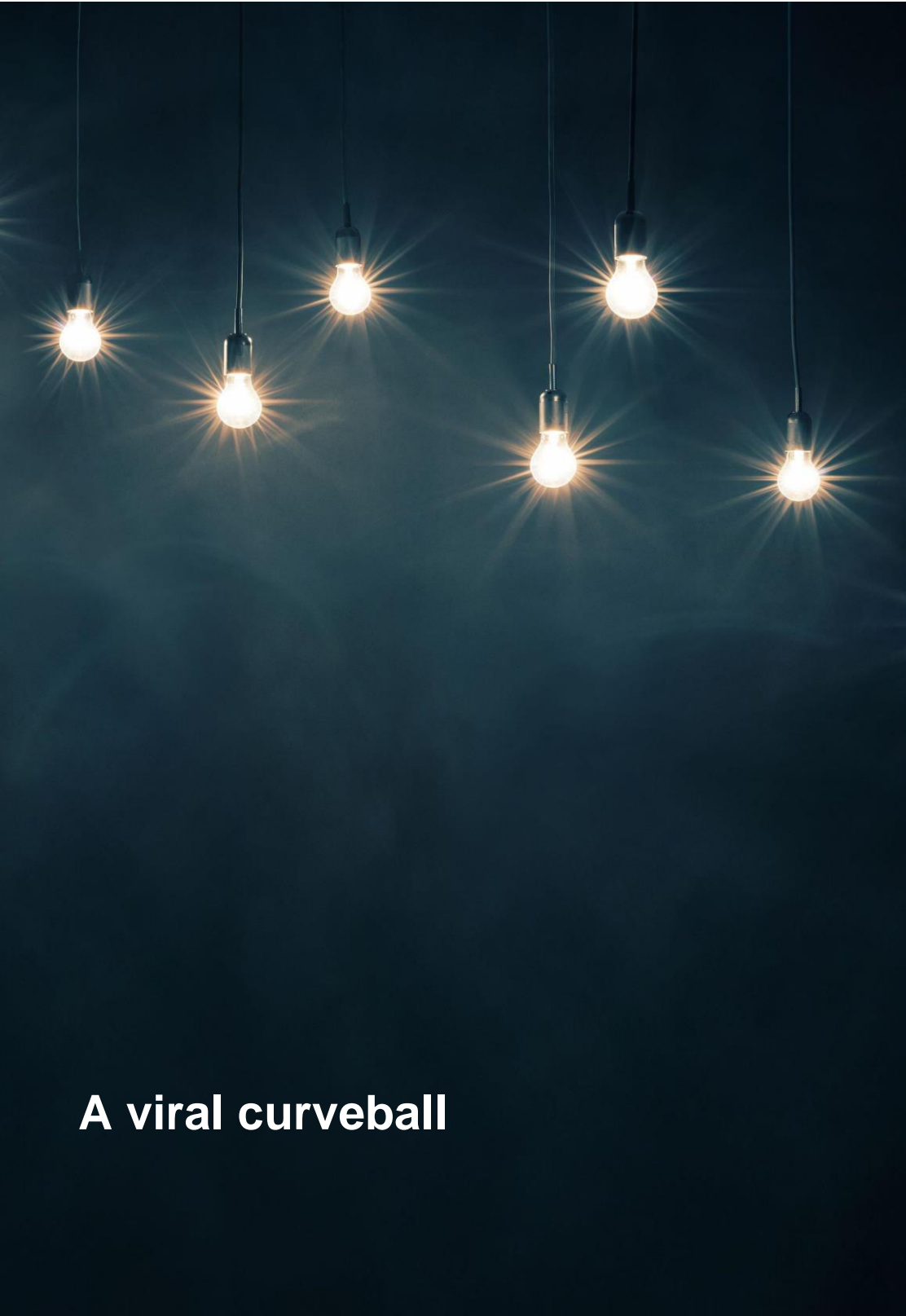


Weekly Market View



A viral curveball

The coronavirus outbreak could be a near-term trigger for a pullback in risk assets, although it appears less severe than SARS. Any pullback would be a buying opportunity, in our view.

Equities: US bank earnings have, on average, beaten estimates, underscoring our preference for the sector. Technology sector earnings are the next focus

Bonds: Surge in Asia USD bond issuance is unlikely to derail the asset class's rally

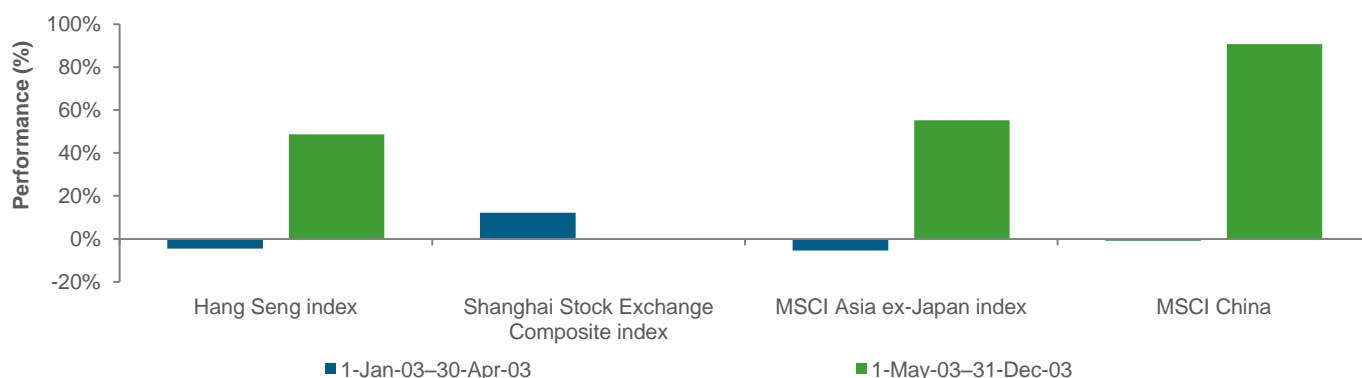
FX: We expect AUD/USD to establish a base around 0.68 in the near term

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Chart of the week: Lessons from 2003 SARS outbreak

Performance of major Asian markets from the start (January) to the peak (April) of the 2003 SARS outbreak and its aftermath



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

Editorial

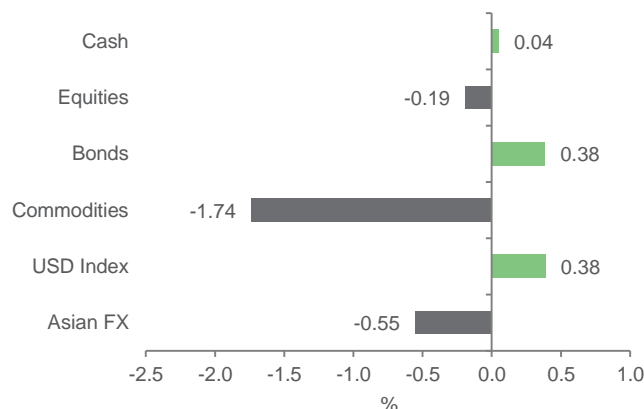
A viral curveball

The coronavirus outbreak in China is one possible candidate to trigger a near-term pullback in risk assets after the record-breaking rally, given stretched positioning and thinning trade volumes in Asia during the Lunar New Year holidays. However, indications from health authorities, noting prompt measures by China, so far suggest the outbreak may not be as severe as the SARS episode of 2003 (see page 5). While we would closely monitor developments on this front, lessons from 2003, technical charts and fundamentals suggest any pullback to the tune of 3-5% may present an opportunity to start adding equity exposure, especially in the Euro area and US.

US Democratic primaries, starting with the Iowa caucus on 3 February, are the other possible triggers for a near-term market pullback. A win by progressive candidates (Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders) could refocus investors towards the risk of increased regulation and redistributive policies, should they eventually win the US presidential election in November. We do not expect the Fed to unsettle markets on 29 January, given benign growth and inflation data lately.

Global equities hit a speed-bump after a record-setting rally this month and commodities slumped amid caution about the coronavirus outbreak

Benchmark market performance w/w*



Source: MSCI, JP Morgan, DJ-UBS, Citigroup, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered (Indices used are JP Morgan Cash, MSCI AC World TR, Citi World Big, DJ-UBS Commodity, DXY and ADXY)

*Week of 16 January 2020 to 23 January 2020

ECB notes waning risks as it embarks on strategic review

The ECB's comments on receding global trade tensions as a factor behind the marginal improvement in the economic outlook since December ties in with our view that the region is starting to emerge from its two-year long slump. ECB President Lagarde cited the US-China phase 1 trade deal and the "encouraging" trade talks between the US and Euro area policy makers as signs of improvement. This week's truce between France and the US over the imposition of taxes on technology company profits is another sign of this rapprochement (although President Trump's threat to impose tariffs on auto imports if trade talks are not fruitful shows the fragile nature of the truce).

Nevertheless, the central bank maintained its ultra-loose monetary policy, including EUR 20bn per month of bond purchases, even as it announced a year-long strategic review of its monetary policy goals. The monetary policy support and waning global trade risks have started to revive expectations for economic growth in the region (see ZEW Survey chart). We expect strong wage growth to sustain regional consumer demand, although slowing jobs growth needs to be monitored closely. The manufacturing sector remains weak, but here too waning external trade risks and more clarity around Brexit should help revive business sentiment.

Against this backdrop, our assessment is of a region turning around, which leaves us bullish on both the EUR and Euro area equities.

Getting more vigilant on US High Yield bonds

US High Yield (HY) bonds have performed reasonably well over the past few months. This has meant that valuations have become more expensive, with yield premiums modestly above their lows touched in 2018. While supportive monetary policy and the search for yield could back current valuations, the biggest risk stems from the energy sector, which accounts for 14% of the US HY bond segment and has been stressed since mid-2019. Last week, large US oilfield service providers said they believed that US shale oil production may have peaked and could face a period of sustained contraction. This could lead to the risk of higher default rates in the US HY bond segment and wider yield premiums in the future. While we maintain US HY bonds as a core holding, given the high yields on offer, risk-reward suggests Emerging Market (EM) USD bonds and EM local currency bonds offer more attractive opportunities in the higher yielding bond segment.

Do you see further downside for AUD?

We see signs that AUD/USD may be approaching a base, despite the potential short-term concerns about the coronavirus outbreak impacting Australia-China trade and the ongoing wildfires.

We expect Australia's central bank to maintain its accommodative policy, but it will likely not cut rates at its 4 February meeting. Meanwhile, significant fiscal stimulus is likely to help rebuild communities and stimulate the local economy after the fires. Stronger-than-expected employment data this week supports this view.

We expect AUD/USD could hold at technical support in the 0.6800-0.6830 range in the near term, with 0.6750 providing further downside protection. Our 2020 AUD/USD outlook is for a trading range between 0.66 and 0.72. We believe the AUD will find a base in the coming weeks and begin a rally towards the top of this band.

Euro area growth expectations have continued to improve with the partial US-China trade deal easing global trade tensions

ZEW Survey expectations for economic growth in the Euro area and Germany



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

US High Yield bonds have likely become expensive after the latest rally

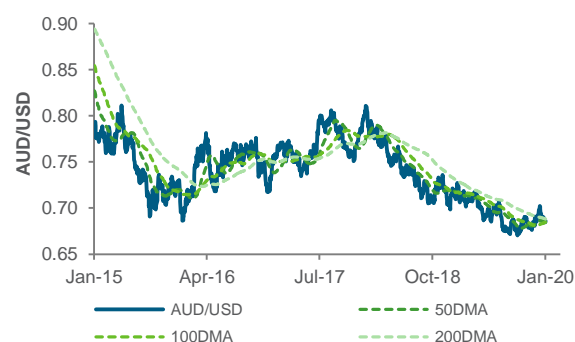
US High Yield bond yield premium over US Treasuries



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

We expect AUD/USD to hold support around 0.68 in the near term and trade within the 0.66-0.72 range over the next 12 months

AUD/USD



Source: Refinitiv, Standard Chartered

What does this mean for investors?

Equities

Are US earnings meeting expectations? Almost 38% of the US financial sector's companies have reported so far and, of these, 56% have beaten expectations. Loan growth has been a positive, driven by credit cards and consumers, and fixed income revenues within capital markets have rebounded strongly. However, we believe net interest margin pressure will continue to impact revenue, making expenses a big focus for banks, and loan loss provisions have ticked up. The financial sector is expected to report 11% earnings growth in Q4 2019, with support from share buybacks and other factors.

The upbeat earnings have pushed the S&P 500 financial sector index to a record high (surpassing the pre-Global Financial Crisis high). In the near term, though, the index is looking quite overbought as it attempts to rise past key resistance at the 2007 high of 511. However, any retreat could be limited, with strong supports at the December 2019 low of 486 and the horizontal trendline from mid-2018 at 472.

The US technology sector continues to be the top performer YTD, up 7%. Some of the large tech companies will report next week. Expectations are muted for Q4 2019, with only 1% earnings growth expected. However, since 2020 earnings are expected to grow 11%, management guidance will be closely watched.

Bonds

Could the surge in Asian USD bond supply derail the market?

Asian USD bonds have seen a surge in supply this year, comprehensively surpassing the supply seen in January in past years. The uptick in supply is likely due to (i) companies trying to issue ahead of the upcoming Lunar New Year and (ii) an increase in the market size over the past few years to over USD 1trn. Despite this rising supply, yield premiums have remained largely stable given the strong demand for bonds. We expect the supply to moderate over the coming few months, which should help alleviate the risk of excess supplies swamping the market. That said, any intensification of concerns around the coronavirus outbreak risk triggering a modest pullback.

Why have EM local currency bonds not taken off this year?

EM local currency (LCY) government bonds have had a lacklustre start to 2020 as price gains and coupon returns have been largely offset by FX losses owing to weakness in EM currencies. Our expectation of USD weakness is a key factor behind our constructive view on EM LCY bonds. While it is difficult to time when the USD may peak, we believe the yield on offer from EM local currency bonds make it attractive to maintain our preferred view while waiting for the currency to turn.

FX

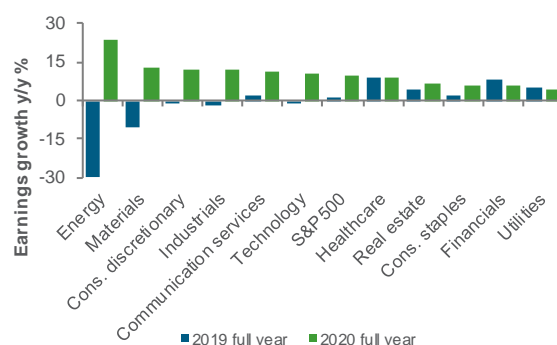
Is there scope for USD/CNY to decline further? In our annual outlook, we expected USD/CNY to be range-bound between 6.80 and 7.20. Following the US-China phase one trade deal, USD/CNY has traded below 6.85, before the current rebound to 6.92.

The latest rebound, driven in part by the coronavirus outbreak and the uncertainty surrounding it for global markets, is relieving oversold technicals in the near term. This correction could fade above 6.94. Strong resistance is expected between 6.97 and 7.00, which could be tested if the coronavirus outbreak impact gets worse.

The Trump administration appears to be stepping back from trade tensions with China as the US election year progresses. We expect China to make strong efforts to cap USD/CNY around 7.00 for now. We also look for another leg lower to test 6.80 once the current correction completes, provided the coronavirus outbreak peaks quickly.

US earnings are expected to rebound strongly in 2020 across most sectors

Consensus US sectoral earnings estimates for 2019, 2020



Source: Refinitiv, Standard Chartered

US equity technicals remain positive after the strong rally

Technical levels of key markets as of 23 January 2020

Index	Spot	1st support	1st resistance	Short-term trend
S&P 500	3,326	3,260	3,380	↑
STOXX 50	3,737	3,680	3,836	↓
FTSE 100	7,508	7,420	7,726	↓
Nikkei 225	23,858	23,300	24,400	↑
Shanghai Comp	2,977	2,905	3,065	→
Hang Seng	27,909	27,350	28,800	↓
MSCI Asia ex-Japan	695	684	716	↑
MSCI EM	1,122	1,107	1,151	↑
Brent (ICE)	62	60	67	↓
Gold	1,562	1,530	1,575	↑
UST 10Y Yield	1.73	1.68	2.00	↔

Source: Trading Central, Standard Chartered

Note: Arrows represent short-term trend opinions

We expect USD/CNY to trade range-bound between 6.80 and 7.20 in 2020, with 7.00 offering a strong near-term resistance

USD/CNY



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

Top client questions

What could derail the equity rally?

Global equity markets have had a good start this year, but we see two developing risks (an intensification of the coronavirus outbreak and the Democratic primaries in the US) which have the potential to cause a short-term pullback in risk assets.

The HK/China equity markets have been volatile on profit taking ahead of the Lunar New Year and amid the developing news of the coronavirus outbreak. We expect thinner liquidity during the festive season, with the closure of the Southbound Stock Connect from 22–30 January (inclusive) and the China A-share markets from 24-30 January. Meanwhile, the potential for an intensification of the coronavirus outbreak in China, exacerbated by the high level of travel activity during the holidays, could further increase the risk to the market. That said, proactive measures undertaken by the Chinese government to contain the virus could alleviate the situation. We also note that, so far, the casualty rate has been less severe than during the SARS outbreak in 2003.

The SARS experience helps set some context. The outbreak peaked about 3-4 months after the first case was reported and it was mostly contained after 6-7 months (May-June) when the flu season passed. The onshore Shanghai Composite index remained largely steady during the SARS outbreak, while the Hang Seng Index fell by as much as 10% by end-April 2003 from the start of the year (though it is difficult to attribute this to SARS alone). The Hong Kong market, however, rebounded sharply in the second half of the year.

Looking ahead, similar trends are likely to play out. Among the sectors, healthcare is likely to outperform, while e-commerce, online gaming and food delivery could benefit from reduced outdoor activities. Tourist-related sectors, such as Macau gaming and aviation, could be hurt by less travel. We maintain our preference for China offshore equities and would view any pullback as a buying opportunity.

For US markets, the outcome of the Democratic Presidential nomination could be more significant for markets near-term. If a “progressive” Democrat, such as Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren, were to make significant gains, markets may worry about the potential significant changes to the business landscape, should they enter the White House in 2021. Both Sanders and Warren have focused on wealth redistribution away from wealthy individuals and large corporations via taxation. Warren has been advocating anti-monopoly measures on tech companies, such as unwinding old acquisitions to dismantle US tech giants and restricting activities of tech giants in online retailing. These measures are controversial and likely to cause markets to reassess whether the assumptions that underlie current valuations are changing.

The Democratic selection process begins in Iowa on 3 February. The Iowa result, although numerically insignificant, could begin to shape how this race will develop over the coming weeks. By 17 March and 28 April, 61% and 87% of delegates will have been chosen, respectively, perhaps providing more clarity on who will be the likely challenger to President Trump. Current polls suggest Joe Biden (a mainstream candidate), Sanders, Warren and Buttigieg rank highest in polls conducted thus far.

Offshore China stocks dipped during the initial stages of the 2003 SARS outbreak, but then recovered strongly once the outbreak peaked at the end of April

MSCI China index during 2003 SARS outbreak



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

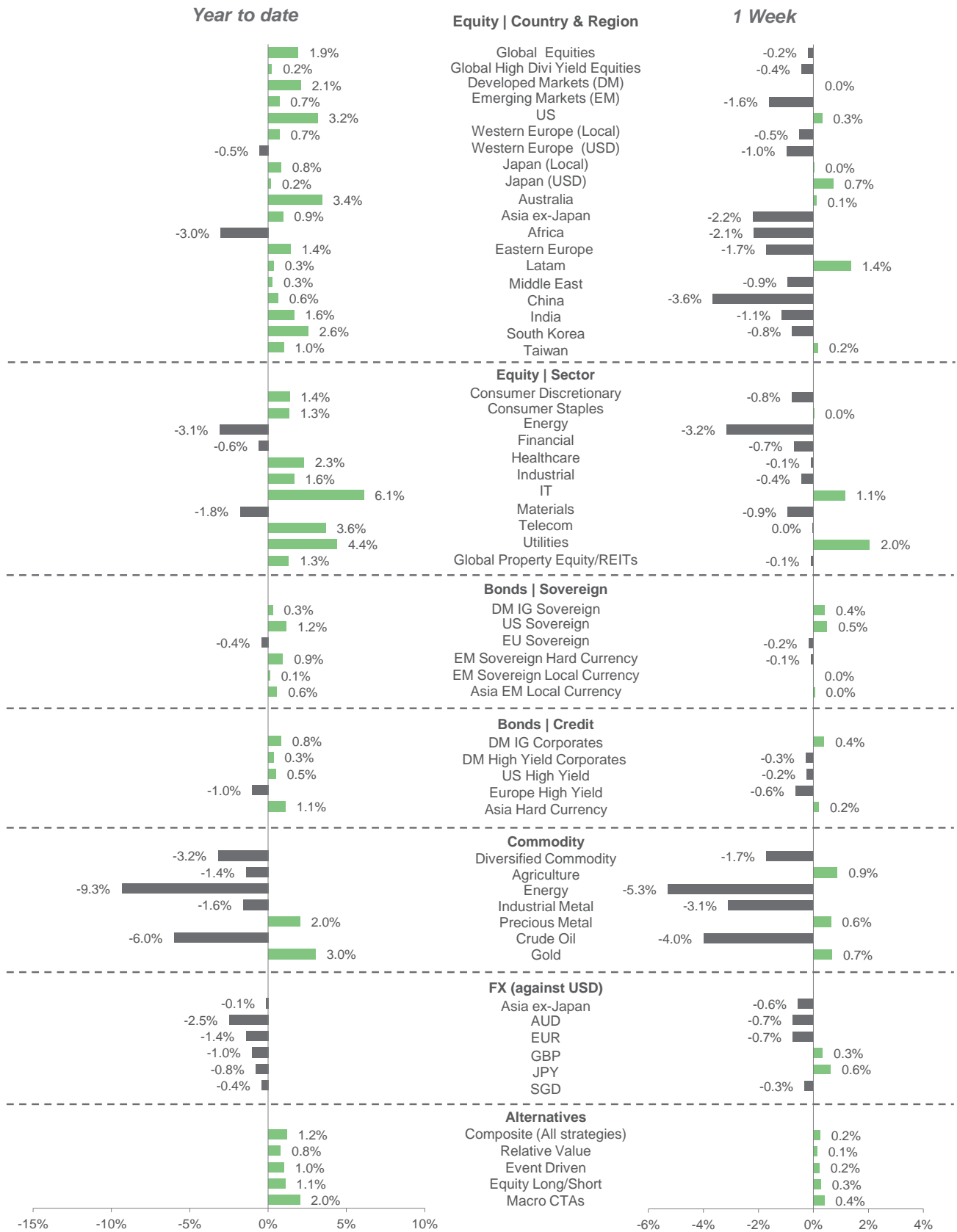
Former Vice President Joe Biden (a moderate) is still leading the line-up of Democratic candidates to challenge President Trump in the November elections

Predictit forecasts for the likely Democrat candidate to challenge President Trump in the November elections



Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

Market performance summary *



Sources: MSCI, JP Morgan, Barclays Capital, Citigroup, Dow Jones, HFRX, FTSE, Bloomberg, Standard Chartered

*Performance in USD terms unless otherwise stated, 2019 performance from 31 December 2019 to 23 January 2020, 1 week period: 16 January 2020 to 23 January 2020

Economic and market calendar

	Event	Next Week	Date	Period	Expected	Prior
MON	GE	IFO Expectations	27-Jan-20	Jan	–	93.8
	US	New Home Sales	27-Jan-20	Dec	728k	719k
TUE	US	Durable Goods Orders	28-Jan-20	Dec P	1.0%	-2.1%
	US	Cap Goods Orders Nondef Ex Air	28-Jan-20	Dec P	–	0.2%
	US	Conf. Board Consumer Confidence	28-Jan-20	Jan	128.1	126.5
WED	EC	M3 Money Supply y/y	29-Jan-20	Dec	–	5.6%
THUR	US	FOMC Rate Decision (Upper Bound)	30-Jan-20	29-Jan	1.8%	1.8%
	UK	Bank of England Bank Rate	30-Jan-20	30-Jan	0.8%	0.8%
	GE	CPI EU Harmonized y/y	30-Jan-20	Jan P	–	1.5%
	US	Personal Consumption	30-Jan-20	4Q A	–	3.2%
	US	Core PCE q/q	30-Jan-20	4Q A	–	2.1%
	US	Initial Jobless Claims	30-Jan-20	25-Jan	–	–
FRI/SAT	JN	Industrial Production y/y	31-Jan-20	Dec P	-3.3%	-8.2%
	CH	Manufacturing PMI	31-Jan-20	Jan	50.1	50.2
	US	Personal Income	31-Jan-20	Dec	0.3%	0.5%

	Event	This Week	Date	Period	Actual	Prior
MON						
TUE	UK	Average Weekly Earnings 3m/y/y	21-Jan-20	Nov	3.2%	3.2%
	EC	ZEW Survey Expectations	21-Jan-20	Jan	25.6	11.2
	JN	BOJ Policy Balance Rate	21-Jan-20	21-Jan	-0.1%	-0.1%
WED	US	Existing Home Sales	22-Jan-20	Dec	5.54m	5.35m
THUR	JN	Exports y/y	23-Jan-20	Dec	-6.3%	-7.9%
	EC	ECB Main Refinancing Rate	23-Jan-20	23-Jan	0.0%	0.0%
FRI/SAT	JN	Natl CPI Ex Fresh Food, Energy y/y	24-Jan-20	Dec	0.9%	0.8%
	JN	Jibun Bank Japan PMI Composite	24-Jan-20	Jan P	51.1	48.6
	FR	Markit France Manufacturing PMI	24-Jan-20	Jan P	–	50.4
	GE	Markit/BME Germany Manufacturing PMI	24-Jan-20	Jan P	–	43.7
	EC	Markit Eurozone Manufacturing PMI	24-Jan-20	Jan P	–	46.3
	UK	Markit/CIPS UK Composite PMI	24-Jan-20	Jan P	–	49.3
	US	Markit US Composite PMI	24-Jan-20	Jan P	–	52.7

Source: Bloomberg, Standard Chartered; key indicators highlighted in blue

Previous data are for the preceding period unless otherwise indicated

Data are % change on previous period unless otherwise indicated

P - preliminary data, F - final data, sa - seasonally adjusted

y/y – year-on-year, m/m - month-on-month

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