

# Resilience in growth off-sets impacts of tariff tensions

- US political pressures were not enough to de-rail EM markets
- · Fund outperformance due to overweight in LatAm and industrials in China
- · Increasing bet in Chilean utilities with positive outlook for battery storage

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# Last month's performance

In August, emerging market equities declined 0.96% (EUR), lagging developed markets which rose 0.33%. Global equity markets showed overall stability and modest gains, supported by resilient global economic activity and controlled inflation.

For emerging markets the main developments in August included a 90-day extension of China tariffs, boosting the Chinese equity market. India faced an increase in tariffs to 50% as they continued to purchase Russian oil, while Brazil got hit by the same due to unfair trade policies and political tensions. Nevertheless, the Brazilian equity market managed to overcome this negative development and outperformed in August on positive sentiment towards the interest rates cycle.

Other markets that did well in August were Chile, Colombia, Peru and South Africa. Markets that lagged in August were India, South Korea, Poland, Taiwan and Thailand. The weaker oil price also subdued performance of some Middle-Eastern countries in August.

Emerging market equity funds saw outflows of USD 1.1bn in August, following inflows of USD 9.4bn in July. ETFs continued to see net buying, albeit at a lower level than in July.

#### Performance

The strategy outperformed the reference index (MSCI EM) in August with both stock selection and country allocation registering positive effects.

In country allocation, our overweight in Brazil and Chile contributed the most, while the underweight in China detracted. In Brazil, the weakness of the USD has favored the BRL, which appreciated 3% in the month. Market consensus has been revising down estimates for inflation, suggesting anticipated rate cuts by the BCB, especially after expectations for a Fed cut in September increased. Chile also performed well, after passing a pension reform that is expected to increase pensions contribution from employers over time, creating a potential booster to the

## **PORTFOLIO MANAGER'S UPDATE AUGUST 2025**

Marketing material for professional investors, not for onward distribution



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pension pot in the long term. On the other hand, the underweight in China impacted, as the market had rallied following the extension of US tariffs on Chinese companies, and dialogues between presidents Trump and Xi Jinping.

In stock selection, CRRC Times Electric shares outperformed after strong H1 results and new policies from the Chinese government that entail a favorable VAT charge to the industrial equipment sector. Contemporary Amperex and Hon Hai also outperformed amid positive market sentiment over tariff discussions between China and US. Delta Electronics stocks continue to do well on reports of high business growth and demand for its product applications in AI infrastructure and power management solutions. Finally, blue chip Itau Unibanco outperformed in Brazil after strong Q2 numbers and indications of a special dividend payment.

On the other hand, stocks of pulp producers Sappi and Suzano underperformed given their revenue exposure to USD weakness. CPFL shares underperformed after the departure of CFO Yuehui Pan and the regulator possible application of a fine of BRL 4.6bn as the company didn't meet some of its regulatory benchmark requirements.

#### Portfolio positioning

This month we increased our exposure in Chile due to better economic growth expectations and the positive outlook for equities after the approval of the pension reform in the country. We increased the exposure via Enel Chile. Chile is experiencing an intense change in its utility sector, with energy storage rapidly expanding capacity to address intermittency in renewable energy. Enel Chile plans to invest USD 400m to build three battery energy storage projects in northern Chile, adding 0.5 GW of capacity over the next two years. The company is a leading producer in the country and benefits from its macro tailwinds and positive sustainability developments.

## **Country allocation**

Country	Portfolio Weight	Index Weight	Relative Weight
Brazil	10.2%	4.4%	5.8%
Greece	4.9%	0.7%	4.2%
Chile	3.9%	0.5%	3.4%
Indonesia	3.9%	1.2%	2.7%
Canada	2.5%	0.0%	2.5%
Mexico	3.8%	2.0%	1.9%
Korea	12.2%	10.6%	1.5%
South Africa	4.8%	3.3%	1.4%
United Arab Emirates	1.6%	1.6%	0.0%
Taiwan	17.1%	19.0%	-1.9%
India	10.8%	16.2%	-5.4%
China	24.3%	30.4%	-6.1%

Source: Robeco, MSCI. Portfolio: Robeco Emerging Markets Climate Transition. Index: MSCI Emerging Markets Index. Data end of August 2025. For illustrative purposes only. This is the current overview as of the date stated above and not a guarantee of future developments. It should not be assumed that any investments in countries or sectors identified were or will be profitable.



In Asia, the fund is overweight Korea and Indonesia and underweight the smaller markets such as Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, where we hold no positions. Due to our restricted investment universe, we are underweight in China, Taiwan and India, although those countries have high absolute weight in our portfolio and host some of our largest investment ideas. We are overweight in Latin America, a commodity-producing region where there are many companies in the priority sectors which are advanced in their climate transition commitments. There we are overweight in Brazil, Mexico and Chile, while underweight in Peru and Colombia. In EMEA, the fund holds overweight positions in South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and Greece, while underweight in Eastern Europe, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

#### Sector allocation

Sector	Portfolio Weight	Index Weight	Relative Weight
Industrials	22.4%	6.9%	15.6%
Utilities	18.0%	2.4%	15.5%
Materials	14.3%	6.1%	8.1%
Energy	4.5%	4.0%	0.5%
Real Estate	0.0%	1.5%	-1.5%
Consumer Discretionary	9.2%	12.7%	-3.6%
Health Care	0.0%	3.6%	-3.6%
Information Technology	20.7%	24.6%	-3.8%
Consumer Staples	0.0%	4.3%	-4.3%
Communication Services	0.0%	10.3%	-10.3%
Financials	10.9%	23.4%	-12.5%

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From a sector perspective, the strategy is overweight in the priority sectors for climate decarbonization and transition pathway to net zero, such as industrials, utilities, and materials. In industrials, the portfolio holds companies active in EV battery manufacturing and its supply chain, electricity efficiency companies and rolling stock companies. Utilities companies include renewable integrated players, geothermal producers, district cooling as well as transition energy players. The IT sector holds the biggest absolute weight in the portfolio, where we invest in companies active in semiconductor manufacturing, solar panel production and IT services. Conversely, financials, communication services and consumer staples are the largest underweight positions compared to the benchmark as climate change is less material than other sustainability factors in those sectors.



#### **Portfolio Characteristics**

	Portfolio	Index*
Price/earnings (FY1)	12.0	14.1
Price/book	1.5	2.0
Price/cash flow (FY0)	7.7	8.9
Dividend yield	3.1%	2.5%
Return on equity (last 5 years)	15.6%	17.9%
Historical 3-year earnings growth	7.6%	13.9%
Estimated 3-year earnings growth	16.0%	13.9%
Average investable market value (bln eur)	84	134
Median market value (bln eur)	8	17
Active share	85.0%	-

Sources: Robeco, FactSet. Portfolio: Robeco Emerging Markets Climate Transition. Index: MSCI Emerging Markets Index. Data end of August 2025.

The strategy is tilted towards value stocks in combination with solid returns on equity. This is in line with our investment style and process, which favour companies with an attractive valuation and improving earnings growth.

Top 10 holdings

Company	Portfolio Weight	Index Weight
Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., Ltd.	8.9%	10.3%
Contemporary Amperex Technology Co., Limited Class A	4.2%	0.1%
Cemex SAB de CV Cert Part Ord Repr 2 ShsA & 1 ShsB	3.8%	0.2%
KB Financial Group Inc.	3.8%	0.3%
Absa Group Limited	3.7%	0.1%
Itau Unibanco Holding SA Pfd	3.5%	0.4%
Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., Ltd.	3.3%	0.9%
HD Hyundai Electric	3.3%	0.1%
Metlen Energy & Metals PLC	3.2%	0.1%
Kia Corporation	3.0%	0.2%

Source: Robeco, MSCI. Portfolio: Robeco Emerging Markets Climate Transition. Index: MSCI Emerging Markets Index. Data end of August 2025. The companies/securities shown on this slide are for illustrative purposes only in order to demonstrate the investment strategy on the date stated. The companies/securities are not necessarily held by a strategy/fund nor is future inclusion guaranteed. No inference can be made on the future development of the company. This is not a buy, sell, or hold recommendation.



Our top holdings are very diversified across emerging market sectors and sustainability themes, whereas the weight is distributed through connectivity, transition financing, mobility and heavy sector leaders. In IT, our biggest position is in TSMC, one of the largest semiconductors and supplier of chips globally. We also hold a position in Taiwanese IT components supplier, Hon Hai Precision. Regarding financials, we are positioned in three leading regional banks, Itaú in Brazil, ABSA in South Africa, and KB Financial in South Korea. On the mobility theme, we have relevant exposure via Korean O&M Kia Corp and EV battery producer Contemporary Amperex. In energy infrastructure, our biggest exposure is via Korean electric machinery manufacturer Hyundai Electric. Finally, we have a stake in heavy sector transition leaders such as global cement producer Cemex and European industrial group Metlen Energy & Metals.

#### Outlook

The US remains a source of uncertainty in today's global economy with rising fiscal deficits, higher US import tariffs and erratic policy making. However, as the majority of earnings from emerging companies is domestically focused, we think the US itself will be most impacted. Global investors seem likely to diversify away from the US, which so far has resulted in a weaker US dollar. With the current America First focus, emerging markets are having to rely more on their own domestic policies and growth opportunities. We expect higher structural economic growth compared to developed markets, whilst macroeconomic stability has significantly improved. Key developments within individual emerging countries are:

- China is still negotiating with the US on trade and import tariffs, with higher US import tariffs a remaining risk
  factor. However, China has room for more stimulus if needed. And although structural growth has slowed down
  to about 4% to 5%, there are new growth drivers like EVs, renewables and AI. In addition, the equity market is
  mostly domestically focused. Valuations for the Chinese market remain attractive.
- In Korea, Lee Jae-myung was inaugurated in June as the new president. Positive changes are more government stimulus and improvements in the Commercial Law to improve corporate governance and minority shareholder protection, yet there is also risk for more market interference and government regulations. Although the market performed strongly in June, valuations are still attractive. And the Value-Up program that was launched last year to reduce low valuations, is likely to remain in place, which should help to narrow the Korea discount.
- Within Taiwan, the technology sector is dominant. After strong performance in 2023 and 2024, valuations have become less attractive, yet there is potential for higher structural growth due to global AI investments. At the same time, the sector may now see lower demand due to the US import tariffs. On the political side, the threats from China on re-unification is a negative factor that are likely to be recurring.
- In India, the long-term growth outlook remains positive and the country is resilient for global developments. However, valuations are still very expensive, making the equity market less attractive.
- In Brazil, the central bank is coming to the end of the hiking cycle and there is potential for interest rate cuts around the end of the year. Even with this year's rally, the market remains attractively valued. If and when the fiscal and monetary outlook improves, there is potential for further re-rating.
- The South African economy faces several structural challenges, leading to a low long-term growth outlook. The start of the Government of National Unity, which includes the more market friendly Democratic Alliance, was a positive change last year, although the cooperation this year has been wobbly.

Emerging equity markets' valuations have become very attractive relative to developed markets with discounts of around 35% based on earnings multiples. At the same time, expected earnings growth for this year is 10%, above the 7% expected growth for developed markets.



#### General

Robeco's fundamental EM Equities strategies have EUR 7.7 billion in assets under management: EUR 1.1 billion in Robeco Emerging Markets Equities; EUR 2.7 billion in EM Core Institutional mandates; and EUR 3.8 billion in EM High Conviction mandates/products. Assets under management in African products stand at EUR 0.5 billion.

# Investment philosophy

- Our philosophy is based on the conviction that equity markets are inefficient and that we have the expertise and tools to identify and exploit these inefficiencies for the benefit of our clients. We believe that investors focused on short-term gains underestimate the long-term value creation of selected companies.
- We strongly believe in a team approach, as there is no monopoly on knowledge.
- The performance of the Robeco Emerging Markets Climate Transition Equities strategy is driven by country allocation and stock selection. Our stock selection is based on in-depth analysis of the companies we invest in. Valuation (discounted cash flow analysis) and risk assessment are key factors. We take a long-term view in carrying out our analyses.
- Environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors are incorporated into the research and decision-making processes, both at country allocation and stock selection level.

#### Investment universe

Robeco Emerging Markets Climate Transition Equities invests in relevant companies that contribute to the goal of the Paris agreement to decarbonize to a Net Zero economy. It is a high-conviction portfolio of around 40 holdings and has sufficient diversification across countries and climate categories.

#### Investment team

The Emerging Markets Climate Transition Equities strategy is managed by Rob Schellekens (Lead Portfolio Manager), Daniela da Costa (Co-Lead Portfolio Manager) and Jaap van der Hart (Portfolio Manager). They are supported by a team of country and sector specialists

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## Additional information for investors with residence or seat in the United Arab Emirates

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The sale of the Fund qualifies as a private placement pursuant to section 2 of Uruguayan law 18,627. The Fund must not be offered or sold to the public in Uruguay, except under circumstances which do not constitute a public offering or distribution under Uruguayan laws and regulations. The Fund is not and will not be registered with the Financial Services Superintendency of the Central Bank of Uruguayan. The Fund corresponds to investment funds that are not investment funds regulated by Uruguayan law 16,774 dated 27 September 1996, as amended.

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