

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# **The World Bank**

European Office: 66, avenue d'Iéna, 75116 Paris, France



Contacts: Raymond Toye - (33 1) 40 69 30 28

## **WORLD BANK HOSTS PRELIMINARY MEETING ON THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

At the request of the new government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the World Bank chaired a preliminary meeting of governments and organisations interested in resuming or augmenting their development assistance to the country when possible. The meeting took place in Paris on September 5 and was attended by representatives of the governments of Belgium, Canada; France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, as well as the European Union (Presidency and Commission), the African Development Bank, IMF and UNDP. Representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo attended as observers.

The main purpose of this meeting was to prepare for more substantive discussion of the country's development strategy and priorities. The meeting enabled the delegations to exchange views on their assessment of recent developments, constraints that they see, and possible options for the Friends of Congo to act together to assist Congo. There was a general review of recent developments in the assistance was most urgent and would be most productive. The participants emphasised the need to rebuild the country's capacity for formulation and implementing appropriate development programs, as well as addressing its external debt and arrears situation; to improve the coordination of actions within Government; and strengthen its collaboration with civil society. The participants also stressed that progress in the field of human rights and especially on the UN investigations into allegations of human rights abuses as well as progress in democratization is a central cooperation and economic and financial programs. The participants also made reference to the importance of good governance and the rule of law.

The next meeting could take place hopefully in the second half of October 1997. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, in close collaboration with the African Development Bank and the UNDP will assist the Government in preparing for that meeting.