

Regional
IT Service

地區性資訊
科技服務



主席報告 Chairman's Statement

We remain cautiously optimistic that our stated strategy will allow ASL to benefit in step with a recovery in the market.

我們保持審慎樂觀的態度，深信在本集團明確業務策略的基礎上，自動系統將可隨著市場復甦而得益。

Allen Joseph
PATHMARAJAH
Chairman 主席



On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present the annual report of Automated Systems Holdings Limited (ASL) for the financial year ended 31st March, 2004.

Last year was a year full of challenges and volatility. In the first half of the financial year, the negative impact of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreaks weighed heavily on Hong Kong's economy, and IT industry was not spared its effects. Despite the challenges faced in the markets in which we operate, ASL remained profitable, and indeed, we have been so since the Group's listing in 1997.

The favourable economic measures taken by the Central Government in the second half of the financial year brought positive effect to the economy of Hong Kong, giving rise to increased exports and domestic spending, and, in particular, improved retail sales. However, IT industry took longer time to recover due to the longer planning cycle of corporations on their IT spending. Competition for clients has been intense. The prevailing market conditions, combined with maturity in traditional computer product segment, have resulted in a decline for IT products sales. The segments which are more resilient are those which are higher in the value chain, providing tailored solutions that meet customers' business needs.

In the past few years, the Group has been actively adjusting its strategy to become less reliant on IT product sales and seeking to underpin our competitive advantage by offering business-based solutions, enabling our customers to deliver better business performance in the fast-paced and volatile economic environment. In order to enhance further the skill and knowledge base of the Group, ASL has become the first Java Centre of Excellence (JCOE) partner of Sun Microsystems last year. With this partnership, we are able to acquire updated knowledge and Java technology best practices from Sun Microsystems, improving our skill sets and capability in providing professional services. Moreover, we are pursuing to adopt Capability Maturity Model

本人謹代表董事會欣然宣佈自動系統集團有限公司（「自動系統」）截至二零零四年三月三十一日止財政年度的年報。

往年是充滿挑戰及不穩定的一年。於本財政年度上半年，嚴重急性呼吸系統綜合症（「非典型肺炎」）爆發所帶來的負面影響，令香港經濟百上加斤，資訊科技業亦未能倖免。自一九九七年上市以來，本集團一直錄得盈利，即使現時市況極為艱鉅，我們仍繼續保持盈利記錄。

中央政府於本財政年度下半年所採取的利好經濟措施，為香港經濟帶來正面影響，推動出口及本地消費，尤以零售業的銷售之改善最為顯著。然而，礙於企業就資訊科技開支的規劃週期較長，故資訊科技業復甦所需時間亦相對較長。爭取客戶的競爭亦日趨白熱化。鑑於現行市況激烈，加上傳統電腦產品業務已發展成熟，資訊科技產品的銷售量下降。而較能迅速反彈的電腦業務，則為可提供高價值及度身訂造的電腦系統解決方案，以滿足客戶的業務需要。

於過去幾年，本集團一直積極調整策略，一方面減少對資訊科技產品銷售的依賴，同時致力加強本身的競爭優勢，提供針對個別行業的方案，讓客戶可於變化不定的經濟環境中發揮更出色的業務表現。為進一步擴闊本集團的技術及知識基礎，自動系統於去年成為太陽電腦（Sun Microsystems）首個Java Centre of Excellence (JCOE)合作夥伴。憑藉是項夥伴關係，自動系統得以從太陽電腦汲取最新有關知識及Java技術的最佳實踐應用，從而提升本身的技術及提供專業服務的能力。此外，我們亦有意採用專為資訊科技業而設的先進優質流程模式 Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI)，該模式乃

主席報告 Chairman's Statement

Integration (CMMI), an advanced quality process model for IT industry evolved from the earlier Software Capability Maturity Model (SW-CMM) on software development. To enhance the competitiveness worldwide, the Hong Kong Government has set up a CMM/ CMMI Assessment Grant under the Innovation and Technology Fund and selected ASL as one of the fifteen grantees in the Grant aiming to upgrade the quality management of local IT industry. The hardware and software services divisions at ASL have also been accredited ISO 9001 certification since 1999 and 2000.

In addition to the shift to service business, the Group has been seeking to maintain a balanced revenue mix between the public and commercial sectors. We believe a diversified revenue base is a crucial step towards steady stream of income. The Group's turnover was evenly contributed by the two sectors, underlining ASL's recognised market presence across the board. To further enhance the Group's operational efficiency, we implemented a reorganisation exercise during the third quarter, allowing us to achieve a more competitive cost structure. We believe that these benefits will gradually be realised as the industry recovers.

Being located in the Pearl River Delta brings in a new set of challenges. The rapid growth in this region may see significant integration of low-cost labour and other costs from inland provinces. Yet we see opportunities in this growth as the demand for capital, technology and management services from Hong Kong will grow.

To ASL, Hong Kong is our base of operations, and it is from here that the Group plans on further developing our core competencies with a view to growing the regional component of the Group's turnover and to becoming the hub from which we are able to provide IT services in the region. Together with our sister company in the People's Republic of China, ASL has agreed with a leading international insurance company to provide all IT infrastructure for the setting up of a data centre in Shanghai. Though current market conditions continue to be challenging, we remain cautiously optimistic that our stated strategy will allow ASL to benefit in step with a recovery in the market.

On the social front, the Group received the "Caring Company" award from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service for two consecutive years in recognition of ASL's contribution in employing vulnerable groups. We also participate in other charitable activities such as donating computers to non-profit organisations, and holding company blood donation day.

On behalf of the Board, I thank the management and staff for their dedication and contribution during the challenging financial year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our valued customers, business partners and shareholders for their continued support.

In conclusion, I thank my fellow directors for their whole-hearted co-operation and support.

Allen Joseph PATHMARAJAH
Chairman

Hong Kong, 17th May, 2004

改良自早期用於軟件開發的Software Capability Maturity Model (SW-CMM)。為提升香港於全球的競爭力，特區政府於創新及科技基金特設CMM/CMMI Assessment Grant，自動系統獲選為十五間獲得撥款資助的公司之一。該項資助旨在提升本地資訊科技業的質量管理。此外，自動系統的硬件及軟件服務部門亦於一九九九年及二零零零年獲頒ISO 9001證書。

除轉營服務性業務外，本集團亦致力維持來自公營及商業機構之間的收入平衡。我們相信多元化的收入基礎，乃構成穩定收入來源的關鍵一環。本集團源自公營及商業機構的營業額比例平均，足證自動系統在整個市場上穩佔重要席位。為進一步提升本集團的營運效率，我們於第三季進行重組，藉此達到一個更具競爭力的成本結構。我們相信，隨著資訊科技業漸見起色，本集團將可逐步發揮重組的效益。

珠江三角洲的營商環境為區內企業帶來不少新挑戰。該區發展迅速，企業或須大大整合內地各省份的低成本勞工及其他開支。然而隨著該區對香港所提供的資金、技術及管理服務需求增加，我們可預見這方面的商機將會繼續增長。

自動系統以香港為業務基地，本集團計劃以此基礎進一步拓展核心實力，務求提升本集團於區內的營業額，並成為區內提供資訊科技服務的樞紐。自動系統已聯同國內的姊妹公司，與一家領先的國際保險公司達成協定，為該公司提供於上海設立數據中心所需的一切資訊科技基建。儘管目前市場狀況仍滿途挑戰，我們仍保持審慎樂觀的態度，深信在本集團明確業務策略的基礎上，自動系統將可隨著市場復甦而得益。

社區服務方面，本集團連續兩年獲香港社會服務聯會頒發「商界展關懷」獎項，表揚自動系統在僱用弱勢社群方面的貢獻。我們亦參與其他慈善活動，例如向非牟利機構捐贈電腦及舉辦公司捐血日。

本人謹代表董事會，對管理層及員工於此挑戰重重的財政年度所付出努力及貢獻致以衷心謝意。本人藉此機會感謝本集團寶貴的客戶、業務夥伴及股東一直對我們的支持。

最後，本人謹向各董事同袍的竭誠服務及支持表示謝意。

Allen Joseph PATHMARAJAH
主席

香港，二零零四年五月十七日