



News Release

TSX/NYSE/PSE: MFC SEHK: 945

**For Immediate Release
August 18, 2009**

Manulife launches Manulife Strength-Equity Dividend Fund

Company signals its confidence in the Thai equity market

Bangkok - Manulife Asset Management (Thailand) today announces the launch of the **Manulife Strength-Equity Dividend Fund**. The Public Offering period runs from August 17-25, 2009.

Mr. Sukkawat Prasurtying, CFA, Chief Investment Officer, Acting Chief Executive Officer said: "We are delighted to announce the launch of the Manulife Strength-Equity Dividend Fund. The fund is targeted at investors who are primarily looking for income as it aims to pay a dividend to unit holders on a monthly basis up to a maximum of 12 times per year."

The Fund shall invest, on average, no less than 65 per cent of the net asset value in stocks listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand. The remaining funds will be invested in other assets to seek investment returns as stipulated or approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC) or the Office of the SEC. The investment ratios can be adjusted by the fund managers as appropriate in order to help maximize returns to investors.

Mr Prasurtying continues: "We continue to be positive on the Thai equity market – believing there are reasons to be bullish in the long term. The launch of this fund today broadens our fund range in Thailand, helps us to develop our institutional investment business and is a tangible indication of our confidence in the Thai market."

Available for both retail and institutional investors, this fund offers institutional investors the added benefit of tax privileges on dividends as any dividends received from the fund are tax-exempt for listed companies. For non-listed companies, only 50% of dividends from the fund is subjected to corporate tax. However, the company must hold investment units at least three months before and after the XD date.

Investors who are interested in MAMT funds can contact MAMT directly at Tel. (66) 0-2354-1001, (66) 0-2246-7650 (press '2' for asset management) or via selling agents e.g. Standard Chartered Bank (Thai) PCL., Deutsche Bank AG, Bangkok and Phatra Securities PCL, KGI (Thailand) Securities PCL, Merchant Partner Securities Co., Ltd. and Phillip Securities (Thailand) Co., Ltd.

Manulife Asset Management Thailand is part of MFC Global Investment Management, the asset management division of Manulife Financial. Representing over 100 years of Asia asset management experience, MFC Global Investment Management (MFC GIM) has developed a strong presence across the

region. Locally based investment professionals in 10 locations – including Thailand – offer extensive knowledge of local markets and exception financial expertise.

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Notes to editors:

The Fund has a policy of paying dividend to unitholders a maximum of 12 times per year at a rate up to a maximum of 70% of fund's retained earnings or net profits which include realized gains and unrealized gains or increases in net assets resulting from operations. Dividends paid from net profits or increase in net assets resulting from operations may not include unrealized gains. So, unitholders will have a chance to realize profit without redemption.

In addition, the management company shall reserve the right not to pay dividend if the dividend to be paid is less than Bath 0.10 /Unit in each accounting period or if the dividend payment causes the fund to accumulate a loss in that accounting period.

About Manulife Financial

Manulife Financial is a leading Canadian-based financial services group serving millions of customers in 19 countries and territories worldwide. Operating as Manulife Financial in Canada and Asia, and primarily through John Hancock in the United States, the Company offers clients a diverse range of financial protection products and wealth management services through its extensive network of employees, agents and distribution partners. Funds under management by Manulife Financial and its subsidiaries were Cdn\$405 billion (US\$322 billion) as at March 31, 2009.

Manulife Financial Corporation trades as 'MFC' on the TSX, NYSE and PSE, and under '945' on the SEHK. Manulife Financial can be found on the Internet at www.manulife.com.

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Investments contain risks. Investor should study prospectus before making decision to invest. Past performance is not a guarantee of future result