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The spoken word shall prevail.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to you all to this year's Annual Media Conference. We are delighted that so many of you are able to be with us here at the MAIN TOWER again or have joined us via video conference.
Joining us for the first time is my colleague and our Chief Risk Officer Tamara Weiss, who has been a member of our Executive Board since December last year.
Following Tamara’s remarks, Christian Schmid, who is no doubt a familiar face to you and has been successfully managing our real estate activities for a while already, will be presenting our latest assessment of the market, which will also draw on the most recent impressions gained from the most recent MIPIM real estate exhibition.

Despite, or precisely in light of, all the well-known turbulences we have encountered, I think it is entirely justified to say that 2023 was another strong year for Helaba. After all, we managed to achieve a significant improvement in earnings - indeed, it is the best result to date. And I can assure you that Helaba's growth story has a long way to go and that we are looking to the future with a sense of optimism. But I will come to the outlook for 2024 and beyond in the second part of my remarks.

Before I delve into the specifics of the past financial year at Helaba, I would first like to share my thoughts on the big picture. I suspect you will agree with me that 2023 was yet another year dominated by immense challenges, with further enormous geopolitical tensions rocking our world. In addition to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which still leaves me personally utterly aghast, we also saw the indescribable atrocities of Hamas' terrorist attack on Israel and the war that has been raging in Gaza ever since. These events seem to be contributing to an increasing polarisation in our society. That is why it is all the more crucial that the middle of society has taken a stand against extremism and mobilised on the streets in recent months. Together, tolerance and diversity form the core of our open and liberal society and are fundamental to our social market economy - and, consequently, to our prosperity. It is vital to defend these principles.

But back to the economic environment:

The fallout of the historic turnaround in monetary policy were undoubtedly one of the most significant factors that had an impact on our results in 2023 - among other on our real estate business. I will come to the details of that later. From a broader perspective, though, we view the situation in the following light: Real estate has been and will continue to be an integral and profitable component of our diversified and resilient business model for decades, through numerous market and interest rate cycles. That is precisely why our customers appreciate us - for our long-standing experience and expertise.

In this respect, allow me to make one aside: Over recent weeks and months, we have certainly noted the intense public interest in a particular real estate developer and its projects. However, we are still unable to comment on this and would be grateful for your understanding.

The huge tasks that lie ahead of us are both a challenge and an opportunity. Just take the digital transformation, for instance, or the transition to sustainability. Here at Helaba, we are already helping our own immediate customers and those of the Savings Banks Finance Group to harness the potential these developments offer today. In my view, the proverbial glass is most definitely half full. I believe our country, our customers and Helaba itself have considerable scope for further growth in the years ahead.

Let me now turn to the Helaba Group's results in the 2023 financial year. In 2023, we substantially raised our net earnings, achieving the best result to-date again. Our net profit before tax rose by 14 percent to 722 million euros. This means we comfortably exceeded our original target of generating a consolidated net profit before tax of between 500 and 700 million euros in 2023.

This reflects the substantial growth in earnings from the Group's operating activities. In turn, we have been able to lift our net profit by more than a quarter over the last three financial years.

Operating income rose considerably to more than 2.8 billion euros in the 2023 financial year. Thanks to this growth, we were able to compensate for and more than offset the negative impact from our real estate activities. This negative impact is reflected in significantly higher net additions to loan loss provisions of -448 million euros (previous year: -162 million euros).

At the same time, we noticeably improved our cost/income ratio to 59.4 percent in 2023, while our CET1 ratio rose to 14.7 percent. As such, Helaba's capital adequacy remains comfortable and well above regulatory requirements. Our return on equity improved to 7.2 percent.

There are two major drivers behind our overall successful performance. Firstly, Helaba's employees, without whom this would not have been possible. On behalf of the entire Executive Board, I would also like to take this opportunity in expressing our sincere gratitude for their enormously valuable contribution. The second factor for our success lies in our strategic agenda, which is proving effective, as well as in our diversified business model, which has once again demonstrated its resilience. To put it another way: If one area of our business falters, others will step up to fill the gap.

Details of earnings components:

Now I would like to provide some details on the most important components of our results.

Net interest income climbed sharply by around 30 percent to 1.8 billion euros, which was driven among others by the turnaround in monetary policy.

In this environment, net fee and commission income continued to perform favourably, increasing slightly to 536 million euros. Compared to 2021, we have thus been able to boost it by over 10 percent.

Here, among other things, principal factors were the positive performance of Helaba’s cash management business as well as Frankfurter Bankgesellschaft’s private banking activities.

In addition, the result from fair value measurement showed a marked improvement, growing appreciably to 207 million euros. A significant upturn in the valuation of financial instruments in the wake of rising interest rates is reflected in this figure.

I began my speech by referring to upheavals that played a decisive role in determining how 2023 unfolded. That brings me to one item in which these upheavals manifested themselves to a particularly great extent. On Group level, the additions to loan loss provisions rose sharply to 448 million euros. This rise was predominantly attributable to one customer relationship in our real estate business. Moreover, a marked deterioration in the real estate market set in from the middle of the year, which we also pointed out. We responded to this in a timely manner, for example by increasing our loan loss provisions.

For the current financial year, we also expect to see a very challenging situation on the property market, among others for office real estate. That is why we have created a significant level of post-model adjustments in an amount of 378 million euros in this segment.

The result from investment property remains a stable and reliable source of earnings. This item largely includes contributions from our residential property company GWH.

In contrast, other income declined to 103 million euros. This was due in part to extraordinary depreciation on real estate project developments at OFB and GWH.

The expected reduction in our balance sheet total was primarily attributable to TLTRO redemptions. Partly against the backdrop of a market-driven development in our real estate business, we reduced the level of new medium to long-term business.

Thanks to our continued rigorous cost management, we were able to limit the rise in general and administrative expenses within the Group, which increased slightly to just over 1.7 billion euros. There was a rise in capital expenditure, such as on the modernisation of our IT infrastructure while personnel costs remained almost unchanged in an inflationary environment. Another positive factor was the lower bank levy.

The CET1 ratio rose substantially to 14.7 percent and is thus comfortably above the regulatory minimum level. The change in this ratio was due to a combination of capital appreciation and a lower level of risk weighted assets (RWA), especially in the real estate business.

<u>Segments:</u>

As is customary, I would now like to outline the performance of our business in each segment. As you know, our operations are organised into five segments: Real Estate, Corporates & Markets, Retail & Asset Management, Development Business and Other.

But let’s have a look at the overall results first.

This slide provides a striking illustration of how we were able to more than offset charges in one segment - in this case Real Estate - by other segments within Helaba's diversified business model.

Real Estate:

Developments in the property market, which I touched on earlier, are reflected in this segment. While the segment's operating income remained generally stable, there was a significant rise in loan loss provisions. The latter contributed significantly to a negative segment result of -241 million euros.

For 2024, we expect to set aside an above-average level of loan loss provisions, though lower than in the previous period.

Corporates & Markets:

The Corporates & Markets segment encompasses products for corporate, institutional, public sector and municipal corporation customers. In this segment, we are market leaders in arranging and placing sustainable Schuldscheine (promissory note loans) and rank third overall in the corporate Schuldschein market. The number of cash management transactions processed grew sharply by around 10 percent.

Despite an increase in customer business, the result from fair value measurement was 31 million euros below the previous year's level due to negative valuation effects.

Retail & Asset Management:

The Helaba Group was able to generate an almost 90 percent increase in earnings in the Retail & Asset Management segment. This segment bundles retail banking, private banking and asset management activities that are mainly performed by our Group subsidiaries Frankfurter Sparkasse, Frankfurter Bankgesellschaft and Helaba Invest. It also includes Landesbausparkasse Hessen-Thüringen and GWH.

The exceptionally strong rise in net interest income is largely attributable to Frankfurter Sparkasse's retail business. We once again managed to boost net fee and commission income, which was mainly generated by Frankfurter Sparkasse, Helaba Invest and Frankfurter Bankgesellschaft. The latter reported a 21 percent growth in net earnings.

There was a very positive trend here in the result from fair value measurement. Among other things, a rebound in the value of Frankfurter Sparkasse's proprietary investments had a noticeable impact.

Development Business:

WIBank achieved net income before tax of 57 million euros. WIBank performs key promotional lending activities on behalf of the German state of Hesse and continued to expand its promotional loan activities.

The Other segment:

The Other segment, which includes costs for central corporate divisions and other profit contributions and expenses that cannot be allocated to other business segments, made a contribution to the Group's net earnings of 129 million euros in the 2023 financial year. In particular, this was driven by robust net interest income and a reversal of post-model adjustments created in previous years.

Let me briefly summarise my remarks:

Our strategic agenda is paying off! Helaba's diversified business model has once again successfully proven its resilience.
Before I explain where we stand in terms of the further implementation of our strategic agenda in the second part of my speech, I would first like to hand over to my colleague and CRO Tamara Weiss. She will be providing detailed insights into our credit portfolio and risk provisioning.
Thank you, Christian.

To round off my speech, I would like to briefly share some thoughts on our outlook for the year ahead. As I previously mentioned, as far as the economic environment is concerned, we see the glass as half full. We are confident about the prospects for 2024 and beyond. Indeed, the year has got off to an encouraging start. However, it goes without saying that heightened geopolitical tensions, the fallout of the recent turnaround in monetary policy and the prevailing situation on real estate markets remain factors to be reckoned with. We will support our customers in overcoming these challenges and seizing opportunities. We regard it as our mission to act as a partner for companies and individuals in embracing digitalisation and the transformation of the economy towards sustainability. For 2024, we are confident of achieving a pre-tax result on the same level as last year. In the medium term, Helaba still anticipates generating a sustained pre-tax profit of more than € 750 million.

Thank you for your attention and I now look forward to answering your questions.