

During the year under review, the Group continued its strategic focus on building and growing the ZONE telecommunications business. Revenue from the ZONE business increased by 33.2% to HK\$298.5 million compared with HK\$224.2 million for the previous year. Through sustainable growth of the ZONE business in the United States, Hong Kong and Singapore, combined with prudent financial control and operational efficiencies, the Group was able to achieve further improvement in its operating results.

The ZONE operation in the United States recorded a revenue growth of 56.3%, increasing from HK\$113.6 million in 2001 to HK\$177.5 million. The operating loss for ZONE US reduced by 15.7% from HK\$96.9 million for the previous year to HK\$81.7 million. Its ZoneLD service targeted at residential customers and small businesses continued to increase its subscriber base mainly as a result of customers acquired through its on-line partners. Continued growth is expected to be derived mainly from the ZoneCMS service which is targeted at the enterprise and corporate customers.

In 2002, ZONE Hong Kong and ZONE Singapore collectively accounted for 38.2% of the Group's revenue and achieved positive EBITDA (Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation). Turnover for ZONE Hong Kong and ZONE Singapore, collectively, increased by 9.5% compared with the previous year from HK\$110.6 million to HK\$121.1 million.

Improvements in the operating result for ZONE Hong Kong was achieved mainly through increase in operating gross margins, reduction in customer churn and further operational efficiency gains. Looking ahead, ZONE Hong Kong will continue to improve its business performance through targeted sales and marketing initiatives, regular customer retention programs and the introduction of value-added services including fax to e-mail, international call forwarding, short messaging services (SMS) and calling card products aimed at niche markets.

ZONE Singapore achieved sustained growth in its customer base and revenue despite intense competition. ZONE Singapore was successful in securing arrangements with key carrier partners to provide high quality service at competitive price. This has resulted in an increase in the gross margin and has also enabled ZONE Singapore to competitively price its services to the business segment of the market.

Following the divestment of the Group's interest in the event management-related business in January 2003, the revenue contribution from the non-telecom businesses will continue to be less significant in the coming year. In 2002, the revenue derived from the non-telecom subsidiaries was HK\$18.2 million, representing 5.8% of the Group's total revenue.

Despite extremely competitive and difficult economic market conditions the Group has managed to record continuous revenue growth in and steady improvements to its operating results in 2002. The Group's key business focus in 2003 would be to continue its revenue growth while keeping tight financial and operational discipline with the objective of achieving positive EBITDA. The Group will focus on increasing its sales and marketing efforts, improving customer retention and introducing additional innovative value-added services in order to improve ZONE's operating results.

