Executive Directors considered the President’s Memorandum and Recommendation and approved an IDA grant in the amount of SDR50.2 million (US$77 million equivalent) (IDA/R2013-0287) to the Democratic Republic of Congo for a Public Service Reform and Rejuvenation Project under the payment terms and conditions set out therein.

The Directors welcomed the Bank’s support for government efforts to create an effective and functioning public administration needed as a foundation for sustained growth, poverty reduction and shared prosperity in DRC. Directors highlighted that the project would be key to implementing the strategic objectives of increasing state effectiveness and improving good governance, as defined in the recently endorsed World Bank Group’s Country Assistance Strategy for FY2013-2016.

Directors underscored the challenges related to the country’s fragile environment, and the dynamic national and regional situation. They noted that this requires a gradual incremental approach, with flexibility and adaptability in the design and implementation of the project. Directors also noted the risks inherent in this operation, including risks related to the payment of retirement benefits, and urged the authorities and the Bank to prioritize fiduciary oversight across all of the project’s components. In this regard, they highlighted the importance of strong governance and sequencing of reform efforts.

Directors also noted that the achievement of the project’s development objectives requires sustained political leadership as well as long-term financial commitments to ensure that adequate resources are made available for the implementation of the subsequent phases of the public service reform program. Directors noted that retaining a cohort of talented young professionals into the public administration remains a serious challenge, and recommended that the government and the Bank capitalize on lessons learned from other countries and adopt innovative solutions to mitigate the risk of ‘brain drain’.

Finally, Directors underscored the need for continued close collaboration among development partners and emphasized the need for strong coordinated supervision during project implementation.

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*This summary is not an approved record.*