

# 4Q 2024 Outlook

**Brace for Volatility as US Economy Slows**

**Chief Investment Office, CIMB**

**01 October 2024**

**MOVING FORWARD WITH YOU**



# Market performance summary

EQUITY	Currency	1M	3M	YTD-30 SEP	FY23	FY22	FY21	FY20
MSCI AC WORLD	USD	2.2%	6.2%	17.2%	20.1%	-19.8%	16.8%	14.3%
S&P 500 INDEX	USD	2.0%	5.5%	20.8%	24.2%	-19.4%	26.9%	16.3%
NASDAQ COMPOSITE	USD	2.7%	2.6%	21.2%	43.4%	-33.1%	21.4%	43.6%
STOXX 600 EUROPE	EUR	-0.4%	2.2%	9.2%	12.7%	-12.9%	22.2%	-4.0%
JAPAN TOPIX INDEX	JPY	-2.5%	-5.8%	11.8%	25.1%	-5.1%	10.4%	4.8%
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	USD	4.6%	8.0%	15.1%	8.8%	-19.4%	-3.4%	17.1%
MSCI ASIA PAC EX-JAPAN	USD	7.5%	9.5%	17.4%	4.6%	-19.7%	-4.9%	19.8%
HANG SENG INDEX	HKD	17.5%	19.3%	24.0%	-13.8%	-15.5%	-14.1%	-3.4%
BLOOMBERG ASEAN INDEX	USD	5.2%	17.3%	15.2%	0.2%	-2.9%	0.2%	-9.2%
STRAITS TIMES INDEX	SGD	4.1%	7.6%	10.6%	-0.3%	4.1%	9.8%	-11.8%
FTSE BURSA MALAYSIA KLCI	MYR	-1.8%	3.7%	13.4%	-2.7%	-4.6%	-3.7%	2.4%
THAI SET	THB	6.6%	11.4%	2.3%	-15.2%	0.7%	14.4%	-8.3%
JAKARTA COMPOSITE INDEX	IDR	-1.9%	6.6%	3.5%	6.2%	4.1%	10.1%	-5.1%
MSCI EMERGING MARKETS	USD	6.4%	7.8%	14.4%	7.0%	-22.4%	-4.6%	15.8%
<b>FIXED INCOME</b>								
GLOBAL AGGREGATE BOND	USD	1.7%	7.0%	3.6%	5.7%	-16.2%	-4.7%	9.2%
JPM ASIA CREDIT INDEX	USD	1.4%	4.6%	7.6%	9.9%	-13.0%	-0.2%	5.9%
ASIA DOLLAR INDEX	USD	1.3%	4.2%	0.9%	-1.5%	-6.9%	-1.1%	4.4%
MALAYSIA CORP BOND INDEX	USD	1.4%	4.0%	6.7%	13.0%	-12.1%	1.2%	6.3%
<b>COMMODITY</b>								
BRENT CRUDE OIL	USD	-8.9%	-16.9%	-6.8%	-10.3%	10.5%	50.2%	-21.5%
GOLD	USD	5.2%	13.2%	27.7%	13.1%	-0.3%	-3.6%	25.1%
COPPER	USD	8.1%	3.2%	15.5%	4.0%	-12.1%	22.2%	22.6%

Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office

As at 30 September 2024

# Key Messages for the 4th Quarter

**01**

Anticipate more rate cuts as US economy slows; Fixed income to out-perform

**02**

Easing cycle, USD weakness – supports Emerging Market equities

**03**

FX volatility has risen – USD remains vulnerable

**04**

Geo-political risks have risen – Allocate 5% exposure to Gold

## FIXED INCOME

- Fed expected to cut rate by another 50bps in 4Q24.
- Barbell investment strategy: Buy short-duration HY and long-duration IG
- Buy USD, AUD, GBP on weak currency and further rate cuts

## EQUITIES

- Better opportunities in EM vs US
- China is inexpensive: Policy stimulus and RMB strength are catalysts
- USD weakness to attract inflows to Asia: Buy Malaysia + Singapore

## CURRENCIES

- USD decline has begun- as Fed eases on cue
- Trade the range using DCI/GCI/GDCI for yield generation
- Buy Gold on dips, below 2600

*Note: HY - High Yield bonds rated below BBB-/Baa3 and unrated bonds.  
IG - Investment grade bonds rated at least BBB-/Baa3.*

*Note: Gold Convertible investment (GCI), Dual Currency Investment (DCI), Gold DCI (GDCI), Currencies (FX)*

# Macro and Market Outlook

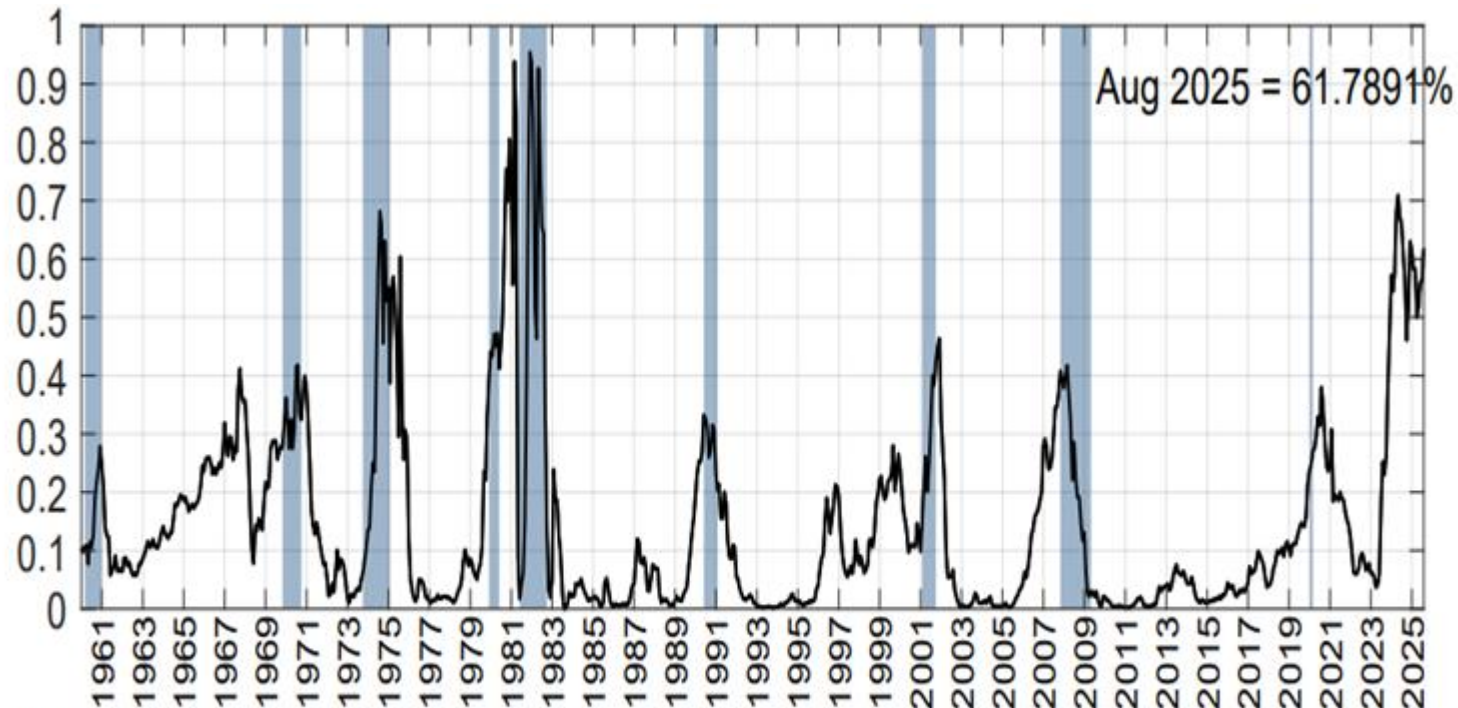


# Is US Headed for a Recession?

New York Fed estimates 61.8% probability of US recession

Probability of US Recession Predicted by Treasury Spread\*

Twelve Months Ahead (month averages)



\*Parameters estimated using data from January 1959 to December 2009, recession probabilities predicted using data through Aug 2024. The parameter estimates are  $\alpha=-0.5333$ ,  $\beta=-0.6330$ .

Updated 04-Sep-2024

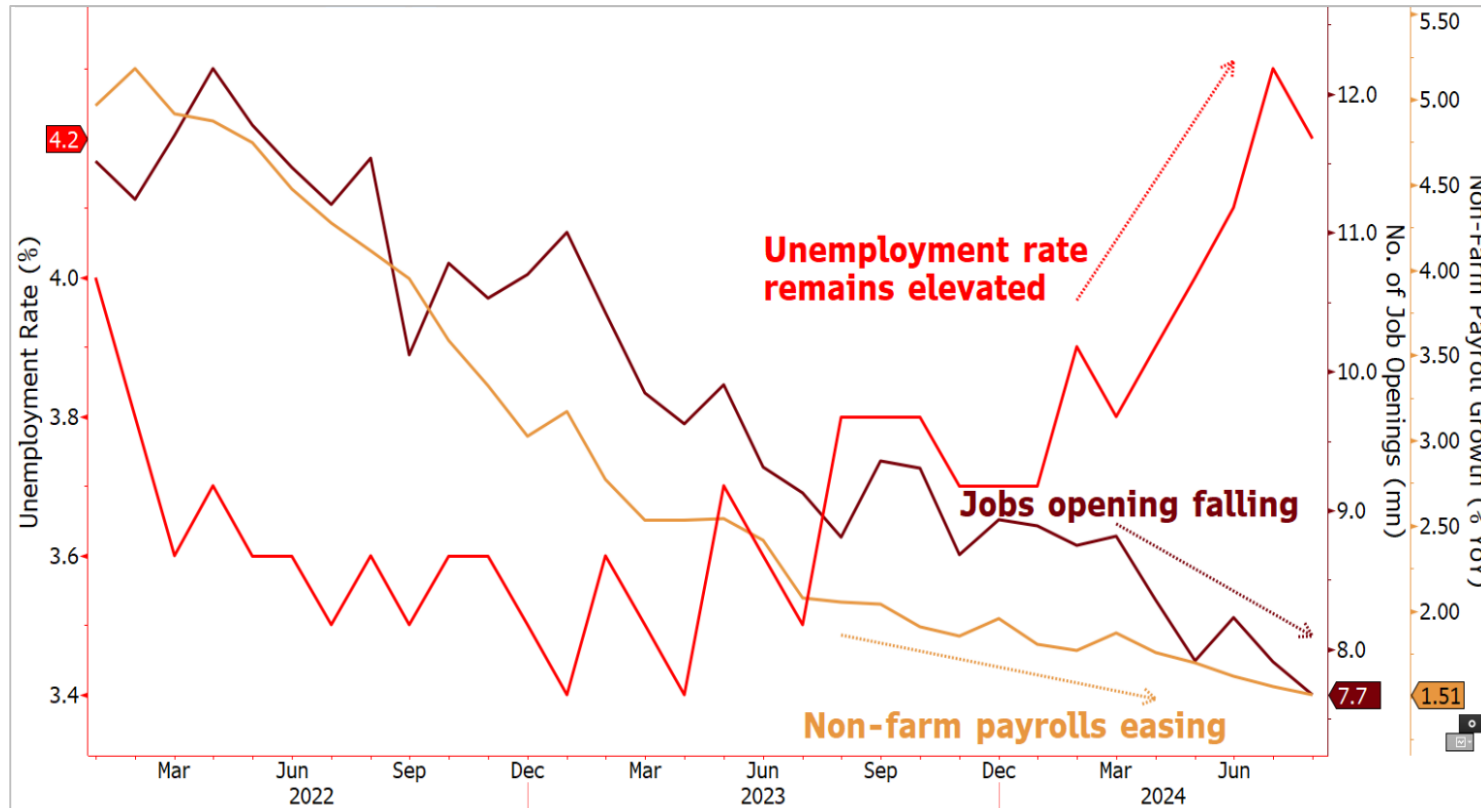
Source: New York Federal Reserve

- US recession indicator, 10y-3mths UST yield differential was inverted since 26 Oct 2022; currently  $-0.87\%$ .
- Past US recessions (shaded in chart) occurred 8-21 months after yield inversion; now in 23rd month without recession.
- Despite rising recession risk, our base case is for soft landing (no recession), given the moderately weaker US labor market and economy



# Fed Shifts Focus to Labour Market

## Clearer Signs of US Labour Market Weakness

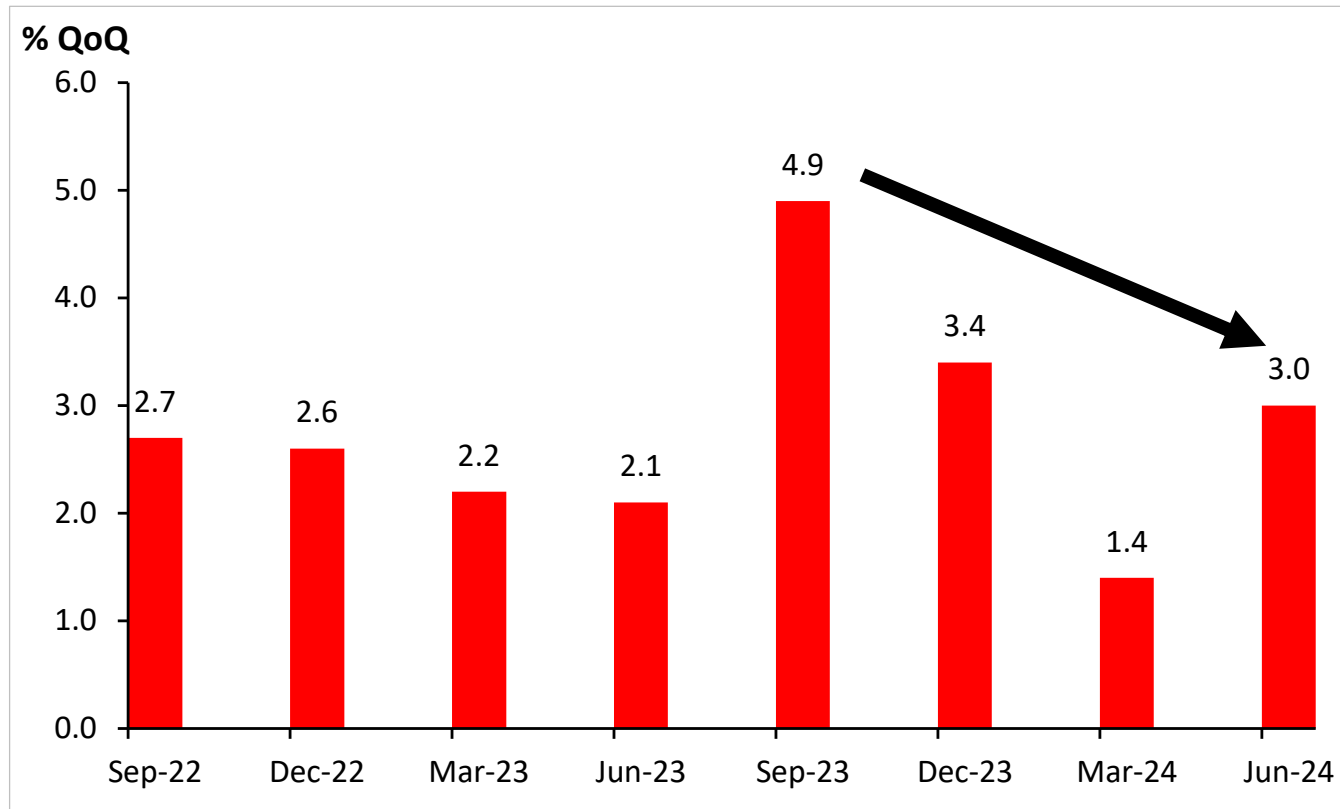


Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office

- US companies are hiring fewer workers, with July's job openings near a 3-year low at 7.67 million.
- Nonfarm job growth has slowed significantly compared to the 12-month average, with previous months' figures also revised down.
- The August unemployment rate remained elevated at 4.2%, despite job gains seen in construction and healthcare sectors.

# Why is the Fed Finally Pivoting ?

## Real GDP has Peaked Since 3Q23

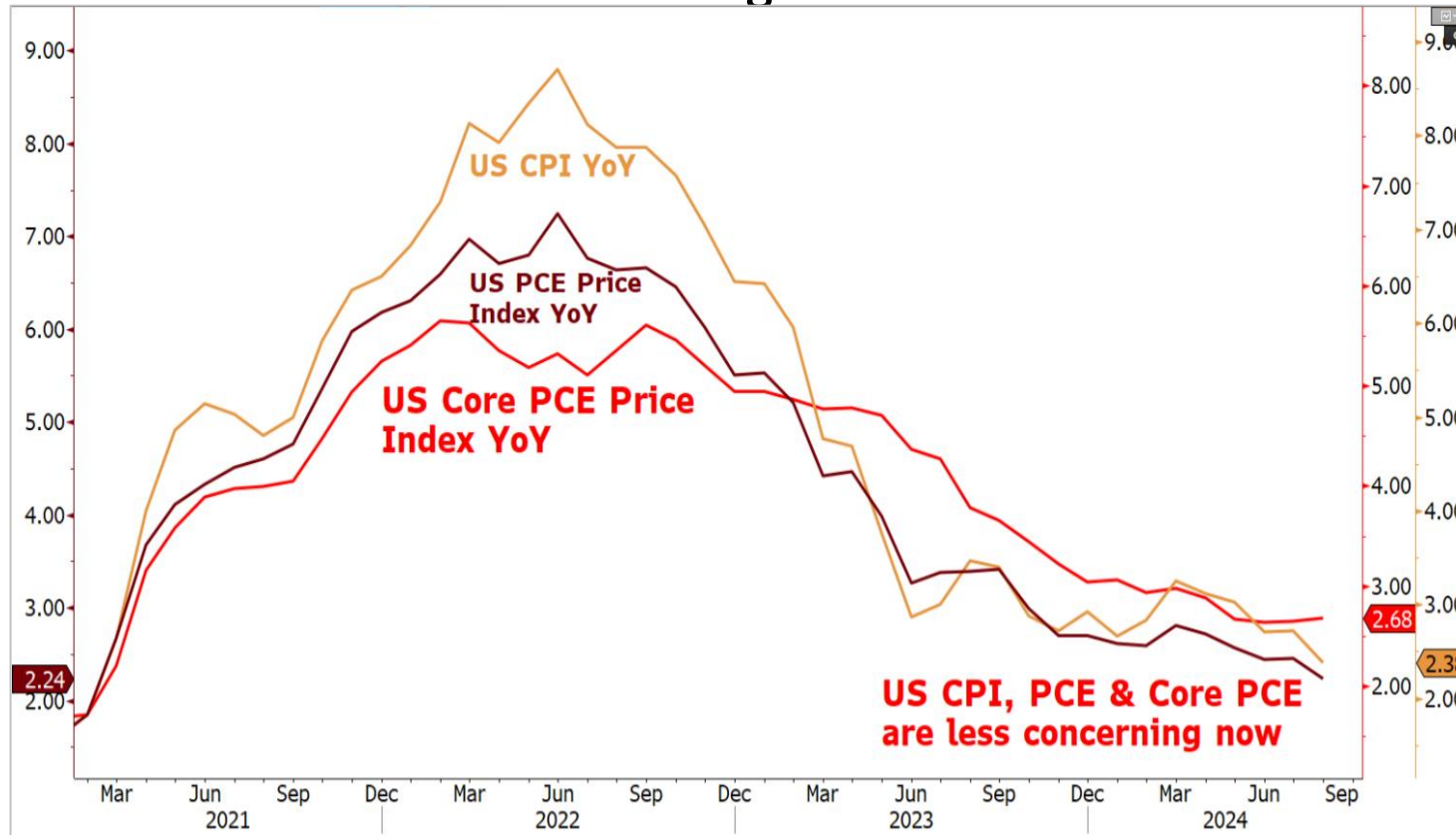


Source: Bloomberg, US Bureau of Economic Analysis, CIMB Chief Investment Office

- In Q2, US real GDP rose by 3% qoq annualized (final estimate), leading to a 2.2% annualized growth rate in 1H2024, which is close to Fed's 2024 estimate of 2%.
- Consumer spending is expected to slow further in 2H2024 as real disposable income weakens, pandemic-era savings dwindle, and loan delinquencies rise.

# Why is the Fed Finally Pivoting ?

## US Inflation is Nearer to Fed's Target of 2%



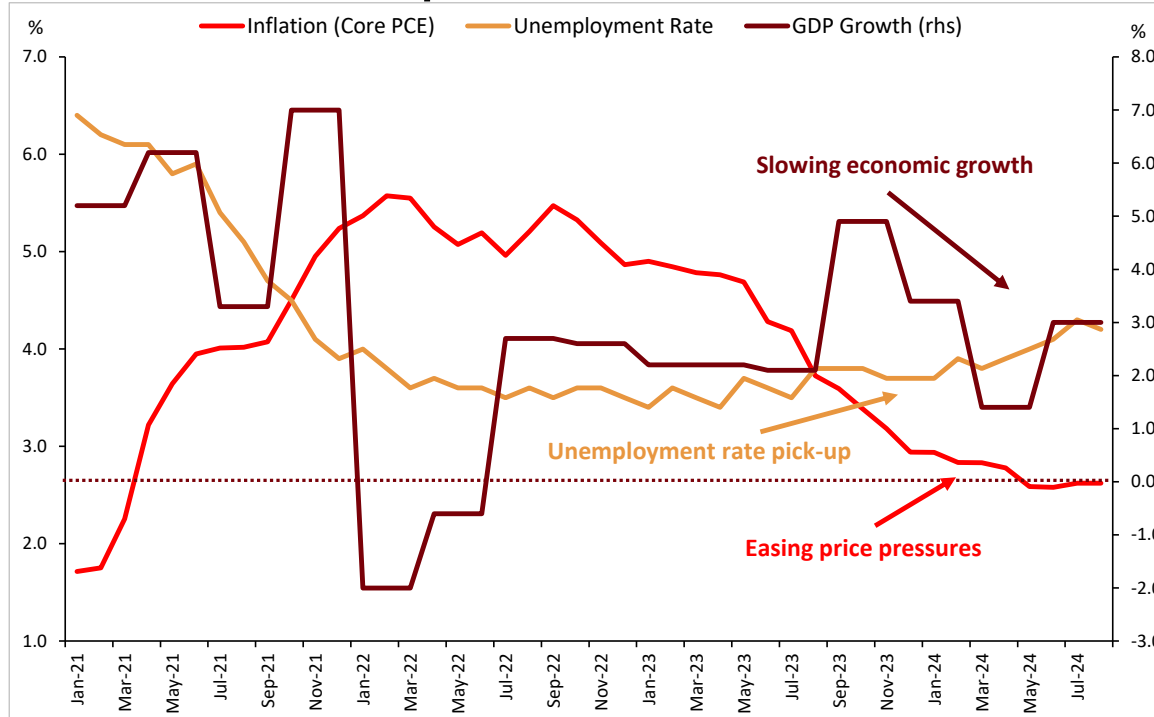
Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office

- In August 2024, the US core PCE price index rose 2.7% yoy, up from 2.6% in June and July, but well below the 5.58% peak in February 2022.
- While rent and service inflation remained persistent, they did not lead to a resurgence in overall inflation. These components account for 65% of the PCE index and 32% of the CPI.

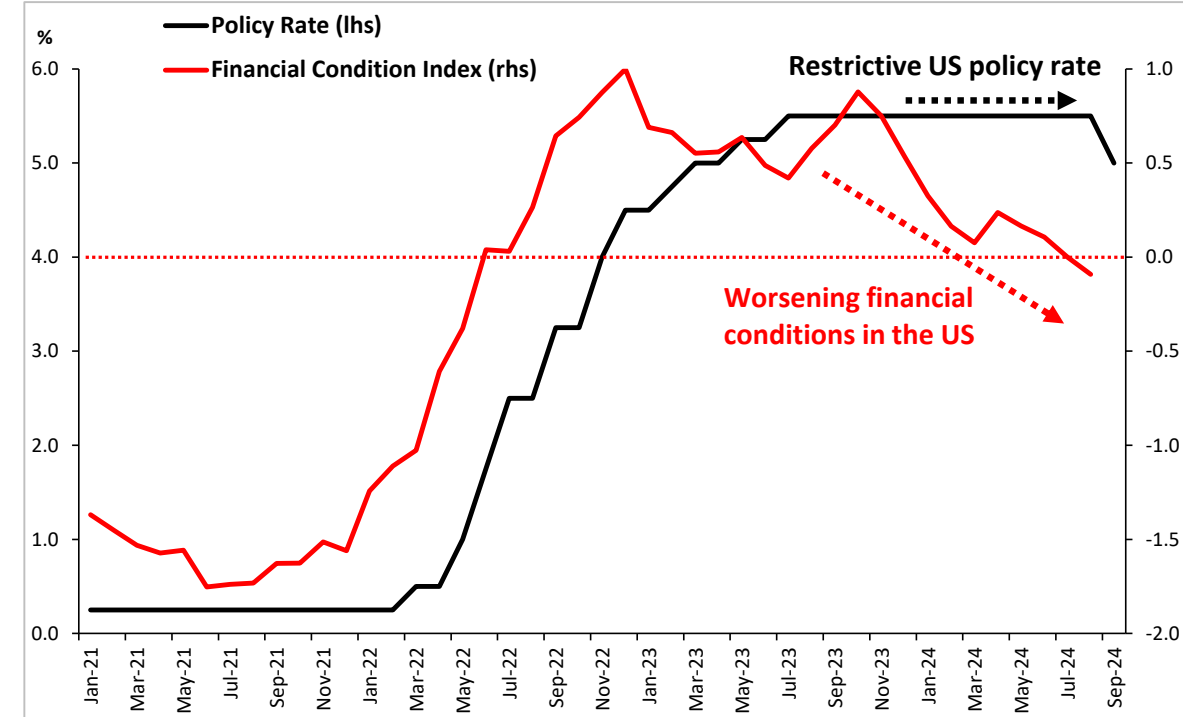


# How Restrictive is the US Policy Rate?

## Fed's rate cut in Sept reduces recession risk



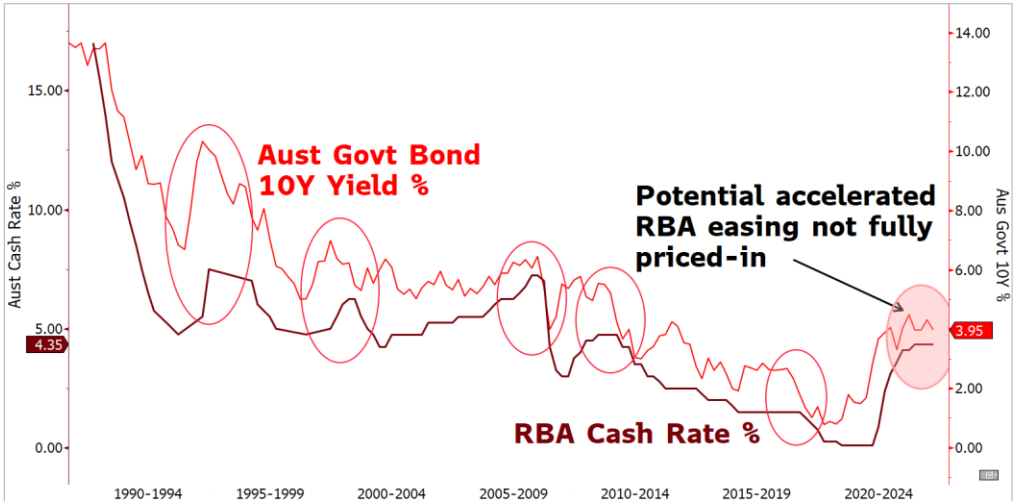
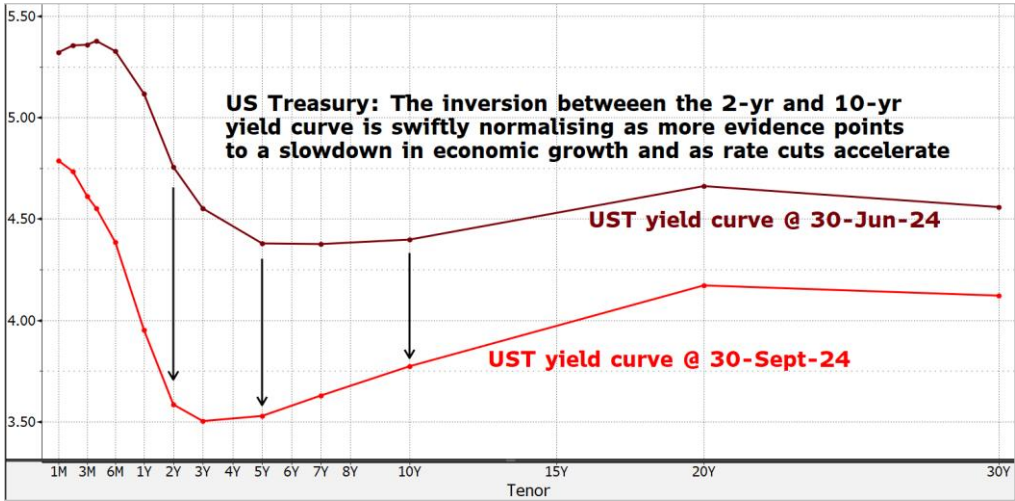
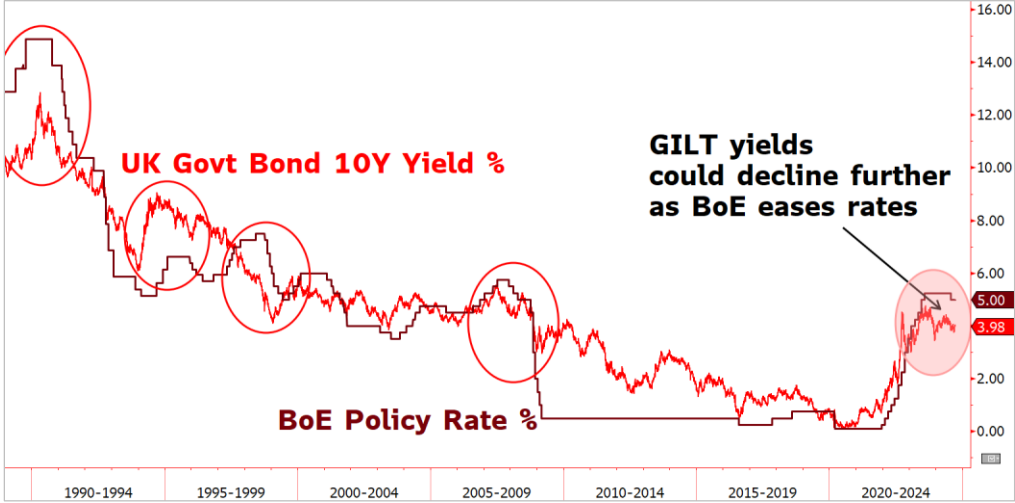
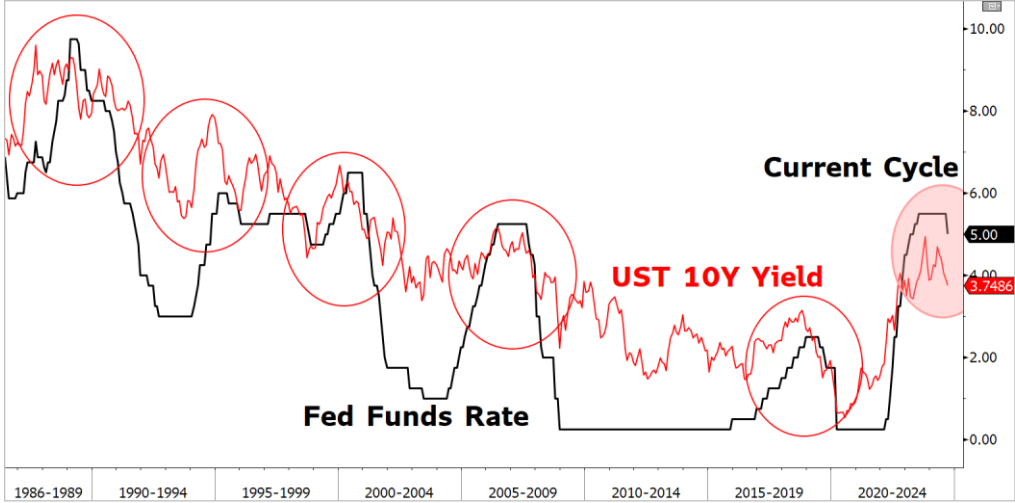
Source: Bloomberg, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, CIMB Chief Investment Office



- Policy rate kept high for 14 months - effective in reducing inflation while avoiding recession so far.
- Maintaining high policy rate will have compounding effect in slowing economic growth and worsening financial conditions; hence raising recession risk over time
- Fed's Sept rate cut to reduce restrictiveness of policy rate and lower recession risk

# Bullish Fixed Income over Next 12 months

Turn in interest rate cycles coincides with subsequent strong fixed income returns in US, UK, Australia.

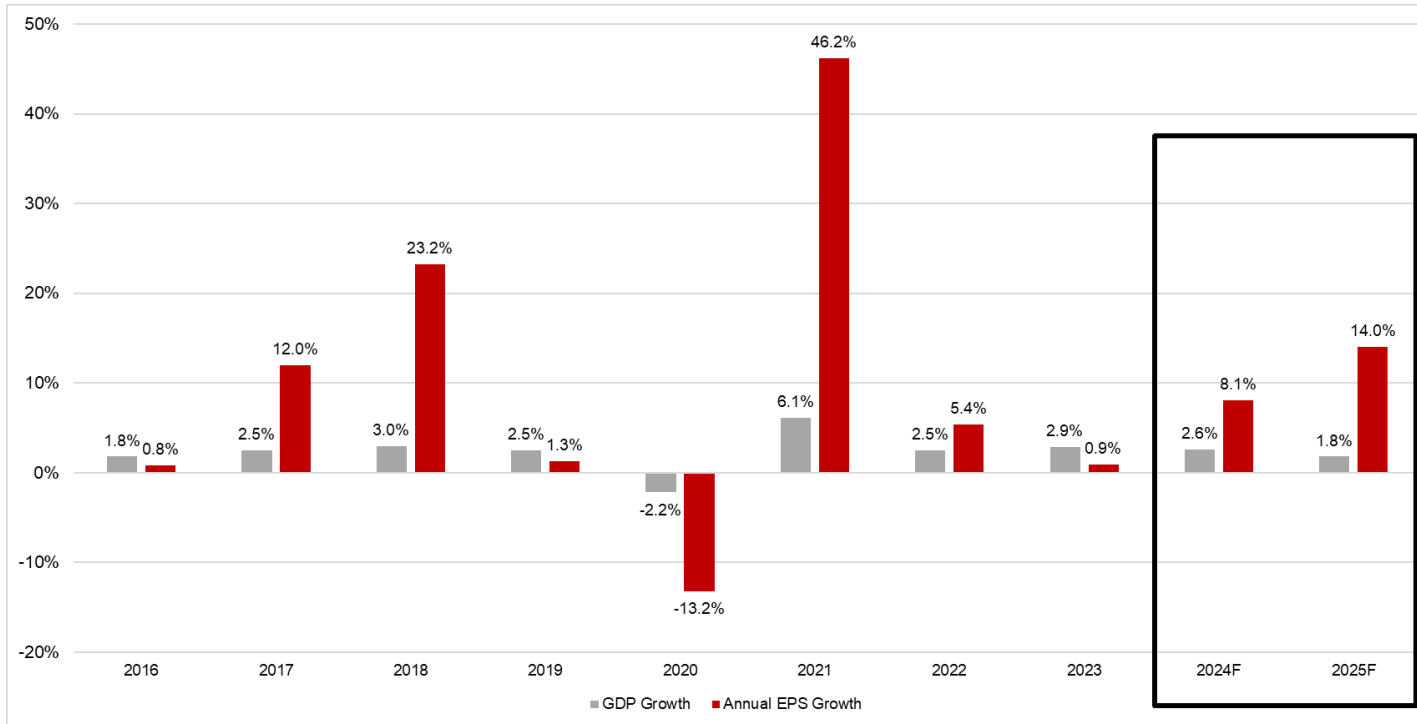


Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office, as at 30 September 2024

# Equities

## US: High expectations have been built in

Consensus expects S&P500 EPS growth to accelerate despite GDP slowdown in 2025F



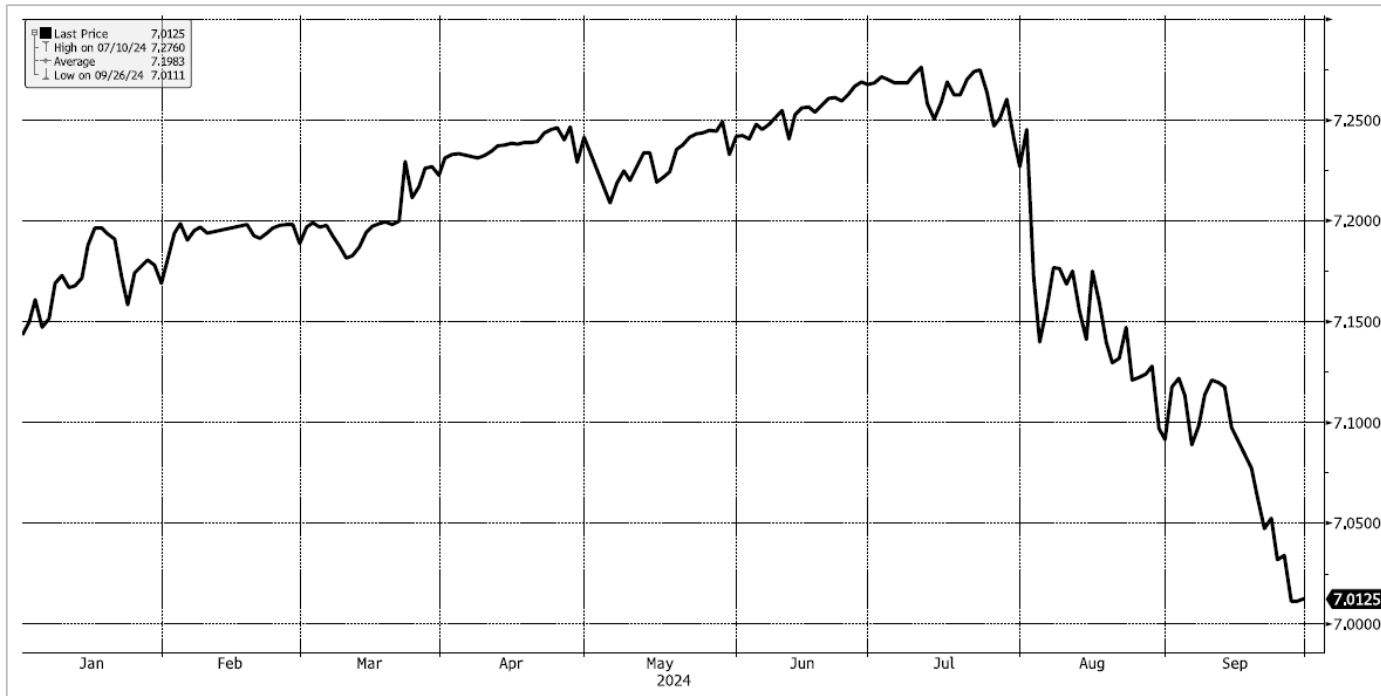
Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office  
As at 30 September 2024

- Potential downside risks to S&P500 EPS forecasts as US economy slows. Need to watch 3Q24 earnings season for more clarity into 2025's outlook.
- Stay cautious with higher volatility expected ahead of US presidential elections. Asian equities offer better risk-reward, given lower valuations and USD weakness.

# Equities

## China: Unleashing fresh stimulus

RMB has strengthened significantly against the USD since July



Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office  
As at 30 September 2024

- The tide has finally turned – China unleashed monetary easing, pledged to deploy fiscal spending, property market support, and consumption boost .
- The stock market is also benefitting from liquidity inflows thanks to RMB strength and a potential stock stabilization fund by PBOC.
- Policy momentum could sustain rally in short term. Stick to quality growth and balance with yielders. Trim stocks with weak fundamentals.

# Equities

## Malaysia: MYR strength is a tailwind

KLCI is inversely correlated to the USDMYR



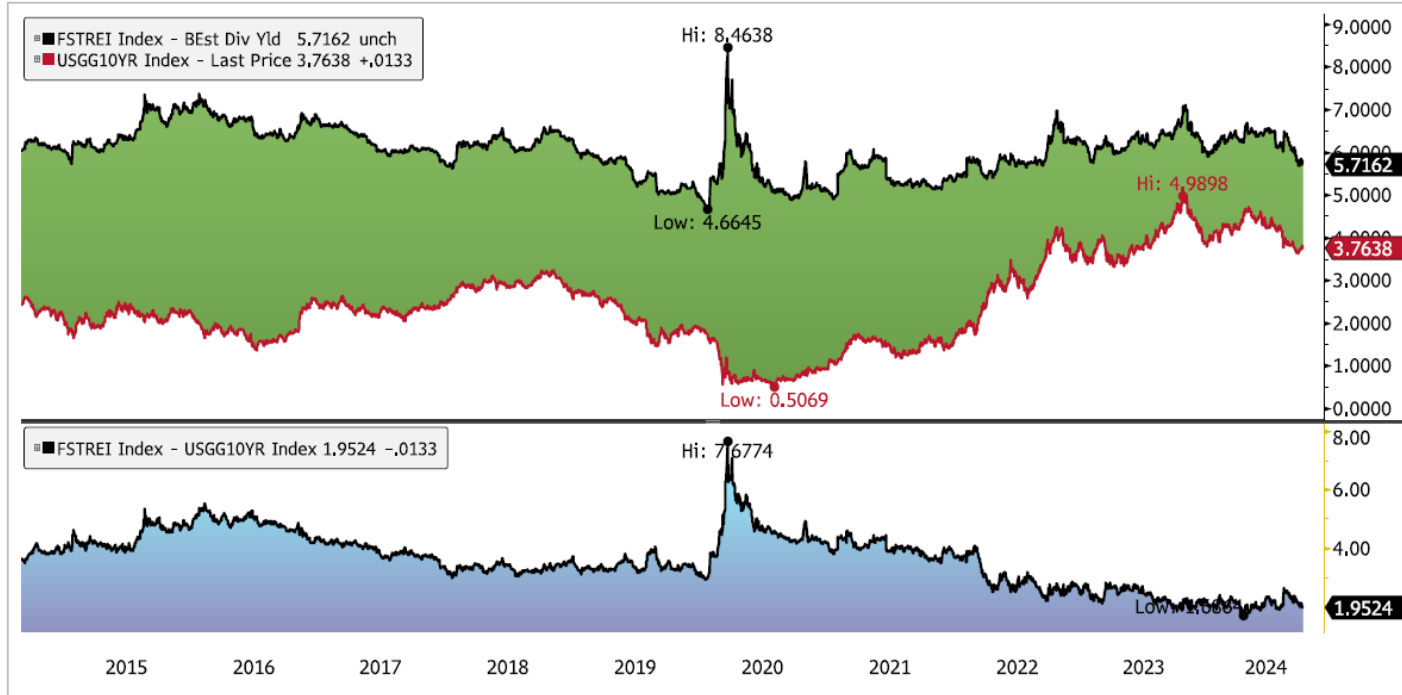
Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office  
As at 30 September 2024

- KLCI valuations justifiable at 13.9x 2025F PER given strong fundamentals and corporate earnings growth.
- Market tends to rally when MYR appreciates – domestic plays to outperform while exporters face a period of volatility.
- Watch policy execution. Next catalysts – Budget 2025 in October, and signing of agreement for the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone.

# Equities

## Singapore: Good yield hunting

S-REIT index trades at an attractive 5.7% yield vs 10Y UST yield of 3.8%



Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office  
As at 30 September 2024

- Policy rate cuts through end-2025F to result in a downward re-pricing of global yields.
- Singapore REITs usually outperform on the cusp of an easing cycle as yield compression gathers momentum.
- DPU growth and acquisition prospects will improve as borrowing costs fall.



# Does Gold Have Room to Appreciate?

Gold surges as USD weakens with worsening Middle-East hostilities



Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office, as at 30 September 2024

- Gold has broken 2024 peak, supported by risk aversion trades and periods of weaker USD and UST yields
- Recent Gold strength driven by USD weakness and Middle-East hostilities
- Anticipation of lower global yields and risk events (US election, geopolitical tensions) supports stronger Gold
- Buy Gold on dips below 2600
- Venture into GCI/GDCI's for better entry levels

# Investment Implications



# Recommended Asset Allocation

**55% Fixed Income : 40% Equity : 5% Gold**

## Fixed Income

▲ *Overweight*

Position for rate cuts in 4Q2024 and 2025. A pivot towards USD, AUD and GBP bonds is advised, for respective anticipated rate reductions and diversification.

## Equities

▼ *Underweight*

Pace of US economic slowdown is key to watch. ASEAN and China are inexpensive and should benefit from fund inflows as USD weakens.

## Cash and Alternatives

We have allocated 5% to Gold. A hedge against geo-political risks (likely to worsen), and continued decline in policy rates and bond yields into 2025. Buy via GCI/GDCI during temporary weakness offers better entry levels.

## Asset Allocation

	UnderWt	Neutral	OverWt		
<b>FIXED INCOME (55%)</b>	○	○	□	○	●
Sovereigns	○	○	□	○	●
Corporate Inv. Grade	○	○	□	●	○
Corporate High Yield	○	○	□	●	○
<b>EQUITIES (40%)</b>	○	●	□	○	○
U.S.	○	●	□	○	○
Asia ex-Japan	○	○	■	○	○
Hong Kong/China	○	○	■	○	○
ASEAN	○	○	□	●	○
<b>GOLD (5%)</b>	○	○	□	●	○

Source: CIMB Chief Investment Office

# Fixed Income Outlook

## KEY INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

- Allocate **55%** of portfolio to fixed income;
- Hold-to-maturity for regular income, ride out of market volatility.
- Utilize up to **50% leverage** to enhance return, by borrowing low-cost currency.

### No Landing

- Elevated inflation, US economy remains strong.
- Rate rises by 25-50 bps, credit spreads tighten.
- Own: TIPS, T-bills, short-duration HY bonds.
- Avoid: STRIPS, long-duration UST & IG bonds.

### Base Case: Soft landing as US economic growth slows

- Fed to meet its 2024-25 employment and inflation goals.
- Fed accelerates rate cuts; Tight credit spreads to persist.
- Own: STRIPS, long-duration UST & IG bonds, short-duration HY bonds.
- Preferred markets: **USD, AUD, GBP and EUR.**

### Hard Landing

- Strong policy response ensues.
- Rate eases over 300 bps by end-2025, credit spreads jump.
- Own: STRIPS, long-duration UST and IG corporate bonds.
- Avoid: HY Corporate bonds.

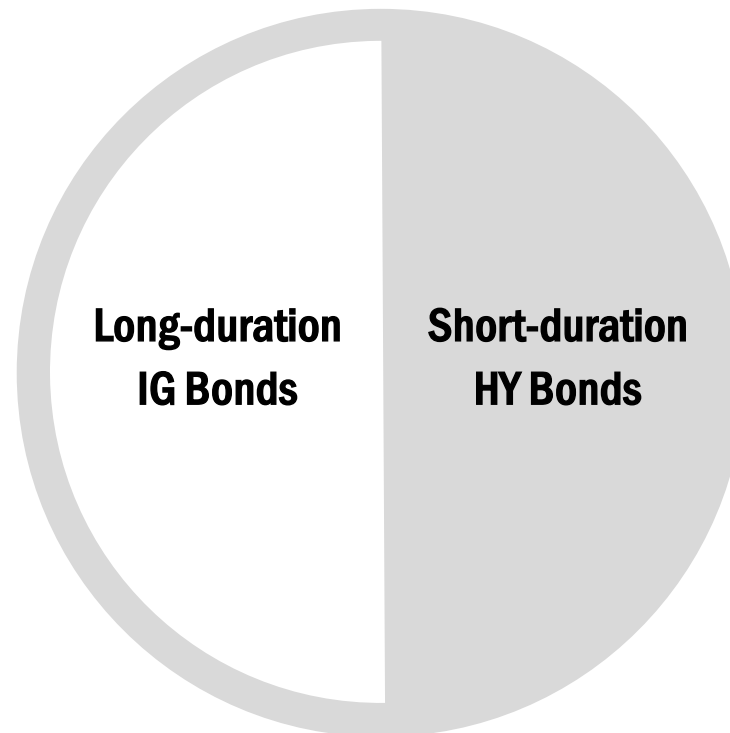
# Barbell Fixed Income Strategy to Maximize Returns

**The conundrum: Near term risks vs. Rate cut opportunities – how to maximize profits?**

- A Barbell Strategy is the ideal solution.
- Buy long-duration (10+ year) IG USD bonds, Buy short-duration (1-3 year) HY USD corporate bonds.
- Alternatively, diversify into AUD and GBP corporate bonds, focusing on short-duration HY bonds. IG long-duration AUD and GBP bonds offer additional benefits when the RBA and BOE cut rates

## Long-duration IG Bonds

- Substantial potential gains during rate cut cycle.
- Has historically performed well.
- This includes the US Treasury bonds.



## Short-duration HY Bonds

- Offer a cushion through high recurring income.
- Less sensitive to event risks and lower volatility.
- Short-duration yields are currently elevated on inverted yield curve, where short-tenor yields exceed medium-tenor yields.

# Implications for Equities

- S&P500 trades above historical mean despite slowdown risks
- HSI is attractively valued; stock-picking is key
- STI offers a compelling dividend yield
- FBMKLCI is reasonably priced for growth

	US	Asia ex-Japan	Japan	HK/China	Singapore	Malaysia
Index	S&P 500	MSCI Asia ex-JP	Topix	Hang Seng	Straits Times	FBMKLCI
Index levels on 30 September 2024	5,762	762	2,646	21,134	3,585	1,649
Year to Date (YTD) performance	20.8%	18.8%	11.8%	24.0%	10.6%	13.4%
<b>2025F Price to Earnings ratio (PER) (x)</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>13.9</b>
5-year Mean PER (x)	19.7	13.4	14.9	10.0	12.3	14.4
2024F Earnings Per Share (EPS) growth	8.1%	28.1%	21.2%	10.2%	5.8%	8.6%
<b>2025F Earnings Per Share (EPS) growth</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
2025F Return on Equity (ROE)	19.5%	12.3%	8.9%	10.7%	10.7%	9.7%
2024F Price to Book (P/B) (x)	4.85	1.79	1.30	1.14	1.24	1.40
<b>2025F Dividend Yield</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

Source: Bloomberg, CIMB Chief Investment Office  
As at 30 September 2024



# Implications for FX



Outlook	USD	Developed Markets	Emerging Markets
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**4Q24**

- ▶ Limited USD upside on anticipation of rate cuts
- ▶ Sustainability of China stimulus will impact ASEAN FX
- ▶ USD to stabilize, rebound after steep drop, as evidence of 'soft landing' emerges



- AUD
- EUR
- GBP
- JPY

- MYR
- IDR
- SGD
- THB

**2025**

- ▶ Magnitude of rate cuts to dictate direction
- ▶ DM central banks more likely to cut rates than EM ones; differentials to support non-USD FX
- ▶ China recovery tailwinds (if any) to support ASEAN FX



- AUD
- EUR
- GBP
- JPY

- MYR
- IDR
- SGD
- THB

Forecasts	
FX Pair	4Q24
DXY	100.1
EUR/USD	1.11
USD/JPY	139
GBP/USD	1.33
AUD/USD	0.69
USD/CNH	7.00
USD/CHF	0.84
USD/SGD	1.29
USD/MYR	4.18
USD/IDR	15,000
USD/THB	32.8
XAU/USD	2,620

Source: CIMB Treasury & Markets Research @ 25 September 2024

Note: US Dollar Index (DXY), Currencies (FX)

# Summary of Key Risks

## Global Macro

- The Fed is behind the curve in cutting rates

## Fixed Income

- Surprise reacceleration of economic growth or fiscal indiscipline could push US bond yields substantially higher; focus on US presidential election on 5 Nov

## Equities

- Geopolitical tensions, US recession fears, earnings disappointments, further carry-trade unwinding.

## FX

- USD weakens faster than expected

# Conclusion

## Be risk aware on equities

- Overweight ASEAN and invest selectively in China. Keep an eye on US growth and equity valuations.

## US economic growth slows

- The Fed has cut rates, with additional cuts anticipated. As US economic growth slows, the investment case for fixed income becomes more compelling.

## Asset allocation

- Maintain Asset allocation to 55% fixed income, 40% equity and 5% gold
- Buy Gold on weakness and sell USD into strength

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## WARNING

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THIS PRODUCT IS PRINCIPAL GUARANTEED BY THE ISSUING BANK UPON MATURITY ONLY. IF THE PRODUCT IS REDEEMED OR SOLD PRIOR TO MATURITY, THE CUSTOMER MAY LOSE PART OF THE INITIAL DEPOSIT AMOUNT. THE RETURNS ON THIS PRODUCT ARE UNCERTAIN AND THE CUSTOMER RISKS EARNING NO RETURNS AT ALL. THE CUSTOMER IS REMINDED THAT THIS PRODUCT IS NOT INSURED BY PERBADANAN INSURANS DEPOSIT MALAYSIA.



# WARNING

## NON-PRINCIPAL PROTECTED AUTOCALLABLE EQUITY LINKED STRUCTURED PRODUCT WARNING

THE RETURNS ON YOUR STRUCTURED PRODUCT INVESTMENT WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE PERFORMANCE OF THE UNDERLYING ASSET/REFERENCE, AND THE RECOVERY OF YOUR PRINCIPAL INVESTMENT MAY BE JEOPORDISED IF YOU MAKE AN EARLY REDEMPTION. THIS STRUCTURED PRODUCT INVESTMENT IS NOT INSURED BY PERBADANAN INSURANS DEPOSIT MALAYSIA.

## DUAL CURRENCY INVESTMENT (DCI) / GOLD CONVERTIBLE / REVERSE GOLD CONVERTIBLE STRUCTURED PRODUCT (GCI) WARNING

THE RETURNS ON YOUR STRUCTURED PRODUCT INVESTMENT WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE PERFORMANCE OF THE UNDERLYING ASSET/REFERENCE, AND THE RECOVERY OF YOUR PRINCIPAL INVESTMENT MAY BE JEOPARDISED IF YOU MAKE AN EARLY REDEMPTION. THIS STRUCTURED PRODUCT INVESTMENT IS NOT INSURED BY PERBADANAN INSURANS DEPOSIT MALAYSIA.

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