# **Market Commentary**

**FIRST QUARTER 2017** 

Social & Environmental impact investment management

#### **GLOBAL ECONOMIC REVIEW**

- With the Trump administration nearing the end of the symbolic, but nonetheless important first 100 days in office, the President's team has relatively little to show in terms of policy changes. Market expectations were running hot after the election, but may be cooling as investors are reminded that changing policy in Washington is never a simple task. Lawmakers took a shot at repealing the Affordable Care Act, and failed. While they may make another attempt to roll back some of the provisions of the healthcare act, a wholesale repeal seems unlikely. Markets, however, largely shrugged off the failure and have responded by moving on to the next big agenda item: tax reform.
- » In an effort to tackle another enormous policy challenge, the administration is in a difficult position: move too quickly and risk a repeat of the healthcare failure, or move too slowly and disappoint voting constituents and market participants, who are counting on the President to keep his campaign promises and stimulate stronger growth.



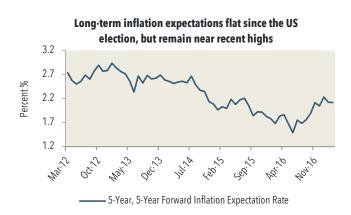


Chart Data Source: Bloomberg.

- » Across the Atlantic, equity volatility has jumped in advance of France's next elections in May. In the first round of elections in mid-April, the right-wing National Front candidate, Marine Le Pen, and the centrist candidate, Emmanuel Macron came out ahead. Le Pen has campaigned on an anti-globalist, anti-EU platform and a National Front victory could once again call into question the stability of the European Union. Macron is the markets' preferred winner.
- » The Euro, meanwhile, ended Q1 slightly stronger, as volatility in the currency generally trended downward during the quarter. Since the end of Q1, however, Euro volatility has spiked as the election nears and uncertainty once again rules the markets.
- » In Asia, China continues to report stable GDP numbers, with the latest reported figure a strong 6.9%. Additionally, there is mounting evidence the latest from a National Bureau of Economic Research study that used nighttime lights to approximate economic activity that China has been underreporting growth. Growth may be stronger than the official numbers, which could suggest even more strength in the global economy.

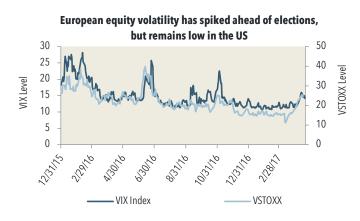




Chart Data Source: Bloomberg. NBER study: China's GDP Growth May be Understated, NBER Working Paper No. 23323

# **Market Commentary**

#### **GLOBAL FIXED INCOME REVIEW**

- » Bond markets generally performed well in the first quarter, with risk assets generating the strongest returns. US High Yield bonds and Emerging Market bonds, both good proxies for fixed income risk appetite, outperformed the Barclays Global Aggregate. The Bloomberg Barclays Emerging Market Local Currency Government bond index returned 6.82%, recovering most of the losses experienced following the US election in November.
- » The major exception to this trend was in European Sovereign bond markets. Bond prices there fell on speculation that the European Central Bank may begin to tighten monetary policy as the Eurozone economy continues to improve. As in the US, crucial factors that influence the ECB's monetary policy decisions include growth and inflation data. Both have shown enough improvement to potentially warrant decreasing support from the ECB.



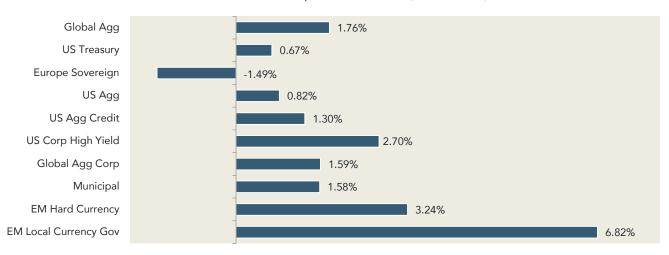
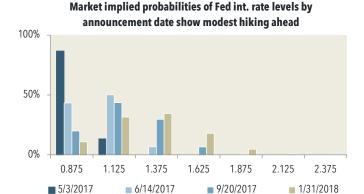


Chart Data Source: Bloomberg.

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- » Since the financial crisis, any quarter in which both global equities and global bonds have rallied has usually resulted from market expectations of or announcements from central banks regarding monetary policy easing. In Q1, 2017, however, the Fed and ECB were generally more hawkish and yet both bond and equity markets surged upward. This suggests that global growth may have improved enough that markets are growing comfortable with the idea of a measured interest-rate hiking cycle from the Fed and ECB. Indeed, markets continue to price in a modest path of rate hikes from the Fed.
- » Fixed income markets will also continue to closely watch the ECB, which has intimated that it may want to begin slowly tightening policy after the Eurozone economy hit the ECB's 2% inflation target in Q1.



#### **Eurozone inflation touched ECB's 2% target in February**

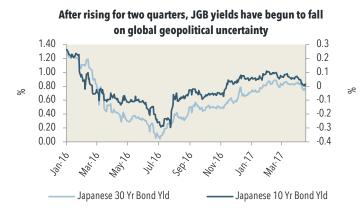


Chart Data Source: Bloomberg.

### **Market Commentary**

#### **GLOBAL FIXED INCOME REVIEW**

- » While Japanese Government Bond yields have fallen of late, this is likely a result of geopolitical concerns rather than concerns about Japanese growth itself. In fact, Japanese GDP rose in all four quarters of 2016 the first time it has done so since 2005. Unemployment in Japan remains extremely low, having fallen to 2.8% in Q1.
- » The Yen, however, strengthened 5% in Q1, creating problems for Japanese exporters. Heavy industries with significant exports, including car manufacturers, were hit particularly hard in the first quarter.
- » After a spike in Q4 2016 (which bled into 2017), volatility in the Barclays Global Aggregate appears to have diminished. Last year's currency volatility was driven in large part by movements in the Japanese Yen, British Pound, Euro and US Dollar.



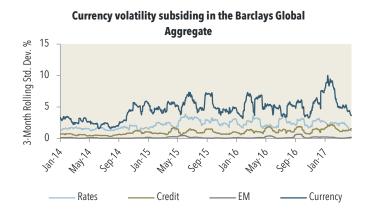


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- » While the British pound has stabilized of late, the currency remains significantly devalued following the country's "Brexit" decision in the summer of 2016. Interestingly, the post-Brexit devaluation of roughly 13% has actually been relatively small compared to the longer-term depreciation of the pound that we've seen over the last decade.
- » Capital flows to EM have turned positive according to a number of measures, including the Bloomberg EM Capital Flow Proxy Index. Capital flooded into EM prior to the Financial Crisis, and fled just as quickly during the crisis, only to once again rebound from 2009-2011. From 2011 to mid-2016, however, capital flows fell substantially as investors worried about China, commodities, and a host of other growth concerns. Although it is too early to say that this is a long-term upswing for EM, it does appear that capital flight has bottomed.



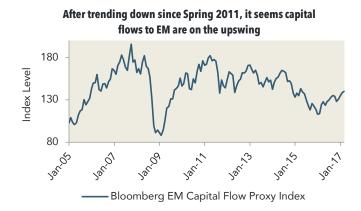


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# **Market Commentary**

#### **GLOBAL EQUITY REVIEW**

- » Global equities, as measured by the MSCI ACWI IMI, had a strong first quarter, returning 6.31% and outpacing US equities, which returned 5.71%.
- » The MSCI Japan index was roughly flat for the quarter, but has once again climbed ahead of US stocks over the trailing 3 years. The path to reflation and growth for the Japanese economy has been a rocky one, but the latest signs are that the economy is gaining strength.
- » The MSCI Europe index returned 5.25% despite major political uncertainty.
- » The MSCI EM was the best performer of the group, returning 11.15% as growth prospects across EM improved.

Global Equity: Valuation Measures (as of 3/31/17)									
Period		Late	est		10-yr average				
Valuation Measure	P/E	Dividend Yield	P/B	P/CF	P/E	Dividend Yield	P/B	P/CF	
MSCI ACWI	20.97	2.39	2.23	9.63	17.14	2.68	1.94	8.92	
MSCI Europe	26.04	3.32	1.83	7.73	19.46	3.72	1.71	8.35	
Nikkei 225	19.58	1.70	1.70	8.62	21.23	1.74	1.48	8.82	
Shanghai Composite	18.65	1.69	1.80	5.69	18.53	1.86	2.38	19.42	
MSCI Emerging Markets	15.51	2.43	1.65	7.18	13.55	2.67	1.73	7.89	

Data Source: Bloomberg.

Global Equity Indices - 36 Month Rolling Annualized Return, %

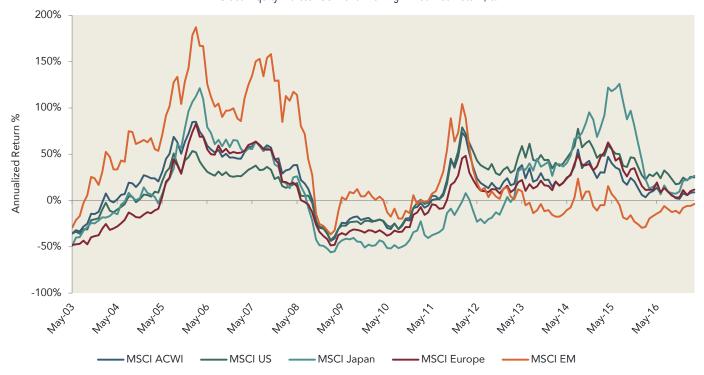


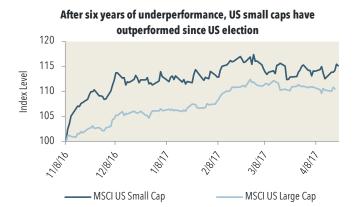
Chart Data Sources: Bloomberg

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# **Market Commentary**

#### **GLOBAL EQUITY REVIEW**

- » Since the US election in November 2016, US small cap stocks have outperformed their large cap counterparts by almost 5%. Over long periods, small caps have historically outperformed larger stocks, but small stocks endured roughly six years of relative underperformance following the financial crisis. Some of the recent bounce may be attributable to the "America-first" doctrine of the Trump administration, as well as talk of major tax reform (including a reduction in the corporate tax rate).
- » Emerging markets have risen lately as growth prospects have improved across countries such as Argentina, India, Brazil, Mexico and Indonesia. This improving mood has served to counterbalance softening sentiment on China. As other EM countries return to stronger growth, there are once again concerns that China will struggle to manage its way out of a government stimulus-driven credit bubble.



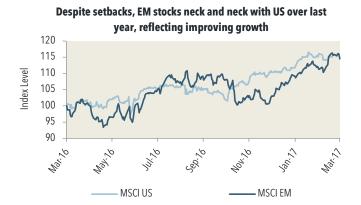


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- » The US equity recovery continues to be the "the most hated bull market in history" (Financial Times). US stocks are indeed quite expensive relative to historical valuations, and there are certainly "cheaper" markets abroad (e.g., Europe and EM), but the US economy has steadily improved over the years since the financial crisis.
- » Those investors worried about a major correction would do well to remind themselves that corrections typically don't occur when sentiment regarding a market is so poor. Likewise, those not worried about a correction might note that it is exactly times like these that diversification may become most important.

US Equity: Valuation	Measures (as of 3/31/17)	Historical Averages					
Valuation Measure	Description	Latest	1 yr ago	5-yr avg.	10-yr avg.	25-yr avg.	
P/E	Price to Earnings	21.63	19.34	17.61	17.05	19.65	
CAPE	Shiller P/E	29.02	26.88	26.33	26.06	22.75	
Div. Yield	Dividend Yield	1.97	2.19	2.06	2.14	2.00	
P/B	Price to Book	2.77	2.81	2.46	2.41	2.87	
P/CF	Price to Cash Flow	11.04	11.32	9.42	10.21	10.98	
EY Spread	EY-Baa Yield	1.32	1.88	2.33	1.09	-0.96	

Index: S&P 500

Data Source: Bloomberg, Multpl.com.

### **Market Commentary**

#### THEMATIC IMPACT REVIEW

- » The labeled green bond market continues to grow across sectors, maturities and currencies. Although US bond yields have begun to rise, the market for debt issuance remains strong in other currencies (and even in the US). Many companies, cities, multilateral organizations, and even countries are rushing to capitalize on cheap debt to finance crucial sustainability projects.
- » The first quarter of 2017 was a strong one for labeled green bond issuance, and expectations are that the remainder of the year will be even stronger. Meanwhile, the much-larger, unlabeled green bond market, which includes many municipal bonds and bonds issued by renewable energy companies, also continues to grow.

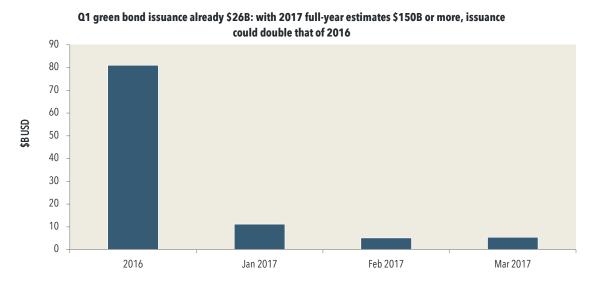
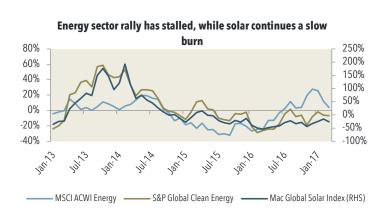


Chart Data Source: Climate Bonds Initiative.

- » The solar sector, as measured by the MAC Global Solar Index, returned 3.81% in Q1, outpacing the traditional MSCI ACWI Energy sector, which returned -4.53%. Despite the Trump administration's rhetoric regarding the revival of coal and other fossil fuel energy sources, the US Russell 3000 Energy sector fared even worse, returning -7.34% during the quarter.
- » Although solar correlated strongly with oil during the recent oil price collapse, historically the relationship has been unstable. Additionally, the economics of solar continue to improve relative to fossil fuels such as coal.



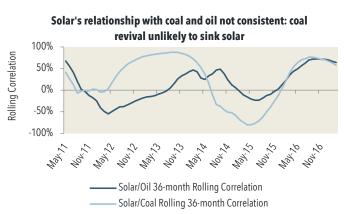


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### **Market Commentary**

#### **ASSET CLASS RETURNS**

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	YTD	1017
BC	MSCI	MSCI	BC US	MSCI	S&PGbl	MSCI	S&PGbl	MSCI	MSCI	M5CI
Agg	EME	EME	CorpIG	EME	CleanEnergy	USA	CleanEnergy	USA	EME	EME
524	79.02	19.20	815	1863	4842	11.87	1.85	11.95	11.49	11.49
BC Global	MSCI	Blbg	BC	MSCI ACW	MSCI	BC US	BC	Blbg	S&PGbl	S&PGbl
Agg	EAFE	Cn <b>ut</b> y	Agg	exFsl Fuels	USA	CorpIG	Agg	Cn <b>ut</b> y	CleanEnergy	CleanEnergy
479	32.46	1683	7.84	1800	32.60	7.46	0.55	11.77	7.85	7.85
BC US	MBCI	MSCI	BC Global	MSCI	MSCI ACW	MSCI ACW	MSCI	MSCI	MSCI ACW	MSCI ACW
CorplG	USA	USA	Agg	EAFE	exFsl Fuels	exFsl Fuels	USA	EME	exFsl Fuels	exFsl Fuels
-494	27.86	1652	5.64	17.90	24.36	605	QOB	11.60	7.61	7.61
EM	EM	EM	MSCI	EM	MSCI	BC	MSCI	EM	MSCI	MSCI
Debt	Debt	Debt	USA	Debt	EAFE	Agg	EAFE	Debt	EAFE	EAFE
-522	21.98	1568	0.63	1676	2329	597	-0.39	9:94	7.39	7.39
Blbg	Blbg	BC US	EM	MSCI	BC US	BC Global	MSCI ACW	MSCI ACW	EM	EM
Cnaty	Cnaty	CarpIG	Debt	USA	CorpIG	Agg	exFsl Fuels	exFsl Fuels	Debt	Debt
-35.65	1891	9:00	-1.75	15.63	-1.53	0.59	-049	6.57	650	650
MSCI	BC US	M5CI	MSCI ACW	BC US	BC	MSCI	BC US	BC US	MSCI	M&CI
USA	CorpIG	EAFE	exFsl Fuels	CorplG	Agg	EME	CorplG	CorplG	USA	USA
-37.39	1868	821	-7.50	9.82	-202	-1.82	-Q68	611	5.75	575
MSCI	S&PGbl	BC	MSCI	BC Global	MSCI	MSCI	BC Global	BC	BC Global	BC Global
EAFE	CleanEnergy	Agg	EAFE	Agg	EME	EAFE	Agg	Agg	Agg	Agg
-4306	7.35	654	-11.73	432	-227	-448	-3.15	265	1.76	1.76
MSCI	BC Global	BC Global	Blbg	BC	BC Global	S&PGbl	MSCI	BC Global	BC US	BC US
EME	Agg	Agg	Cnoby	Agg	Agg	ClænEnergy	EME	Agg	CorpIG	CarpIG
-53.18	693	5.54	-13.32	422	-260	-463	-14:60	209	1.22	1.22
S&PGbl	BC	S&PGbl	MSCI	Blbg	EM	EM	EM	MSCI	BC	BC
CleanEnergy	Agg	CleanEnergy	EME	Cn <b>u</b> ly	Debt	Debt	Debt	EAFE	Agg	Agg
-6528	593	-27.63	-18.17	-1.06	-898	-572	-1492	1.51	082	082
MSCI ACW	MSCI ACW	MSCI ACW	S&PGId	S&PGbl	Blbg	Blbg	Blbg	S&PGId	Blbg	Blbg
exFsI Fuels	exFsl Fuels	exFsl Fuels	CleanEnergy	CleanEnergy	Cn <b>u</b> ly	Cn <b>u</b> ty	Cmaty	CleanEnergy	Cn <b>u</b> ly	Cnaty
NA	NA	NA	-44,47	-16.15	-9.52	-17.01	-2466	-1699	-233	-233

DJ UBS Cmdty = Dow Jones-UBS Commodity Index

MSCI EAFE = MSCI EAFE Index

MSCI EME = MSCI EM Equity Index

MSCI USA = MSCI US Equity Index

S&P Gbl Clean Energy = S&P Global Clean Energy Index

EM Debt = JP Morgan GBI EM Global Diversified Unhdged

BC Agg = Barclays Capital US Aggregate Bond Index

MSCI ACWI ex Fsl Fuels = MSCI ACWI ex Fossil Fuels Index

 ${\tt BC\ Global\ Agg=Barclays\ Capital\ Global\ Aggregate\ Bond\ Index}$ 

BC US Corp IG = Barclays Capital US Corporate Bond Index

Chart Data Source: Morningstar, MPI.

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#### **APPENDIX**

#### All reported data are sourced from Bloomberg unless otherwise stated.

MSCI USA (US): MSCI United States Index

MSCI US Large Cap: MSCI USA Large Cap Index

MSCI US Small Cap: MSCI USA Small Cap Index

5-Year, 5-Year Forward Inflation Expectation Rate: Market-derived 5-year inflation expectation rate in 5 years' time

Bloomberg EM Capital Flow Proxy Index: Estimate of investment flow into and out of emerging markets

CAPE: Shiller P/E (Cyclically Adjusted PE) from Robert Shiller's website http://www.multpl.com/shiller-pe/

Coal: VanEck Vectors Coal ETF

CPI: Consumer Price Index

Credit: Bloomberg Barclays Global Agg Corporate

Currency: Bloomberg Barclays Global Agg-Government USD Hedged Index

Div. Yield: Dividend Yield

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

Global Agg: Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate Bond Index

Global Agg Corp: Bloomberg Barclays Global Aggregate Corporate Bond Index

EM Hard Currency: Bloomberg Barclays Emerging Markets Hard Currency Aggregate Index

EM Local Currency Gov: Bloomberg Barclays Emerging Markets Local Currency Diversified Total Return Index

Europe Sovereign: Bloomberg Barclays Europe Sovereign Index

EY Spread: EY-Baa Yield derived by subtracting the Barclays Capital Baa US Credit YTW from the S&P 500 (SPX) Earnings Yield (the inverse of the P/E ratio)

MAC Global Solar Index: MAC Global Solar Energy Index

MSCI ACWI: MSCI All Country World Index

MSCI ACWI Energy: MSCI ACWI Energy Index

MSCI Emerging Markets (EM): MSCI Emerging Markets Index

MSCI Europe: MSCI All Country Europe Index

MSCI Japan: MSCI Japan Index

### **Market Commentary**

#### APPENDIX CONTINUED

Municipal: Bloomberg Barclays US Municipal Bond Index

Nikkei 225: Nikkei 225 Stock Average NMI Index: Non-Manufacturing ISM Index

Oil: WTI Crude Oil

P/B: Trailing 12 months price to book ratio P/CF: Trailing 12 months price to cash flow ratio P/E: Trailing 12 months price to earning ratio

Rates: Bloomberg Barclays Global Agg Government USD Hedged Index

S&P Global Clean Energy: S&P Global Clean Energy Index

Shanghai Composite: Shanghai Stock Exchange Composite Index

Solar: MAC Global Solar Energy Index

Unemployment: U-3, total unemployed, as a percent of the civilian labor force (this is the definition used for the official unemployment rate)

US Agg: Bloomberg Barclays US Aggregate Bond Index

US Agg Credit: Bloomberg Barclays United States Aggregate Credit Total Return Index

US Corporate High Yield: Bloomberg Barclays United States Corporate High Yield Total Return Index

US-Europe Growth Differential: Difference between US and European GDP growth

US HY: Bloomberg Barclays US High Yield Bond index

US Treasury: Bloomberg Barclays United States Treasury Total Return Index

VIX: S&P 500 Volatility Index

VSTOXX: European Equity Volatility Index

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