

assets; and

- a limitation on our and our subsidiaries' ability to enter into a merger, consolidation or similar transaction;

#### *Events of Default*

The New Notes contain the following events of default, among others:

- default in the payment of principal, interest or any other amount due under the terms of the New Notes after a specified grace period;
- breach of obligations contained in the New Notes after a specified cure period;
- the occurrence of an event of default under our other debt obligations;
- the occurrence of certain bankruptcy events or enforcement proceedings;
- enforcement by any creditor of any mortgage, charge, pledge, lien or other encumbrance created or assumed by us or one of our subsidiaries exceeding US\$10 million;
- failure to obtain certain required governmental authorizations when required or if any such authorizations are rescinded, terminated, lapse or cease to be in full force and effect; and
- the occurrence of certain material adverse events with respect to our License, such as the revocation, suspension for a period of greater than 120 days or termination of the License.

#### **D. Exchange Controls**

Since the end of 2001 the Argentine government has imposed controls on the foreign exchange market and the movement of capital. During 2002, these controls were extensive, but since 2003 they have been progressively and considerably eased.

The most important provisions currently in force, that affect us, are mentioned below:

1. there is an obligation to enter at least 30% of the funds received as payment for the export of NGL into the exchange market and to convert it into local currency within a time limit established by the Ministry of Economy and Production;
2. Argentine individuals and companies are authorized to buy up to US\$ 2,000,000 per month;
3. principal and interest payments of financial obligations may be freely made, provided that the debt has been previously reported to the BCRA, negotiated in the local foreign exchange market and taken for a minimum term;
4. companies may freely transfer dividends corresponding to audited financial statements without prior BCRA approval.

#### **E. Taxation**

##### **General**

The following is a general summary of certain Argentine and United States federal income tax matters that may be relevant to the ownership and disposition of ADSs or Class B Shares. The summary describes the principal tax consequences of the ownership and disposition of ADSs or Class B Shares, but it does not purport to be a comprehensive description of all of the tax considerations that may be relevant to a holder of ADSs or Class B Shares.

The summary is based upon tax laws of Argentina and the United States and regulations thereunder as in effect on the date of this Annual Report, which are subject to change, possibly on a retroactive basis. In addition, the summary is based in part on representations of the Depositary and assumes that each obligation provided for in or otherwise contemplated by the Deposit Agreement or any other related document will be performed in accordance with its terms. Holders of ADSs or Class B Shares should consult their own tax advisors as to the United States, Argentine or other tax consequences of the acquisition, ownership and disposition of the ADSs or Class B Shares in their particular circumstances.

##### **Argentine Taxes**

**Taxation of Dividends.** Dividends of our cash, property or capital stock paid or distributed to holders of Class B Shares or ADSs are currently exempt from Argentine withholding or other taxes. However, according to Law No. 25,063, published on December 30, 1998, cash or other type of dividend distribution, exceeding accumulated net income at year end determined as stipulated by tax regulations, will be subject to a 35% withholding tax as a sole and definite payment.

**Taxation of Capital Gains.** Capital gains derived by non-Argentine residents from the sale, exchange or other disposition of ADSs or Class B Shares are not subject to income tax.

**Tax on Personal Property (Individuals).** The Argentine Tax authority has introduced some amendments to the Personal Property Tax. In accordance with the Law No. 25,585, the personal tax corresponding to the ownership of securities issued by entities domiciled in Argentina, whose direct owners are individuals domiciled in Argentina or abroad and entities domiciled abroad, will be liquidated and deposited by the entity that has issued such securities. The applicable rate is 0.50% on the equity value according to the last financial statements as of each respective fiscal year. The Law presumes that securities whose holders are entities domiciled or located abroad indirectly belong to individuals domiciled abroad.

We are responsible for depositing such tax and have the right to recover such amount from holders, even withholding and/or liquidating the securities which caused such tax payment. This Amendment was effective starting fiscal year 2002.

**VAT.** The sale, exchange or other disposition of ADSs or Class B Shares is not subject to VAT.

**Transfer Taxes.** The sale, exchange or other disposition of ADSs or Class B Shares is not subject to transfer taxes.

**Purchase or Sale of Foreign Currency.** There is no tax on the purchase or sale of foreign currency.

**Deposit and Withdrawal of Class B Shares in Exchange of ADSs.** No Argentine tax is imposed on the deposit or withdrawal of Class B Shares in exchange for ADSs.

**Other Taxes.** There are no Argentine inheritance or succession taxes applicable to the ownership, transfer or disposition of ADSs or Class B Shares. There are no Argentine stamp, issue, registration or similar taxes or duties payable by holders of ADSs or Class B shares.

**Tax Treaties.** Argentina has entered into tax treaties with several countries. A tax treaty between Argentina and the United States has been signed but has not yet been ratified and therefore is not currently in effect. It is not clear when, if ever, the treaty will be ratified or will enter into effect.

## **United States Taxes**

**General.** This discussion relating to certain US federal income tax consequences applies only to an investor who holds our ADSs or Class B Shares as capital assets for tax purposes and is not a member of a special class of holders subject to special rules, including: a dealer in securities; a trader in securities that elects to use a mark-to-market method of accounting for his or her securities holdings; a tax-exempt organization; an insurance company, a person liable for alternative minimum tax; a person that actually or constructively owns 10% or more of our voting stock; a person that holds shares or ADSs as part of a hedging or straddle or conversion transaction; or a US holder whose functional currency is not the U.S. dollar. A holder is a US holder if such holder is a beneficial owner of shares or ADSs and such holder is: a citizen or resident of the United States; a domestic corporation; an estate whose income is subject to US federal income tax regardless of its source; or a trust, if a US court can exercise primary supervision over the trust's administration and one or more US persons are authorized to control all substantial decisions of the trust.

Moreover, the effect of any applicable US state or local tax laws is not discussed in this Annual Report.

In general, and taking into account the earlier assumptions, for US federal income tax purposes, a holder of ADRs evidencing ADSs will be treated as the owner of the underlying shares represented by those ADSs, and exchanges of Class B Shares for ADRs, and ADRs for Class B shares, will not be subject to US federal income tax.

**Taxation of Dividends.** Subject to the passive foreign investment company ("PFIC") rules discussed below, if a holder is a US holder such holder must include in his or her gross income the gross amount of any dividend (or other distribution, other than certain distributions in redemption of ADSs or Class B shares or distributions of our capital stock or rights to subscribe for our capital stock) paid by us out of our current or accumulated earnings and profits (as determined for US federal income tax purposes). If the holder is a non-corporate US holder, dividends paid to him or her in taxable years beginning before January 1, 2011 that constitute qualified dividend income will be taxable at a maximum tax rate of 15% provided that the shares or ADSs are held for more than 60 days during the 121-day period beginning 60 days before the ex-dividend date and certain other holding period requirements are met. Dividends with respect to the shares or ADSs generally will be qualified dividend income, provided that in the year that the holder receives the dividend, the shares or ADSs are readily tradable on an established securities market in the US. The holder must include the gross amount of dividends in income when he or she receives them, either actually or constructively, in the case of Class B Shares, or when the depository receives such dividend, in the case of ADSs. The dividend will not be eligible for the dividends-received deduction generally allowed to US corporations in respect of dividends received from other US corporations. Distributions in excess of current and accumulated earnings and profits, as determined for US federal income tax purposes, will be treated as a non-taxable return of capital to the extent of a holder's basis in the ADSs or Class B Shares and thereafter as capital gain.