



PRESS RELEASE

**PARIS CLUB AGREES ON THE PRINCIPLE OF AN EARLY REPAYMENT
OF ITS DEBT OFFERED BY GABON**

The representatives of the Paris Club creditor countries and of the Government of the Gabonese Republic met in Paris on 18 July 2007 in order to examine the offer of the Government of Gabon to make an early repayment of its debt not granted under Official Development Assistance rescheduled by the Paris Club in 1994, 1995, 2000 and 2004.

Paris Club creditors accepted the principle of a buyback by Gabon of its debt at market value. According to Paris Club rules, each creditor country may decide to participate or not in this early repayment operation. Several creditors have already announced their intention to participate in this operation.

The face value of Gabon's Paris Club debt amounts to around US\$ 2.334 billion as of 1st July 2007. For creditors willing to participate, the early repayment will take place between 2 December 2007 and 30 January 2008, after the conclusion of bilateral implementation agreements.

This early repayment operation is part of the policy of reforms initiated by the Government of the Gabonese Republic. This policy also recently led to the conclusion of a stand-by arrangement with the International Monetary Fund. It will allow Gabon to reduce its exposure to potential external shocks.

Background notes

1. The Paris Club was formed in 1956. It is an informal group of creditor governments from major industrialized countries. It meets on a monthly basis in Paris with debtor countries in order to agree with them on restructuring their debts.

2. The members of the Paris Club who are creditors of the Gabonese Republic are Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

3. The delegation of the Gabonese Republic was headed by Mr Paul TOUNGUI, State Minister, Minister of Economy, Finance, Budget and Privatisation. The meeting was chaired by Mr Xavier MUSCA, Chairman of the Paris Club, Head of the Treasury and Economic Policy Department of the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Employment.

Technical note

The Gabonese Republic's debt not granted under Official Development Assistance owed to Paris Club creditors eligible for the early repayment operation amounts to around US\$ 2.182 billion (in face value, after payment of the 30 September 2007 and 1st December 2007 instalments), to be paid up to 2019.