

Commonwealth Bank of Australia posts 3.78 bln USD H1 profit

SYDNEY, Feb. 13 (Xinhua) -- The Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA), one of the big four banks in the country, posted a record half-year profit of 3.66 billion AU dollars (3.78 billion U.S. dollars) on Wednesday.

CBA said its net profit for the six months to Dec. 31, 2012 rose one percent on the same period a year ago.

The bank's preferred measure of cash profit for the first half, which excludes one-off costs and gains, rose six percent to 3.78 billion AU dollars, in line with analysts' expectations.

CBA said the result was mainly driven by a stronger performance from its retail bank business, with loans up 26 billion AU dollars to 649 billion AU dollars.

CBA Chief Executive Officer Ian Narev said the bank had delivered a cash return on equity (ROE) of 18.1 percent for the six months to December despite the subdued market conditions.

Narev said there had been improvement in the global macroeconomic environment since the bank released its full year results in August 2012.

"In each of the major areas of concern European Union stability, U.S. recovery and China's on-going growth developments have been positive overall," he noted in a statement.

"As a result, we have experienced a period of relative stability, which has had a positive impact on global equity and debt markets."

However, he warned that risk remains in the economy and the bank must remain cautious.

"In particular, there is still no sustainable long-term plan for resolving sovereign indebtedness in Europe, and the U.S. recovery remains

fragile," Narev said.

CBA on Wednesday declared an interim dividend of 1.64 a share, an increase of 20 percent on the previous year.