### CMB International Securities | Equity Research | Company Update



#### 招商银行全资附属机构 A Wholly Owned Subsidiary Of China Merchants Bank

# **ZTO Express (ZTO US)**

## Market share gain > profitability

ZTO targets to deliver parcel volume growth of 35-40% YoY in 2021E, and to achieve market share of 22%/25% in 2021E/22E (versus 20.4% in 2020). Given that no guidance on net profit is provided, we believe ZTO will continue to pursue scale instead of profitability in the foreseeable future. We took our 2021E/22E earnings forecast down by 14%/9%, after revising down our ASP assumptions. We revised our TP to HK\$279 from HK\$292, based on 36x 2021E P/E (50% premium to the historical average of 24x, on the back of market share gain). On the positive side, we believe ZTO's on-track cost reduction measures and continuous investment in network and capacity will make it a beneficiary of market consolidation. Besides, expansion in time-definite segment, less than load (LTL) and cold chain business will serve as potential growth drivers going forward.

- Earnings highlight. ZTO's reported net profit in 4Q20 dropped 45% YoY to RMB1.29bn. Excluding the one-off gain of ~RMB700mn in 4Q19, net profit in 4Q20 would drop only 21% YoY. For the full year, net profit was RMB4.3bn, down 24%/13% on reported/recurring basis. ZTO recognized RMB127mn of FX loss in 2020, due to the depreciation of USD-denominated deposits against RMB.
- Volume growth remained strong in 4Q20. ZTO's revenue increased by 21% YoY to RMB8.3bn in 4Q20, driven by parcel volume growth of 47% YoY (similar to YTO [600233 CH] and Yunda [002120 CH], but outpaced the industry growth of 30%). In terms of parcel volume, ZTO's market share reached 19.9% in 4Q20.
- ASP dropped less than "Tongda" players. ZTO's parcel ASP dropped 20% YoY (or RMB0.36/unit) to RMB1.41/unit in 4Q20 (breakdown: [1] RMB0.25 for incentives to support network partners, [2] RMB0.02 for the use of lower-priced waybills, and [3] RMB0.09 due to lower parcel weight). On QoQ basis, the ASP increased 6%.
- Unit cost down 12% YoY in 4Q20. ZTO's unit cost of transportation and sorting hub dropped 16% YoY and 12% YoY, respectively, to RMB0.55 and RMB0.31. The transportation cost reduction was driven by higher portion of volume transported by self-owned trucks (88%, vs 69% in 4Q19) and higher portion of the use of high-capacity trucks (81%, vs 72% in 4Q19). For sorting hub cost, the reduction was mainly by the use of more sets of automated sorting equipment (339 sets, vs 265 sets in 4Q19).

### **Earnings Summary**

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(YE 31 Dec)	FY18A	FY19A	FY20A	FY21E	FY22E
Revenue (RMB mn)	17,604	22,110	25,214	33,036	41,715
YoY growth (%)	35	26	14	31	26
Net profit (RMB mn)	3,820	4,979	4,312	5,375	7,127
EPS (RMB)	5.08	6.35	5.43	6.44	8.54
YoY growth (%)	14.3	25.0	-14.5	18.6	32.6
Consensus EPS (RMB)	N/A	N/A	N/A	6.42	8.19
EV/EBITDA (x)	28.2	21.7	22.1	16.9	12.5
P/E (x)	40.0	32.9	38.5	30.5	23.0
P/B (x)	4.7	4.3	3.6	3.1	2.8
Yield (%)	0.8	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.3
ROE (%)	13.7	13.7	9.9	10.5	12.8
Net gearing (%)	Net cash				

Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIS estimates

### **BUY (Maintain)**

Target Price US\$36 (Previous TP US\$37.7) Up/Downside +22% Current Price US\$29.48

### **China Express Delivery**

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### Stock Data

Mkt Cap (US\$ mn)	25,214
Avg 3 mths t/o (US\$ mn)	111
52w High/Low (US\$)	38.99/23.04
Total Issued Shares (mn)	855.3
Source: Bloomberg	

**Shareholding Structure** 

Meisong Lai	25.6%
Alibaba	8.6%
Others	65.8%

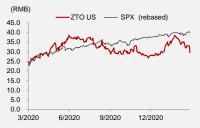
Note: Under the weighted voting rights structure, Meisong Lai has 76.8% of the total voting right Source: HKEx

### **Share Performance**

	Absolute	Relative
1-mth	-20.2%	-20.2%
3-mth	5.5%	-0.1%
6-mth	-3.8%	-18.5%

Source: Bloomberg

### 12-mth Price Performance



Source: Bloomberg

### **Auditor: Deloitte**

### Related report:

ZTO Express (2057 HK, BUY) – Volume growth to remain the top priority – 20 Nov 2020

China Express Delivery Sector – Bloody battle to end soon; War for market share to continue; BUY winners in the respective playing fields – 14 Oct 2020



Figure 1: ZTO's 4Q20 results

(RMB mn)	1Q19	1Q20	Change YoY	2Q19	2Q20	Change YoY	3Q19	3Q20	Change YoY	4Q19	4Q20	Change YoY
Total revenue	4,574	3,916	-14.4%	5,424	6,402	18.0%	5,266	6,639	26.1%	6,847	8,257	20.6%
Cost of sales	-3,314	-3,097	-6.6%	-3,655	-4,633	26.8%	-3,669	-5,248	43.0%	-4,850	-6,399	31.9%
Gross profit	1,260	819	-35.0%	1,769	1,769	0.0%	1,597	1,391	-12.9%	1,996	1,858	-6.9%
Other income	58	113	95.2%	30	190	542.9%	94	152	60.7%	206	126	-38.8%
SG&A expenses	-558	-560	0.4%	-305	-312	2.3%	-291	-374	28.5%	-392	-418	6.5%
EBIT	760	372	-51.0%	1,493	1,647	10.3%	1,401	1,169	-16.5%	1,810	1,566	-13.4%
D&A	283	408	44.4%	298	426	42.9%	303	479	58.3%	381	527	38.3%
EBITDA	1,043	780	-25.2%	1,791	2,073	15.7%	1,703	1,648	-3.2%	2,191	2,093	-4.4%
Net finance income/(expense)	146	126	-14.0%	144	105	-27.2%	146	83	-43.3%	148	93	-36.9%
Finance income	146	126	-13.8%	144	114	-20.9%	146	97	-34.0%	148	106	-28.7%
Finance expenses	0	-0	n/a	0	-9	n/a	0	-14	n/a	0	-12	n/a
Gain/(loss) on disposal of subsidiaries	-1	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	-2	1	n/a
Impairment of investment in equity investees	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	-56	-1	-98.4%
Unrealized gain from investment in equity investee	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	754	0	-100.0%
FX gain/(loss)	-26	16	n/a	22	3	-88.4%	29	-64	n/a	-12	-82	n/a
Share of profit of JV and associates	-6	-14	n/a	-6	-2	n/a	-1	-5	n/a	6	3	-51.2%
Pretax profit	874	501	-42.7%	1,654	1,752	5.9%	1,574	1,182	-24.9%	2,648	1,581	-40.3%
Income tax	-192	-130	-32.4%	-289	-298	3.3%	-266	28	n/a	-331	-290	-12.6%
After tax profit	682	371	-45.6%	1,365	1,454	6.5%	1,308	1,210	-7.4%	2,317	1,291	-44.3%
MI	-1	4	n/a	-6	-5	-7.1%	-0	-9	n/a	10	-3	-136.2%
Net profit	681	375	-45.0%	1,359	1,449	6.6%	1,308	1,201	-8.1%	2,326	1,288	-44.6%
Ratios:			ppt			ppt			ppt			ppt
Gross margin	27.5%	20.9%	-6.6	32.6%	27.6%	-5.0	30.3%	21.0%	-9.4	29.2%	22.5%	-6.7
EBIT margin	16.6%	9.5%	-7.1	27.5%	25.7%	-1.8	26.6%	17.6%	-9.0	26.4%	19.0%	-7.5
After tax profit margin	14.9%	9.5%	-5.4	25.2%	22.7%	-2.5	24.8%	18.2%	-6.6	33.8%	15.6%	-18.2
Effective tax rate	22.0%	25.9%	4.0	17.5%	17.0%	-0.4	16.9%	-2.4%	-19.3	12.5%	18.3%	5.8

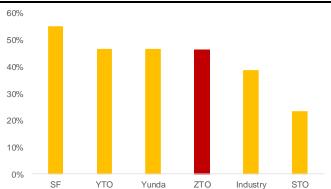
Source: Company data, CMBIS

Figure 2: ZTO's parcel volume growth has continued to outpace the industry average



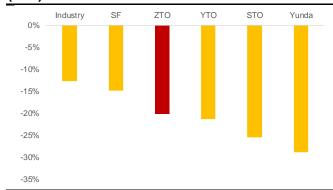
Source: Company data, The State Post Bureau, CMBIS

Figure 3: ZTO delivered similar parcel volume growth with major players in 4Q20



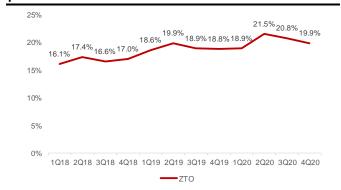
Source: Company data, The State Post Bureau, CMBIS

Figure 4: ZTO achieved relatively less ASP reduction (YoY) in 4Q20



Source: Company data, The State Post Bureau, CMBIS

Figure 5: ZTO's market share in China in terms of parcel volume



Source: Company data, CMBIS

Figure 6: ZTO's self-owned high capacity truck ratio

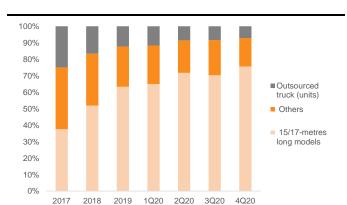
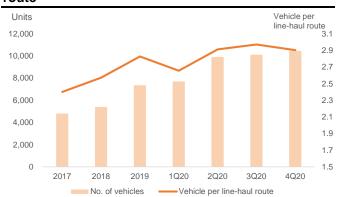


Figure 7: ZTO's number of vehicles per line-haul route



Source: Company data, CMBIS Source: Company data, CMBIS

Figure 8: ZTO unit cost breakdown

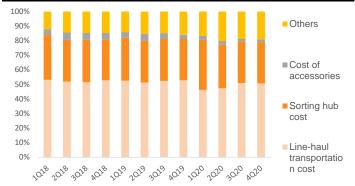
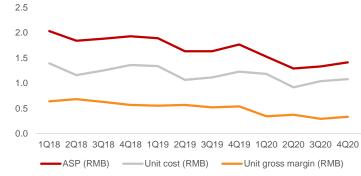


Figure 9: ZTO's ASP, unit cost & unit gross margin



Source: Company data, CMBIS

Source: Company data, CMBIS



Figure 10: Change in key assumptions

	Old		New		Change	
	2021E	2022E	2021E	2022E	2021E	2022E
Shipment volume (mn units of parcel)	00.000	05.400	00.000	00.044	45.50/	00.40/
Unit of parcel	20,606	25,139	23,803	30,944	15.5%	23.1%
ASP (RMB/unit)						
Per unit of parcel	1.37	1.35	1.30	1.27	-5.1%	-6.0%
Unit cost breakdown (RMB)						
Line-haul transportation cost	-0.51	-0.50	-0.51	-0.49	-0.8%	-0.8%
Sorting hub cost	-0.30	-0.29	-0.28	-0.26	-7.4%	-11.2%
Others	-0.19	-0.19	-0.19	-0.19	-1.5%	-1.5%
Total	-1.03	-1.01	-1.00	-0.96	-3.3%	-4.4%
Unit gross margin (RMB)	0.33	0.35	0.30	0.31	-10.4%	-10.6%
(RMB mn)						
Revenue						
Express delivery, accessories & others	28,169	34,022	30,894	39,359	9.7%	15.7%
Freight forwarding services	1,795	1,938	2,142	2,356	19.4%	21.6%
Total	29,963	35,960	33,036	41,715	10.3%	16.0%
Revenue growth					ppt	
Express delivery, accessories & others	23%	21%	32%	27%	9.8	6.6
Freight forwarding services	10%	8%	15%	10%	5.0	2.0
Revenue	22%	20%	31%	26%	9.4	6.3
Gross margin					ppt	
Express delivery, accessories & others	24%	26%	23%	24%	(1.4)	(1.2)
Freight forwarding services	5%	5%	8%	8%	3.0	3.0
Gross margin	28%	29%	22%	23%	(5.6)	(5.5)
Net profit	6,261	7,850	5,375	7,127	-14.1%	-9.2%

Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates

Figure 11: Earnings sensitivity to ASP and unit line-haul transportation cost

2021E Net profit (RMB mn)		ASP (RMB/unit)								
		1.23	1.27	1.30	1.32	1.36				
	-0.534	3,571	4,339	4,851	5,363	6,131				
	-0.519	3,886	4,654	5,166	5,677	6,445				
Unit line-haul	-0.509	4,096	4,864	5,375	5,887	6,655				
transportation cost (RMB)	-0.499	4,306	5,073	5,585	6,097	6,865				
	-0.484	4,620	5,388	5,900	6,412	7,179				

Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates

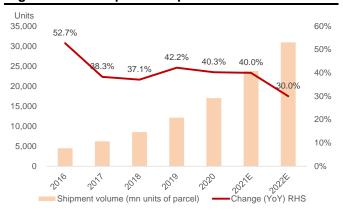
Figure 12: Earnings sensitivity to ASP and unit sorting hub cost

2021E Net profit (RMB mn)		ASP (RMB/unit)							
		1.23	1.27	1.30	1.32	1.36			
	-0.293	3,809	4,576	5,088	5,600	6,368			
	-0.284	3,981	4,749	5,260	5,772	6,540			
Unit sorting hub cost	-0.279	4,096	4,864	5,375	5,887	6,655			
(RMB)	-0.273	4,211	4,978	5,490	6,002	6,770			
	-0.265	4,383	5,151	5,663	6,174	6,942			

Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates

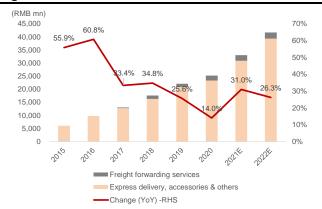


Figure 13: ZTO's parcel shipment volume forecast



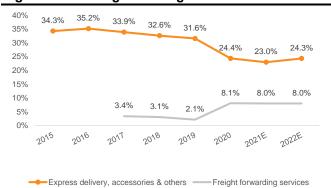
Source: Company data, CMBIS estimate

Figure 14: ZTO's revenue forecast



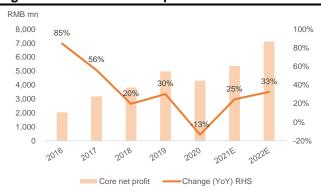
Source: Company data, CMBIS estimate

Figure 15: ZTO's gross margin trend



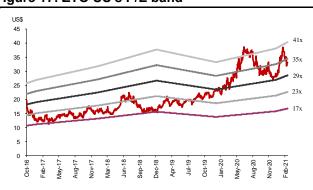
Source: Company data, CMBIS estimate

Figure 16: ZTO's core net profit forecast



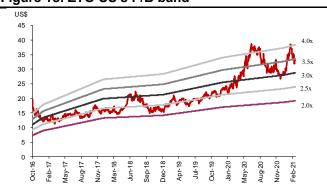
Source: Company data, CMBIS estimate

Figure 17: ZTO US's P/E band



Source: Bloomberg, Company data, CMBIS estimates

Figure 18: ZTO US's P/B band



Source: Bloomberg, Company data, CMBIS estimates

Major risk factors: (1) prolonged price war; (2) slowdown of online retail sales; (3) lack of effective control over network partners.



## **Financial Summary**

Income statement	EV40 *	EV40 4	EV00 A	EV04E	EVOCE	Cash flow summary	EV401	FV404	EV004	EV01E	EVANE
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)	FY18A	FY19A	FY20A 25,214	FY21E	FY22E	YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)	FY18A	FY19A	<b>FY20A</b> 5,016	FY21E	FY22E
Revenue	17,604	22,110	•	33,036	41,715	Pretax profit	5,317	6,750	,	6,269	8,410
Cost of sales	(12,240)	(15,489)	(19,377)	(25,764)	(31,945)	Finance cost	1	0	35	36	36
Gross profit	5,365	6,621	5,837	7,272	9,770	Interest income	(401)	(585)	(443)	(427)	(340)
Other operating income	178	388	581	661	834	Profit or loss of associates	19	8	19	6	(3)
SG&A expense	(1,211)	(1,546)	(1,664)	(2,048)	(2,503)	Depreciation & amortization	854	1,265	1,840	2,744	3,558
EBIT	4,332	5,463	4,754	5,884	8,102	Income tax paid	(1,068)	(1,119)	(690)	(878)	(1,261)
Net finance income/(cost)	400	585	407	391	304	Change in working capital	(443)	(260)	(1,381)	(459)	(308)
Finance income	401	585	443	427	340	Others	(275)	(338)	111	(0)	(0)
Finance expenses	(1)	0	(35)	(36)	(36)	Cash flow from operation	4,003	5,719	4,508	7,292	10,090
Gain/(loss) on disposal	563	(3)	1	0	0	Net capex on PP&E	(3,324)	(4,636)	(7,853)	(10,000)	(10,000)
Impairment of equity investees	0	(56)	(1)	0	0	Purchase of land use rights	(657)	(591)	(1,927)	(700)	(700
Unrealized gain fr. equity investee	0	754	0	0	0	Investment in JV/associates	(1,865)	(218)	0	(50)	(50)
FX gain/(loss)	41	13	(127)	0	0	Investment in subsidiaries	(110)	(20)	0	0	(50)
• ,			, ,				, ,	, ,			
Profit of JV & associates	(19)	(8)	(19)	(6)	3	Interest received	401	585	443	427	340
Pretax profit	5,317	6,750	5,016	6,269	8,410	Others	(7,718)	629	5,346	0	
Income tax	(929)	(1,078)	(690)	(878)	(1,261)	Cash flow from investing	(13,274)	(4,250)	• • •	(10,323)	(10,410)
After tax profit	4,388	5,671	4,326	5,392	7,148	Equity financing/(repurchase)	8,122	(763)	9,842	0	C
MI	(5)	3	(14)	(16)	(21)	Net bank borrowings	(250)	0	1,433	0	C
Net profit	4,383	5,674	4,312	5,375	7,127	Dividend paid	(895)	(1,271)	(1,667)	(1,355)	(1,666)
Recurring net profit	3,820	4,979	4,312	5,375	7,127	Others	66	51	(1,271)	0	C
						Cash flow from financing	7,042	(1,982)	8,337	(1,390)	(1,702)
D&A	854	1,265	1,840	2,744	3,558	Change in cash	(2,229)	(513)	8,853	(4,421)	(2,022)
EBITDA	5,186	6,727	6,595	8,628	11,659	Cash at beginning of the year	5,425	4,623	5,270	14,213	9,791
LBIIDA	3,100	0,121	0,000	0,020	11,000	Exchange gains/(losses) and others	1,426	1,161	89	(0)	(0)
						Cash at the end of the year	4,623	5,270	14,213	9,791	7,769
						Cash at the cha of the year	7,020	0,210	14,210	3,731	7,700
Balance sheet						Key ratios					
YE 31 Dec (RMB mn)	FY18A	FY19A	FY20A	FY21E	FY22E	YE 31 Dec	FY18A	FY19A	FY20A	FY21E	FY22E
Non-current assets	18,449	25,792	36,880	45,344	53,108	Sales mix (%)	11104	11134	1 1204		
PP&E	9,036	12,471	18,565	25,927	32,489	Express delivery, accessories & others	93%	94%	93%	94%	94%
Land use right	1,969	2,509	4,361	4,961	5,548	Freight forwarding services	7%	6%	7%	6%	6%
Investment in JV/associates	2,207	3,109	3,224	3,268	3,321	Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Operating lease right-of-use assets	0	902	876	936	996	Profit & loss ratio (%)					
Goodwill	4,242	4,242	4,242	4,242	4,242	Gross margin	30.5	29.9	23.1	22.0	23.4
Long term financing receivables	0	550	1,970	2,374	2,883	EBITDA margin	29.5	30.4	26.2	26.1	27.9
Intangible assets	54	48	42	36	29	EBIT margin	24.6	24.7	18.9	17.8	19.4
Long-term investment	0	946	1,842	1,842	1,842	Net profit margin	24.9	25.7	17.2	16.3	17.1
Others	623	612	1,037	1,037	1,037	Growth (%)					
Deferred tax assets	318	404	721	721	721	Revenue	34.8	25.6	14.0	31.0	26.3
Current assets	21,234	20,098	22,325	18,720	16,685	Gross profit	23.5	23.4	(11.8)	24.6	34.4
Inventories	44	44	53	88	69	EBITDA	n/a	29.7	(2.0)	30.8	35.1
Account receivables	597	676	746	1,155	1,245	EBIT	15.6	26.1	(13.0)	23.8	37.7
Financing receivables	518	511	492	865	780	Core net profit	19.8	30.3	(13.4)	24.7	32.6
Advances to suppliers	338	438	589	589	589	Balance sheet ratio					
Short-term investment	13,600	11,113	3,690	3,690	3,690	Current ratio (x)	4.1	3.0	2.4	1.8	1.6
Others	1,515	2,039	2,408	2,408	2,408	Trade receivable turnover days	9	15	29	35	34
Restricted cash	0	7	133	133	133	Inventory turnover days	1	1	1	1	1
Cash	4,623	5,270	14,213	9,791	7,769	Payable turnover days	33	33	29	29	30
Current liabilities	5,141	6,681	9,348	10,170	10,417	Net debt / total equity (%)	Net cash	Net cash	Net cash	Net cash	Net cash
Account payables	1,312	1,475	1,636	2,458	2,706	Profitability (%)	40.4	40.0	0.0	0.7	40.0
Operating lease liabilities	0	299	246	246	246	ROA	13.4	13.3	8.2	8.7	10.6
Bank borrowings	0	0	1,433	1,433	1,433	ROE Per share data	13.7	13.7	9.9	10.5	12.8
Tax payable Advanced from customers	406 437	80 1 211	49	49	49	EPS (RMB)	E 02	7 04	E 40	6 14	0 F /
Others	437 2,987	1,211 3,616	1,120 4,864	1,120 4,864	1,120 4,864	Core EPS (RMB)	5.83 5.08	7.24 6.35	5.43 5.43	6.44 6.44	8.54 8.54
Non-current liabilities	2,967 <b>272</b>	3,616 <b>806</b>	4,864 <b>757</b>	4,864 <b>757</b>	4,864 <b>757</b>	BVPS (RMB)	43.56	48.98	58.67	63.48	70.02
Bank borrowings	0	0	0	0	0	DPS (RMB)	1.69	2.13	1.70	2.00	2.65
•	158	208	255	255	255	Di O (IXIND)	1.09	2.13	1.70	2.00	2.00
Deferred tax liabilities Non-current operating lease					502						
THOSE CONTOUR OPERATION IEASE	0	504	502	502	502						
·	111	0.4	(0)	(0)	(0)						
Others Shareholders' equity	114 <b>34,217</b>	94 <b>38,303</b>	(0) <b>48,979</b>	(0) <b>53,000</b>	(0) <b>58,460</b>						

Source: Company data, CMBIS estimates



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