Principal Accounting Policies

Accounting Convention
The accounts of the Company and of the Group have been prepared under the historical cost convention, modified by the revaluation of certain fixed assets and dealing positions. The following accounting policies have been consistently applied.

Group Accounts
The consolidated accounts of the Group comprise the accounts of the Company and its subsidiary undertakings for the year ended 31 December 2003 and are drawn up in accordance with Part VII Chapter II of the UK Companies Act 1985 (the Act), applicable Accounting Standards and the British Bankers' Association's Statements of Recommended Accounting Practice.

Company Accounts
The Company accounts are drawn up in accordance with Section 228 of, and Schedule 4 to, the Act and applicable Accounting Standards. As permitted by Section 230 of the Act, the Company's profit and loss account has not been included in these financial statements.

Bad and Doubtful Debts
Provisions for bad and doubtful debts are held in respect of loans and advances, including cross border exposures. The provisions comprise two elements – specific and general.

Provisions against loans and advances are based on an appraisal of the loan portfolio. Specific provisions are made where the repayment of identified loans is in doubt and reflect an estimate of the amount of loss expected. The general provision is for the inherent risk of losses which, although they have not been separately identified, are known from experience to be present in any loan portfolio and to other material uncertainties where specific provisioning is not appropriate. The amount of the general provision reflects past experience and judgements about current conditions in particular locations or business sectors.

Provisions are made against cross border exposures where a country may experience or has experienced external liquidity problems and doubts exist as to whether full recovery will be achieved.

Provisions are applied to write off advances, in part or in whole, when they are considered wholly or partly irrecoverable. In prior years, advances against which provisions were outstanding for two years or more were written down to their net book value. Prior periods have been restated accordingly.

Interest on loans and advances is accrued to income until such time as reasonable doubt exists about its collectability; thereafter, and until all or part of the loan is written off, interest continues to accrue on customers' accounts, but is not included in income. Such suspended interest is deducted from loans and advances on the balance sheet.

Debt Securities, Equity Shares and Treasury Bills
Securities, including equity shares and treasury bills, which are intended for use on a continuing basis in the Group's activities are classified as investment securities. They include portfolios of securities held in countries where the Group is required to maintain a stock of liquid assets. Investment securities are stated at cost less any provision for permanent diminution in value. The cost of dated investment securities is adjusted to reflect the amortisation or accretion of premiums and discounts on acquisition on a straight-line basis over the residual period to maturity. The amortisation and accretion of premiums and discounts are included in interest income.

Securities other than investment securities are classified as dealing securities and are held at market value. Where the market value of such securities is higher than cost, the original cost is not disclosed as its determination is not practicable.

Deferred Taxation
In accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 19 – Deferred tax, deferred taxation is provided in full, subject to the recoverability of deferred tax assets, arising from the inclusion of income and expenditure in taxation computations in periods different from these in which they are included in the financial statements, on timing differences at the rates of taxation anticipated to apply when the differences crystallise.

Equipment Leased to Customers and Instalment Credit Agreements
Assets leased to customers under agreements which transfer substantially all the risks and rewards associated with ownership, other than legal title, are classified as finance leases. The balance sheet amount represents total minimum lease payments receivable less unearned income. Income from finance leases is recognised in the profit and loss account in proportion to the funds invested. Fixed rate instalment credit agreements are treated in a similar manner to finance leases.

Lease agreements other than finance leases are classified as operating leases. Operating leases are included in loans and advances but are treated as fixed assets and depreciated over the shorter of the lease term and the estimated useful life of the asset. The profits arising from operating leases are recognised in the profit and loss account on a straight-line basis over the duration of each lease.

Income arising from the residual interest in instalment credit agreements which have been sold is credited to the profit and loss account as it accrues. Expenses incurred in generating this income are deferred and amortised over the duration of the income flow and in proportion to it.

Foreign Currencies
Assets and liabilities in foreign currencies are expressed in US dollar terms at rates of exchange ruling on the balance sheet date. Profits and losses earned in foreign currencies are expressed in US dollar terms at the average exchange rate of each currency against US dollar during the year. Exchange

differences arising from the balance sheet period end rate and the profit and loss average rate are taken to reserves. Gains or losses arising from positions taken to hedge such profits and losses are included in the profit and loss account.

Translation differences arising from the application of closing rates of exchange to opening net assets denominated in foreign currencies are taken directly to reserves.

Exchange differences arising on the translation of opening net monetary assets and results of operations in areas experiencing hyper-inflation are included in the profit and loss account. Non-monetary assets in these areas are not retranslated.

All other exchange differences arising from normal trading activities, and on branch profit and dividend remittances to the United Kingdom, are included in the profit and loss account.

Investments in Subsidiary Undertakings
Investments in subsidiary undertakings are stated in the balance sheet of the Company at the Company's share of their attributable net assets, together with any long-term loans provided by the Company to the subsidiary undertakings.

Off-Balance Sheet Financial Instruments
Off-balance sheet financial instruments are valued with reference to market prices and the resultant profit or loss is included in the profit and loss account, except where the position in the instrument has been designated as a hedge when the profit or loss resulting from marking them to market is dealt with in the same way as the accounting treatment applied to the position hedged.

Trading positions are valued at market rates, and non-trading positions are valued on the same basis as the items being hedged. Netting occurs where transactions with the same counterparty meet the following requirements. The balances must be determinable and in freely convertible currencies. The Standard Chartered entity can insist on net settlement, and this ability is beyond doubt.

Retirement Benefits
The Group operates some 50 retirement benefit schemes throughout the world. Arrangements for retirement benefits for members of staff are made in a variety of ways in accordance with local regulations and customs. The major schemes are of the defined benefit type.

The pension costs relating to these schemes are assessed in accordance with the advice of qualified actuaries. The assets of the schemes are generally held in separate funds administered by trustees.

The cost of providing pensions and other post-retirement benefits for employees is charged to the profit and loss account over their expected working lives.

The Group is complying with the transitional requirements of FRS17– Retirement Benefits.

Sale and Repurchase Agreements
These are arrangements under which assets are sold by one party to another on terms that provide for the seller to repurchase the assets in certain circumstances at a later date.

Where the substance of the transaction is that of a secured loan, the sale and any apparent profit will not be recorded as such in the books of the seller, but the proceeds of sale will be recorded as a deposit.

Swaps and Sales of Assets
Assets acquired through debt exchange transactions are included in the accounts in the same line as the original underlying asset at the directors' assessment of their fair value. Where the asset represents exposure to a country which is experiencing payment difficulties, it is stated at its principal amount and any provision required to reduce the exposure to its fair value is included with other provisions of a like nature.

Profits and losses on sales of assets are calculated by reference to their net carrying amount, whether at historical cost (less any provisions made) or at a valuation, at the time of disposal.

Tangible Fixed Assets
Freehold and long leasehold premises (premises with unexpired lease terms of 50 years or more) are included in the accounts at their historical cost or at the amount of any subsequent valuation. Leasehold premises with no long-term premium value are not revalued.

Land is not depreciated. Freehold premises are amortised on a straight-line basis over their estimated residual lives. Leasehold premises are amortised over the remaining term of each lease on a straight-line basis.

Equipment, including fixed plant in buildings, computers and capitalised software development expenditure, is stated at cost and is depreciated on a straight-line basis over its expected economic life, which is six years on a weighted average basis.

Intangible Fixed Assets
Any purchased goodwill is capitalised and amortised to nil, on a straight-line basis, over its estimated useful life. The amortisation period of capitalised goodwill is up to 20 years, being the period over which the Group expects to derive economic benefit from the assets. Purchased goodwill arising on consolidation in respect of acquisitions before 1 January 1998 was written off through reserves in the year of acquisition and has not been restated. Any goodwill previously written off through reserves is charged through the profit and loss account in the year of disposal.

Fees and Commissions
Fees or commissions which represent a payment for a service provided in setting up a transaction, are credited to the profit and loss account once they are receivable.

Fees or commissions which in substance amount to an additional interest charge, are recognised over the life of the underlying transaction on a level yield basis.