 percentage point from July.⁵
- According to Eurostat's second estimate, eurozone GDP grew 0.3% in the second quarter of 2023, improving from the flat growth rate in the first quarter, and increased 0.6% year-over-year. The economies of Ireland and Lithuania were the strongest performers for the second quarter, expanding 3.3% and 2.8%, respectively, while Poland's economy contracted 3.7% during the period.

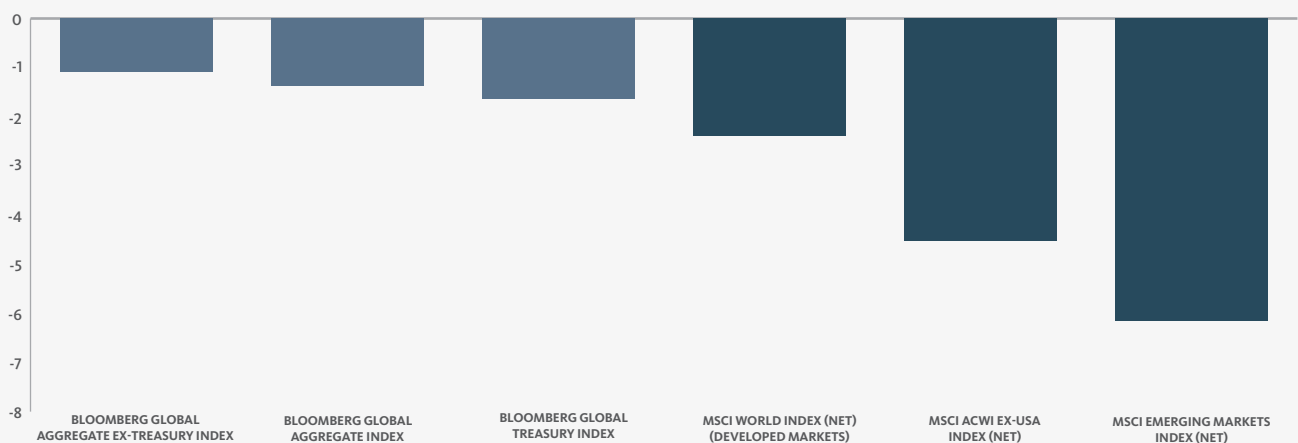
Central banks

- The Fed's next policy meeting is scheduled for September 19-20. Minutes from the Federal Open Market Committee's (FOMC) meeting in July, which were released in August, revealed that the members remain focused on curbing inflation despite the steady downward trend in the U.S. personal-consumption-expenditures (PCE) price index over the past year. Most committee participants maintained their belief that there are "significant upside risks to inflation, which could require further tightening of monetary policy." However, several FOMC members expressed the view that the Fed should take a more measured approach, noting that, "with the stance of monetary policy in restrictive territory, risks to the achievement of the Committee's goals had become more two-sided, and it was important that the Committee's decisions balance the risk of an inadvertent overtightening of policy against the cost of an insufficient tightening."

⁵ According to Eurostat. August 31, 2023.

Major Index Performance in August 2023 (Percent Return)

● Fixed Income ● Equities



Sources: FactSet, Lipper

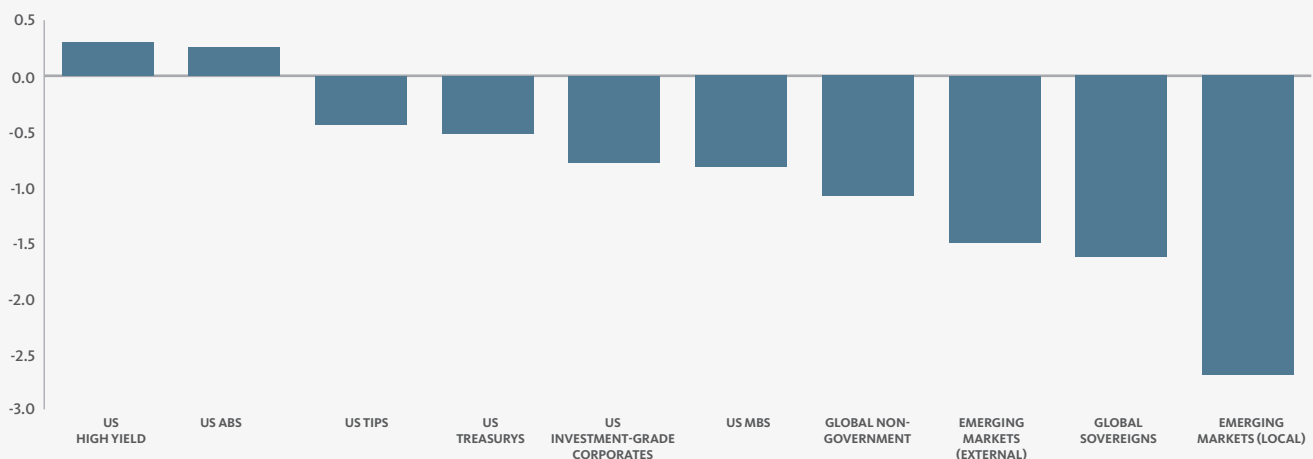
In a split 6-3 vote, the Bank of England (BOE) raised the Bank Rate by 25 basis points (bps) to a 15-year high of 5.25%. Two BOE members supported a 0.50% increase, while another favoured leaving the benchmark interest rate unchanged at 5.00%. In its announcement of the rate hike, the BOE noted that, while the overall inflation rate in the UK had slowed from 8.7% to 7.9% month-over-month in June, it remained well above the central bank's 2% target. The BOE also commented, "Given the significant increase in Bank Rate since the start of this tightening cycle, the current monetary policy stance is restrictive. The [Monetary Policy Committee] will continue to monitor closely indications of persistent inflationary pressures and resilience in the economy as a whole, including the tightness of labour market conditions and the behaviour of wage growth and services price inflation.

The European Central Bank's (ECB) next monetary policy meeting is scheduled for September 14. The ECB increased its benchmark interest rate by 0.25% to 4.25% following its meeting in late July.

The next monetary policy meeting for the Bank of Japan (BOJ) will be held on September 21-22. The central bank left its benchmark interest rate unchanged at -0.1% following its meeting on July 28. However, the BOJ set a rigid upper yield limit of 1.0% for the 10-year Japanese government bond (JGB). The 10-year JGB yield ended August at 0.65%.⁶

⁶ Source: Bank of Japan. August 2023.

Fixed-Income Performance in August 2023 (Percent Return)



Sources: FactSet, Lipper. See "Corresponding Indexes for Fixed-Income Performance Exhibit" in the Index descriptions section for more information.

Regional Equity Performance in August 2023 (Percent Return)

● Countries ● Regions



Sources: FactSet, Lipper. See “Corresponding Indexes for Regional Equity Performance Exhibit” in the Index descriptions section for more information.

SEI's view

Economists have been spending much of their time this year arguing when or if economic growth, inflation, corporate profits, interest rates, and equities will peak. Optimists and pessimists alike have been confounded by the ebb and flow of the data and the gyrations of the financial markets.

In general, input-price inflation has decelerated significantly. Canada's industrial product price index registered an outright decline in its price level, with a year-over-year change of -2.7% through July.⁷ The eurozone's producer-price index (PPI) has witnessed the sharpest deceleration, falling from a peak year-over-year rate of 43% through August 2022 to a July 2023 reading of a 3.4% annual decline. By contrast, the improvement in producer prices has been less dramatic in Japan (still rising at a 3.6% year-over-year pace as of July). We believe that these year-over-year PPI inflation readings should continue to show improvement in the months immediately ahead owing to favourable base effects.

On a longer-term basis, we believe that demographic shifts are likely to keep labour markets tighter than has been the case at any point since the baby boomers—who were born between 1946 and 1964—first made their presence felt in the workforce in the 1970s. The new focus on supply-chain resiliency, reduced dependence on China as a manufacturing hub, the transition away from relatively cheap fossil-fuel energy to greener but more expensive sources of power, and the likelihood of significantly higher corporate taxes and financing costs in the years ahead, all suggest to us that inflation will tend to settle at 3% or more in advanced industrial economies instead of the previous norm of 2% or less.

⁷ Source: Statistics Canada. August 2023.

We expect inflation to run structurally higher in the years ahead due to persistent labour-market tightness, among other factors.

Persistent inflation and ongoing labour-market tightness have forced most major developed-country central banks to keep raising their benchmark interest rates. The Fed, the Bank of Canada, and the ECB already have benchmark rates that match or exceed the peak recorded in 2008.⁸ We think it's likely that the BOE will soon join this group. We continue to expect inflation to run structurally higher in the years ahead due to persistent labour-market tightness, the need to increase the resiliency and diversity of supply chains, and the need to offset the depressive impact of higher taxes and financing costs on profit margins.

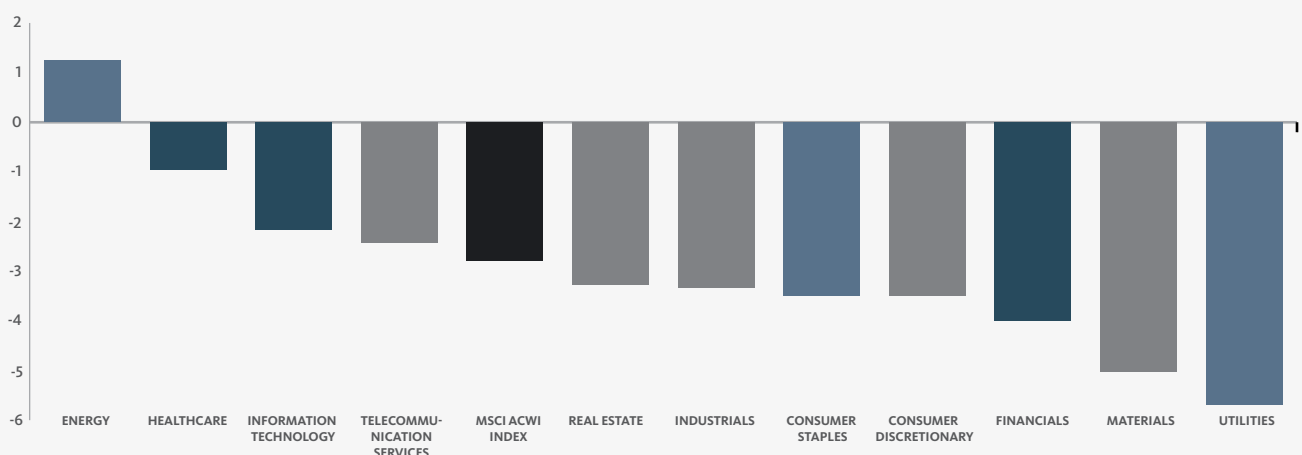
While U.S. equities experienced a downturn in August, the valuation in the market remains problematic. The price-to-earnings ratio of the broad-market S&P 500 Index had been on the rise this year, ending August at 18.6 times analysts' estimated earnings for the next 12 months.⁹ The expansion in the price/earnings multiple on forward earnings for most of 2023 occurred despite the additional monetary tightening by the Fed and other central banks. The overall market also appears to be overvalued relative to today's bond yields. If earnings experience a substantial contraction, history suggests that stock valuations also will fall.

⁸ Sources: U.S. Federal Reserve, Bank of Canada, European Central Bank. August 2023.

⁹ Sources: Standard & Poor's, Yardeni Research Inc. August 31, 2023.

Global Equity Sector Performance in August 2023 (Percent Return)

● Defensives ● Blends ● Cyclical



Sources: FactSet, Lipper. MSCI ACWI Index Components (as defined by SEI).

Standardised Performance

		1 year to 31-Aug-23	1 year to 31-Aug-22	1 year to 31-Aug-21	1 year to 31-Aug-20	1 year to 31-Aug-19
Key Measures						
Dow Jones Industrial Average		12.58%	-9.07%	26.77%	10.27%	4.12%
S&P 500 Index		15.94%	-11.23%	31.17%	21.94%	2.92%
NASDAQ Composite Index		19.85%	-21.99%	30.49%	49.33%	-0.72%
MSCI ACWI Index (Net)		13.95%	-15.88%	28.64%	16.52%	-0.28%
Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate Index		1.07%	-15.38%	1.81%	6.60%	7.18%
Major Index Performance						
Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate ex-Treasury Index		1.07%	-15.38%	1.81%	6.60%	7.18%
Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate Index		-0.09%	-17.61%	0.52%	5.54%	7.77%
Bloomberg Barclays Global Treasury Index		-1.13%	-19.56%	-0.61%	4.59%	8.27%
MSCI ACWI ex-USA (Net)		11.89%	-19.52%	24.87%	8.31%	-3.27%
MSCI Emerging Markets Index (Net)		1.25%	-21.80%	21.12%	14.49%	-4.36%
MSCI World Index (Net)		15.60%	-15.08%	29.76%	16.79%	0.26%
Fixed-Income Performance						
US Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS)	Bloomberg Barclays 1-10 Year U.S. TIPS Index	-2.01%	-2.96%	5.82%	7.24%	5.88%
Global Non-Government	Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate ex-Treasury Index	1.07%	-15.38%	1.81%	6.60%	7.18%
Global Sovereigns	Bloomberg Barclays Global Treasury Index	-1.13%	-19.56%	-0.61%	4.59%	8.27%
US Investment-Grade Corporates	Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Corporate Investment Grade Index	0.90%	-14.91%	2.53%	7.50%	13.33%
US Asset-Backed Securities (ABS)	Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Asset-Backed Securities Index	2.06%	-4.63%	0.87%	4.26%	5.54%
US Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBS)	Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Mortgage-Backed Securities Index	-2.10%	-9.73%	-0.18%	4.54%	7.06%
US Treasuries	Bloomberg Barclays U.S. Treasury Index	-2.07%	-10.80%	-2.11%	6.98%	10.38%
US High Yield	ICE BofAML US High Yield Constrained Index	7.03%	-10.43%	10.26%	3.62%	6.58%
Emerging Markets (External)	JPMorgan EMBI Global Diversified Index	5.77%	-20.82%	4.59%	2.73%	13.77%
Emerging Markets (Local)	JPMorgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index	11.34%	-19.43%	4.14%	1.55%	11.91%
Regional Equity Performance						
United Kingdom	FTSE All-Share Index	14.60%	-14.59%	31.06%	-4.38%	-5.89%
EM Latin America	MSCI Emerging Markets Latin America Index (Net)	18.20%	-7.09%	34.73%	-23.59%	8.86%
Europe ex UK	MSCI Europe ex UK Index (Net)	24.95%	-25.36%	29.71%	9.85%	-2.31%
Pacific ex Japan	MSCI Pacific ex Japan Index (Net)	1.94%	-12.41%	22.69%	1.18%	0.99%
United States	S&P 500 Index	15.94%	-11.23%	31.17%	21.94%	2.92%
Japan	TOPIX, also known as the Tokyo Stock Price Index	16.21%	-18.73%	19.49%	9.88%	-6.80%
Global Equity Sector Performance						
MSCI ACWI Index		13.95%	-15.88%	28.64%	16.52%	-0.28%
MSCI ACWI Consumer Discretionary Index		11.12%	-21.85%	18.33%	34.50%	-0.08%
MSCI ACWI Consumer Staples Index		4.98%	-5.25%	12.80%	5.49%	10.31%
MSCI ACWI Energy Index		12.24%	40.10%	32.17%	-27.42%	-15.80%
MSCI ACWI Financials Index		10.05%	-12.75%	43.70%	-6.51%	-5.19%
MSCI ACWI Healthcare Index		9.41%	-12.27%	22.68%	23.31%	-0.52%
MSCI ACWI Industrials Index		19.17%	-16.89%	32.51%	6.97%	-1.76%
MSCI ACWI Information Technology Index		27.34%	-21.03%	33.13%	53.38%	3.33%
MSCI ACWI Materials Index		11.50%	-17.41%	34.95%	15.82%	-6.37%
MSCI ACWI Telecommunication Services Index		16.88%	-33.43%	29.85%	23.01%	9.98%
MSCI ACWI Utilities Index		-6.80%	0.78%	16.51%	0.21%	15.14%
MSCI ACWI Real Estate Index		-7.58%	-15.84%	25.17%	-7.42%	10.55%

Corresponding Indexes for Key Measures Exhibit

Dow Jones Industrial Average	The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a widely followed market indicator based on a price-weighted average of 30 blue-chip New York Stock Exchange stocks that are selected by editors of The Wall Street Journal.
NASDAQ Composite Index	The NASDAQ Composite Index is a market-value-weighted index of all common stocks listed on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (NASDAQ) system, representing a subset of the US equity market.
MSCI ACWI Index	The MSCI ACWI Index is a market-capitalisation-weighted index composed of over 2,000 companies, and is representative of the market structure of 46 developed- and emerging-market countries in North and South America, Europe, Africa and the Pacific Rim. The Index is calculated with net dividends reinvested in US dollars.
Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index	The Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index is an unmanaged market-capitalisation-weighted benchmark that tracks the performance of investment-grade fixed-income securities denominated in 13 currencies. The Index reflects reinvestment of all distributions and changes in market prices.
Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index (VIX)	The Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index (VIX) tracks the expected volatility in the S&P 500 Index over the next 30 days. A higher number indicates greater volatility.

Corresponding Indexes for Major Index Performance Exhibit

MSCI ACWI ex-USA Index	The MSCI ACWI ex-USA Index includes both developed- and emerging-market countries, excluding the US.
MSCI Emerging Markets Index	The MSCI Emerging Markets Index is a free float-adjusted market-capitalisation-weighted index designed to measure the performance of global emerging-market equities.
MSCI World Index	The MSCI World Index is a free float-adjusted market-capitalisation-weighted index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of developed markets.
Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index	The Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index is an unmanaged market-capitalisation-weighted benchmark that tracks the performance of investment-grade fixed-income securities denominated in 13 currencies. The Index reflects reinvestment of all distributions and changes in market prices.
Bloomberg Global Aggregate ex-Treasury Index	The Bloomberg Global Aggregate ex-Treasury Index is an unmanaged market index representative of the total return performance of ex-Treasury major world bond markets.
Bloomberg Global Treasury Index	The Bloomberg Global Treasury Index is composed of those securities included in the Bloomberg Global Aggregate Index that are Treasury securities.

Corresponding Indexes for Fixed-Income Performance Exhibit

US High Yield	ICE BofA U.S. High Yield Constrained Index
Global Sovereigns	Bloomberg Global Treasury Index
Global Non-Government	Bloomberg Global Aggregate ex-Treasury Index
Emerging Markets (Local)	JPMorgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index
Emerging Markets (External)	JPMorgan EMBI Global Diversified Index
US Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBS)	Bloomberg U.S. Mortgage Backed Securities Index
US Asset-Backed Securities (ABS)	Bloomberg U.S. Asset-Backed Securities Index
US Treasurys	Bloomberg U.S. Treasury Index
US Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities (TIPS)	Bloomberg 1-10 Year U.S. TIPS Index
US Investment-Grade Corporates	Bloomberg U.S. Corporate Bond Index

Corresponding Indexes for Regional Equity Performance Exhibit

United States	S&P 500 Index
United Kingdom	FTSE All-Share Index
Pacific ex Japan	MSCI Pacific ex Japan Index (Net)
Japan	TOPIX, also known as the Tokyo Stock Price Index
Europe ex UK	MSCI Europe ex UK Index (Net)
EM Latin America	MSCI Emerging Markets Latin America Index (Net)

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