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World Bank Vice President for Europe and Central Asia Ms. Laura Tuck visited the Republic of Belarus on September 15-17, 2014 to discuss the implementation progress under the World Bank Group Country Partnership Strategy for Belarus and to exchange views on key priorities emerging in the country's long-term structural transformation agenda. She was accompanied by World Bank Country Director for Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine Mr. Qimiao Fan. During the visit, Ms. Tuck and her team held meetings with His Excellency Alexander G. Lukashenko, President of the Republic of Belarus, His Excellency Mikhail V. Myasnikovich, the Prime Minister, and other senior officials. Belarusian authorities confirmed their interest in expanding cooperation with the World Bank and getting technical assistance in developing a long-term structural transformation strategy. Ms. Tuck also met with representatives of the business community, civil society and development partners, and visited local enterprises that embody Belarus engineering and manufacturing capacity. Belarus has achieved significant development outcomes, some of which I saw during my visit. It was also clear that Belarus has the potential to become a prosperous and competitive economy. To realize this potential, however, the current economic structure needs consistent and comprehensive reforms, said Ms. Tuck. "We see a role for the Bank in advising the authorities and sharing international experience that can inform the design and implementation of policies for structural change, including on reforms in the SOE sector, creating a more dynamic private sector, and strengthening institutions that can support innovation and competition. Ms. Tuck visited the Republican Forest Seed Breeding Center, established under the Forestry Development Project financed by the World Bank in late 1990s. While in Belarus, Ms. Tuck will also travel to Gomel taking a road rehabilitated under the Road Upgrading and Modernization Project supported by the World Bank. This is the first official visit to the Republic of Belarus for Ms. Tuck since she became Vice President for Europe and Central Asia in September 2013. She is responsible for leading the Bank's development program in the Europe and Central Asia region, which includes 31 countries. Since the Republic of Belarus joined the World Bank in 1992, lending commitments to the country have totaled US\$1.14 billion. In addition, grant financing totaling US\$25 million has been provided to programs, including those with civil society organizations. The current investment lending portfolio includes five operations for a total amount of US\$648 million. The World Bank
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