



DEPOSITORY ANNOUNCEMENT

For Immediate Release

June 1st, 2001

Thomas Murray release second Depository Assessment – STRATE, South Africa

LONDON/NEW YORK – Thomas Murray and Standard & Poor's today unveiled their STRATE Ltd (South African) depository assessment as part of a unique, joint service aimed at analysing the custody and settlement related risks that depositories pose to equity and fixed-income investment advisors and mutual funds.

The two firms launched the Depository Service in response to the enactment of Rule 17f-7 by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in 2000. The rule, which requires mutual funds to evaluate the custody risks of depositories, comes on top of market pressure for independent analysis on the management and risks of central securities depositories globally.

According to the assessment by Thomas Murray and Standard & Poor's, STRATE exhibits low liquidity, asset commitment and counterparty risk exposure based on the systems' design and the settlement guarantees offered by JSE Securities Exchange SA ('JSE'). There is also limited financial and operational risk exposure on the depository at present. However, the degree to which this may change during the next year is dependent on the success of the dematerialisation programme, STRATE's ability to consequently handle higher volumes, and risk of future claims on its assets due to proposed regulatory responsibilities for its participants. These should not adversely affect STRATE's continued development given the full support of market participants.

Commenting on the Depository Service, Monica Singer, CEO of STRATE said "XXXXXXXX."

Simon Thomas, chief executive officer of Thomas Murray said that he hoped "the Depository Service assessment will aid STRATE in their continued development by highlighting to foreign investors the efficiency and low risk profile of this new equities settlement system. We are very grateful for all the help and co-operation Monica Singer, Bobby Johnston and the whole STRATE team gave in helping to fully assess the depository's risk profile".

Thomas Murray and Standard & Poor's Depository Service includes expertise contributed by a core group of major market participants that have worked to define the custody and settlement-related risks that investment advisors and funds face when they hold investments in foreign securities depositories. The cooperation provided by the global banks that work with central

depositories is critical to the value of the assessments and include Citibank, State Street, BNP Paribas, ABN AMRO, Bank of New York, Mellon and SE Banken.

“Our Depository Service represents a milestone in cross-industry co-operation in tackling the problems associated with the absence of independent analysis of the risks associated with central securities depositories,” said Leo C. O’Neill, president, Standard & Poor’s. “This service combines Thomas Murray’s strong position as a provider of research, evaluation, and assessment of custodian banks and local capital market infrastructures with Standard & Poor’s extensive analytical resources and experience in evaluating credit and counterparty risk.”

For further information contact:

Simon Thomas, CEO, Thomas Murray

Tel: +44 207-830-8300 E-mail: sthomas@thomasmurray.com

Derek Duggan, Managing Director, Information Services, Thomas Murray

Tel: +44 207 830 8300 E-mail: dduggan@thomasmurray.com

Mark Bachmann, Managing Director, Financial Institutions Ratings, Standard & Poor’s

Tel: +1 212-438-7366 E-mail: mark_bachmann@standardandpoors.com

Rob Bowen, Director, Financial Institutions Ratings, Standard & Poor’s

Tel: +1 212-438-7381 E-mail: robert_bowen@standardandpoors.com

The role of STRATE in the South African Market Infrastructure

STRATE provides clearing, settlement and electronic safekeeping for an increasing number of listed company equities in South Africa. STRATE was launched on 1st November 1999 for a pilot phase, and went 'live' on 3rd March 2001.

STRATE is a limited liability company jointly owned by the JSE Securities Exchange SA ('JSE'), five domestic banks and one international bank. STRATE operates as a depository and settlement system under the provisions of the Custody and Administration of Securities Act 85 of 1992 (amended), and the South African Companies Act, 1973.

All South African securities held within STRATE are dematerialised under Section 91A (amended) of the South African Companies Act, 1973, and must be in dematerialised form to be settled in STRATE. Listed companies are continuing to be dematerialised into STRATE and the process of moving all listed companies into STRATE is due for completion in January 2002. It is legally compulsory by JSE rules to settle on-market trades in equities within STRATE, but is optional for safekeeping.

About Thomas Murray

Thomas Murray is an information, rating and research company specialising in supporting the investment and global securities services industries. The company specialises in the evaluation and assessment of global custodians, agent banks, Depositories, local capital market infrastructure and provides a range of products and services:

- Investor services - assisting institutions evaluate and select global custodians
- Rating services – working in rating global and domestic custodians
- Network services – assisting banks operating overseas networks evaluate local markets, associated custodial and settlement risks and analyse and select suitable domestic custodians to act as securities correspondent banks
- Information services – local capital market infrastructure information (>100 markets) and Depository Review and Risk Evaluation Service.

Additional information is available at www.thomasmurray.com.

About Standard & Poor's

Standard & Poor's, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies, provides independent financial information, analytical services, risk solutions, and credit ratings to the world's financial markets. Among the company's many products are the S&P 1200, the premier global equity performance benchmark, the S&P 500, the premier U.S. portfolio index, and credit ratings on more than 220,000 securities and funds worldwide. With more than 5,000 employees located in 22 countries, Standard & Poor's is an integral part of the global financial infrastructure.

Additional information is available at www.standardandpoors.com.