CMB International Global Markets | Equity Research | Company Update



## AIA Group Ltd. (1299 HK)

# FY23 VNB +33% in line; strong MCV momentum sustained to 1-2M24

AIA reported full-year results with VNB +33% YoY (CER basis, +30% on AER basis) to US\$4,034mn, and ANP +45% YoY (CER basis, +41% on AER basis) to US\$7,650mn, in line with our forecasts (VNB +31%, ANP +44% on AER basis). We saw a narrowed downtrend in VNB margin to 52.6%, sequentially improved by 3.8pct to 54.5% in 2H23 (vs 1H23: 50.7%). Among double-digit growth in four segments, AIA HK's VNB remarkably rose 82% YoY underpinned by sequential growth in 4Q23 by capturing MCV demands against a sector-wide slowdown. The solid MCV momentum continued year-to-date, driving a double-digit VNB uptick in 1-2M24, which would support a mid-double digit VNB gain in 1Q24 in our view.

Despite geographical highlights, we saw mixed patterns in profitability and EV, adversely impacted by investment return variances and higher medical claims, jointly offsetting the increase from new business growth. Looking ahead, we are positive on AlA's long-term OPAT growth, as 1) the growth of contractual service margin (CSM) release (+6% YoY) implying future profit release outpaced that of current OPAT(-1% YoY) and 2) medical claims will normalize in product repricing.

We rebase our valuation by taking into account both P/EV vs RoEV on Gordon Growth and Appraisal Value approach by adjusting assumptions of 1) long-term RoEV from 14% to 11%; 2) risk discount rate from 10% to 9.5%, and 3) involving 8.6% long-term investment return in calc. the discount factor, as shown in <u>Fig. 4</u>. The new price target (TTM) of HK\$96.5 implies 1.8x FY24E P/EV. Reiterate BUY.

- AIA China VNB +28% YoY in Feb-Dec implying resilience. AIA China grew full-year VNB by 20% YoY, of which agency VNB was +20% YoY in Feb-Dec as pandemic disruptions subsided. Agency VNB margin rose to 63.4% in 2H23, +6.7pct from 56.7% in 1H23 given product mix shifting to traditional protection and lucrative long-term savings, such as private pension and retirement plans with VNB margin >65%. Critical illness (CI) made up ~70% of protection VNB in 2H23. The bancassurance advanced rapidly, making up 6% of total VNB with a consecutively increasing margin to >30% by Jan 2024. The insurer carried on with provincial expansions, to 1-2 cities per year. Looking ahead, we expect the long-term savings momentum to sustain within a prolonged low-interest-rate environment; yet from 2Q24 onwards, a high base might be a pressure.
- CSM +6% YoY outgrew OPAT bolstering financial health. The IFRS OPAT (-1% YoY on CER basis) was below market expectations, as a first decline in company's history. We see this fall a result of: 1) US\$221m medical claims that negatively offset the CSM contribution (+6% YoY) to insurance service results (-5% YoY); and 2) a low CSM beg. balance dragged by prior-year VNB decline. Yet, we are unconcerned as of: 1) the CSM, which implies the unearned profit of in-force policies for future, outgrew OPAT growth by +6% YoY, showing the Group's financial health with incremental future profit release; 2) EV operating profit +30% YoY to US\$8.9bn supporting consistent EV growth; 3) the insurer refined EV assumptions by lowering the risk discount rate (RDR) of AIA China, AIA Thailand and AIA Malaysia, and increasing the long-term equity investment return of most markets. After the refinement, the avg. RDR is -45bps to 9.5% and avg. long-term equity return is +8.5bps to 8.9% giving upside for future EV.
- Revise price target to HK\$96.5. We revise our valuation with a new price target derived from P/EV vs RoEV and Appraisal Value approach. We adjust assumptions of 1) long-term RoEV from 14% to 11%; 2) risk discount rate from 10% to 9.5%; and 3) adding 8.6% investment return to calc. for discount factor. The stock is now trading at 1.2x FY24E P/EV, while our new price target implies 1.8x FY24E P/EV. We are positive on the insurer's organic growth, disciplined capital management, and consistent returns to shareholders. Reiterate BUY.

### **BUY (Maintain)**

 Target Price
 HK\$96.50

 (Previous TP
 HK\$118.00)

 Up/Downside
 58.2%

 Current Price
 HK\$61.00

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#### Stock Data

Mkt Cap (HK\$ mn)	693,082.0
Avg 3 mths t/o (HK\$ mn)	1,647.7
52w High/Low (HK\$)	85.90/59.10
Total Issued Shares (mn)	11362.0

Source: FactSet

### **Shareholding Structure**

Bank of New York Mellon Corp.	10.2%
JPMorgan Chase & Co.	8.9%
Source: HKEx	

#### **Share Performance**

	Absolute	Relative
1-mth	-3.6%	-8.1%
3-mth	-10.2%	-9.8%
6-mth	-8.3%	-0.3%

Source: FactSet



Source: FactSet

### Auditor: PwC

### **Recent Reports:**

- 1. AIA Group Ltd. (1299 HK) Longterm growth intact, expect 2H22 recovery (link)
- 2. AIA Group Ltd. (1299 HK) Pent-up demands to boost HK growth; Raise TP (link)
- 3. AIA Group Ltd. (1299 HK) 2H22 recovery in line; Upbeat trend in HK and mainland China in 2M23 (link)
- 4. AIA Group Ltd. (1299 HK) Strong 1Q23 momentum (link)



Fa	rnin	as	Sum	mary
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(YE 31 Dec)	FY22A	FY23A	FY24E	FY25E	FY26E
Net profit (US\$ mn)	3,365	3,781	6,357	6,970	7,718
EPS (Reported)(US\$)	0.28	0.33	0.58	0.64	0.73
Consensus EPS (US\$)	n.a	n.a	0.58	0.65	0.71
VNB/share (US\$)	0.27	0.36	0.42	0.48	0.56
Group embedded value / share (US\$)	5.87	5.94	6.60	7.28	8.07
P/B (x)	2.6	2.7	1.9	1.8	1.7
P/Embedded value (x)	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0
Dividend yield (%)	2.0	2.1	2.9	3.3	3.7
ROE (%)	6.6	8.8	15.0	15.5	16.2

Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates

### Rerating rationale

■ RoEV vs P/EV in addition to Appraisal Value. In our previous model, we adopted only the Appraisal Value approach to derive the price target (HK\$118) for AIA, given the fact that the pan-Asian life insurer operates businesses primarily in emerging markets. The key variable of the approach stands on the new business multiplier (NBM), which depends on actuarial assumptions incl. risk discount rate (RDR) and long-term equity investment return to derive a proper discount factor. The formula of the approach is stated in the following:

Total value = Embedded Value + Value of New Business \* New Business Multiplier

The approach focuses more on new business growth, given the emerging markets usually have lower insurance penetration and density; and yet it may not provide a full picture of embedded value (EV) movements in our view. The change in EV beginning and ending balance shows a process of the insurer's value generation, and differences between the pricing and actual variances, from both operating and investment perspectives. Given increasing macro uncertainties, we incorporate the RoEV vs P/EV based on Gordon Growth in addition to the Appraisal Value approach to derive our new price target (TTM) at HK\$96.5 per share. (Fig. 3/Fig. 4)

- Long-term RoEV from 14% to 11%: Aside from the operating RoEV, we also include other metrics, i.e. investment experience variances, effect of changes in economic assumptions, other non-operating variances and changes in FX rates, etc. as part of the return on embedded value. We see a trend of negative investment variances in recent years, offsetting the growth of total EV profit. On a 10-year+ horizon, we find the Group's RoEV fluctuates at around 11%.
- Risk discount rate down from 10.0% to 9.5%: In 2023, the Group revised down the core economic assumptions for AIA China, given the risk discount rate (RDR) contracted by 53bps YoY from 9.69% to 9.16% and local equities return dropped by 50bps YoY from 9.30% to 8.80%, as a result of a prolonged low-interest-rate environment and gloomy market sentiment, as shown in Fig.1/Fig.2. After the cut, the average risk discount rate of the Group was down 50bps YoY from 9.89% to 9.45% (Fig.1).



### **Embedded value economic assumptions by market**

Figure 1: Risk discount rate (RDR) and 10-year bond yields (%) by market

	Ris	k discount ra	10	10-year govt. bond yields (%)				
Markets	FY21	FY22	1H23	FY23	FY21	FY22	1H23	FY23
AIA Australia	6.41	7.43	7.43	7.93	1.67	3.30	3.30	3.80
AIA China	9.72	9.69	9.67	9.16	2.78	3.70	3.70	3.50
AIA Hong Kong	6.98	7.46	7.45	7.97	1.51	3.00	3.00	3.50
AIA Indonesia	12.98	13.09	13.13	13.17	6.38	7.50	7.50	7.50
AIA Korea	8.1	8.91	8.86	8.81	2.26	3.00	3.00	3.00
AIA Malaysia	8.56	8.92	8.86	8.80	3.58	4.50	4.50	4.50
AIA New Zealand	6.53	7.43	7.39	7.85	2.39	3.30	3.30	3.80
AIA Philippines	11.8	12.10	12.10	12.10	4.82	5.80	5.80	6.00
AIA Singapore	6.59	7.27	7.22	7.38	1.67	2.90	2.90	3.10
AIA Sri Lanka	14.7	21.00	21.00	14.70	11.71	10.00	10.00	10.00
AIA Taiwan	7.25	7.67	7.64	7.62	0.73	1.50	1.50	1.50
AIA Thailand	7.69	8.09	8.00	7.81	1.9	3.20	3.20	3.40
AIA Vietnam	9.16	9.57	9.55	9.54	2.08	4.00	4.00	4.00
Average	8.96	9.89	9.87	9.45	3.34	4.28	4.28	4.43
Change (bps)		93.5bps		(44.5bps)		94.0bps		14.6bps

Source: Company annual report, CMBIGM

Figure 2: Local equity investment return (%) and risk premium (%) by market

		Risk prem	ium (%)					
Markets	FY21	FY22	1H23	FY23	FY21	FY22	1H23	FY23
AIA Australia	6.60	7.60	7.60	8.10	4.93	4.30	4.30	4.30
AIA China	9.30	9.30	9.30	8.80	6.52	5.60	5.60	5.30
AIA Hong Kong	7.00	7.50	7.50	8.00	5.49	4.50	4.50	4.50
AIA Indonesia	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	5.62	4.50	4.50	4.50
AIA Korea	6.50	7.30	7.30	7.30	4.24	4.30	4.30	4.30
AIA Malaysia	8.60	9.10	9.10	9.10	5.02	4.60	4.60	4.60
AIA New Zealand	6.80	7.80	7.80	8.30	4.41	4.50	4.50	4.50
AIA Philippines	10.50	10.80	10.80	10.80	5.68	5.00	5.00	4.80
AIA Singapore	6.70	7.40	7.40	7.60	5.03	4.50	4.50	4.50
AIA Sri Lanka	11.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	-0.71	2.00	2.00	2.00
AIA Taiwan	5.60	6.10	6.10	6.10	4.87	4.60	4.60	4.60
AIA Thailand	7.70	8.20	8.20	8.10	5.80	5.00	5.00	4.70
AIA Vietnam	8.80	9.30	9.30	9.30	6.72	5.30	5.30	5.30
Average	8.24	8.80	8.80	8.88	4.89	4.52	4.52	4.45
Change (bps)		56.2bps		8.5bps		-37.8bps		-6.2bps

Source: Company annual report, CMBIGM



### Valuation

Figure 3: P/EV vs RoEV approach based on Gordon Growth Model

	2021	2022	2023	2024E	2025E	2026E
Required rate of return	9.0%	9.9%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%
Risk-free rate	3.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Risk premium	5.6%	5.6%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%	5.2%
Beta	0.7	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
COE	7.2%	9.7%	8.9%	9.6%	9.6%	9.6%
RoEV (10yr.avg)	12.7%	10.9%	10.4%	11.0%	11.0%	11.0%
Terminal growth rate	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
P/EV multiple (x)	2.30	1.18	1.26	1.22	1.22	1.22
EV	72,987	68,865	67,447	71,790	77,799	84,794
Total value (US\$ mn)	168,015	81,256	84,719	87,514	94,840	103,366
No. of shares outstanding	12,097	11,734	11,362	10,884	10,690	10,505
Target price (US\$)	13.89	6.92	7.46	8.04	8.87	9.84
USD/HKD	7.81	7.80	7.81	7.81	7.81	7.81
Target price (HK\$)				62.80	69.29	76.85
Implied VNB multiplier (x)	28.2x	4.0x	4.3x	3.5x	3.3x	3.2x

Source: CMBIGM estimates

Figure 4: Appraisal Value approach

	2021	2022	2023	2024E	2025E	2026E	Terminal Value
EV (US\$ mn)	72,987	68,865	67,447	71,790	77,799	84,794	
VNB (US\$ mn)	3,366	3,092	4,034	4,497	5,130	5,856	
Risk discount rate (RDR)			9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%
Long-term investment return			8.6%	8.6%	8.6%	8.6%	8.6%
Discount factor				0.9132	0.9054	0.8977	0.9167
VNB growth%				11.5%	14.1%	14.2%	3.0%
New business FV				1.00	1.14	1.30	
New business PV					1.03	1.17	20.64
VNB multiplier (x)				22.8x			
Target valuation (US\$ mn)				174,488	194,953	218,538	
No. of shares outstanding				10,884	10,690	10,505	
Target price (US\$)				16.0	18.2	20.8	
USD/HKD				7.81	7.81	7.81	
Target price (HK\$)				125.2	142.4	162.5	
Avg. TP on basis of two methods:							
Implied price per share (HK\$)				94.0	105.9	119.7	
Implied EV per share (HK\$)				1.82x	1.86x	1.90x	
CMBI price target (TTM), HK\$				96.5			

Source: CMBIGM estimates



### Sensitivity analysis of VNB multiplier for Appraisal Value

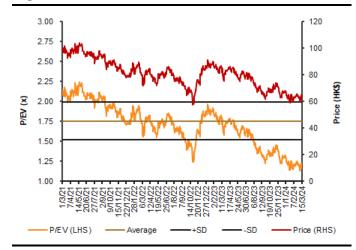
Figure 5: Sensitivity analysis of VNB multiplier for Appraisal Value

		Terminal growth (g)										
	22.8x	0.50%	1.00%	1.50%	2.00%	2.50%	3.0%	3.50%	4.00%	4.50%	5.00%	5.50%
	6.0%	26.2x	28.7x	31.8x	35.6x	40.5x	47.1x	56.3x	70.1x	93.1x	139.1x	277.2x
	6.5%	24.2x	26.3x	28.8x	31.9x	35.7x	40.7x	47.3x	56.5x	70.4x	93.5x	139.8x
	7.0%	22.5x	24.3x	26.4x	28.9x	32.0x	35.9x	40.8x	47.5x	56.8x	70.7x	93.9x
	7.5%	21.0x	22.5x	24.3x	26.5x	29.0x	32.1x	36.0x	41.0x	47.7x	57.0x	71.0x
	8.0%	19.7x	21.1x	22.6x	24.4x	26.6x	29.1x	32.2x	36.1x	41.2x	47.9x	57.2x
	8.5%	18.6x	19.8x	21.1x	22.7x	24.5x	26.6x	29.2x	32.4x	36.3x	41.3x	48.1x
<b>5</b> .	9.0%	17.6x	18.7x	19.9x	21.2x	22.8x	24.6x	26.7x	29.3x	32.5x	36.4x	41.5x
Discount rate (r)	9.5%	16.7x	17.7x	18.7x	19.9x	21.3x	22.8x	24.7x	26.8x	29.4x	32.6x	36.5x
(.,	10.0%	16.0x	16.8x	17.7x	18.8x	20.0x	21.3x	22.9x	24.7x	26.9x	29.5x	32.7x
	10.5%	15.2x	16.0x	16.8x	17.8x	18.8x	20.0x	21.4x	23.0x	24.8x	27.0x	29.6x
	11.0%	14.6x	15.3x	16.0x	16.9x	17.8x	18.9x	20.1x	21.5x	23.1x	24.9x	27.1x
	11.5%	14.0x	14.6x	15.3x	16.1x	16.9x	17.9x	19.0x	20.2x	21.5x	23.1x	25.0x
	12.0%	13.5x	14.0x	14.7x	15.4x	16.1x	17.0x	17.9x	19.0x	20.2x	21.6x	23.2x
	12.5%	13.0x	13.5x	14.1x	14.7x	15.4x	16.2x	17.0x	18.0x	19.1x	20.3x	21.7x
	13.0%	12.5x	13.0x	13.5x	14.1x	14.7x	15.4x	16.2x	17.1x	18.0x	19.1x	20.4x

Source: CMBIGM estimates

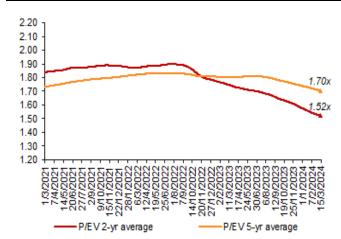
### 12M forward P/EV & Historical avg. P/EV

Figure 6: AIA 12M forward P/EV band



Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates Note: Stock price quoted by market close on 15 Mar 2024.

Figure 7: AIA's historical 2-yr and 5-yr avg. P/EV



Source: Company data, Bloomberg, CMBIGM estimates Note: Stock price quoted by market close on 15 Mar 2024.



# **Financial Summary**

NCOME STATEMENT	2021A	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
YE 31 Dec (US\$ mn)						
nsurance revenue		16,319	17,514	18,432	19,965	21,866
Contracts not measured under PAA:		14,524	15,107	15,736	16,946	18,484
Contracts measured under PAA		1,795	2,407	2,696	3,019	3,382
nsurance service expenses		(10,434)	(12,078)	(12,435)	(13,411)	(14,615)
Contracts not measured under PAA:		(8,869)	(9,775)	(9,862)	(10,528)	(11,386)
Contracts measured under PAA		(1,565)	(2,303)	(2,574)	(2,883)	(3,229)
Net expenses from reinsurance contracts held		(419)	(345)	(319)	(351)	(386)
nsurance service results		5,466	5,091	5,677	6,204	6,865
Net finance (expenses)/income from insurance contracts		31,122	(10,301)	(7,305)	(8,072)	(9,217)
Net investment results		3,597	3,792	3,508	3,750	4,018
Other expenses		(1,512)	(1,534)	(1,580)	(1,627)	(1,676)
Other results		(1,438)	(1,555)	(1,602)	(1,650)	(1,699)
Profit before tax		4,415	4,883	7,431	8,145	9,017
ncome taxes		(1,050)	(1,102)	(1,073)	(1,175)	(1,300)
Net profit		3,365	3,781	6,357	6,970	7,718
Net profit attributable to shareholders		3,331	3,764	6,375	6,990	7,739

BALANCE SHEET	2021A	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
YE 31 Dec (US\$ mn)						
ASSETS						
Intangible assets	2,914	3,277	3,615	3,688	3,762	3,837
Investments in associates and joint ventures	831	2,056	1,331	1,385	1,441	1,499
Property	2,744	2,844	4,058	4,222	4,307	4,393
Investment property	4,716	4,600	4,504	4,686	4,875	5,072
Insurance contract assets	3,681	2,037	1,457	1,530	1,606	1,687
Reinsurance contract assets	6,436	5,763	6,047	6,349	6,667	7,000
Financial investments:	278,231	232,711	248,958	272,095	294,491	321,835
At amortised cost:	6,910	6,353	5,888	6,435	6,965	7,612
At fair value through other comprehensive income:	103,580	86,060	88,612	96,847	104,818	114,551
At fair value through profit or loss:	167,741	140,298	154,458	168,812	182,707	199,672
Deferred tax assets	104	229	301	307	313	320
Current tax recoverable	120	117	207	211	215	220
Other assets	6,486	4,524	4,316	4,403	4,491	4,582
Cash and cash equivalents	4,989	8,020	11,525	12,585	13,612	14,865
Assets in disposal group held for sale	0	4,293	0	0	0	0
Total assets	311,252	270,471	286,319	311,460	335,780	365,309
LIABILITIES						
Insurance contract liabilities	217,773	181,851	203,271	216,829	231,640	248,082
Investment contract liabilities	13,896	9,092	9,170	10,110	11,146	12,289
Borrowings	9,588	11,206	11,800	13,010	14,343	15,813
Obligations under repurchase agreements	1,588	1,748	3,461	3,601	3,746	3,898
Derivative financial instruments	1,392	8,638	8,035	8,360	8,697	9,049
Provisions	186	153	174	181	188	196
Deferred tax liabilities	4,103	3,409	3,204	3,333	3,468	3,608
Current tax liabilities	389	467	387	403	419	436
Other liabilities	5,121	4,264	4,887	10,663	14,907	22,000
Liabilities in disposal group held for sale	0	4,111	0	0	0	0
Total liabilities	254,745	225,323	244,725	266,847	288,938	315,780
EQUITIES						
Share capital	14,160	14,171	14,176	14,189	14,204	14,220
Reserves	(7,134)	(15,998)	(17,398)	(17,627)	(17,868)	(18,123)
Retained profits	48,997	46,499	44,333	47,562	50,012	52,933
Total shareholders' equity	56,023	44,672	41,111	44,124	46,348	49,030
Non-controlling interests	484	476	483	489	494	499
Total equity	56,507	45,148	41,594	44,613	46,843	49,529
Total liabilities & equity	311,252	270,471	286,319	311,460	335,780	365,309



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PER SHARE DATA	2021A	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
YE 31 Dec						
DPS (US\$)	0.19	0.20	0.21	0.23	0.26	0.29
EPS (Reported, US\$)	0.62	0.28	0.33	0.58	0.64	0.73
Diluted EPS (US\$)	0.61	0.28	0.33	0.57	0.64	0.73
Consensus EPS (US\$)			0.33	0.58	0.65	0.71
Group embedded value/share (US\$)	6.03	5.87	5.94	6.60	7.28	8.07
VNB/share (US\$)	0.28	0.27	0.36	0.42	0.48	0.56
No. of shares outstanding, basic	12,097	11,734	11,362	10,884	10,690	10,505
PROFITABILITY	2021A	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
YE 31 Dec						
Return on equity (ROE)	12.5%	6.6%	8.8%	15.0%	15.5%	16.2%
Return on asset (ROA)	2.3%	1.1%	1.4%	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%
Operating return on embedded Value	12.1%	9.0%	13.0%	14.2%	14.8%	15.3%
VNB margin (FYP APE basis)	59.3%	57.0%	52.6%	53.1%	54.2%	55.3%
VALUATION	2021A	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
YE 31 Dec						
P/Embedded value (x)	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0
P/B	2.6	2.6	2.7	1.9	1.8	1.7
Div yield (%)	1.6	2.0	2.1	2.9	3.3	3.7

Source: Company data, CMBIGM estimates. Note: The calculation of net cash includes financial assets.



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