

Third Quarter 2017

# Quarterly Commentary

Ticker	Inv Manager or Sub-Advisor	Benchmark	Morningstar Category	Investment Objective
PRWLX	Principal Global Investors	MSCI ACWI Ex USA Index	Foreign Large Blend	Foreign Stock

## Economic Overview

The global economic recovery that began in early 2016 appears to have reached self-sustaining velocity. The consensus now recognizes the evidence: strong industrial production, robust growth, and improved capital spending. Plus, business and consumer confidence is surging to high or record levels. Bank indices had better returns than the overall market. Mildly rising interest rates also suggest that investors appreciate some of the more recent worries (i.e., risks of deflation, political turmoil in Europe, or a China hard landing) have fallen significantly.

Economic sentiment in the Eurozone is within a whisker of a 17-year high. Confidence improved in every sector and country. Even Italian CEOs have the most optimistic outlook in a decade. The final survey of manufacturing purchasing managers was the highest in over six and a half years. The flash composite of service and manufacturing indices rose. Private demand is driving growth in both consumer spending and investment. In September, inflation stayed modest. Unemployment is falling and job gains are healthy. The 5.6% jobless rate in Germany is the lowest it's been since reunification in the early 1990s. Even Brexit fears can't keep the UK economy from expanding, or household spending from growing. Purchasing manager indices from the National Bureau of Statistics suggest that both manufacturing and service businesses are improving in China. The private-sector gauge from Caixin/Markit slipped a bit, but still shows growth. The People's Bank of China revealed a targeted cut in required reserves for banks that increase lending to small and very small enterprises, so while fiscal stimulus has faded some, there will be plenty of liquidity. Growth is not accelerating, but no near-term hard landing seems anywhere in sight. The U.S. economy has been strong and steady. Real economic growth averaged 2.2%, matching the rate over the entire expansion. Confidence is high, job growth is robust, and inflation is subdued. Profit growth is rebounding, and capital spending is picking up. We expect third-quarter growth to be cut a few tenths by the tragedies that came with Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. Rebuilding efforts could add a bit to growth in following quarters.

As the synchronized global economic expansion continues robust and unabated, central banks are re-evaluating the extraordinary policies put in place after the financial crisis. Robust world growth, higher oil prices, and rising investor confidence in the self-sustaining expansion, pushed government bond yields higher, reversing their July-August dip.

## International Equity

Global equity had robust and broad-based gains during the third quarter of 2017, in a continuation of favorable market conditions for the year to date. For another consecutive quarter, the market advance was led by emerging markets and international shares. The synchronized global expansion remained on track. Despite a reversal in September, the U.S. dollar weakened, while industrial commodity prices firmed, both consistent with signs of improving global growth trends. After a prolonged period of returns being driven by multiple rerating in recent years, 2017 has been defined by margin expansion and earnings growth. Corporate profits have returned to health with modest but meaningful top line growth and further extension of cost controls and capital redeployment. Much of the market action during the quarter conveyed a "risk-on" sentiment with sector leadership having a cyclical tilt. The S&P 500 advanced 4.5%, the MSCI EAFE index return posted a 5.5% return, while the MSCI Emerging Markets Index notched another sharp advance of 8.0%, in U.S. dollar terms.<sup>1</sup>

## Performance Contributors

### Positive Contributors

#### During last quarter:

Stock selection in the consumer discretionary sector contributed, driven by overweight to TAL Education Group, a leading K-12 after-school tutoring services provider in China that is well positioned to benefit from the growing K-12 tutoring market. Stock selection in the financials sector contributed, driven by overweight in Sberbank, Russia's largest bank. Stock selection in the healthcare sector contributed, driven by an overweight to Lonza Group AG., one of the world's leading custom contract manufacturers of biotech drugs, as well as a leading provider of chemical ingredients for antimicrobial, agrochemical, sanitation, nutrition, and personal care products based in Switzerland. Stock selection in Brazil contributed, led by an overweight position in Banco do Brasil. Stock selection in Japan contributed, led by overweight to in Ulvac, Inc., Japan's largest supplier of flat panel display production equipment, leading supplier of physical vapor deposition equipment, and a major vendor of plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition tools.

#### During last 12 months:

Stock selection in the healthcare sector contributed, led by overweight to Switzerland-based Lonza Group AG, which is one of the world's leading custom contract manufacturers of biotech drugs, as well as a leading provider of chemical ingredients for antimicrobial, agrochemical, sanitation, nutrition and personal care products. Stock selection in the information technology sector contributed, driven by overweight to Samsung Electronics, a Korean conglomerate with operations in mobile smartphones, memory, display screens, and consumer appliances. Stock selection in the consumer discretionary sector contributed, driven by overweight to TAL Education Group, which is a leading China-based education service provider focusing on the preparation of foreign language testing and K-12 tutoring segments.

### Negative Contributors

#### During last quarter:

Stock selection in the materials sector detracted, led by lack of allocation to Glencore plc. Stock selection in the energy sector detracted, led by lack of allocation to Royal Dutch Shell Plc. Stock selection in Spain detracted, led by an overweight position to Aena SME SA, which is engaged in airport operations. Stock selection in Finland detracted, led by overweight to pharma company Orion Oyj. Stock selection in the telecommunication services sector detracted, led by overweight to Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation (NTT).

#### During last 12 months:

Stock selection in Canada detracted, led by overweight to Alimentation Couche-Tard Inc., a leading global convenience store operator with a network of nearly 15,000 stores, 10,000 of which are located in North America and Europe. Stock selection in the telecommunication services sector detracted, led by an overweight to NTT DoCoMo, Inc., Japan's largest mobile provider, serving 60m subscribers via their 3G and LTE networks. Stock selection in the United Kingdom detracted, led by overweight to Shire Plc., a leading global pharmaceutical company, based in the UK, with strong market positions in attention deficit disorder (ADHD), gastroenterology and rare genetic diseases.

#### Changes to the investment option's structure or portfolio:

No material changes occurred in the portfolio structure.

# Diversified International Fund (A)

## Performance

*Investment results shown represent historical performance and do not guarantee future results. Investment returns and principal values fluctuate with changes in interest rates and other market conditions so the value, when redeemed may be worth more or less than original costs. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance data shown. The gross fund expense figure does not reflect any waivers or caps on the mutual fund. Performance shown reflects the application of net expenses of the fund. For more performance information, including most recent month-end performance, visit [principalfunds.com](http://principalfunds.com), or contact your financial representative of The Principal.*

*In situations where the net and gross fund expense figures are different, the investment manager has contractually agreed to limit the investment option's expense. Differences may also be shown due to the investment manager choosing to pay certain expenses that would normally be payable by the fund. The gross fund expense figure does not reflect any waivers or caps on the mutual fund. Performance shown reflects the application of net expenses of the fund.*

Average Annual Total Returns (%) as of 09/30/2017	QTR	YTD	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	Since Inception	Inception Date	06/28/2005
Diversified International Fund (A) (excl. sales charge)	7.83	24.39	19.77	5.98	8.30	0.87	4.42	Ext. Perf. Inc. Date	12/06/2000
Diversified International Fund (A) (incl. sales charge)	1.92	17.59	13.15	4.02	7.08	0.30	4.07	Total Inv. Exp Gross	1.36
MSCI ACWI Ex USA Index	6.16	21.13	19.61	4.70	6.97	1.28	-	Total Inv Exp Net	1.36
Foreign Large Blend Category	5.34	20.33	18.01	5.07	7.74	1.22	-	Waiver Date	-
Morningstar Percentile Ranking	-	-	28	29	35	60	-	Contractual Cap Date	-
Total Funds in Category	802	765	736	598	533	344	-	Contingent Deferred Sales Charge	1.00
								Maximum Up-front Sales Charge	5.50

**Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** Market indices have been provided for comparison purposes only. They are unmanaged and do not reflect fees or expenses. Individuals cannot invest directly in an index.

These calculated returns reflect the historical performance of the oldest share class of the fund, adjusted to reflect a portion of the fees and expenses of this share class. For time periods prior to inception date of the fund, predecessor performance is reflected. Please see the fund's prospectus for more information on specific expenses, and the fund's most recent shareholder report for actual date of first sale. Expenses are deducted from income earned by the fund. As a result, dividends and investment results will differ for each share class.

## Diversified International Fund (A)

### Statistics Summary as of 09/30/2017

	Risk and Return Statistics Summary						Upside/Downside Capture Ratio					
	Alpha	Beta	R2	Sharpe Ratio	Info Ratio	Std Dev	# of Months		Avg Returns %		Benchmark %	
							Up	Down	Up	Down	Up	Down
	3 Year						3 Year					
Diversified International Fund (A)	1.87	0.83	91.81	0.57	0.35	10.66	23	13	2.78	-1.98	90.73	79.80
MSCI ACWI Ex USA Index	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	19	17	3.06	-2.48	100.00	100.00
	5 Year						5 Year					
Diversified International Fund (A)	1.94	0.89	90.75	0.77	0.38	10.79	38	22	2.70	-2.26	98.35	87.99
MSCI ACWI Ex USA Index	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	36	24	2.74	-2.57	100.00	100.00

Risk and return statistical data is calculated by Morningstar, Inc. Please see Important Notes section for definitions of Risk and Return Statistics.

### Top Ten Holdings as of 08/31/2017

Security	Net Assets (%)
Tencent Holdings Ltd	1.86
Samsung Electronics Co Ltd	1.80
Nestle SA	1.65
Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co Ltd	1.53
Alibaba Group Holding Ltd ADR	1.45
Roche Holding AG Dividend Right Cert.	1.32
LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE	1.28
Unilever NV DR	1.24
ING Groep NV	1.10
Lonza Group Ltd	1.08
<b>Total % in Top 10</b>	<b>14.30</b>

## Diversified International Fund (A)

Manager(s)	Start Date	Degree	Alma Mater
Paul H. Blankenhagen	12/22/2003	M.B.A.	Drake University
Juliet Cohn	06/14/2004	B.A.	Trinity College

### Fund Strategy

The investment seeks long-term growth of capital. The fund invests primarily in foreign equity securities. It has no limitation on the percentage of assets that are invested in any one country or denominated in any one currency, but the fund typically invests in foreign securities of at least 20 countries. The fund invests in equity securities regardless of market capitalization size (small, medium or large) and style (growth or value).

### About Principal Global Investors

Principal Global Investors - a member of the Principal Financial Group® - uses a unified investment philosophy and process that emphasize independent fundamental research and superior stock selection. The firm's capabilities encompass large-, mid-, and small-cap stocks in developed and emerging markets worldwide.

## Important Notes

**Investors should carefully consider a fund's investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses prior to investing. A prospectus, or summary prospectus if available, containing this and other information can be obtained by contacting a financial professional, visiting [principalfunds.com](http://principalfunds.com), or calling 800-222-5852. Read the prospectus carefully before investing.**

The value of the investment options will fluctuate so that when redeemed, shares or units may be worth more or less than the original cost.

Returns shown for periods of less than one year are not annualized. All returns displayed here are after Total Investment Expense of the investment option. Any operating expenses of a mutual fund or underlying mutual fund that are part of net Total Investment Expense are obtained from the mutual fund's most recent prospectus. The operating expenses shown as part of the Total Investment Expense include voluntary expense limits and fee credit.

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These calculated returns reflect the historical performance of the oldest share class of the fund, adjusted to reflect a portion of the fees and expenses of this share class. For time periods prior to inception date of the fund, predecessor performance is reflected. Please see the fund's prospectus for more information on specific expenses, and the fund's most recent shareholder report for actual date of first sale. Expenses are deducted from income earned by the fund. As a result, dividends and investment results will differ for each share class.

International and global investment options are subject to additional risk due to fluctuating exchange rates, foreign accounting and financial policies, and other economic and political environments.

MSCI ACWI Ex USA Index is a free float-adjusted market capitalization index that is designed to measure the combined equity market performance of developed and emerging market countries excluding the US.

Extended Performance Inception Date (Ext. Perf. Inc. Date) - Inception date of the oldest share class of the fund, or underlying fund of the Separate Account.

### About Principal Financial Group



The Principal Financial Group® (The Principal®) is a leading global financial company offering businesses, individuals and institutional clients a wide range of financial products and services. Our range of products and services includes retirement solutions, life and health insurance, wellness programs, and investment and banking products through our diverse family of financial services companies and national network of financial professionals.

## Important Notes

### **Risk and Return Statistics:**

**Alpha** - The difference between an investment's actual returns and its expected performance, given its level of risk (as measured by beta).

**Beta** - An investment's sensitivity to market movements.

**R-squared** - Ranges from 0 to 100 and reveals how closely an investment's returns track those of a benchmark index.

**Standard Deviation** - Measures how much an investment's returns are likely to fluctuate.

**Sharpe Ratio** - Measures how an investment balances risks and rewards. The higher the Sharpe ratio, the better the investment's historical risk-adjusted performance.

**Information Ratio** - A risk-adjusted measure commonly used to evaluate an active manager's involvement skill. It's defined as the manager's excess return divided by the variability or standard deviation of the excess return.

**Up-Market Capture Ratio** - A statistical measure of an investment option's performance relative to a comparative index in months in which that index has risen. An up-market capture ratio of greater than 100 would indicate that the investment option performed better than the comparative index during months in which the index had risen over a specified time period.

**Down-Market Capture Ratio** - A statistical measure of an investment option's performance relative to a comparative index in months in which that index has fallen. A down-market capture ratio of greater than 100 would indicate that the investment option performed worse than the comparative index during months in which the index had fallen over a specified time period.

\*Unless otherwise stated, all data from Bloomberg

<sup>1</sup>International developed markets: MSCI EAFE Index; broad U.S. market: Russell 3000 Index; international emerging markets: MSCI Emerging Markets Index

This report is not complete unless all pages, as noted below, are included.

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