

# UBAM – GLOBAL HEALTHCARE CONVERTIBLE BOND

## **Quarterly Comment**

#### Marketing communication

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#### Market Comment

- While January benefited from a strong risk on momentum, the trend has started to reverse in February after higher than expected inflation numbers and central banks' officials' comments. In the beginning of March markets moved into a risk-off mode on the back of Silicon Valley Bank failure and the loss of confidence crisis impacting Credit Suisse. Interest rate volatility moved to a level lastly saw in 2008 before falling back. Central banks have continued to raise their respective policy rates despite these events in the banking sector The Fed and the ECB rose their policy rates by 25bps and 50bps respectively. Despite a tumultuous month of March, risky asset ended the quarter higher. However, with renewed recession risk, the long end of yield curves have fallen, the US 10-year rate fell by 41bps to 3.46% over the quarter. Despite the return of volatility during March, High Yield credit spreads tighten during Q1 down by 21bps.
- Despite the volatility over the month of March, major equity markets still delivered positive performances over the first quarter of the year and global equities ended the quarter up 7.7% (MSCI World TR) and the S&P 500 index increased by 7.5% quarter-on-quarter. The Healthcare Select Sector Index was down by 4.3% over the quarter, 11.8% below the broad S&P 500 index. The US healthcare convertible bond market, however, outperformed its equity counterpart. During the quarter, the ICE BofA US Healthcare Convertible Index increased by 2.2%.
- Primary market confirmed the rebound seen the last quarter of 2022 as global markets introduced close to \$20 billion of convertible bonds during the first quarter of 2023. The US contributing \$12.9bn. Together, the Healthcare sector contribution reached \$1.6bn or 17% of the total amount issued during Q1 2023.

## Performance Review

- During the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, the UBAM Global Healthcare Convertible Bond Fund (IC USD) returned +1.47% after fees.
  - For the period under review, the healthcare theme delivered a performance below the broad US equity market, as revealed by the US healthcare equity index<sup>2</sup> (-4.31% vs 7.5%).
  - The "structuration" namely, the choice of convertible bonds to get exposure to the healthcare stock market –, added value, as evidenced by the 7.3% outperformance of our Healthcare Conevrtible bond universe vs. the healthcare stock index. The ICE BofA US Healthcare stock index¹ was up 2.2% q/q.
  - This quarter, the positive performance of our strategy comes from the structuration and the implmentation while the allocation slightly detracted over the quarter.
- At firm level, top contributors over the quarter were Lantheus (Healthcare Equipment & Services), Envista (Healthcare Equipment & Services) and Exact Sciences (Pharmaceuticals, Biotech & Life Sciences). On the opposite end, holdings in Cutera (Healthcare Equipment & Services), Alnylam Therapeuticals (Pharmaceuticals, Biotech & Life Sciences) and Halozyme Therapeutics (Pharmaceuticals, Biotech & Life Sciences) detracted.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For indicative purpose only, the strategy has no official benchmark. <sup>2</sup>The Healthcare Select Sector Index (USD).

### Portfolio Activity

- Within the UBAM Global Healthcare Convertible Bond portfolio, the first quarter was marked by:
  - Liquidity-related adjustments (e.g. Cryoport 2026, Cytokinetics 2027, Innoviva 2028, Pacira Pharmaceuticals 2025)
  - o Credit related trades (e.g. Guardant Health 2027, Cutera 2028)
  - o Accounting quality-related trades (e.g. Teladoc 2025 & 2027)
  - Security financing-related trades (e.g Cerevel Therapeutics 2027, Insulet 2026, Natera 2027)
  - Additions to the investment universe and portfolio (e.g. Collegium Pharmaceuticals 2029, Exact Sciences 2030)
  - o M&A (e.g. 1Life Healthcare, Nuvasive, Oak Street Health)
- During the quarter, the portfolio reported a turnover of 93% with an average realized beta versus the Healthcare equity index of 0.44
- At March-end, UBAM Global Healthcare Convertible Bond exhibits an expected beta of 0.3 versus healthcare equity index with nearly 3/5 of expected Healthcare equity index volatility.

#### Outlook

- The January outperformance from low-quality names was pricing excessive optimism and was not justified by the current economic environment. In the foreseeable future inflation should stay above central bank target and higher than experienced in the previous decade. Although economic data suggests that the overall slowdown could be smaller than previously anticipated, 2023 is still likely to be a challenging year for corporates. However, with global inflation pressure easing and rate hikes slowing, the factors holding back consumer demand and corporate earnings should fade throughout the year. That being said we still expect dispersion to be particularly high in the equity markets.
- Recent market events have been a good reminder that uncertainty is still very high, and that markets are fragile. In this context convertible bonds constitute an attractive way to maintain equity exposure whilst containing overall volatility.
- Against a deteriorating economic backdrop, offering a defensive play, Healthcare is increasingly attractive as valuations have collapsed. On average the Price-to-sales ratio has fallen by 46% since their 2021 highs for convertible issuer in the healthcare sector The cyclical shift that impacted global equity markets does not question the long-term case for the healthcare industry. If anything, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the spread of trends for which the long-term fundamentals remain unchanged (expanding basic health insurance; evolving care models; ageing world population; rising chronic disease...). Fierce therapeutic and technological innovations lay the foundation for sustained, and new, growth channels in the healthcare industry (e.g. big data insights to predict outbreaks; artificial intelligence to improve diagnostic accuracy; gene therapy and editing). Overall, at current level we see an attractive entry point into the healthcare convertible bond space. We believe Healthcare sector should perform better thanks to reduced upside pressure on interest rates in 2023.

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