



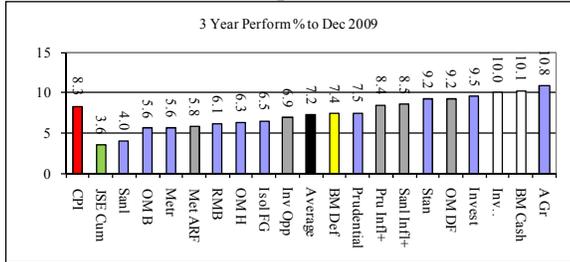
Benchmark Retirement Fund

MONTHLY REVIEW OF PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE TO 31 DECEMBER 2009

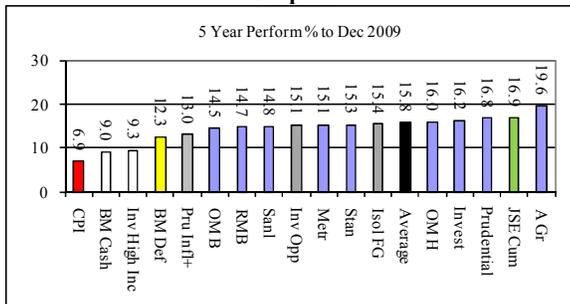
By T H Friedrich – Managing Director, Retirement Fund Solutions Namibia (Pty) Ltd

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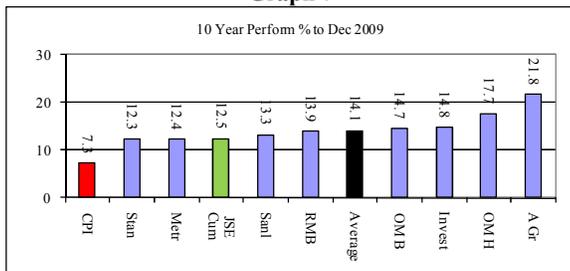
Graph 5



Graph 6

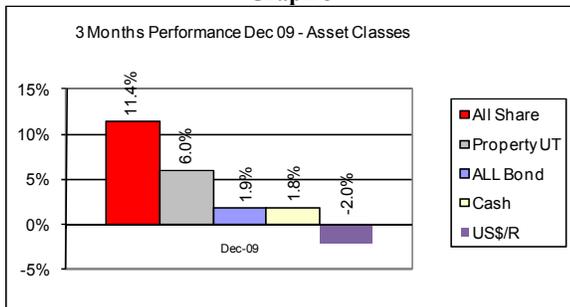


Graph 7

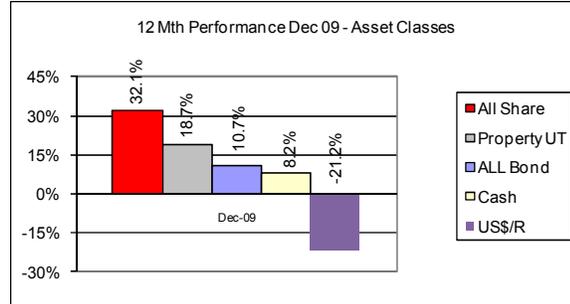


2. Performance of Key Indices (index performance by courtesy from pointBreak/Deutsche Securities)

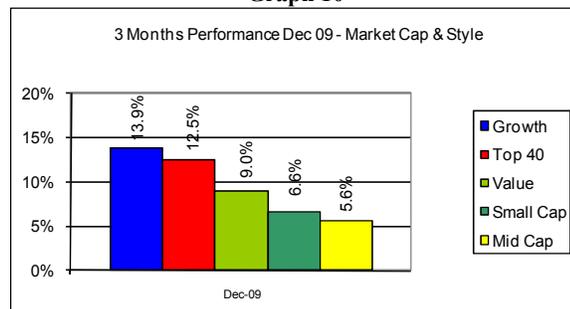
Graph 8



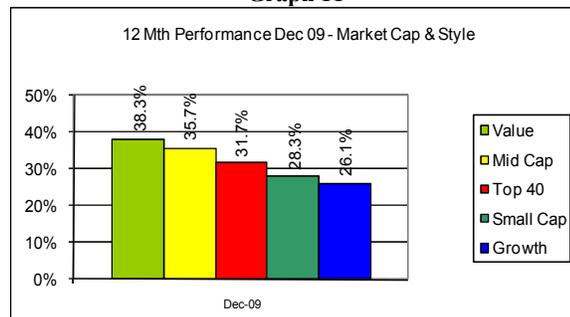
Graph 9



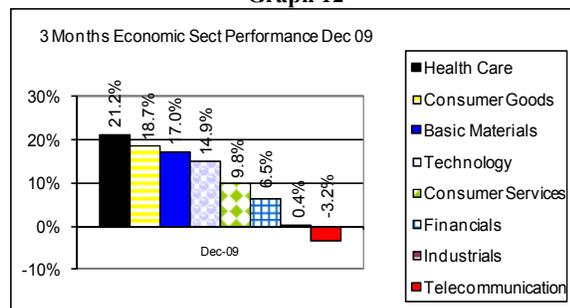
Graph 10



Graph 11



Graph 12



Graph 13



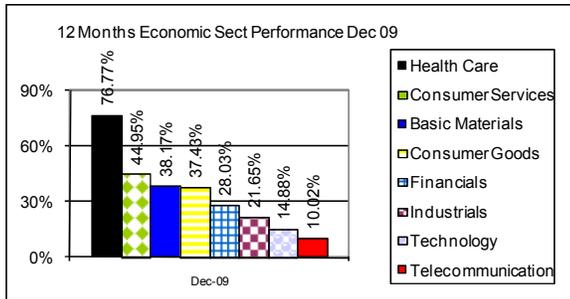


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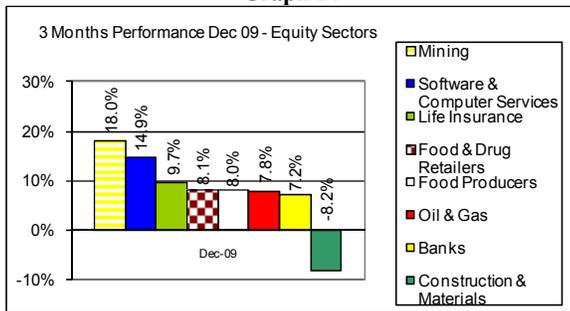
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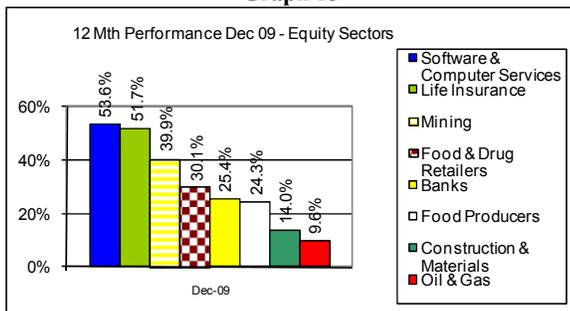
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Graph 14

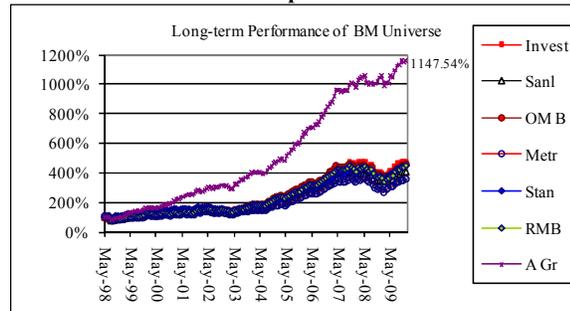


Graph 15

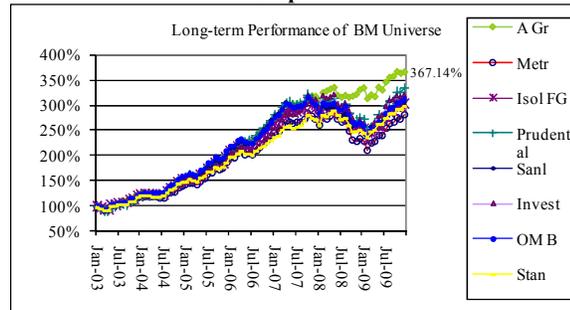


3.1. Cumulative performance of prudential balanced portfolios

Graph 16

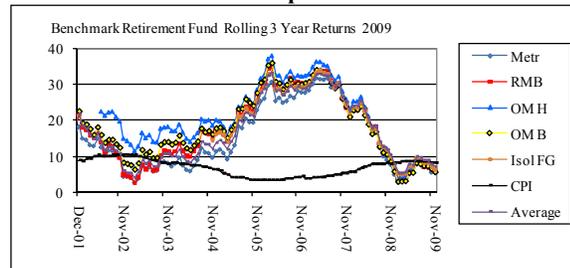


Graph 17



3.2. 3-year rolling performance of prudential balanced portfolios relative to CPI

Graph 18



3. Portfolio Performance Analysis

Graph 19

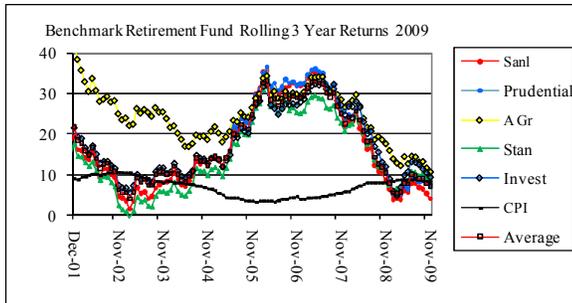




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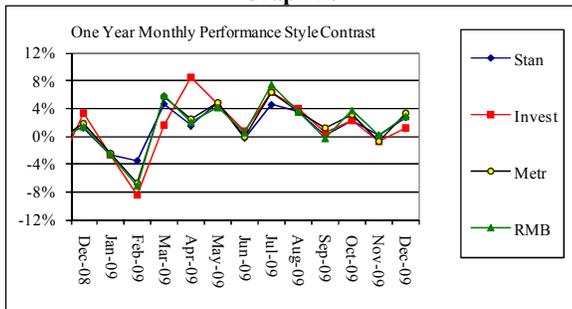
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3.3. Monthly performance of prudential balanced portfolios

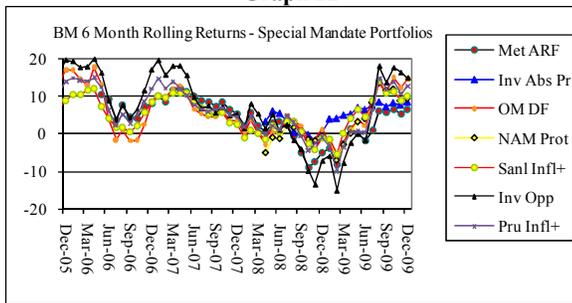
Graph 20



Graph 21

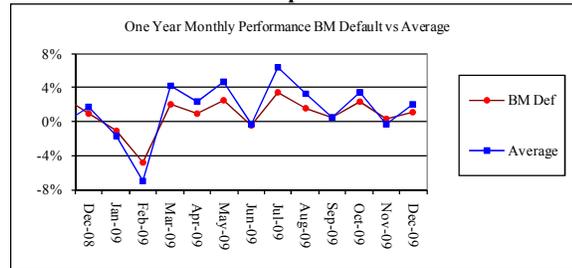
3.4. 6-month rolling returns of 'special mandate' portfolios

Graph 22



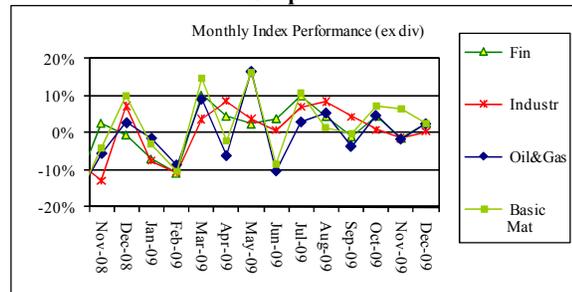
3.5 Monthly performance of 'Default' portfolio relative to average prudential balanced portfolio

Graph 23

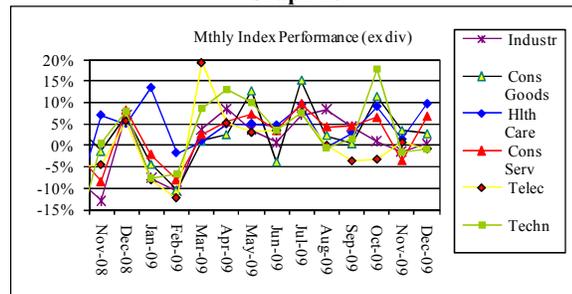


3.6 Monthly and one year cumulative performance of key indices (excluding dividends)

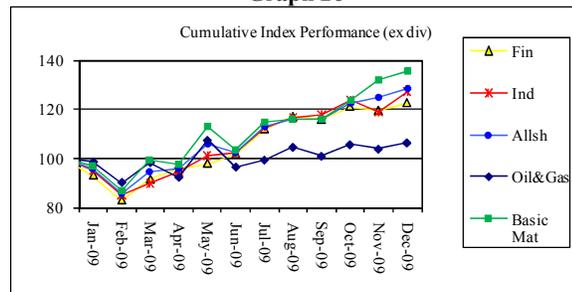
Graph 24



Graph 25



Graph 26



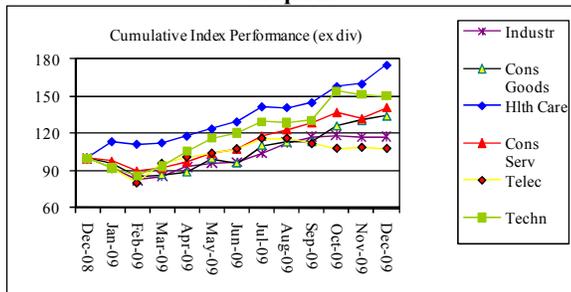


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Graph 27



4. The Benchmark Default Portfolio

Graph 6 shows that the average prudential balanced portfolio returned 15.8% in nominal terms, or 8.9% in real terms, over the past 5 years while the Benchmark Default portfolio returned 12.3% in nominal terms, or 5.4% in real terms. We believe that the past 5 years are now much more representative of the expected long-term performance differential between the Default portfolio and the average prudential balanced portfolio, probably still slightly skewed in favour of latter portfolio. We would expect the average prudential balanced portfolio to deliver a real return of roughly 6% per year and the Default portfolio to sacrifice around 2% for the benefit of lower volatility, thus an expected real return of around 4% per year.

The Money Market portfolio returned 9.1% and the Default portfolio returned 8.6%, gross for the one year to end December. The more 'risky' average prudential balanced portfolio returned 18.3% gross over this period. A fee of roughly 0.75% p.a. still has to be deducted from all but the Money Market Portfolio. The performance of the prudential balanced portfolios is significantly more volatile than that of the Default portfolio, which produces significantly more volatile performance than the Money Market portfolio. The table below presents one year statistics over the 3 years January 2007 to December 2009:

| Measure | Money Market | Default Portf | Average Prud Bal |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| Worst annual performance | 7.4% | - 8.0% | - 19.1% |
| Best annual performance | 12.1% | 20.8% | 33.4% |
| No of negative 1 year periods | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Average of negative 1 year periods | 0% | - 3.7% | - 11.4% |
| Average of positive 1 year periods | 10.1% | 12.2% | 16.8% |

This table represents the different characteristics of the three types of portfolio quite well. The Default portfolio is a more conservative investment aimed at minimising negative returns and with a long-term return objective of inflation plus 4%.

It is very important, though, that employers invested in the Default portfolio are comfortable with these investment characteristics and that they should be able to create comfort amongst their employees as well!

5. A Contrarian Preview Of The Next 12 Months

As shown in **Graphs 26 and 27** the main indices on local markets have produced somewhere between 6% ('Oil & Gas') and 76% ('Healthcare') and the Allshare delivered a return of 29% for the year 2009, excluding dividends,. This compares well with the returns delivered by the DOW Jones (19%), the DAX (24%), the Nikkei (19%) and the Hang-Seng (52%). SA historic P:E was 17.2 at the end of December reaching its highest point since January 2007 when it was on 17.6. The historic S&P 500 P:E was 16.2 at the end of December, compared to 18.1 in January 2007. With this dramatic recovery and in the light of the status of global economies and historically low interest rates, we believe that equity markets are unlikely to produce any positive returns in 2010.

The crude price has now declined to below US\$ 80. This is a positive sign for a prospective normalization of global financial markets. Should the price remain stable at this level, we believe that focus will slowly shift from commodities to the consumer. Consumer sentiment seems to be recovering slowly in the US although the termination of the Fed's 'quantitative easing programme' as from end March, and huge tax increases possibly looming in the US later this year, is likely to put a cap on any meaningful improvement of sentiment and this is likely to be mirrored in other economies as well. Zero or low interest rate policies are likely to become unsustainable in the course of 2010 as huge government deficits will be vying for hesitant financiers globally. This should also take any remaining steam out of equity markets. If this happens, the Rand is likely to weaken from its current level of around 7.4. **Graph 29** indicates that the Rand is fairly valued at 8.50 to the US\$, weakening further over the course of 2010 as the result of the inflation differential and an increasing risk premium likely to be attached to weaker currencies in the light of the expected economic woes. We believe the Rand may weaken to 8.7 over the course of 2010, representing a potential return on a US\$ investment of 17.6%. **Graph 28** indicates that foreign equity purchases in SA have receded significantly and given our outlook this is likely to persist for an extended period of time putting pressure on the Rand and on local equity markets.





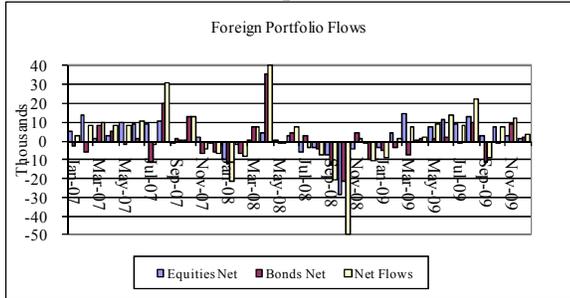
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Graph 28

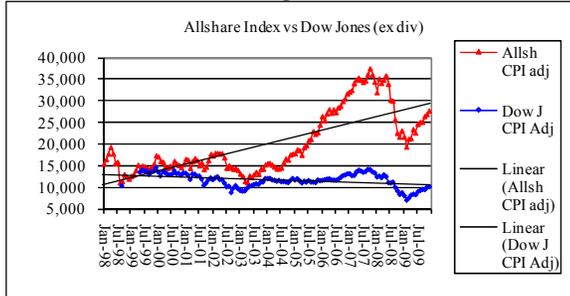


Graph 29



Graph 30 indicates that equity markets seem to have bottomed. The 1 year trailing SA Allshare P:E gained 9 points to 17.2 from its bottom of 8.2 at the end of February.

Graph 30



5. Conclusion

It would seem that global markets are now in risky territory. We believe that the oil price will now remain in a sustainable oil range of between US\$ 45 and US\$ 70.

In this scenario markets have probably run ahead of themselves and are likely to produce no or negative growth for the next 6 to 12 months. Interest rates will remain stable for another 6 months to start picking up from thereon, and consumer demand will be subdued for the next 12 months, while the Rand should start weakening once global interest rates start rising, which we expect to happen toward the latter part of the year.

An expected incline in global interest rates in the medium term will be negative for all interest bearing assets for a while. In terms of equity sectors, our shorter term view would indicate on the basis of fundamentals, that consumer goods and services should be overweight to neutral in one's portfolio, while commodities should be neutral to underweight under the more likely scenario. We expect financials to return to the higher quartiles later in the year once the interest cycle has turned. Industrials are expected to experience rather tough times over the next 12 months. In this environment the performance of most conventional asset classes will be muted. We do not expect equities in general to perform but stock picking can add value. Hedge funds should also be able to produce positive returns in this scenario. Any further increase in the price of precious metals will probably be offset by the strengthening Dollar for local investors.

Taking our view on the Rand, an investment in the US\$ could produce a return of between 5% and 20% in 2010. A lack of prospective investment opportunities suggests that on should have an overweight in offshore, specifically cash exposure in these circumstances. For pension funds, a conservative balanced portfolio with a high foreign and high local cash exposure is our choice for 2010.

6. Important notice and disclaimer

Whilst we have taken all reasonable measures to ensure that the results reflected herein are correct, Benchmark Retirement Fund and Retirement Fund Solutions Namibia (Pty) Ltd do not accept any liability for the accuracy of the information and no decision should be taken on the basis of the information contained herein before having confirmed the detail with the relevant portfolio manager.

