

#### **UBS Investment Research**

#### **China's Economic Outlook and Challenges**

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### China's economy to recover further in 2021

- Consumption and exports to lead >8% GDP growth in 2021
- Corporate earnings to grow significantly
- Policy to normalize tighter regulations and return of de-leveraging
- More opening and a steadier China-US relations
- RMB to appreciate further

## Corporate CAPEX to rebound on improving profits and outlook



FAI growth by sector





- Increased focus on containing leverage and control financial risks
- Monetary: tighter liquidity, slower credit growth, more macro prudential rules (shadow credit, internet finance etc.) instead of rate actions. Credit growth to slow from 13.8% to 10.8%, credit impulse turning negative
- Fiscal: budget deficit <=3%, reduced special LG bonds issuance
- Debt/GDP ratio to decline by 2ppt in 2021E after 23ppt increase in 2020
- Property policies and financial regulations to be more hawkish; clean-up of small banks to accelerate



### De-leveraging should have little impact on 2021 growth









## Risk in policy exit: bumpy credit markets and wider spreads

As policy support fades and tolerance of defaults increase, NPLs and bond defaults could rise Tapering may not be smooth, leading to more market volatility and wider spreads







### A steadier China-US relations and further opening

- Biden presidency: lower risk, more rules-based multilateral approach to foreign relations, more dialogues with China
- Renegotiate of trade deal possible but no unwinding of tariffs or tech restrictions in 2021; hawkish on security/political/human rights issues
- A tough but more predictable approach to US-China relations; potential cooperation in pandemic control, climate change etc.
- RCEP and China-EU CAI win for multilateralism, positive for supply chain and market opening

### CNY to face further appreciation pressure, trade in a wider range





Source: CEIC, Wind, Haver, Bloomberg, UBS estimates



### Tech restrictions to add to China's long-term challenges

- Tech rivalry and access restrictions for China has intensified. Unlikely to ease in the coming years
- China to focus more on innovation and self-reliance...
- ...but expect potential growth to be reduced by 0.3-0.8ppts a year in the next decade

#### China's long term outlook should remain solid, 4.5% 2021-2030E





Source: CEIC, UBS estimates



# China's market size means some supply chain shift will be towards China





Source: CEIC, Haver, UBS Evidence Lab, UBS estimates



# China's debt challenge: much increased in 2020, but no imminent financial system trouble

- The pandemic is a sharp but temporary shock, debt/GDP to decline in 2021
- Overall government debt would remain manageable at ~80% of GDP
- High domestic saving, adequate FX reserves, capital control still largely in place
- High government ownership of banks; progress on NPL disposal
- Risk areas: some local SOEs, SMEs, some LGFVs, some consumer loans
- More defaults could cause credit events and market volatility

### China's high and rising debt



Source: CEIC, Wind, Haver, UBS estimates



### Government debt still manageable



Government debt still manageable Rely on corporate and policy bank Government still have disposable assets Monetary easing





#### Rising household debt, risks in some segments



Source: CEIC, UBS estimates. \*Assume some rural household have credits too



Source: CEIC, Haver, UBS estimates

### Portfolio capital inflows to continue, outflows to be relaxed



Foreign holding of domestic asset (RMB bn, quarterly change)





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