

China Telecom Sector

5G will be the next big thing



# China Telecom Sector 5G will be the next big thing

- The MIIT has allocated the 5G trial frequency bands to the three major telecom operators for usage until 2020; operators will speed up 5G network development.
- Owing to low-end user migration, 4G user penetration rate reached over 74.5% in 2018
- Due to the launch of "Speed Upgrade and Tariff Reduction", ARPU will be pressured in 2019
- Our sector rating is OVERWEIGHT, with China Mobile (941 HK) and China Tower (788 HK) as the top picks. China Mobile has a high dividend yield than peers; its healthy financial conditions and dominant positions in mobile and wireline businesses also support our favorable view. Meanwhile, China Tower will benefit from increasing tower demand is in 2019, spurred by the need for network improvement and 5G network trials

China Mobile dominates the mobile and wireline broadband businesses in China. As of Dec 2018, mobile market shares of China Mobile/ China Unicom (762 HK)/ China Telecom (728 HK) were 60.0%/ 20.4%/ 19.6%. China Mobile managed to surpass China Telecom as China's largest wireline broadband provider in Oct 2018.

**5G network development speeds up in China.** China targets to expedite 5G network development to boost domestic consumption and raise mobile internet penetration. China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom are assigned with 2.6GHz & 4.9GHz/ 3.5GHz/ 3.5GHz bands for 5G network.

**4G** user penetration rate reached **74.5%** in Dec **2018**. According to MIIT, mobile business accounted for 70.2% of total telecom revenue among operators in 2018. Such revenue was mainly derived from mobile data services and value-added services. China's mobile users reached 1.57bn in Dec 2018, with over 149mn mobile user additions in 2018. According to MIIT, as of Dec 2018, 4G users reached 1.17bn, which represented **74.5%** of total mobile users in China. 4G penetration rate keeps improving due to customer upgrade.

**Downward pressure on mobile data charges.** In accordance with the government's instruction, telecom operators cancelled domestic data roaming tariff and lowered mobile data service fee by over 30% in 2018, dragging down the mobile ARPU with the lower mobile data unit price. According to MIIT, the average price per unit of mobile data dropped 56.7% YoY in 2018.

**Demand for telecom towers is growing.** Driven by the need to improve 4G network coverage and the impending 5G network rollout, telecom towers demand is expected to grow. China Tower, with its denser base station distribution and better network coverage in China, is well positioned to capture demand from operators.

Maintain BUY for China Mobile and China Tower. We assign the OVERWEIGHT rating for the sector on the back of expedited 5G network rollout and robust growth in mobile data usage in China. Our sector top picks are China Mobile and China Tower. China Mobile dominates the mobile and fixed-line market with attractive dividend yield; China Tower is expected to be benefit from the 5G network development.

**Risks:** 1) ROE is expected to decrease among telecom operators; 2) Further tariff reduction would affect telecom operators; 3) Deferred launch of 5G network

## Sector Report Feb 19, 2019 OVERWEIGHT

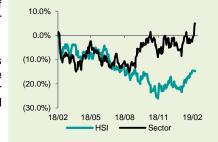
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| Sector Performance |                 |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|                    | <u>Absolute</u> | Relative* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1-mth              | 5.3%            | 0.4%      |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3-mth              | (2.7%)          | (5.5%)    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6-mth              | (3.1%)          | (8.0%)    |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *Relative to H     | ISI             |           |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Source(s): Bloomberg, ABCI Securities

1-Year sector performance



Source(s): Bloomberg, ABCI Securities

Sector Valuation Summary (Data as of Feb 18, 2019)

| Company       | Ticker | Rating | Price<br>(HK\$) | TP<br>(HK\$) | FY19E<br>P/B(x) | FY20E<br>P/B (x) | FY19E<br>P/E (x) | FY20E<br>P/E (x) | FY19E<br>Yield(%) | FY20E<br>Yield(%) |
|---------------|--------|--------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| China Unicom  | 762 HK | HOLD   | 9.17            | 9.50         | 0.7             | 0.7              | 17.5             | 12.9             | 2.4               | 3.1               |
| China Mobile  | 941 HK | BUY    | 83.30           | 90.00        | 1.4             | 1.3              | 12.4             | 11.8             | 4.0               | 4.2               |
| China Telecom | 728 HK | HOLD   | 4.32            | 4.00         | 0.9             | 0.8              | 13.6             | 12.3             | 3.1               | 3.3               |
| China Tower   | 788 HK | BUY    | 1.84            | 2.00         | 1.3             | 1.3              | 45.0             | 28.9             | 1.3               | 2.0               |

Source(s): Bloomberg, ABCI Securities estimates



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#### **Industry analysis**

A series of initiatives, including "Broadband China" and "Speed Upgrade and Tariff Reduction", have been implemented in the telecom sector in recent years to improve mobile internet penetration, enhance data transmission speed, and boost 4G user growth. According to China's 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan, mobile internet penetration is expected to increase to support information consumption. In Aug 2018, MIIT and NDRC released the "Three-Year Action Plan for Expanding and Upgrading Information Consumption (2018-20). The Plan targets to expand optical coverage in urban areas with access of more than 100Mbps by 2020 and make optical fiber readily accessible for 98% of administrative villages with 4G network coverage. By following the regulatory action plans, telecom operators have eliminated domestic data roaming tariff and lowered handset service tariff by 30% in 2018 to boost mobile internet penetration rate and stimulate domestic consumption.

In Dec 2018, MIIT allowed the transfer of mobile phone number among telecom operators in five provinces (Tianjin, Hainan, Jiangxi, Hubei and Yunnan). According to the 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, such transfer will be permitted in all provinces in China by 2020. We believe the policy will benefit customers with improved user mobility among operators, lower services tariff, and better services quality.

Exhibit 1: Telecom sectors' events

| Date       | Events  |
|------------|---|
| Aug 2017   | China Unicom carried out the Mixed ownership reform   |
| Sept 2017  | Canceled domestic mobile voice long distance and roaming fees                                 |
| March 2018 | Launch e-SIM services in several cities   |
| July 2018  | Canceled domestic mobile data roaming fees  |
| Aug 2018   | "Three-Year Action Plan for Expanding and Upgrading Information Consumption (2018-20)"        |
| Dec 2018   | China Broadcasting and Telecom Company obtained the 5G operating license                      |
| Dec 2018   | MIIT allowed the transfer of mobile phone number between telecom operators in some provinces. |
| Dec 2018   | Telecom operators obtained their 5G frequency spectrum for testing until June 2020            |
| Dec 2018   | Central Economic Work Conference announced to speed up the 5G network development in China    |

Source(s): MIIT, Companies, ABCI Securities

Telecom operators have been assigned with 5G frequency spectrums for testing until 2020. China Mobile obtains the more favorable frequency bands of 2.52GHz - 2.67GHz and 4.8GHz - 4.9GHz; China Unicom and China Telecom obtain the 3.5GHz - 3.6GHz and 3.4 GHz - 3.5 GHz, respectively.

With the dual spectrums, China Mobile can distribute the frequency bands in different regions for different usages; the higher frequency band of 4.8GHz - 4.9GHz can be allocated for higher speed requirement usage while the lower frequency band of 2.52GHz - 2.67GHz can be assigned for Internet of Things (IoT).

China has set out a number of targets for the telecom sector in the 13<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan: internet users are targeted to reach over 1.0 bn in 2020E (2015-20E CAGR: 7.8%). China is transforming itself from an outward based economy to a domestic-driven one with the plan of achieving a consumption market size of RMB 6tr in 2020E, compared to RMB 3.2tr in 2015 (2015-20E CAGR: 13.4%). Telecom sector, which is responsible for developing internet network and infrastructure, plays a key role in determining the success of China's Internet Plus strategy.

Exhibit 2: Telecom related targets in the 13th Five Year Plan

|  | 2015 | 2020E | CAGR (%) |
|--|------|-------|----------|
| Telecom sector revenue (RMB tr)                        | 1.7  | 3.5   | 15.5     |
| Including: internet service revenue (RMB tr)           | 1.0  | 3.0   | 24.6     |
| FTTH to overall wireline broadband user ratio (%)      | 56   | 80    | 24 ppt   |
| Wireline broadband users' penetration ratio (%)        | 40   | 70    | 30 ppt   |
| Mobile broadband users' penetration ratio (%)          | 57   | 85    | 28 ppt   |
| Rural regions wireline broadband penetration ratio (%) | 78   | 90    | 12 ppt   |
| Internet users (100 mn)                                | 6.88 | >10   | >7.8     |
| Information consumption market size (RMB tr)           | 3.2  | 6     | 13.4     |

Source(s): MIIT

#### Mobile business

Mobile business revenue in China grew 0.6% YoY in 2018, the growth was much slower than that of the fixed-line business (+9.1% YoY) because of the tariff policies that significantly reduce average spending per mobile customer. According to MIIT, mobile business accounted for 70.2% of total telecom revenue among operators' in 2018. China's mobile users reached 1.57bn in Dec 2018, with over 149 mn mobile user additions in 2018. According to MIIT, as of Dec 2018, 4G users reached 1.17 bn, or 74.5% of total mobile users in China. 4G penetration rate improves on customers upgrading to 4G platform and increased adoption of dual SIM smartphones.

Complying to "Speed Upgrade and Tariff Reduction" policy, the domestic voice roaming tariff was cancelled and long-distance voice fee and broadband internet tariff were lowered for SMEs in 2017; similarly, domestic data roaming tariff was cancelled and mobile data tariff was slashed by over 30% for all users in 2018. According to MIIT, the average mobile data price per GB lowered by 56.7% YoY to RMB10 in 2018. Hence, operators' ARPU is under pressure.

Through the mixed ownership reform, China Unicom has launched the largest number of data SIM cards by co-operating with internet enterprises. In 2017, China Unicom has collaborated with 35 Internet companies such as Tencent (700 HK), Alibaba (BABA US), Baidu (BIDU US) and NetEase (NTES US) to launch over 40 projects, including the Tencent King Card, DiDi King Card and Baidu Grand Card, offering a total of 95 products.



Exhibit 3: China's average monthly data usage

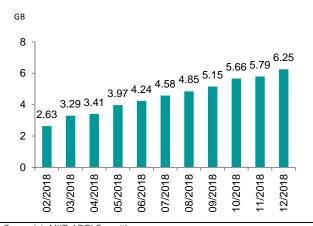
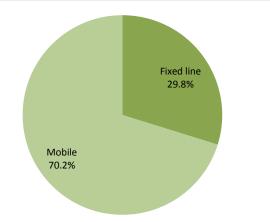


Exhibit 4: Telecom revenue distribution



Source(s): MIIT, ABCI Securities

Source(s): MIIT, ABCI Securities

Average mobile data per user in China exceeded 4.42GB in 2018, up 260% YoY. The "Speed Upgrade and Tariff Reduction" policy is expected to elevate mobile data usage with the lower service tariff. Also, 4G network coverage is scheduled to reach 98% by 2020. Many smartphones in the market are equipped with dual SIM features and we expect mobile user demand to show a moderate growth in 2019.

Exhibit 5: China's overall mobile internet users

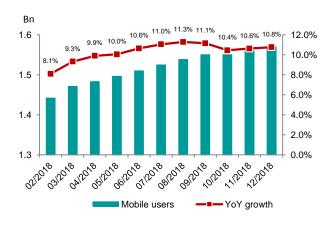
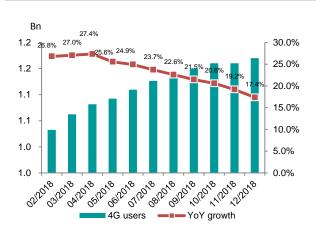


Exhibit 6: China's 4G users and YoY growth



Source(s): MIIT

Source(s): MIIT

Telecom operators have established the large-scale commercial use of TDD/FDD hybrid LTE network through macro cells, small cells, and DAS. In 2018, telecom operators built over 439,000 new 4G base stations; overall 4G base stations reached over 3.72 mn. 5G network is expected to the key technology development at the moment by many countries for boosting economic growth and improving operational efficiency. Chinese telecom operators are estimated to increase their CAPEX in FY19 for 5G base station construction.

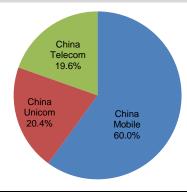


**Exhibit 7: CAPEX comparison:** 

| RMB Bn | С      | China Mobile |       |        | China Unicom |       |        | China Telecom |       |  |
|--------|--------|--------------|-------|--------|--------------|-------|--------|---------------|-------|--|
|        | FY18E  | FY19E        | FY20E | FY18E  | FY19E        | FY20E | FY18E  | FY19E         | FY20E |  |
| CAPEX  | 166.1  | 177.7        | 188.4 | 50.0   | 52.3         | 56.4  | 75.0   | 81.8          | 86.7  |  |
| YoY    | -13.9% | 7.0%         | 6.0%  | -18.9% | 4.5%         | 8.0%  | -14.1% | 9.0%          | 6.0%  |  |

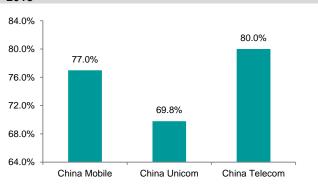
Source(s): ABCI Securities estimates

Exhibit 8: China's mobile user market share in Dec 2018



Source(s): Companies

Exhibit 9: China's 4G users penetration rate in Dec 2018



Source(s): Companies

**Exhibit 10: Mobile base stations** 



Source(s): MIIT

Exhibit 11: User comparison in Dec 2018:

| (Mn)                   | China Mobile | China Unicom | China Telecom |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 4G user additions      | 63.1         | 45.0         | 60.4          |
| YoY                    | -44.8%       | -35.9%       | 0.4%          |
| Aggregate 4G users     | 712.7        | 219.9        | 242.4         |
| YoY                    | 9.7%         | 25.8%        | 33.2%         |
| Mobile user additions  | 37.9         | 30.9         | 53.0          |
| YoY                    | -1.1%        | 51.8%        | 51.7%         |
| Aggregate mobile users | 925.1        | 315.0        | 303.0         |
| YoY                    | 4.3%         | 10.9%        | 21.2%         |

Source(s): Companies, ABCI Securities



Exhibit 12: Mobile ARPU comparison for 9M18:

|   | China Mobile | China Unicom | China Telecom |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| ARPU (RMB)  | 55.7         | 46.8         | 51.5          |
| YoY   | -8.0%        | -3.3%        | -8.0%         |
| Average Handset Data Traffic per<br>User per Month (DOU)<br>(MB/user/month) * | 3.1          | 5.2          | 3.4           |
| YoY   | 158.3%       | 162.6%       | 246.9%        |

Source(s): Companies

#### 5G network: the game-changing technology

According to MIIT, the 5G telecom network is estimated to commercial launch in the second half of 2019. We forecast CAPEX among telecom operators to rise in 2019 for 5G network allocation. In 2018, overall CAPEX in telecom service sector was lower compared to previous year due to the decrease in 4G network spending.

Based on its high transmission rate with low latency, 5G network will facilitate development of autonomous driving, IoT, cloud computing, Big Data, AR/VR, smart cities, AI technology and more, which in turn would enable real-time monitoring, fast responses, and seamless transmissions. The network enhances connectivity among buildings, transport, and utility, while the remote control room can make reactions and decisions based on the collected instant information through sensors and devices.

The frequency of 5G is much higher than that of the 4G; its transmission speed is expected to be 100 times higher than the latter. To meet the 5G network demand, telecom operators will need to increase their base station density, in-door antenna system, and small-cell network. The densification of network will allow telecom operators to add capacity for video transmission and machine-to-machine communications.

Since telecom operators are required to build a denser base station network to support the 5G network, China Tower is estimated to benefit from a higher tenancy ratio with denser base stations and improved network coverage. We expect tenancy ratio to rise from 1.44 in 2017 to 1.52 in 2020.

In Dec 2018, MIIT allocated the 5G frequency spectrums to telecom operators. China Mobile (941 HK) was assigned with the more favorable frequency bands of 2.52GHz-2.67GHz and 4.8GHz-4.9GHz bands, while China Unicom (762 HK) and China Telecom (728 HK) obtained 3.5GHz-3.6GHz band and 3.4GHz-3.5GHz band, respectively. According to MIIT, overall 5G telecom capital investments in China is estimated to be RMB 1.2tr, 1.5 times higher than that of the 4G. The 5G infrastructure is estimated to take more than eight years to complete. The number of 5G base stations required and the average price of these stations will double that of the 4G.



#### **Fixed-line business**

Aggregate fixed-line business revenue in China grew 9.1% in 2018, accounting for 29.8% (+ 1.7 ppt YoY) of overall telecom revenue in China. The growth was supported by the industrial internet, FTTH usage, and higher wireline broadband penetration rate.

Wireline user addition was 58.8mn in 2018, bringing the aggregate wireline broadband users to 407mn (+17.0% YoY) in 2018. FTTH users reached 368 mn (+25.3% YoY) in 2018, accounting for 90.4% of total fixed-line users. Wireline broadband users with 100M transmission speed or above accounted for over 70.3% as of Dec 2018. China Mobile surpassed China Telecom as China's largest wireline broadband service market provider in Oct 2018. The former recorded strong growth in wireline broadband market thanks to its lower service tariff, improved network coverage and bundled service packages. Telecom operators are offering different types of value-added services, IPTV, and video contents to improve user experiences and boost adoption. China's development of fiber-optic broadband has entered the global ranks, with the penetration rate of FTTH exceeding some of OECD countries such as South Korea (76.8%), Japan (76.7%), and the U.S. (12.6%).

As of Dec 2018, wireline broadband market share of China Mobile, China Unicom and China Telecom reached 40.9%/ 21.1%/ 38.0%. Due to the mixed ownership reform, China Unicom has strengthened its development in industrial internet by co-operating with internet enterprises. It is shifting its focus from retail market to the industrial one and IoT to capture demand from cloud computing, AI, and industrial internet.

Exhibit 13: Wireline broadband user market share

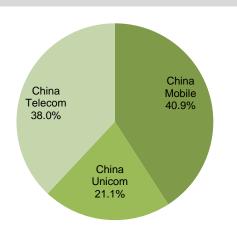
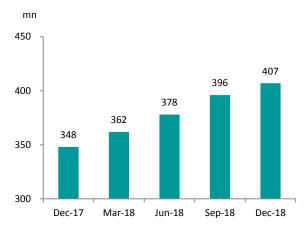


Exhibit 14: Aggregate wireline broadband users in China



Source(s): MIIT

Source(s): MIIT



The deployment of the FTTH network provides a guarantee for continuous increase in access rate of broadband users. As the coverage of the fiber network is in place and fare reduction continues, mainstream broadband access rate is moving towards the era of 100Mbps. It can be predicted that after the popularity of 100Mbps broadband, Gigabit network will be the next development goal in fixed broadband network.

In Aug 2018, the MIIT and NDRC released the "Three-Year Action Plan for Expanding and Upgrading Information Consumption (2018-20), which targets to expand optical coverage in urban areas with access of more than 100Mbps by 2020 and make optical fiber readily accessible for 98% of administrative villages with 4G network coverage. We believe this would benefit operators' fixed-line business.

#### **Financial Analysis**

China Mobile's operating revenue in 9M18 was down 0.3% YoY due to lower mobile ARPU (-8.0% YoY) amid user growth (+4.4% YoY). EBITDA margin improved by 0.6 ppt to 37.7%. Driven by margin improvement with lower handset subsidies and scale effect, net profit grew 3.1% YoY. We project net profit to grow 3.2%/ 2.8% in FY19E-FY20E, supported by margin improvement and user growth (+3.6%/+2.6% YoY in FY19E-FY20E). China Mobile still has a large pool of low-end mobile users (~200mn) for 4G network upgrade. The recent allocation of 5G frequency spectrum will benefit China Mobile more than its competitors.

China Unicom's 9M18 operating revenue was up 6.8% YoY, mainly supported by data revenue, industrial internet and new businesses. Net profit was the highest among operators with 116.6% YoY growth due to lower finance costs and better interest income after capital injection from the mixed ownership reform. The Group is expected to benefit from its cooperation with internet enterprises, which is expected to increase income from industrial internet and data SIM cards. However, user addition in mobile and wireline broadband businesses for the Group was less than sanguine in 9M18 due to intensified market competition. Overall, we estimate net profit to grow 69.4%/ 48.1% in FY19E-FY20E.

China Telecom's 9M18 operating revenue was up 3.6% YoY., mainly driven by better 4G penetration rate and industrial internet. Net profit grew 3.6% YoY in 9M18, due to 4G user improvement and increased information & application services contributions. Net profit improved 2.7% in 9M18, thanks to better margins enabled by lowered handset subsidies and better 4G user penetration rate. We expect moderate growth (+13.3%/+8.2% YoY in FY19E-FY20E) in mobile user and stronger revenue from information & application services due to the increasing demand for cloud computing, and information services. We estimate net profit to grow 4.0%/ 5.1% in FY19E-FY20E.

China Tower's operating revenue grew 6.1% YoY in 9M18, thanks to improved tenancy ratio. Net profit grew 16.7% YoY. Since the 5G frequency spectrum is much higher than that of the 4G network and telecom operators are required to build a much denser base stations networks to support the 5G network; demand for towers are set to increase. We expect tenancy ratio to rise from 1.44 in 2017 to 1.52 in 2020E. Recent adjustment of tower useful lives from 10 years to 20 years is expected to help lower depreciation expenses and improve margins. Since pace of 5G network development will expedite in 2019, we project net profit to grow 72.4%/ 48.8% in FY19E/20E.

Exhibit 15: Telecom operators' margins comparison table:

|                   | China Mobile |       |       | С      | hina Unico | om    | China Telecom |       |       |  |
|-------------------|--------------|-------|-------|--------|------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|--|
|                   | FY18E        | FY19E | FY20E | FY18E  | FY19E      | FY20E | FY18E         | FY19E | FY20E |  |
| Revenue growth    | 1.8%         | 2.8%  | 2.5%  | 4.2%   | 4.8%       | 3.8%  | 5.6%          | 5.8%  | 3.4%  |  |
| Operating growth  | 3.0%         | 3.3%  | 2.9%  | 137.3% | 63.9%      | 46.6% | 4.0%          | 6.7%  | 2.3%  |  |
| Net profit growth | 1.6          | 8.7   | 6.5   | 384.3% | 69.4%      | 48.1% | 11.6%         | 4.0%  | 5.1%  |  |
|                   |              |       |       |        |            |       |               |       |       |  |
| Operating margin  | 18.0%        | 18.0% | 17.9% | 3.3%   | 5.1%       | 7.2%  | 8.0%          | 8.0%  | 7.8%  |  |
| EBITDA margin     | 40.9%        | 40.7% | 40.8% | 50.9%  | 50.4%      | 51.5% | 30.0%         | 28.8% | 28.3% |  |
| Net profit margin | 15.4%        | 15.5% | 15.5% | 3.1%   | 5.0%       | 7.1%  | 5.0%          | 5.3%  | 5.4%  |  |

Source(s): ABCI Securities estimates



Since negative impacts of the regulatory measures will be fully reflected in their 2018 financials, we expect business performance of telecom operators to improve thereafter. Although the "Speed Upgrade and Tariff Reduction" policy affect operators' mobile ARPU, user growth and DOU are likely to be driven up by lower transaction costs. We forecast telecom operators to benefit from higher DOU growth and multi-SIM smartphones.

Mobile users in China will grow further in 2019, driving up service revenue. The growing popularity of HD video and IPTV would stimulate demand for wireline broadband in China. The 5G telecom network will be a game changer for the sector. The sector rating is **OVERWEIGHT.** 

#### China Mobile (Rating: BUY; TP: HK\$90.0)

China Mobile has obtained the more favorable 5G frequency spectrums of 2.6GHz and 4.9GHz. China Mobile has the highest market share in both the mobile and wireline businesses (by the number of users), which will support growth in data revenue. Since the Group still has a large low-end user base, room for upgrade is high. The launch of bundled service plans and value-added services would help boost earnings growth. Maintain **BUY** with TP of HK\$ 90.0, which implies 13.7x/ 13.3x FY19E/ FY20E P/E and 5.7x/ 5.5x FY19E/ FY20E EV/EVITDA, based on DCF valuation.

#### China Tower (Rating: BUY; TP: HK\$2.0)

China Tower is expected to benefit from better tenancy rate. Telecom operators are improving network coverage by renting more towers for their base stations. The launch of 5G telecom network will further stimulate the demand for network towers in China due to the high frequency spectrum needed. The Group's recent extension of tower useful life can improve profit margin with lower depreciation expenses. The improvement in tower tenancy rate is estimated to drive up revenue growth and margin with better utilization rate. China Tower also enjoys an almost monopolistic position since there are very few competitors in the tower operator market and none is as sizeable as the Group.

China Tower has been a constituent stock in several indices (Hang Seng China Enterprises Index, Hang Seng Composite LargeCap & MidCap Index, Hang Seng Stock Connect Hong Kong Index), since Dec 2018, which should support trading volume. We maintain **BUY** with a TP of HK\$ 2.0, which implies 6.9x/6.6x FY19E/20E EV/EBITDA and 1.7x/ 1.6x FY19E/20E P/B), based on DCF valuation.



#### **Risk factors**

#### ROE is expected to decrease for telecom operators

We expect ROEs of China Mobile/ China Unicom/ China Telecom to decrease in 2019 due to the decrease in mobile ARPU resulted from the "Speed Upgrade Tariff Reduction" policy. Telecom operators' mobile business growth will be affected by the government's policy to lower data usage fee.

#### Telecom sector may be affected by further tariff reduction

The telecom services sector has been affected by a series of policies, including the cancellation of domestic data roaming fee, the 30% reduction in mobile data service tariff, and the lower fixed-line broadband tariff for SMEs. Further tariff reduction mandated by new policies will impact earnings growth.

#### Deferred launch of 5G network

We expect the 5G telecom network to launch in 2H19, and operators are preparing for the commercial launch by pacing 5G network construction. Delays in the 5G network launch will weaken revenue growth and financial conditions of telecom operators.

Exhibit 16: Peer comparison table

|                  | •       |        |       | F    | P/E  |      |      | P    | <b>/</b> B |      | ROE  | ROA | EV/EBITDA |
|------------------|---------|--------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------------|------|------|-----|-----------|
|                  | Ticker  | Price  | 17A   | 18E  | 19E  | 20E  | 17A  | 18E  | 19E        | 20E  | 19E  | 19E | 19E       |
| China Market     |         |        |       |      |      |      |      |      |            |      |      |     |           |
| China Unicom     | 762 HK  | 9.17   | 110.7 | 27.5 | 17.5 | 12.9 | 0.8  | 0.7  | 0.7        | 0.7  | 4.2  | 2.3 | 2.3       |
| China Mobile     | 941 HK  | 83.30  | 12.8  | 12.5 | 12.4 | 11.8 | 1.4  | 1.4  | 1.3        | 1.2  | 10.8 | 7.2 | 3.3       |
| China Telecom    | 728 HK  | 4.32   | 16.0  | 14.5 | 13.5 | 12.4 | 0.9  | 0.9  | 0.8        | 0.8  | 6.3  | 3.4 | 3.1       |
| China Tower      | 788 HK  | 1.84   | n.a.  | 82.0 | 45.6 | 29.3 | 1.4  | 1.4  | 1.3        | 1.3  | 3.0  | 1.4 | 7.1       |
| Simple Average   |         |        | 46.5  | 34.1 | 22.3 | 16.6 | 1.1  | 1.1  | 1.0        | 1.0  | 6.1  | 3.6 | 4.0       |
| Weighted Average |         |        | 24.8  | 22.1 | 16.8 | 14.0 | 1.3  | 1.2  | 1.2        | 1.1  | 8.6  | 5.5 | 3.6       |
|                  |         |        |       |      |      |      |      |      |            |      |      |     |           |
| US Market        |         |        |       |      |      |      |      |      |            |      |      |     |           |
| AT&T             | TUS     | 30.47  | 6.3   | 10.5 | 8.4  | 8.2  | 1.3  | 1.2  | 1.2        | 1.1  | 14.9 | 4.1 | 6.4       |
| Verizon          | VZ US   | 55.16  | 7.5   | 14.6 | 11.8 | 11.5 | 5.2  | 4.3  | 3.7        | 3.2  | 33.0 | 7.4 | 6.9       |
| Sprint           | SUS     | 6.30   | n.a.  | 3.4  | 97.5 | 73.4 | 1.3  | 0.9  | 0.9        | 0.9  | 0.8  | 0.1 | 4.6       |
| T-Mobile         | TMUS US | 72.05  | 12.9  | 20.8 | 17.6 | 14.8 | 2.7  | 2.4  | 2.1        | 1.9  | 12.6 | 5.9 | 6.4       |
| American Tower   | AMT US  | 177.82 | 64.3  | 59.1 | 50.0 | 43.1 | 11.9 | 13.9 | 14.9       | 19.9 | 29.5 | 5.4 | 22.0      |
| Simple Average   |         |        | 22.7  | 21.7 | 37.1 | 30.2 | 4.5  | 4.5  | 4.5        | 5.4  | 18.2 | 4.6 | 9.3       |
| Weighted Average |         |        | 15.0  | 18.9 | 19.5 | 17.2 | 4.2  | 4.0  | 3.9        | 4.3  | 22.7 | 5.5 | 8.5       |

Price at Feb 18, 2019 Source(s): Bloomberg



## **Financial Statements**

## China Mobile (941 HK)

Consolidated income statement (2016A-2020E)

| FY Ended Dec 31 (RMB mn)       | 2016A     | 2017A     | 2018E     | 2019E     | 2020E     |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Service revenue                | 623,422   | 668,351   | 687,548   | 729,988   | 765,308   |
| Sales of products and others   | 84,999    | 72,163    | 66,390    | 63,070    | 60,232    |
| Total revenue                  | 708,421   | 740,514   | 753,938   | 793,059   | 825,541   |
| Leased lines & network assets  | (39,083)  | (46,336)  | (45,103)  | (51,549)  | (53,660)  |
| Interconnection                | (21,779)  | (21,762)  | (21,864)  | (20,620)  | (20,639)  |
| Depreciation                   | (138,090) | (149,780) | (154,698) | (163,517) | (172,194) |
| Personnel                      | (79,463)  | (85,513)  | (88,006)  | (92,709)  | (97,194)  |
| Selling expenses               | (57,493)  | (61,086)  | (62,567)  | (66,429)  | (69,643)  |
| Cost of products sold          | (87,352)  | (73,668)  | (67,474)  | (63,937)  | (60,995)  |
| Other operating expenses       | (167,073) | (182,243) | (190,444) | (198,062) | (204,994) |
| Total operating expenses       | (590,333) | (620,388) | (630,156) | (656,822) | (679,319) |
| Operating Profits              | 118,088   | 120,126   | 123,782   | 136,237   | 146,221   |
| Non-operating income           | 1,968     | 2,389     | 2,031     | 2,136     | 2,223     |
| Interest income                | 16,005    | 15,883    | 17,153    | 17,618    | 18,014    |
| Finance costs                  | (235)     | (210)     | (184)     | (193)     | (196)     |
| Share of profit in investments | 8,636     | 9,949     | 10,944    | 11,272    | 11,610    |
| Profit before tax              | 144,462   | 148,137   | 153,725   | 167,070   | 177,874   |
| Tax                            | (35,623)  | (33,723)  | (37,517)  | (40,774)  | (43,411)  |
| Profit after tax               | 108,839   | 114,414   | 116,207   | 126,296   | 134,463   |
| Minority interests             | (98)      | (135)     | (137)     | (149)     | (159)     |
| Shareholders' net profit       | 108,741   | 114,279   | 116,070   | 126,147   | 134,304   |
| EBITDA                         | 256,677   | 270,421   | 280,874   | 302,380   | 321,247   |
| EPS (RMB)                      | 5.311     | 5.581     | 5.668     | 6.161     | 6.559     |
| DPS (HKD)                      | 2.732     | 6.405     | 3.099     | 3.479     | 3.704     |
| Payout ratio                   | 45.1%     | 97.1%     | 48.0%     | 48.0%     | 48.0%     |

Note: Including a special cash dividend of HK\$ 3.20/ share in FY17  $\,$ 



## China Mobile (941 HK)

Consolidated balance sheet (2016A-2020E)

| As of Dec 31 (RMB mn)               | 2016A     | 2017A     | 2018E     | 2019E     | 2020E     |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| PPE                                 | 622,356   | 648,029   | 636,269   | 640,703   | 653,324   |
| CIP                                 | 89,853    | 78,112    | 68,415    | 66,963    | 73,481    |
| Land lease prepayments              | 26,720    | 28,322    | 32,570    | 35,827    | 39,410    |
| Goodwill                            | 35,343    | 35,343    | 35,343    | 35,344    | 35,345    |
| Interest in associates              | 124,039   | 132,499   | 205,643   | 278,964   | 323,319   |
| Deferred tax assets                 | 29,767    | 33,343    | 35,010    | 36,761    | 38,599    |
| Other non-current assets            | 6,271     | 8,269     | 8,857     | 9,213     | 9,588     |
| Total non-current assets            | 934,349   | 963,917   | 1,022,107 | 1,103,775 | 1,173,066 |
| Cash & cash equivalents             | 90,413    | 120,636   | 132,592   | 143,548   | 156,956   |
| Deposits in bank                    | 335,297   | 279,371   | 268,196   | 257,468   | 247,170   |
| Available for sale financial assets | 31,897    | 65,630    | 82,038    | 90,241    | 97,461    |
| Others                              | 129,038   | 92,559    | 99,483    | 106,225   | 112,897   |
| Total current assets                | 586,645   | 558,196   | 582,308   | 597,482   | 614,483   |
| Total assets                        | 1,520,994 | 1,522,113 | 1,604,416 | 1,701,257 | 1,787,549 |
| Accounts payable                    | 250,838   | 233,169   | 228,506   | 217,080   | 206,226   |
| Accrued expenses and other payable  | 180,950   | 190,866   | 208,044   | 226,768   | 247,177   |
| Others                              | 104,601   | 105,947   | 110,755   | 113,769   | 117,437   |
| Total current liabilities           | 536,389   | 529,982   | 547,304   | 557,618   | 570,840   |
| Deferred revenue                    | 2,175     | 2,888     | 3,032     | 3,184     | 3,343     |
| Others                              | 292       | 362       | 387       | 403       | 419       |
| Total non-current liabilities       | 2,467     | 3,250     | 3,420     | 3,587     | 3,762     |
| Total liabilities                   | 538,856   | 533,232   | 550,724   | 561,205   | 574,602   |
| Equity attributable to shareholders | 979,021   | 985,636   | 1,050,309 | 1,136,521 | 1,209,257 |
| Non-controlling interests           | 3,117     | 3,245     | 3,382     | 3,531     | 3,690     |
| Total equity                        | 982,138   | 988,881   | 1,053,691 | 1,140,052 | 1,212,947 |
|                                     |           |           |           |           |           |



#### China Mobile (941 HK)

#### Consolidated Cash Flow Statement (2016A-2020E)

| As of Dec 31 (RMB mn)                         | 2016A     | 2017A     | 2018E     | 2019E     | 2020E     |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Operating profit before change in working     | 270,255   | 289,519   | 273,405   | 291,957   | 308,541   |
| capital                                       |           |           |           |           |           |
| Change in working capital                     | 23,187    | (6,546)   | 11,357    | 4,073     | 7,032     |
| Tax   | (236)     | (135)     | (37,517)  | (40,774)  | (43,411)  |
| Others  | (39,505)  | (37,324)  | (38,444)  | (39,597)  | (40,785)  |
| Operating cash flow                           | 253,701   | 245,514   | 208,801   | 215,659   | 231,377   |
| CAPEX   | (188,209) | (193,015) | (166,100) | (177,727) | (188,391) |
| Change in restricted bank deposits            | (11,439)  | (30,746)  | (16,408)  | (8,204)   | (7,219)   |
| Change in available-for-sale financial asset  | (12,102)  | 54,467    | 11,164    | 10,698    | 10,274    |
| Others  | 17,227    | 62,761    | 30,957    | 31,861    | 32,646    |
| Investing cash flow                           | (194,523) | (106,533) | (140,387) | (143,372) | (152,690) |
| Dividend paid                                 | (46,991)  | (106,036) | (55,714)  | (60,551)  | (64,466)  |
| Others  | (1,967)   | (2,195)   | (191)     | (200)     | (203)     |
| Financing cash flow                           | (48,958)  | (108,231) | (55,905)  | (60,750)  | (64,668)  |
| Net increase in cash & cash equivalents       | 10,220    | 30,750    | 12,509    | 11,537    | 14,018    |
| Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of year  | 79,842    | 90,413    | 120,636   | 132,592   | 143,548   |
| Effect of changes in foreign exchange rate    | 351       | (527)     | (553)     | (581)     | (610)     |
| Cash & cash equivalents at end of year        | 90,413    | 120,636   | 132,592   | 143,548   | 156,956   |
| Financial Ratios:                             |           |           |           |           |           |
| EBITDA / service revenue margin (%)           | 41.2      | 40.5      | 40.9      | 41.4      | 42.0      |
| Operating profit / service revenue margin (%) | 18.9      | 18.0      | 18.0      | 18.7      | 19.1      |
| Net profit / total revenue margin (%)         | 15.3      | 15.4      | 15.4      | 15.9      | 16.3      |
| ROAA (%)                                      | 7.4       | 7.5       | 7.4       | 7.6       | 7.7       |
| ROAE (%)                                      | 11.5      | 11.6      | 11.4      | 11.5      | 11.5      |
| YoY Growth:                                   |           |           |           |           |           |
| Service revenue (%)                           | 6.7       | 7.2       | 2.9       | 6.2       | 4.8       |
| EBITDA (%)                                    | 6.2       | 5.4       | 3.9       | 7.7       | 6.2       |
| Net profit (%)                                | 0.2       | 5.1       | 1.6       | 8.7       | 6.5       |



## China Unicom (762 HK)

## Consolidated income statement (2016A-2020E)

| FY Ended Dec 31 (RMB mn)                 | 2016A     | 2017A     | 2018E     | 2019E     | 2020E     |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Mobile service revenue                   | 145,018   | 156,441   | 172,121   | 187,138   | 198,641   |
| Wireline service revenue                 | 91,710    | 90,866    | 90,412    | 90,864    | 91,591    |
| Others                                   | 37,469    | 27,522    | 23,872    | 22,271    | 21,387    |
| Total revenue                            | 274,197   | 274,829   | 286,404   | 300,272   | 311,618   |
| Interconnection charges                  | (12,739)  | (12,617)  | (12,365)  | (12,117)  | (11,875)  |
| D&A                                      | (76,805)  | (77,492)  | (78,267)  | (79,050)  | (79,840)  |
| Network operation & support              | (51,167)  | (54,507)  | (60,242)  | (65,872)  | (68,332)  |
| Employee benefit expenses                | (36,907)  | (42,471)  | (44,393)  | (46,542)  | (48,301)  |
| Cost of product sold                     | (39,301)  | (26,643)  | (22,922)  | (21,037)  | (19,877)  |
| Other operating expenses                 | (54,585)  | (57,166)  | (58,881)  | (60,353)  | (60,957)  |
| Total operating expenses                 | (271,504) | (270,896) | (277,069) | (284,971) | (289,182) |
| Operating Profits                        | 2,693     | 3,933     | 9,335     | 15,301    | 22,436    |
| Finance cost                             | (5,017)   | (5,734)   | (2,010)   | (1,201)   | (722)     |
| Interest income                          | 1,160     | 1,647     | 1,918     | 3,343     | 5,373     |
| Others (including associates, JV & other | 1,100     | 1,017     | 1,010     | 0,010     | 0,070     |
| income)                                  | 1,948     | 2,747     | 3,031     | 3,351     | 3,713     |
|  |           |           |           |           |           |
| Profit before tax                        | 784       | 2,593     | 12,274    | 20,795    | 30,801    |
| Tax                                      | (154)     | (743)     | (3,351)   | (5,677)   | (8,409)   |
| Profit after tax                         | 630       | 1,850     | 8,923     | 15,118    | 22,392    |
| Minority interests                       | 5         | 22        | 71        | 120       | 178       |
| Shareholders' net profit                 | 625       | 1,828     | 8,852     | 14,998    | 22,214    |
| EBITDA                                   | 79,498    | 81,425    | 87,602    | 94,351    | 102,276   |
| EDC (DMD)                                | 0.000     | 0.074     | 0.000     | 0.400     | 0.700     |
| EPS (RMB)                                | 0.026     | 0.074     | 0.289     | 0.490     | 0.726     |
| DPS (RMB)                                | 0.000     | 0.052     | 0.251     | 0.425     | 0.630     |
| Payout ratio                             | 0.0%      | 86.0%     | 86.0%     | 86.0%     | 86.0%     |



## China Unicom (762 HK)

## Consolidated balance sheet (2016A-2020E)

| •  | ,       |         |         |         |         |
|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| As of Dec 31 (RMB mn)                        | 2016A   | 2017A   | 2018E   | 2019E   | 2020E   |
| PPE  | 451,115 | 416,596 | 423,472 | 433,572 | 444,346 |
| Interest in associates                       | 32,248  | 33,233  | 32,477  | 32,802  | 33,458  |
| Lease prepayments                            | 9,436   | 9,313   | 9,872   | 9,970   | 10,070  |
| Other non-current assets                     | 39,137  | 36,119  | 30,982  | 26,907  | 23,679  |
| Total non-current assets                     | 531,936 | 495,261 | 496,803 | 503,252 | 511,553 |
|  |         |         |         |         |         |
| Cash & cash equivalents                      | 23,633  | 32,836  | 61,204  | 101,654 | 147,864 |
| Accounts receivables                         | 13,622  | 13,964  | 16,478  | 18,099  | 19,636  |
| Short-term bank deposits                     | 1,754   | 5,526   | 5,652   | 5,813   | 5,899   |
| Others                                       | 43,209  | 24,396  | 23,291  | 23,252  | 23,332  |
| Total current assets                         | 82,218  | 76,722  | 106,625 | 148,818 | 196,731 |
| Total assets                                 | 614,154 | 571,983 | 603,428 | 652,070 | 708,284 |
| Accounts payable and accrued liabilities     | 143,224 | 125,260 | 158,651 | 163,956 | 167,171 |
| Short-term bank loans                        | 76,994  | 22,500  | 18,000  | 10,800  | 6,480   |
| Commercial paper                             | 35,958  | 8,991   | 7,193   | 4,316   | 2,589   |
| Others                                       | 86,479  | 85,871  | 87,109  | 140,175 | 194,000 |
| Total current liabilities                    | 342,655 | 242,622 | 270,953 | 319,247 | 370,240 |
| Promissory notes                             | 47.000  | 47.004  | 44.005  | 0.004   | 5,179   |
| Others                                       | 17,906  | 17,981  | 14,385  | 8,631   | 4,616   |
| Total non-current liabilities                | 25,911  | 7,033   | 6,394   | 5,171   | 9,794   |
| Total liabilities                            | 43,817  | 25,014  | 20,778  | 13,802  |         |
| Total habilities                             | 386,472 | 267,636 | 291,731 | 333,049 | 380,035 |
| Equity attributable to ordinary shareholders | 227,407 | 304,050 | 311,311 | 318,635 | 327,848 |
| Non-controlling interests                    | 275     | 297     | 386     | 385     | 401     |
| Total equity                                 | 227,682 | 304,347 | 311,697 | 319,020 | 328,249 |
|  |         |         |         |         |         |



#### China Unicom (762 HK)

## Consolidated Cash Flow Statement (2016A-2020E)

| As of Dec 31 (RMB mn)                        | 2016A    | 2017A    | 2018E    | 2019E    | 2020E    |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Operating profit before change in working    | 784      | 2,593    | 12,274   | 20,795   | 30,801   |
| capital                                      |          |          |          |          |          |
| Change in working capital                    | (3,898)  | 1,966    | 5,130    | 6,134    | 5,073    |
| Others                                       | 84,617   | 87,767   | 82,594   | 82,602   | 82,947   |
| Tax  | (6,910)  | (7,272)  | (5,361)  | (6,878)  | (9,130)  |
| Operating cash flow                          | 74,593   | 85,054   | 94,637   | 102,653  | 109,690  |
| CAPEX  | (98,293) | (61,489) | (50,000) | (52,250) | (56,430) |
| Others                                       | 2,544    | 14,153   | 19,098   | 20,083   | 21,206   |
| Investing cash flow                          | (95,749) | (47,336) | (30,902) | (32,167) | (35,224) |
| Dividend paid                                | (4,071)  | 0        | (1,591)  | (7,674)  | (13,001) |
| Others                                       | 26,948   | (28,414) | (33,685) | (22,280) | (15,182) |
| Financing cash flow                          | 22,877   | (28,414) | (35,276) | (29,954) | (28,183) |
| Net increase in cash & cash equivalents      | 1,721    | 9,304    | 28,459   | 40,532   | 46,283   |
| Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of year | 21,755   | 23,633   | 32,836   | 61,204   | 101,654  |
| Effect of changes in foreign exchange rate   | 157      | (101)    | (91)     | (82)     | (74)     |
| Cash & cash equivalents at end of year       | 23,633   | 32,836   | 61,204   | 101,654  | 147,864  |
| Financial Ratios:                            |          |          |          |          |          |
| EBITDA / service revenue margin (%)          | 29.0%    | 29.6%    | 30.6%    | 31.4%    | 32.8%    |
| Operating margin (%)                         | 1.0%     | 1.4%     | 3.3%     | 5.1%     | 7.2%     |
| Net profit margin (%)                        | 0.2%     | 0.7%     | 3.1%     | 5.0%     | 7.1%     |
| ROAA (%)                                     | 0.1%     | 0.3%     | 1.5%     | 2.4%     | 3.3%     |
| ROAE (%)                                     | 0.3%     | 0.7%     | 2.9%     | 4.8%     | 6.9%     |
| YoY Growth:                                  |          |          |          |          |          |
| EBITDA (%)                                   | (9.1%)   | 2.4%     | 7.6%     | 7.7%     | 8.4%     |
| Net profit (%)                               | (94.1%)  | 192.5%   | 384.3%   | 69.4%    | 48.1%    |



#### ABCI SECURITIES COMPANY LIMITED

## China Telecom (728 HK)

Consolidated income statement (2016A-2020E)

| FY Ended Dec 31 (RMB mn)        | 2016A     | 2017A     | 2018E     | 2019E     | 2020E     |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Service revenue                 | 309,812   | 331,044   | 355,072   | 379,758   | 395,688   |
| Sales of products and others    | 42,722    | 35,185    | 31,508    | 29,103    | 27,236    |
| Total revenue                   | 352,534   | 366,229   | 386,580   | 408,862   | 422,924   |
| D&A                             | (67,942)  | (74,951)  | (78,116)  | (78,990)  | (81,116)  |
| Network operation & support     | (94,156)  | (103,969) | (109,362) | (115,826) | (120,289) |
| Selling G&A                     | (56,426)  | (58,434)  | (62,493)  | (69,915)  | (72,320)  |
| Personnel expenses              | (54,504)  | (56,043)  | (59,652)  | (63,420)  | (66,476)  |
| Other operating expenses        | (52,286)  | (45,612)  | (48,645)  | (50,508)  | (51,835)  |
| Total operating expenses        | (325,314) | (339,009) | (358,268) | (378,659) | (392,036) |
| Operating Profits               | 27,220    | 27,220    | 28,313    | 30,203    | 30,888    |
| Investment income               | 40        | 147       | 169       | 191       | 208       |
| Share of profit from associates | 91        | 877       | 2,300     | 890       | 979       |
| Net finance costs               |           |           |           |           |           |
| Profit before tax               | 24,116    | 24,953    | 27,842    | 28,959    | 30,428    |
| Tax                             | (5,993)   | (6,192)   | (6,909)   | (7,186)   | (7,551)   |
| Profit after tax                | 18,123    | 18,761    | 20,933    | 21,773    | 22,877    |
| Minority interests              | (105)     | (144)     | (161)     | (167)     | (176)     |
| Shareholders' net profit        | 18,018    | 18,617    | 20,773    | 21,606    | 22,702    |
| EBITDA                          | 95,161    | 102,169   | 106,425   | 109,188   | 112,004   |
| EPS (RMB)                       | 0.223     | 0.230     | 0.257     | 0.267     | 0.281     |
| DPS (RMB)                       | 0.093     | 0.093     | 0.093     | 0.093     | 0.093     |
| Payout ratio                    | 41.5%     | 40.3%     | 40.0%     | 40.0%     | 40.0%     |



#### ABCI SECURITIES COMPANY LIMITED

## China Telecom (728 HK)

Consolidated balance sheet (2016A-2020E)

| As of Dec 31 (RMB mn)               | 2016A   | 2017A   | 2018E   | 2019E   | 2020E   |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| PPE                                 | 389,671 | 406,257 | 396,093 | 408,879 | 409,553 |
| CIP                                 | 80,386  | 73,106  | 70,347  | 60,441  | 59,132  |
| Land lease prepayments              | 22,955  | 22,262  | 20,036  | 18,032  | 16,229  |
| Goodwill                            | 29,923  | 29,920  | 29,920  | 29,921  | 29,922  |
| Intangible costs                    | 11,244  | 12,391  | 13,506  | 14,317  | 15,032  |
| Interest in associates              | 34,572  | 35,726  | 48,613  | 45,998  | 49,390  |
| Other non-current assets            | 9,673   | 9,982   | 14,459  | 15,842  | 17,302  |
| Total non-current assets            | 578,424 | 589,644 | 592,973 | 593,430 | 596,560 |
| Cash & cash equivalents             | 24,617  | 19,410  | 55,137  | 91,235  | 126,779 |
| Deposits in bank                    | 3,331   | 3,100   | 3,007   | 2,917   | 2,829   |
| Accounts receivables                | 21,465  | 22,096  | 22,538  | 22,989  | 23,448  |
| Others                              | 24,721  | 26,944  | 28,584  | 29,914  | 31,804  |
| Total current assets                | 74,134  | 71,550  | 109,266 | 147,054 | 184,860 |
| Total assets                        | 652,558 | 661,194 | 702,240 | 740,485 | 781,421 |
| Short term debt                     | 40,780  | 54,558  | 61,651  | 67,816  | 73,241  |
| Accounts payable                    | 122,493 | 119,321 | 118,128 | 122,853 | 128,996 |
| Accrued expenses and other payable  | 91,173  | 98,695  | 103,630 | 108,811 | 114,252 |
| Others                              | 64,687  | 2,834   | 2,314   | 2,333   | 2,363   |
| Total current liabilities           | 319,133 | 275,408 | 285,722 | 301,812 | 318,851 |
| Long term debt and payable          | 9,370   | 48,596  | 55,885  | 60,915  | 66,397  |
| Deferred revenue                    | 4,770   | 8,010   | 9,392   | 10,829  | 12,339  |
| Others                              | 2,937   | 2,483   | 11,449  | 13,083  | 14,810  |
| Total non-current liabilities       | 17,077  | 59,089  | 76,727  | 84,827  | 93,547  |
| Total liabilities                   | 336,210 | 334,497 | 362,448 | 386,640 | 412,397 |
| Equity attributable to shareholders | 315,377 | 325,867 | 339,072 | 353,139 | 368,303 |
| Non-controlling interests           | 971     | 830     | 720     | 705     | 720     |
| Total equity                        | 316,348 | 326,697 | 339,791 | 353,845 | 369,023 |
|                                     |         |         |         |         |         |



## China Telecom (728 HK)

## Consolidated Cash Flow Statement (2016A-2020E)

| As of Dec 31 (RMB mn)                             | 2016A    | 2017A    | 2018E    | 2019E    | 2020E    |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Operating profit before change in working capital | 99,545   | 106,236  | 108,591  | 111,296  | 114,050  |
| Change in working capital                         | 9,530    | (1,897)  | 1,691    | 8,127    | 9,264    |
| Others  | (3,314)  | (3,211)  | (3,319)  | (2,684)  | (1,986)  |
| Tax   | (4,626)  | (4,626)  | (4,626)  | (4,626)  | (4,626)  |
| Operating cash flow                               | 101,135  | 96,502   | 102,338  | 112,113  | 116,702  |
| CAPEX   | (96,678) | (87,334) | (75,000) | (81,750) | (86,655) |
| Others  | (2,365)  | 2,071    | 1,896    | 2,349    | 2,361    |
| Investing cash flow                               | (99,043) | (85,263) | (73,104) | (79,401) | (84,294) |
| Dividend paid                                     | (6,489)  | (7,530)  | (7,568)  | (7,539)  | (7,539)  |
| Others  | (3,066)  | (8,617)  | 14,288   | 11,097   | 10,806   |
| Financing cash flow                               | (9,555)  | (16,147) | 6,720    | 3,558    | 3,267    |
| Net increase in cash & cash equivalents           | (7,463)  | (4,908)  | 35,954   | 36,270   | 35,675   |
| Cash & cash equivalents at beginning of year      | 31,869   | 24,617   | 19,410   | 55,137   | 91,235   |
| Effect of changes in foreign exchange rate        | 211      | (299)    | (227)    | (173)    | (131)    |
| Cash & cash equivalents at end of year            | 24,617   | 19,410   | 55,137   | 91,235   | 126,779  |
| Financial Ratios:                                 |          |          |          |          |          |
| EBITDA margin (%)                                 | 30.7     | 30.9     | 30.0     | 28.8     | 28.3     |
| Operating margin (%)                              | 8.8      | 8.2      | 8.0      | 8.0      | 7.8      |
| Net profit margin (%)                             | 5.1      | 5.1      | 5.4      | 5.3      | 5.4      |
| ROA A (%)   | 2.8      | 2.8      | 3.0      | 3.0      | 3.0      |
| ROAE (%)  | 5.8      | 5.8      | 6.2      | 6.2      | 6.3      |
| YoY Growth:                                       |          |          |          |          |          |
| Service revenue (%)                               | 5.6      | 6.9      | 7.3      | 7.0      | 4.2      |
| EBITDA (%)  | 1.1      | 7.4      | 4.2      | 2.6      | 2.6      |
| Net profit (%)                                    | (10.2)   | 3.3      | 11.6     | 4.0      | 5.1      |
|   |          |          |          |          |          |



## China Tower (788 HK)

Consolidated income statement (2016A-2020E)

| FY Ended Dec 31 (RMB mn)       | 2016A    | 2017A    | 2018E    | 2019E    | 2020E    |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Tower business revenue         | 55,552   | 67,085   | 69,694   | 72,180   | 74,384   |
| DAS revenue                    | 421      | 1,284    | 1,990    | 2,687    | 3,452    |
| TSSAI revenue                  | 19       | 169      | 1,014    | 1,876    | 3,001    |
| Others                         | 5        | 127      | 298      | 606      | 1,060    |
| Total revenue                  | 55,997   | 68,665   | 72,997   | 77,349   | 81,899   |
| D&A expenses                   | (27,585) | (32,642) | (34,308) | (34,420) | (36,199) |
| Site operating lease charges   | (9,121)  | (11,336) | (12,117) | (12,917) | (13,292) |
| Repairs and maintenance        | (5,750)  | (6,156)  | (6,351)  | (6,575)  | (6,798)  |
| Employee benefits and expenses | (3,743)  | (4,229)  | (4,380)  | (4,564)  | (4,668)  |
| Other operating expenses       | (4,728)  | (6,587)  | (7,154)  | (7,735)  | (6,552)  |
| Other gains                    | 48       | 149      | 343      | 463      | 537      |
| Interest income                | 65       | 104      | 47       | 402      | 431      |
| Finance costs                  | (5,077)  | (5,283)  | (5,562)  | (5,966)  | (6,401)  |
| Profit before tax              | 106      | 2,685    | 3,514    | 6,037    | 8,956    |
| Tax                            | (30)     | (742)    | (836)    | (1,419)  | (2,087)  |
| Shareholders' net profit       | 76       | 1,943    | 2,678    | 4,618    | 6,869    |
| EBITDA                         | 32,655   | 40,357   | 42,995   | 45,559   | 50,589   |
|                                |          |          |          |          |          |
| EPS (RMB)                      | 0.001    | 0.015    | 0.015    | 0.026    | 0.039    |
| DPS (RMB)                      | 0.000    | 0.000    | 0.008    | 0.013    | 0.020    |
| Payout ratio                   | 0.0%     | 0.0%     | 50.0%    | 50.0%    | 50.0%    |



## China Tower (788 HK)

## Consolidated balance sheet (2016A-2020E)

| As of Dec 31 (RMB mn)                             | 2016A   | 2017A   | 2018E   | 2019E    | 2020E    |
|---|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
| PPE   | 245,788 | 258,138 | 263,648 | 266,335  | 268,364  |
| CIP   | 13,592  | 10,930  | 9,291   | 7,897    | 6,712    |
| Long term prepayments                             | 5,385   | 9,910   | 10,901  | 11,991   | 13,190   |
| Deferred income tax assets                        | 1,208   | 689     | 482     | 338      | 236      |
| Other non-current assets                          | 6,130   | 12,459  | 13,331  | 52,946   | 60,351   |
| Total non-current assets                          | 272,103 | 292,126 | 297,653 | 339,507  | 348,853  |
| Cash & cash equivalents                           | 17,249  | 7,852   | 66,924  | 71,836   | 82,433   |
| Trade and other receivables                       | 15,789  | 15,262  | 14,499  | 13,774   | 13,085   |
| Prepayments & other current assets                | 6,524   | 7,375   | 8,113   | 8,924    | 9,816    |
| Others  | 3       | 28      | (3,262) | (37,537) | (42,753) |
| Total current assets                              | 39,565  | 30,517  | 86,274  | 56,997   | 62,582   |
| Total assets                                      | 311,668 | 322,643 | 383,927 | 396,504  | 411,435  |
| Interest bearing borrowings                       | 32,316  | 95,260  | 100,976 | 107,034  | 113,456  |
| Deferred consideration payables - current portion | 90,499  | 17,252  | 16,389  | 15,570   | 14,791   |
| Accounts payable                                  | 39,840  | 31,906  | 30,311  | 28,795   | 27,355   |
| Others  | 8,913   | 5,623   | 6,348   | 7,169    | 8,096    |
| Total current liabilities                         | 171,568 | 150,041 | 154,024 | 158,568  | 163,699  |
| Borrowings  | 12,280  | 43,793  | 48,172  | 52,990   | 58,288   |
| Others  | 2,268   | 1,314   | 1,248   | 1,186    | 1,127    |
| Total non-current liabilities                     | 14,548  | 45,107  | 49,421  | 54,175   | 59,415   |
| Total liabilities                                 | 186,116 | 195,148 | 203,445 | 212,743  | 223,114  |
| Total equity                                      | 125,552 | 127,495 | 180,482 | 183,761  | 188,321  |



## China Tower (788 HK)

## Consolidated cash flow statement (2016A-2020E)

| As of Dec 31 (RMB mn)                     | 2016A    | 2017A    | 2018E    | 2019E    | 2020E    |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Operating profit before tax               | 106      | 2,685    | 3,514    | 6,037    | 8,956    |
| Others                                    | 27,488   | 32,250   | 32,820   | 33,267   | 35,389   |
| Operating cash flow                       | 27,594   | 34,935   | 36,334   | 39,303   | 44,346   |
| CAPEX                                     | (64,103) | (43,836) | (37,261) | (33,535) | (31,858) |
| Others                                    | 18,080   | (8,079)  | (8,725)  | (9,423)  | (10,177) |
| Investing cash flow                       | (46,023) | (51,915) | (45,986) | (42,958) | (42,035) |
| Change in borrowings                      | 12,280   | 43,793   | 48,172   | 52,990   | 58,288   |
| Others                                    | 9,745    | (36,210) | 20,552   | (44,423) | (50,002) |
| Financing cash flow                       | 22,025   | 7,583    | 68,724   | 8,567    | 8,286    |
| Net increase in cash and cash equivalents | 3,596    | (9,397)  | 59,072   | 4,912    | 10,597   |
| Cash and cash equivalents at beginning    | 13,653   | 17,249   | 7,852    | 66,924   | 71,836   |
| of year                                   |          |          |          |          |          |
| Cash and cash equivalents at end of year  | 17,249   | 7,852    | 66,924   | 71,836   | 82,433   |
| Financial ratio:                          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Growth rate:                              |          |          |          |          |          |
| Revenue                                   | 536.2%   | 22.6%    | 6.3%     | 6.0%     | 5.9%     |
| Net profit                                | N/A      | 2456.6%  | 37.8%    | 72.4%    | 48.8%    |
| EBITDA                                    | 3242.4%  | 23.6%    | 6.5%     | 6.0%     | 11.0%    |
| ROAA                                      | 0.0%     | 0.6%     | 0.8%     | 1.2%     | 1.7%     |
| ROAE                                      | 0.1%     | 1.5%     | 1.7%     | 2.5%     | 3.7%     |
| EBITDA margin                             | 58.3%    | 58.8%    | 58.9%    | 58.9%    | 61.8%    |
| Operating profit margin                   | 9.1%     | 11.2%    | 11.9%    | 14.4%    | 17.6%    |
| Net profit margin                         | 0.1%     | 2.8%     | 3.7%     | 6.0%     | 8.4%     |
|   |          |          |          |          |          |



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| Rating | Definition  |
|--------|---|
| Buy    | Stock return rate ≥ Market return rate (10%)                                |
| Hold   | - Market return rate (-10%) ≤ Stock return rate < Market return rate (+10%) |
| Sell   | Stock return < - Market return (-10%)                                       |

Notes: Stock return rate: expected percentage change of share price plus gross dividend yield over the next 12 months Market return rate: average market return rate since 2005 (HSI total return index 2005-17 CAGR at 10%)

Time horizon of share price target: 12-month

Stock rating, however, may vary from the stated framework due to factors including but not limited to: corporate governance, market capitalization, historical price volatility relative to corresponding benchmark index, average daily turnover of the stock relative to market capitalization of the stock, competitive advantages in corresponding industry, etc.

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