



World Bank Vice President for Africa to Visit Gabon for Development Talks

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The World Bank Vice President for the Africa Region, Mr. Makhtar Diop, will arrive in Libreville on Sunday, May 12 for a one-day working visit. He will meet with Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba, Prime Minister Raymond Ndong Sima, government officials, and technical and financial partners during his visit. Mr. Diop will discuss the development challenges facing Gabon and see first-hand how the World Bank can step-up its development program in the middle-income country to better help its poor and vulnerable families escape poverty and pursue lives with better health, education, and more opportunity. "The visit by Vice President Makhtar Diop to Gabon will signal the importance attached by the World Bank to the country and strengthen high-level dialogue between the Bank and the Republic of Gabon. This visit will allow him to discuss the paradox faced by resource-rich African countries where high levels of poverty nonetheless persist. He will also discuss assistance currently being provided and ask how the World Bank's development strategy for Gabon and Central Africa can better help people and their families, stated Zouera Youssoufou, World Bank Country Manager for Gabon. Ms. Youssoufou indicated that Mr. Diop's visit coincides with the implementation of a significant US\$58 million telecommunications project. This will be the first loan agreement concluded between the World Bank and Gabon in seven years. In addition, the World Bank and the Republic of Gabon concluded a technical assistance agreement on January 30, 2012 in the amount of US\$2 million, which will allow the Central African country to better manage its public spending and identify potential sources of growth. The World Bank is one of Gabon's leading development partners. A new 2012-2016 strategic partnership agreed upon by the World Bank and Gabon consists of a US\$300 million portfolio and covers telecommunications, energy, institutional reforms, and economic diversification. The World Bank
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