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COMPUTERSHARE LIMITED MOVES TO FULL OWNERSHIP OF CENTRAL REGISTRATION

Computershare Limited, the 50% owner of Hong Kong's largest share registrar, Central Registration Hong Kong Limited, has agreed to acquire the outstanding 50% from a subsidiary of HSBC Holdings plc for a cash consideration of A\$40.0m (approx. HK\$164m). The transaction will complete within the next week. Australian-based Computershare is the world's only global share registrar with over 61 million shareholder accounts in its integrated network of nine worldwide operations.

Announcing the transaction in Hong Kong, Mr Julian Leiper, Executive Chairman of Central Registration said, "The acquisition of HSBC's share in Central Registration represents a strategic move by Computershare to build our unique global network of share registrars in Asia, and to own the leading player in the region's largest securities market outside Japan."

Mr. Mike Scales, an HSBC representative on the Board of Central Registration said that "Computershare has unequalled technical knowledge and global experience in the specialist field of share registration and transfer agency. As the Hong Kong market becomes increasingly sophisticated, it is appropriate that Computershare, whose core expertise is running share registration businesses, should take Central registration forward. We pass our interest in the company to Computershare with great confidence."

The change of control does not signal any personnel changes at Central Registration. Mr Leiper confirmed that the existing management team would continue to operate the businesses. Mr Leiper will remain as Executive Chairman, having been seconded to Central Registration from the UK operations of Computershare in January 2001. Mr. David Lee will remain as Managing Director, a position he has held for the last 10 years.

Mr. Leiper said that Computershare would be investing in Central Registration in anticipation of a scripless market in Hong Kong, and to align Central Registration with its other share registration centres in key financial markets."

Commenting on the move to full ownership of Central Registration, Mr. Chris Morris, Group Managing Director, Computershare Limited noted: "Increasingly, share registration is a sophisticated, computer driven and Internet enabled service as financial markets become global. To compete in this business, we need significant equity in operations strategically positioned in all of the world's key financial centres. Hong Kong is an important link in this network and Central Registration is the market leader."

Mr. Morris added "Ownership demonstrates true commitment to the global market place and our innovation, technology and services are the means through which we deliver on that commitment.". Computershare Limited will fund the acquisition from existing debt facilities and cash reserves.

About Computershare Limited

Computershare Limited is incorporated in Australia and listed on the Australian Stock Exchange (symbol: CPU) with a market capitalization in excess of A\$4.0 billion. It has grown rapidly from its base as a provider of computer bureau services to transfer agents in Australia, and is now the world's largest, and only global, transfer agent, with major transfer agent businesses in Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Channel Islands, South Africa, Hong Kong, the USA, and Canada. Computershare maintains over 61 million shareholder accounts worldwide and also supplies financial markets software to exchanges and market participants in Europe, North America and Asia. For more information visit the company web site www.computershare.com

About Central Registration Hong Kong Limited

Central Registration Hong Kong Limited was formed in 1972. It is the premier provider of registration services in Hong Kong and has been appointed share registrar for over 200 listed companies which includes 21 out of the 33 Hang Seng Index constituent stocks. Significant clients include HSBC, MTRC, Swire Group companies, Cheung Kong group and Tracker Fund. It also acts as the warrant agent for more than 90% of the derivative warrant issues in Hong Kong

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