



PRESS RELEASE

2006 will be remembered as an important phase in the development of the Manitou Group. Apart from the fact that its consolidated net sales exceeded the symbolic level of € 1 billion for the first time, the year was marked by new sales records being set in all business lines and activities and the launch of industrial operations in China, in the very heart of a continent that offers substantial growth potential for the Group over the next decade. In a favourable economic environment, the Group is taking full advantage of the expansion of its traditional markets as well as that of emerging markets to strengthen its position as world leader in rough-terrain handling equipment. Year after year, the Group thus continues to pursue a development strategy that combines growth and profitability over the long term.

With consolidated net sales up 14.5% to € 1,128 million, in 2006 the Group posted yet another sharp increase in its activities and results. Between 2003 and 2006, its net sales increased by 65%, while the Group share of net profit soared by 89%. In 2006, the Group's dynamic development was fuelled by three main growth engines: first and foremost, the strength of the global economy and, more specifically, that of the construction sector, which, outside the US, set new records in a number of countries; next, the strengthening of its commercial positions in its traditional markets and the opening up of new emerging markets offering strong growth potential; and lastly, the constant broadening of its product ranges in the handling business lines, with confirmed successes, such as those notched up in respect of on-board handlers, aerial work platforms and rotating telescopic forklift trucks.

Supported by the soundness of this strategy for expanding its ranges, the Group boosted its presence in the industrial sector in 2006 by launching a range of thermal and electric industrial forklift trucks for light loads, aimed at its export networks. The Group also further increased its investment in research and development to accelerate its product plan and pave the way for a future generation of equipment.

Despite persistent pressure on the prices of raw materials and components, and a highly competitive environment, the Manitou Group managed to improve its margins and increase its profitability. Thanks to tight control over its production costs and operating charges, the added value and the operating margin each gained one percentage point to reach 23.9% and 12% respectively. At € 87.8 million, the Group share of net profit increased by 19%, boosting the net margin by 0.3 percentage points to 7.8%, a new all-time record for the Group's profitability.

Buoyed by these excellent results, the Group is in a strong financial position, with shareholders' equity representing 57.6% of the total balance sheet and a still very low debt level. The significant increase in free cash flow to € 111 million in 2006 means that the Group is able to finance the acceleration in its capital expenditure plan (up 72% to € 45 million) without the need to seek external financing, and will propose an increase in the dividend per share at the next shareholders' meeting (increase of 17% to € 1.05 per share).

Commenting on the 2006 results, Marcel Claude Braud, Chairman of Manitou's Executive Committee stated: "The 2006 results are perfectly consistent with the implementation of the various stages of the strategic goals of the Vision that the Group shares with all its management staff and employees. They are testament to the determination of the Group's management bodies to take all necessary steps to prepare for the challenges of tomorrow, with the aim of satisfying its customers and shareholders while at the same time pursuing a socially responsible policy with regard to all employees who, on a daily basis, contribute to the Group's achievements."