

NOTES TO CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Operations and summary of significant accounting policies

A. Nature of operations

Information in our financial statements and related commentary are presented in the following categories:

Machinery, Energy & Transportation (ME&T) – Represents the aggregate total of Construction Industries, Resource Industries, Energy & Transportation and All Other operating segment and related corporate items and eliminations.

Financial Products – Primarily includes the company’s Financial Products Segment. This category includes Caterpillar Financial Services Corporation (Cat Financial), Caterpillar Insurance Holdings Inc. (Insurance Services) and their respective subsidiaries.

Our products are sold primarily under the brands “Caterpillar,” “CAT,” design versions of “CAT” and “Caterpillar,” “EMD,” “FG Wilson,” “MaK,” “MWM,” “Perkins,” “Progress Rail,” “SEM” and “Solar Turbines”.

We conduct operations in our ME&T lines of business under highly competitive conditions, including intense price competition. We place great emphasis on the high quality and performance of our products and our dealers’ service support. Although no one competitor is believed to produce all of the same types of equipment that we do, there are numerous companies, large and small, which compete with us in the sale of each of our products.

Our machines are distributed principally through a worldwide organization of dealers (dealer network), 46 located in the United States and 119 located outside the United States, serving 191 countries. Reciprocating engines are sold principally through the dealer network and to other manufacturers for use in products. Some of the reciprocating engines manufactured by our subsidiary Perkins Engines Company Limited, are also sold through its worldwide network of 67 distributors covering 178 countries. The FG Wilson branded electric power generation systems primarily manufactured by our subsidiary Caterpillar Northern Ireland Limited are sold through its worldwide network of 150 distributors covering 109 countries. Some of the large, medium speed reciprocating engines are also sold under the MaK brand through a worldwide network of 20 distributors covering 130 countries. Our dealers do not deal exclusively with our products; however, in most cases sales and servicing of our products are the dealers’ principal business. Some products, primarily turbines and locomotives, are sold directly to end customers through sales forces employed by the company. At times, these employees are assisted by independent sales representatives.

The Financial Products line of business also conducts operations under highly competitive conditions. Financing for users of Caterpillar products is available through a variety of competitive sources, principally commercial banks and finance and leasing companies. We offer various financing plans designed to increase the opportunity for sales of our products and generate financing income for our company. A significant portion of Financial Products activity is conducted in North America, with additional offices in Latin America, Asia/Pacific, Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

B. Basis of presentation

The consolidated financial statements include the accounts of Caterpillar Inc. and its subsidiaries where we have a controlling financial interest.

Investments in companies where our ownership exceeds 20 percent and we do not have a controlling interest or where the ownership is less than 20 percent and for which we have a significant influence are accounted for by the equity method.

We consolidate all variable interest entities (VIEs) where Caterpillar Inc. is the primary beneficiary. For VIEs, we assess whether we are the primary beneficiary as prescribed by the accounting guidance on the consolidation of VIEs. The primary beneficiary of a VIE is the party that has both the power to direct the activities that most significantly impact the entity’s economic performance and the obligation to absorb losses or the right to receive benefits that could potentially be significant to the VIE. See Note 21 for further discussion on a consolidated VIE.

We have affiliates, suppliers and dealers that are VIEs of which we are not the primary beneficiary. Although we have provided financial support, we do not have the power to direct the activities that most significantly impact the economic performance of each entity. Our maximum exposure to loss from these VIEs for which we are not the primary beneficiary was \$133 million and \$131 million as of December 31, 2019 and 2018, respectively.