Interim Management Report of Fund Performance

## AGF Global Dividend Strategic Equity Fund

March 31, 2023

# Management Discussion of Fund Performance

This management discussion of fund performance represents the portfolio management team's view of the significant factors and developments affecting the fund's performance and outlook.

#### **Results of Operations**

AGF Global Dividend Strategic Equity Fund (the "Fund") commenced operations in February 2023.

The Fund holds Series O Units of mutual funds managed by AGF Investments Inc. ("AGFI") (the "Underlying Funds"). The Fund's major portfolio categories, as a percentage of Net Asset Value as at March 31, 2023, include approximately 95.0% in global equity via its holdings in the Underlying Funds and exchange traded funds ("ETFs"), 8.0% in cash and cash equivalents and 3.0% in other net liabilities.

#### **Recent Developments**

Equities rallied strongly during the last calendar quarter of 2022 as major announcements around the globe spurred a move higher in equity markets. Despite the strong fourth quarter performance, 2022 was still the worst calendar year for equities since the Global Financial Crisis. As Russia's invasion of Ukraine passed the one-year mark, NATO member nations pledged their unwavering support to Ukraine to continue the fight against the Kremlin. The monetary tightening cycle by the U.S. Federal Reserve (the "Fed") and the European Central Bank ("ECB") continued through the period, albeit at a slower pace, in an effort to balance growth with persistent inflation.

The U.S. economy had a solid start to the final calendar quarter of 2022. The economy grew at an annualized 2.6% quarter over quarter, in continuation with the strong rebound in economic activity during the third calendar quarter. New additions to the labour market continued to largely beat expectations through the period. However, this became a concern for the Fed as it signaled that inflationary pressures could continue despite their aggressive tightening measures to date. Encouragingly, U.S. inflation including headline, core and the Fed's preferred measure, the U.S. Personal Consumption Expenditure Core Price Index, fell to their lowest levels since 2021. To quell inflationary pressures, the Fed raised interest rates four times throughout the reporting period to end the period at a target range of 4.75% to 5.00%. In March 2023, alongside a 0.25% interest rate hike, the Fed also confirmed that it would continue to allow up to US\$60 billion in treasury securities and US\$35 billion in agency mortgage-backed securities to mature and roll off its more than US\$8.5 trillion balance sheet every month.

U.S. equities rallied during the last calendar guarter of 2022 and the better part of the first calendar guarter of 2023. Investor sentiment grew stronger as industrial activity improved and jobless claims fell to their lowest point since April 2022. However, markets sold off in February 2023 due to better-than-expected U.S. data, which caused investors to price in higher Fed policy rates, pushing the 2-year U.S. treasury yield to the highest level since 2007. The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank, Signature Bank and Credit Suisse in March 2023 caused panic and significant volatility in financial markets as contagion risk soared. Encouragingly, policymakers, the biggest U.S. banks and UBS were swift to rescue the failed banks and backstop the financial system. Short-term yields fell significantly as the financial shock caused investors to reassess their expectations of how aggressive the Fed would be in hiking rates.

European equities rallied strongly during the reporting period as the rate of inflation started to recede. Performance was supported by stronger-than-expected economic data, lower gas prices and a greater bias to China where sentiment improved dramatically, as policymakers eased its zero-COVID policy earlier than the market had expected. Earlier in the year and particularly in the third calendar quarter of 2022, the market became concerned about the prospects of a deep recession in the region as a result of the energy crisis. Milder weather, government subsidies and a stronger euro, vis-à-vis a weaker U.S. dollar, helped reduce price pressures in Europe, particularly commodity prices which are priced in U.S. dollars.

Emerging markets equities modesty under-performed developed markets equities in the last calendar quarter of 2022, despite the strongest quarter for emerging markets equities in two years. Several emerging markets central banks hiked rates, including India, Taiwan, Mexico, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Peru, Colombia, Chile, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. While performance in Asia was initially weighed down by weak performance in China in October 2022 following the conclusion of the 20th Communist Party Congress, China's performance in November was the strongest in two decades following the country's dramatic shift on easing its zero-COVID restrictions earlier than the market had expected. South Korea performed strongly during the fourth calendar quarter of 2022, along with other Asian economies on the back of optimism about China's reopening. Countries in the Middle East, which had out-performed in the first three calendar quarters of 2022, under-performed during the reporting period due to falling energy prices. The Latin American region also under-performed during the reporting period, weighed down by Brazil.

This interim management report of fund performance contains financial highlights, but does not contain either the interim or annual financial statements of the investment fund. You can get a copy of the interim or annual financial statements at your request, and at no cost, by calling 1888 226-2024, by writing to us at AGF Investments Inc., CIBC SQUARE, Tower One, 81 Bay Street, Suite 4000, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5J 0G1, or by visiting our website at www.AGF.com or SEDAR at www.sedar.com.

Securityholders may also contact us using one of these methods to request a copy of the investment fund's proxy voting policies and procedures, proxy voting disclosure record, or quarterly portfolio disclosure.

The portfolio manager maintains a positive view for equities and anticipates uncertainty to remain elevated. The portfolio manager expects that core inflation will remain more persistent, leading to higher bond yields for a longer period than markets expect.

While the end of the U.S. rate hiking cycle may be close, the portfolio manager anticipates a U.S. recession towards the end of 2023 or early 2024, owing to the delayed impact of higher policy rates and tightening credit conditions on households and businesses.

Importantly, as long as central banks maintain a tightening monetary stance and the yield curve remains inverted, companies will continue to face obstacles akin to historical tightening cycles.

Positively, the Eurozone still has room for further industrial production growth, which could imply the potential for a continued surprise in manufacturing strength. The ECB will continue to monitor signs of inflationary pressures and tighten policy as necessary as inflation could remain sticky. The sanctions placed on Russia remain a material risk for the outlook, particularly for Europe, due to the potential for higher energy prices, ongoing energy shortages and tighter monetary policy.

While the U.S. and Europe already went through a recovery phase, rising inflation, monetary tightening and a subsequent growth slowdown, Japan, like China, is just at the beginning of that phase. While Japan has nearly fully reopened its economy, the government announced it would downgrade its classification of COVID-19 under the Infectious Diseases Law from Class 2 to Class 5 effective May 8. This should provide a boost to economic growth, particularly in services demand. Inbound consumption may also recover sharply as restrictions on the entry of foreigners are likely to be eased around the same time.

The portfolio manager believes that Asia's economies and financial markets will continue to benefit from China's reopening and further stimulus measures despite the potential for geopolitical tensions with the U.S. The replacement of expectations of higher Fed rate hikes with expectations of lower U.S. growth is relatively more advantageous for non-U.S. economies and equity markets, particularly those in Asia. This reinforces the portfolio manager's positive outlook for equity markets in the region.

The portfolio manager continues to focus on quality companies with solid balance sheets and strong management teams with a track record of navigating through challenging environments, often making investments and taking market share during times of weakness. Importantly, the Fund remains well-diversified across and within countries and sectors, which the portfolio manager believes is essential during times of heightened uncertainty and increased volatility.

#### **Related Party Transactions**

AGFI is the manager ("Manager") and trustee of the Fund. Pursuant to the management agreement between the Fund and AGFI, AGFI is responsible for the day-to-day business of the Fund. AGFI also acts as the investment (portfolio) manager of the Fund, providing analysis and making decisions as to which Underlying Funds and ETFs the Fund invests in and the target weighting of the Fund's assets. Fees payable to AGFI for such services are payable directly by unitholders and are not expenses of the Fund.

AGFI pays for all of the operating expenses relating to the operation of the Fund, except for certain costs as disclosed in the current prospectus, in exchange for a fixed rate administration fee. The administration fee is calculated based on the Net Asset Value of the Fund at a fixed annual rate of 0.32%. Administration fees of approximately \$400 were incurred by the Fund during the period from commencement of operations to March 31, 2023.

AGFI is an indirect wholly-owned subsidiary of AGF Management Limited.

#### **Caution Regarding Forward-looking Statements**

This report may contain forward-looking statements about the Fund, including its strategy, expected performance and condition. Forward looking statements include statements that are predictive in nature, that depend upon or refer to future events or conditions, or that include words such as "expects", "anticipates", "intends", "plans", "believes", "estimates" or negative versions thereof and similar expressions.

In addition, any statement that may be made concerning future performance, strategies or prospects, and possible future Fund action, is also a forward-looking statement. Forward-looking statements are based on current expectations and projections about future events and are inherently subject to, among other things, risks, uncertainties and assumptions about the Fund and economic factors.

The forward-looking statements are by their nature based on numerous assumptions, which include, amongst other things, that (i) the Fund can attract and maintain investors and has sufficient capital under management to effect its investment strategies, (ii) the investment strategies will produce the results intended by the portfolio manager, and (iii) the markets will react and perform in a manner consistent with the investment strategies. Although the forward-looking statements contained herein are based upon what the portfolio manager believes to be reasonable assumptions, the portfolio manager cannot assure that actual results will be consistent with these forward-looking statements.

Forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance, and actual events and results could differ materially from those expressed or implied in any forward-looking statements made by the Fund. Any number of important factors could contribute to these digressions, including, but not limited to, general economic, political and market factors in North America and internationally, interest and foreign exchange rates, global equity and capital

markets, business competition, taxation, changes in government regulations, unexpected judicial or regulatory proceedings, technological changes, cybersecurity, the possible effects of war or terrorist activities, outbreaks of disease or illness that affect local, national or international economies (such as COVID-19), natural disasters and disruptions to public infrastructure, such as transportation, communications, power or water supply or other catastrophic events.

It should be stressed that the above-mentioned list of factors is not exhaustive. You are encouraged to consider these and other factors carefully before making any investment decisions and you are urged to avoid placing undue reliance on forward-looking statements. Further, you should be aware of the fact that the Fund has no specific intention of updating any forward-looking statements whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise, prior to the release of the next Management Report of Fund Performance.

### Financial Highlights

The following tables show selected key financial information about the Fund and are intended to help you understand the Fund's financial performance for the six months ended March 31, 2023 and the past five years as applicable.

#### Net Assets per Unit<sup>(1)</sup>

For the periods ended	Mar 31, 2023 (\$)	Sept 30, 2022 (\$)	Sept 30, 2021 (\$)	Sept 30, 2020 (\$)	Sept 30, 2019 (\$)	Sept 30, 2018 (\$)
Net Assets, beginning of period <sup>(1)</sup>	25.00*	-	-	-	-	-
Increase (decrease) from operation						
Total revenue	0.00	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenses	(0.01)	-	-	-	-	-
Realized gains (losses)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unrealized gains (losses)	0.34	-	-	-	-	-
Total increase (decrease) from						
operations <sup>(2)</sup>	0.33	_	_	_	_	_
Distributions:						
From income (excluding dividends)	-	-	-	-	-	-
From dividends	-	-	-	-	-	-
From capital gains	-	-	-	-	-	-
Return of capital	_	_	_	_	_	
Total annual distributions(3)	_	_	_	_	_	_
Net Assets, end of period <sup>(4)</sup>	24.86	_	_	_	_	_

#### Ratios/Supplemental Data<sup>(1)</sup>

For the periods ended	Mar 31, 2023	Sept 30, 2022	Sept 30, 2021	Sept 30, 2020	Sept 30, 2019	Sept 30, 2018
Total Net Asset Value (\$000's)	2,487	-	-	-	-	-
Number of units outstanding (000's)	100	-	-	-	-	-
Management expense ratio <sup>(5)</sup>	0.35%	-	-	-	-	-
Management expense ratio before waivers						
or absorptions	0.35%	_	_	_	_	_
Trading expense ratio <sup>(6)</sup>	0.04%	_	_	_	_	_
Portfolio turnover rate <sup>(7)</sup>	0.00%	_	_	_	_	_
Net Asset Value per unit	24.86	-	-	-	-	-

#### **Explanatory Notes**

- (1) a) This information is derived from the Fund's audited annual financial statements and unaudited interim financial statements. Under International Financial Reporting Standards ("IFRS"), investments that are traded in an active market are generally valued at closing price, which is determined to be within the bidask spread and most representative of fair value. As a result, there is no difference between the net assets per unit presented in the financial statements ("Net Assets") and the net asset value per unit calculated for fund pricing purposes ("Net Asset Value").
  - b) The Fund commenced operations in February 2023, which represents the date upon which securities were first made available for purchase by investors.
- (2) Net Assets and distributions are based on the actual number of units outstanding at the relevant time. The increase/decrease from operations is based on the weighted average number of units outstanding over the financial period.
- (3) Distributions were paid in cash/reinvested in additional units of the Fund, or both. The characterization of the distributions is based on management's estimate of the actual income for the year.
- (4) This is not a reconciliation of the beginning and ending Net Assets per unit.
- (5) The management expense ratio ("MER") is calculated in accordance with National Instrument 81-106, based on all the expenses of the Fund (including Harmonized Sales Tax, Goods and Services Tax and interest, but excluding foreign withholding taxes, commissions and other portfolio transaction costs) and the Fund's proportionate share of the MER, if applicable, of the underlying funds and ETFs in which the Fund has invested, expressed as an annualized percentage of average daily Net Asset Value during the period.
- (6) The trading expense ratio represents total commissions and other portfolio transaction costs, including the Fund's proportionate share of the commissions, if applicable, of the underlying funds and ETFs in which the Fund has invested, expressed as an annualized percentage of average daily Net Asset Value during the period.
- (7) The Fund's portfolio turnover rate ("PTR") indicates how actively the Fund's portfolio advisor manages its portfolio investments. A PTR of 100% is equivalent to the Fund buying and selling all of the securities in its portfolio once in the course of the year. The higher a fund's PTR in a year, the greater the trading costs payable by the fund in the year, and the greater the chance of an investor receiving taxable capital gains in the year. There is not necessarily a relationship between a high turnover rate and the performance of a fund.

PTR is calculated based on the lesser of the cumulative cost of purchases or cumulative proceeds of sales divided by the average market value of the portfolio, excluding short-term investments.

<sup>\*</sup> represents initial Net Assets (1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6) and (7) see Explanatory Notes

### **Management Fees**

The Fund is managed by AGFI. AGFI is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Fund, which include providing investment and management services as well as other administrative services required by the Fund. The management fees for such services are payable directly by the unitholders, not by the Fund.

AGFI bears all operating expenses relating to the operation of the Fund, except for certain costs as disclosed in the Fund's prospectus. In exchange, AGFI receives an administration fee at the annual rate of 0.32%, which is subject to applicable taxes, based on the Net Asset Value of the Fund, calculated daily and payable monthly.

#### **Past Performance**

It is AGFI's policy to report rates of return for a fund in existence greater than one year. The Fund commenced operations in February 2023.

## Summary of Investment Portfolio As at March 31, 2023

The major portfolio categories and top holdings (up to 25) of the Fund at the end of the period are indicated in the following tables. The Summary of Investment Portfolio may change due to ongoing portfolio transactions of the Fund and the next quarterly update will be in the Quarterly Portfolio Disclosure as at June 30, 2023.

The prospectus and other information about the underlying investment funds and ETFs are available on the internet at www.sedar.com.

Portfolio by Sector	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
Equity Funds	93.0
Cash & Cash Equivalents	7.7
ETFs – International Equity	2.0
Other Net Assets (Liabilities)	(2.7)

Top Holdings	Percentage of Net Asset Value (%)
AGF Global Dividend Fund	93.0
Cash & Cash Equivalents	7.7
AGF Systematic Emerging Markets Equity ETF	2.0
Total Net Asset Value (thousands of dollars)	\$ 2,487



For more information contact your investment advisor or:

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