

that AUTOM is intended to improve, through the use of new data processing and communications techniques, the efficiency with which transactions in PHLX equity and index options are executed. Further, the Exchange believes that AUTOM fosters competition among options exchanges, which have similar systems in place.

*(B) Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Burden on Competition*

The PHLX does not believe that the proposed rule change will impose any inappropriate burden on competition.

*(C) Self-Regulatory Organization's Statement on Comments on the Proposed Rule Change Received From Members, Participants or Others*

No written comments were either solicited or received.

**III. Commission's Findings and Order Granting Accelerated Approval of Proposed Rule Change**

The Exchange has requested that the proposed rule change be given accelerated effectiveness pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act.

The Commission finds that the proposed rule change is consistent with the requirements of the Act and the rules and regulations thereunder applicable to a national securities exchange, and, in particular, the requirements of Sections 6 and 11A.<sup>5</sup> Specifically, the Commission continues to believe that the development and implementation of the AUTOM system provides for more efficient handling and reporting of orders in PHLX options through the use of new data processing and communications techniques, thereby improving order processing and turnaround time. The Commission does not object to an extension of the pilot program until December 31, 1996, in response to the PHLX's assertion that continuation of the pilot will provide the Exchange with a better opportunity to study its operation and effectiveness prior to permanent approval of the program.<sup>6</sup> The Commission notes further that the Exchange has represented that from January 1995 until the present, AUTOM has functioned

properly and efficiently, that no material problems have been reported by PHLX members or AUTOM users, and that AUTOM has not had significant malfunctions or operational failures.

The Commission finds good cause for approving the proposed rule change prior to the thirtieth day after the date of publication of notice of filing thereof in the Federal Register in order to permit the PHLX to continue the AUTOM pilot program on an uninterrupted basis. Specifically, the Commission believes that the PHLX's proposal to extend the AUTOM pilot program does not raise any new issues since it merely extends the pilot program as it is currently operating. Further, the Commission believes that the pilot is beneficial in maintaining the quality and efficiency of the PHLX's market. In addition, the Commission notes that there have been no adverse comments concerning the pilot program since its implementation. Accordingly, the Commission believes that granting accelerated approval of the proposed rule change is appropriate and consistent with Sections 6 and 11A of the Act.

**IV. Solicitation of Comments**

Interested persons are invited to submit written data, views and arguments concerning the foregoing. Persons making written submissions should file six copies thereof with the Secretary, Securities and Exchange Commission, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549. Copies of the submission, all subsequent amendments, all written statements with respect to the proposed rule change that are filed with the Commission, and all written communications relating to the proposed rule change between the Commission and any person, other than those that may be withheld from the public in accordance with the provisions of 5 U.S.C. 552, will be available for inspection and copying at the Commission's Public Reference Section, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. Copies of such filing will also be available for inspection and copying at the principal office of the above-mentioned self-regulatory organization. All submissions should refer to the file number in the caption above and should be submitted by January 8, 1996.

*It is therefore ordered*, pursuant to Section 19(b)(2) of the Act,<sup>7</sup> that the proposed rule change (SR-PHLX-95-

78) is approved through December 31, 1996.

For the Commission, by the Division of Market Regulation, pursuant to delegated authority:<sup>8</sup>

Margaret H. McFarland,

*Deputy Secretary.*

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**[Investment Company Act Release No. 21593; International Series Release No. 901; 812-9816]**

**First National Bank of Southern Africa Limited; Notice of Application**

December 12, 1995.

**AGENCY:** Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC").

**ACTION:** Notice of Application for Exemption under the Investment Company Act of 1940 (the "Act").

**APPLICANT:** First National Bank of Southern Africa Limited ("First National bank").

**RELEVANT ACT SECTIONS:** Order under section 6(c) of the Act for an exemption from section 17(f).

**SUMMARY OF APPLICATION:** First National Bank requests an order that would permit United States registered investment companies (a "U.S. Investment Company"), other than investment companies registered under section 7(d), for which First National Bank serves as custodian or subcustodian, to maintain foreign securities and other assets in the custody of foreign affiliates located in Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

**FILING DATE:** The application was filed on September 5, 1995 and amended on December 12, 1995.

**HEARING OR NOTIFICATION OF HEARING:** An order granting the application will be issued unless the SEC orders a hearing. Interested persons may request a hearing by writing to the SEC's Secretary and serving applicant with a copy of the request, personally or by mail. Hearing requests should be received by the SEC by 5:30 p.m. on January 8, 1996, and should be accompanied by proof of service on the applicant, in the form of an affidavit or, for lawyers, a certificate of service. Hearing requests should state the nature of the writer's interest, the reason for the request, and the issues contested. Persons may request notification of a hearing by writing to the SEC's Secretary.

**ADDRESSES:** Secretary, SEC, 450 Fifth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20549.

<sup>5</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78f and 78k-1 (1988).

<sup>6</sup> The PHLX will submit a request for permanent approval of the program no later than November 1, 1996. This request will be accompanied by a report covering the period between January 1, 1996, and June 30, 1996, that will include: (1) a description of the benefits provided by AUTOM; (2) the degree of AUTOM usage, including the number and size of the orders routed through AUTOM and the number and size of the orders executed automatically through the AUTO-X system; (3) the system capacity of AUTOM and AUTO-X; and (4) any problems the Exchange has encountered with the routing and execution features.

<sup>7</sup> 15 U.S.C. 78s(b)(2) (1982).

<sup>8</sup> 17 CFR 200.30-3(a)(12) (1994).