

## **Capital Markets**

Securities-related transactions carried out through stock exchanges and authorized securities markets must be paid using any of the following mechanisms: (i) in Pesos; (ii) in foreign currency through electronic fund transfers from and to sight accounts in local financial institutions; and (iii) through wire transfers against foreign accounts. Under no circumstances is the settlement of these securities purchase and sale transactions to be made in foreign currency bills or through deposits in escrow accounts or in third-party accounts (Communication "A" 4308).

## **Report of Issuances of Securities and Other Foreign Indebtedness of the Private Financial and Non-financial Sector**

Pursuant to Communication "A" 3602 dated May 7, 2002, as amended, all individuals and legal entities in the private financial and non-financial sector must report their outstanding foreign indebtedness (whether Peso or foreign currency-denominated) at the end of each quarter. The debts incurred and repaid within the same calendar quarter need not be reported.

## **Direct Investments Report**

Communication "A" 4237 dated November 10, 2004, as amended, established reporting requirements in connection with direct investments made by local residents abroad and by non-residents in Argentina. Direct investments are defined as those that reflect the long-standing interest of a resident in one economy (direct investor) in another economy's resident entity, such as an ownership interest representing at least 10% of a company's capital stock or voting rights. The reporting requirements prescribed by this Communication "A" 4237 are to be fulfilled bi-annually.

## **E. Taxation**

### **Material U.S. federal income tax considerations relating to our Class B shares and ADSs**

The following discussion is a summary of the material U.S. federal income tax considerations relating to the purchase, ownership and disposition of our Class B shares or ADSs. This discussion applies only to beneficial owners of Class B shares or ADSs that are "U.S. holders" (as defined below) that hold Class B shares or ADSs as "capital assets" (generally, property held for investment). This discussion is based on the U.S. Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), final, temporary and proposed Treasury regulations, administrative pronouncements of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") and judicial decisions, all as currently in effect and all of which are subject to change (possibly on a retroactive basis) and to different interpretations. This discussion does not purport to address all U.S. federal income tax considerations that may be relevant to a particular U.S. holder and you are urged to consult your own tax advisor regarding your specific tax situation. The discussion does not address the tax considerations that may be relevant to U.S. holders in special tax situations, such as:

- dealers in securities or currencies;
- insurance companies;
- holders liable for the Medicare tax on net investment income;
- individual retirement accounts and other tax deferred accounts;
- tax-exempt organizations;
- traders in securities that elect to mark to market;
- certain financial institutions;
- entities or arrangements treated as partnerships or other pass-through entities for U.S. federal income tax purposes;
- holders whose functional currency for U.S. federal income tax purposes is not the U.S. dollar;
- U.S. expatriates;
- holders that hold Class B shares or ADSs as part of a hedge, straddle, conversion transaction, constructive sale transaction or other integrated transaction;
- holders that own, directly, indirectly, or constructively, 10% or more of the total combined voting power of our shares;
- real estate investment trusts; or
- regulated investment companies.

This discussion does not address the estate, gift, or alternative minimum tax consequences of holding Class B shares or ADSs or the indirect consequences to holders of equity interests in entities or arrangements treated as partnerships for U.S. federal income tax purposes that own our Class B shares or ADSs. Moreover, this discussion does not address the state, local, or non-U.S. income or other tax consequences of an investment in our Class B shares or ADSs, or any aspect of U.S. federal taxation other than income taxation.

We do not believe that we were a passive foreign investment company (a "PFIC") for our most recent taxable year and do not expect to be one in our current taxable year. As discussed below under "Passive Foreign Investment Companies," the application of the PFIC rules to banks is unclear under present U.S. federal income tax law. If we were treated as a PFIC in the past or if we are treated as a PFIC in any future periods, a U.S. holder that held our Class B shares or ADSs while we were or are a PFIC could be subject to unfavorable U.S. tax consequences. You should carefully consider the discussion under "Passive Foreign Investment Companies" below and consult your own tax advisor regarding the consequences of investing in a PFIC. Unless otherwise noted, the following discussion assumes that we are not a PFIC.

For the purposes of this discussion, you are a "U.S. holder" if you are a beneficial owner of Class B shares or ADSs and you are for U.S. federal income tax purposes:

- an individual who is a citizen or resident of the United States;

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- a corporation, or any other entity taxable as a corporation, created or organized in or under the laws of the United States, any state thereof or the District of Columbia;
- an estate the income of which is subject to U.S. federal income taxation regardless of its source; or
- a trust if (i) a court within the United States is able to exercise primary supervision over the administration of the trust and one or more U.S. persons have the authority to control all substantial decisions of the trust or (ii) the trust has a valid election in effect under applicable Treasury regulations to be treated as a U.S. person.

If an entity or arrangement treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes holds our Class B shares or ADSs, the tax treatment of a partner in such partnership will generally depend upon the status of the partner and upon the activities of the partnership. A prospective investor who is a partner of an entity or arrangement treated as a partnership for U.S. federal income tax purposes holding our Class B shares or ADSs should consult its own tax advisor.

In general, for U.S. federal income tax purposes, U.S. holders that are beneficial owners of ADSs will be treated as the beneficial owners of the Class B shares represented by those ADSs. No gain or loss will be recognized on the exchange of ADSs for the U.S. holder's proportionate interest in Class B shares. A U.S. Holder's tax basis in the Class B shares received will be the same as the U.S. Holder's tax basis in the ADSs surrendered, and the holding period of the Class B shares will include the holding period of the ADSs.

*Taxation of Dividends.* Distributions of cash with respect to the Class B shares or ADSs generally will, to the extent made from our current or accumulated earnings and profits as determined under U.S. federal income tax principles, constitute dividends for U.S. federal income tax purposes. To the extent that a distribution by us exceeds the amount of our earnings and profits, it will be treated as a non-taxable return of capital to the extent of the U.S. Holder's adjusted tax basis in the Class B shares or ADSs, and thereafter as capital gain.

However, we do not maintain calculations of our earnings and profits under U.S. federal income tax principles. U.S. Holders should therefore assume that any distribution by us with respect to Class B shares or ADSs will be reported as ordinary dividend income for U.S. federal income tax purposes. In general, cash dividends (including amounts withheld in respect of Argentine taxes) paid with respect to:

- the Class B shares generally will be includible in the gross income of a U.S. holder as ordinary income on the day on which the dividends are received by the U.S. holder; or
- the Class B shares represented by ADSs generally will be includible in the gross income of a U.S. holder as ordinary income on the day on which the dividends are received by the depository;

and, in either case, these dividends will not be eligible for the dividends received deduction allowed to corporations. To the extent that a distribution by us exceeds the amount of our earnings and profits, it will be treated as a non-taxable return of capital to the extent of the U.S. holder's adjusted tax basis in the Class B shares or ADSs, and thereafter as capital gain.

Subject to certain exceptions for short-term and hedged positions, the amount of dividends received by certain U.S. holders (including individuals) with respect to the ADSs will be subject to taxation at a maximum rate of 20% under current law if the dividends represent "qualified dividend income." Dividends paid on the ADSs will be treated as qualified dividend income if (i) the ADSs are readily tradable on an established securities market in the United States and (ii) we were not in the year prior to the year in which the dividend was paid, and are not in the year in which the dividend is paid, a PFIC. The ADSs (but not the Class B shares) should qualify as readily tradable on an established securities market in the United States so long as they are listed on the NYSE. See "Passive Foreign Investment Companies" below for a discussion of the PFIC rules.

In addition, the U.S. Treasury Department has indicated that it continues to consider whether detailed information reporting guidance is necessary pursuant to which holders of ADSs and intermediaries through whom such securities are held will be permitted to rely on certifications from issuers to establish that dividends are treated as qualified dividend income. However, no such detailed procedures have yet been issued and therefore we are not certain that we will be able to comply with them. You should consult your own tax advisors regarding the availability of the preferential dividend tax rate in light of your own particular circumstances.

Dividends paid in Pesos will be includible in the gross income of a U.S. holder in a U.S. dollar amount calculated by reference to the exchange rate in effect on the day they are received by the U.S. holder, in the case of Class B shares, or the depository, in the case of Class B shares represented by ADSs, regardless of whether the payment is in fact converted to U.S. dollars. If dividends paid in Pesos are converted into U.S. dollars on the day they are received by the U.S. holder or the depository, as the case may be, U.S. holders should not be required to recognize foreign currency gain or loss in respect of the dividend income. Generally, any gain or loss resulting from currency exchange fluctuations during the period from the date the dividend payment is included in the gross income of a U.S. holder through the date such payment is converted into U.S. dollars (or otherwise disposed of) will be treated as U.S. source ordinary income or loss. However, U.S. holders should consult their own tax advisors regarding the treatment of any foreign currency gain or loss if any Pesos received by the U.S. holder or the depository are not converted into U.S. dollars on the date of receipt.

A U.S. holder will be entitled, subject to a number of complex limitations and conditions, to claim a U.S. foreign tax credit in respect of any Argentine income taxes withheld on dividends received on shares. The limitation on foreign taxes eligible for credit is calculated separately with respect to specific classes of income. For this purpose, the dividends should generally constitute "passive category income," or in the case of certain U.S. holders, "general category income." U.S. holders who do not elect to claim a credit for any foreign taxes paid during the taxable year may instead claim a deduction of such Argentine income taxes, provided that the U.S. holder elects to deduct (rather than credit) all foreign income taxes paid or accrued for the taxable year. Dividends received with respect to the Class B shares or ADSs will be treated as foreign source income, which may be relevant in calculating a U.S. holder's foreign tax credit limitation. The rules relating to computing foreign tax credits or deducting foreign taxes are extremely complex, and U.S. holders are urged to consult their independent tax advisors regarding the availability of foreign tax credits with respect to any Argentine income taxes withheld from a

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dividend on the Class B shares or ADSs. The IRS has expressed concern that intermediaries in connection with depositary arrangements may be taking actions that are inconsistent with the claiming of foreign tax credits by U.S. persons who are holders of depositary shares. Accordingly, investors should be aware that the discussion above regarding the availability of foreign tax credits for Argentine withholding tax on dividends paid with respect to Class B shares represented by ADSs could be affected by future action taken by the IRS.

### *Sale, Exchange or Other Taxable Disposition.*

In general, gain or loss realized by a U.S. holder on the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of Class B shares or ADSs will be subject to U.S. federal income taxation as capital gain or loss in an amount equal to the difference between the amount realized (including the gross amount of the proceeds of the sale or other taxable disposition before the deduction of any Argentine tax) on the taxable disposition and such U.S. holder's basis in the Class B shares or the ADSs. Such capital gain or loss will be long-term capital gain or loss if the U.S. Holder's holding period in the Class B shares or ADSs exceeds one year. The deductibility of capital losses is subject to limitations. Any gain or loss realized by a U.S. holder will generally be treated as a U.S. source gain or loss for U.S. foreign tax credit purposes.

If Argentine withholding tax is imposed on the sale or disposition of Class B shares or ADSs, the amount realized by a U.S. holder will include the gross amount of the proceeds of such sale or disposition before deduction of the Argentine withholding tax. The availability of U.S. foreign tax credits for these Argentine taxes and any Argentine taxes imposed on distributions that do not constitute dividends for U.S. tax purposes is subject to various limitations and involves the application of rules that depend on a U.S. holder's particular circumstances. In particular, because any gain from the sale or other disposition of Class B shares or ADSs generally will be treated as U.S. source income, a U.S. holder may not be able to fully utilize its U.S. foreign tax credits in respect of such Argentine withholding taxes unless such U.S. holder has other income from foreign sources. U.S. holders are urged to consult their own tax advisors regarding the application of the U.S. foreign tax credit rules to their investment in, and disposition of, Class B shares or ADSs.

### *Passive Foreign Investment Companies.*

In general, if during any taxable year of a non-U.S. corporation, 75% or more of the corporation's gross income consists of certain types of "passive" income, or the average value of the "passive assets" of the corporation (generally assets that generate passive income) is 50% or more of the average value of all the corporation's assets, the corporation will be treated as a PFIC under U.S. federal income tax law. Passive income for this purpose generally includes interest, dividends, royalties, rents and gains from commodities and securities transactions. Certain exceptions are provided, however, for passive income derived in the conduct of an active business. A non-U.S. corporation that owns (directly or indirectly) at least 25% of another corporation is treated as owning a proportionate share of the assets, and earning a proportionate share of the income, of the other corporation for purposes of determining whether the non-U.S. corporation is a PFIC.

We do not believe that we were a PFIC for our most recent taxable year and do not expect to be a PFIC for our current taxable year. While banks generally derive a substantial part of their income from assets that are interest bearing or that otherwise could be considered passive under the PFIC rules, the IRS has issued a notice and has proposed regulations that exclude from passive income any income derived in the active conduct of a banking business by a qualifying foreign bank (the "active bank exception"). The IRS notice and proposed regulations have different requirements for qualifying as an active foreign bank, and for determining the banking income that may be excluded from passive income under the active bank exception. Moreover, the proposed regulations have been outstanding since 1995 and will not be effective unless finalized.

Because final regulations have not been issued and because the definition of banking income for purposes of the active bank exception is unclear under both the notice and the proposed regulations, our status under the PFIC rules is subject to uncertainty. We conduct, and intend to continue to conduct, a significant banking business, and therefore we believe we should qualify as an active foreign bank. However, our possible status as a PFIC must be determined annually and therefore may be subject to change. Accordingly, there can be no assurance that we will not be a PFIC in the current taxable year or any future taxable year.

If we are treated as a PFIC for any taxable year during which a U.S. holder owns Class B shares or ADSs, such U.S. holder would be subject to special rules (and may be subject to increased tax liability and form filing requirements) with respect to (a) any gain realized on the sale or other disposition of Class B shares or ADSs, and (b) any "excess distribution" made by us to the U.S. holder (generally, any distribution during a taxable year in which distributions to the U.S. holder on the Class B shares or ADSs exceed 125% of the average annual distributions the U.S. holder received on the Class B shares or ADSs during the preceding three taxable years or, if shorter, the U.S. holder's holding period for the Class B shares or ADSs). Under those rules, (a) the gain or excess distribution would be allocated ratably over the U.S. holder's holding period for the Class B shares or ADSs, (b) the amount allocated to the taxable year in which the gain or excess distribution is realized and to taxable years before the first day on which we became a PFIC would be taxable as ordinary income, (c) the amount allocated to each prior year in which we were a PFIC would be subject to U.S. federal income tax at the highest tax rate in effect for that year and (d) the interest charge generally applicable to underpayments of U.S. federal income tax would be imposed in respect of the tax attributable to each prior year in which we were a PFIC. In addition, as discussed above, a U.S. holder would not be entitled to (if otherwise eligible for) the preferential reduced rate of tax payable on qualified dividend income.

A U.S. holder may mitigate these effects by electing mark-to-market treatment for its ADSs or Class B shares, provided the relevant shares constitute "marketable stock" as defined in Treasury regulations. Our ADSs and our Class B shares will be "marketable stock" if they are "regularly traded" on a "qualified exchange or other market." The term "qualified exchange or other market" includes the NYSE where our ADSs are listed. Our ADSs will be "regularly traded" if they are traded on at least fifteen (15) days during each calendar quarter, other than in de minimis quantities. No assurance can be provided that our ADSs will be characterized as regularly traded on a qualified exchange or

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other market for this purpose. Our Class B shares will be treated as listed on a “qualified exchange or other market” for purposes of the relevant Treasury regulations if the exchange on which they are listed has sufficient trading volume, listing, financial disclosure and surveillance, is regulated or supervised by a governmental authority of the country in which the market is located, and meets certain other characteristics. It is unclear whether the Merval and MAE would meet these requirements and whether there would be sufficient trading of the Class B shares for the Class B shares to be characterized as “regularly traded.” It is therefore unclear whether a U.S. holder would be able to elect mark-to-market treatment for the ADSs or Class B shares.

A U.S. holder electing the mark-to-market regime generally would compute gain or loss at the end of each taxable year as if the Class B shares or ADSs had been sold at fair market value. Any gain recognized by the U.S. holder under mark-to-market treatment, or on an actual sale, would be treated as ordinary income, and the U.S. holder would be allowed an ordinary deduction for any decrease in the value of Class B shares or ADSs as of the end of any taxable year, and for any loss recognized on an actual sale, but only to the extent, in each case, of previously included mark-to-market income not offset by previously deducted decreases in value. Any loss on an actual sale of Class B shares or ADSs would be a capital loss to the extent in excess of previously included mark-to-market income not offset by previously deducted decreases in value. A U.S. holder’s tax basis in Class B shares or ADSs would increase or decrease by gain or loss taken into account under the mark-to-market regime.

A mark-to-market election under the PFIC rules applies to all future years of an electing U.S. holder during which the Class B shares or ADSs are regularly traded on a qualifying exchange, unless revoked with the IRS’s consent.

If we are characterized as a PFIC and, at any time, we have non-U.S. subsidiaries that are classified as PFICs, U.S. holders generally will be deemed to own, and also would be subject to the PFIC rules with respect to, their indirect ownership interests in that lower-tier PFIC. If we are characterized as a PFIC, the U.S. holder could incur liability for the deferred tax and interest charge described above if either:

- (1) we receive a distribution from, or dispose of all or part of our interest in, the lower-tier PFIC or
- (2) the U.S. holder disposes of all or part of its Class B shares or ADSs.

A mark-to-market election under the PFIC rules with respect to shares would not apply to a lower-tier PFIC, and a U.S. holder would not be able to make such a mark-to-market election in respect of its indirect ownership interest in that lower-tier PFIC. Consequently, U.S. holders of shares could be subject to the PFIC rules with respect to income of the lower-tier PFIC the value of which already had been taken into account indirectly via mark-to-market adjustments.

Furthermore, if we are characterized as a PFIC, a U.S. holder will be required to annually file an IRS Form 8621. Under recent legislation, the statute of limitations on assessment and collections will remain open with respect to unreported PFIC interests. U.S. Holders should consult their own tax advisor regarding the PFIC rules.

**Information Reporting and Backup Withholding.** Information reporting requirements will apply to dividends in respect of the Class B shares or ADSs or the proceeds from the sale, exchange or other taxable disposition of the Class B shares or ADSs paid within the United States (and, in some cases, outside of the United States) to U.S. holders, unless, in either case, the U.S. holder is an exempt recipient (such as a corporation). Backup withholding may apply to such amounts if the U.S. holder fails to provide an accurate taxpayer identification number or certification of exempt status or fails to comply with applicable certification requirements. The amount of any backup withholding from a payment to a U.S. holder will be allowed as a credit against the U.S. holder’s U.S. federal income tax liability, provided that the required information is timely furnished to the IRS. U.S. holders should consult their tax advisers about these rules and any other reporting obligations that may apply to the ownership or disposition of Class B shares or ADSs, including requirements related to the holding of certain foreign financial assets.

### **Material Argentine tax considerations relating to our Class B shares and ADSs**

The following discussion is a summary of the material Argentine tax considerations relating to the purchase, ownership and disposition of our Class B shares or ADSs.

#### **Income Tax**

##### *Taxation on Dividends paid in excess of taxable accumulated income*

At the present date there is no Argentine income tax withholding except for the application of the “Equalization Tax” described below.

Dividends paid in excess of taxable accumulated income at the previous fiscal period will be subject to an additional withholding tax (the “Equalization Tax”) at the rate of 35% applicable on such excess and regarding both Argentine and non-Argentine resident shareholders. Equalization Tax is applicable when dividends distributed are higher than the “net accumulated taxable income” of the immediate previous fiscal year from when the distribution is made. In order to assess the “net accumulated taxable income” from the income calculated by the Income Tax Law, the income tax paid in the same fiscal period should be subtracted and the local dividends received in the previous fiscal year should be added to such income.

The Equalization Tax will be imposed as a withholding tax on the shareholder receiving the dividend. Dividend distributions made in property (other than cash) will be subject to the same tax rules as cash dividends. Stock dividends on fully paid shares (“*acciones liberadas*”) are not subject to Equalization Tax.

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Holders are encouraged to consult a tax advisor as to the particular Argentine income tax consequences derived from profit distributions made on Class B shares and ADSs.

### *Capital gains tax*

Prior to September 23, 2013, gains derived by non-resident individuals or foreign companies from the sale, exchange or other disposition of ADSs or Class B shares were exempt from income tax in Argentina. As of September 23, 2013, the results derived from the transfer of shares, quotas and other equity interests, titles, bonds and other securities, are subject to Argentine income tax, regardless of the type of beneficiary who realizes the gain.

Capital gains obtained by Argentine corporate entities (in general, entities organized or incorporated under Argentine law, certain traders and intermediaries, local branches of non-Argentine entities, sole proprietorships and individuals carrying on certain commercial activities in Argentina) derived from the sale, exchange or other disposition of shares are subject to income tax at the rate of 35% on net income. Losses arising from the sale of shares can only be offset against income derived from the same type of operations, for a five-year carryover period.

Amendments to the Argentine Income Tax Law by Law 26,893 now mean that income derived by Argentine resident individuals from the sale of shares and other securities are exempt from capital gains tax, unless such securities were not traded in stock markets and/or do not have public offering authorization in which case this income are subject to income tax at a 15% rate on net income. The amendments introduced by implementing decree 2334/2013 state that the exemption includes income derived from the sale of shares and other securities made through a stock exchange market duly authorized by the CNV. It is unclear whether the exemption *also* includes securities traded through a stock exchange market duly authorized by the CNV (*i.e.* in addition to publicly offered securities), or whether the exemption *only* includes securities made through a stock exchange market duly authorized by the CNV. Certain qualified tax authorities publicly held the latter opinion in tax conferences.

Capital gains obtained by non-Argentine resident individuals or non-Argentine entities from the sale, exchange or other disposition of shares would be subject to income tax, as mentioned above the exemption for shares is not applicable to non-Argentine beneficiaries. Therefore, the gain derived from the disposition of shares would be subject to Argentine income tax at a 15% rate on the net capital gain or at a 13,5% rate on the gross price. The purchaser of the shares, whether Argentine resident or not, will be under an obligation to withhold the tax due by the seller and pay it to the Argentine tax authorities, although the Argentine tax authorities have not yet implemented any mechanism to make such withholding and payment when both seller and purchaser are non-Argentine residents.

Holders are encouraged to consult a tax advisor as to the particular Argentine income tax consequences derived from holding and disposing of Class B shares and ADSs.

### *Personal assets tax*

Argentine entities, like us, have to pay the personal assets tax corresponding to Argentine and foreign domiciled individuals and foreign domiciled entities for the holding of company shares at December 31 of each year. The applicable tax rate is 0.25% and is levied on the proportional net worth value ("valor patrimonial proporcional"), or the book value, of the shares arising from the last balance sheet. Pursuant to the Personal Assets Tax Law, the Argentine company is entitled to seek reimbursement of such paid tax from the applicable Argentine domiciled individuals and/or foreign domiciled shareholders. The Argentine company may seek this reimbursement of Personal Assets Tax by setting off the applicable tax against any amount due to its shareholders or in any other way or, under certain circumstances, waive its right under Argentine law to seek reimbursement from the shareholders.

Holders are encouraged to consult a tax advisor as to the particular Argentine personal assets tax consequences derived from the holding of Class B shares and ADSs.

### *Value added tax*

The sale, exchange or other disposition of our Class B shares or ADSs and the distribution of dividends are exempted from the value added tax.

### *Tax on debits and credits on Argentine bank accounts*

All credits to and debits from bank accounts held at Argentine financial institutions, as well as certain cash payments, are subject to this tax, which is assessed at a general rate of 0.6%. There are also increased rates of 1.2% and reduced rates of 0.075%. Owners of bank accounts subject to the general 0.6% rate may consider 34% of the tax paid upon credits to such bank accounts as a tax credit. The taxpayers that are subject to the 1.2% rate may consider 17% of all tax paid upon credits to such bank accounts as a credit. Such amounts can be utilized as a credit for income tax or tax on presumed minimum income. Whenever financial institutions governed by Law No. 21.526 make payments acting in their own name and behalf, the application of this tax is restricted to certain specific transactions. Such specific transactions include, among others, dividends or profits distributions.

### *Tax on minimum presumed income*

Entities domiciled in Argentina are subject to this tax at the rate of 1% applicable over the total value of their assets, above an aggregate amount of AR\$ 200,000. Specifically, the Law establishes that banks, other financial institutions and insurance companies will consider a taxable base equal to 20% of the value of taxable assets. This tax shall be payable only to the extent the income tax determined for any