

**Burkina Faso and Republic of Côte d'Ivoire****First Regional Trade Facilitation and Competitiveness Development Policy Operation****Chair Summary\*****June 16, 2015**

Executive Directors considered the President's Memorandum and Recommendation and approved the First Regional Trade Facilitation and Competitiveness Development Policy Operation (DPO) (IDA/R2015-0135) for Burkina Faso and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, with credits of EUR44.7 million (SDR 35.6 million equivalent) for each country.

Directors strongly supported the countries' coordinated efforts to reduce trade and transport transaction costs along the Abidjan-Ouagadougou corridor, an important complement to IDA projects that facilitate trade and reduce transport costs in the Tema-Ouagadougou-Bamako and Abidjan-Lagos corridors. Directors noted the potential to extend this operation to other countries and to develop regional DPOs as an instrument to address policy issues and competitiveness in a regional context. They commented on the DPO's alignment with ECOWAS initiatives including transit, the customs union, and the common external tariff. Directors encouraged the World Bank Group to leverage the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of goods and persons through operations that support regional transformation.

Directors welcomed the innovative approach under this first World Bank-supported regional DPO, supporting reforms in more than one country through a Policy and Results Matrix, including joint prior actions to be met by both countries. The operation leverages the strong commitment of the Governments of Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire to cooperate on these issues. Directors noted the governments' actions to ensure macroeconomic stability and sustained growth, but recognized that poverty rates remain high in both countries. They emphasized the importance of poverty reduction, job creation, and ensuring gender equality and access. Directors underscored the need for a level playing field for transport operators, including opportunities for small and medium operators.

Directors highlighted the need for a robust technical assistance program to support implementation, the need to assess the political economy of reform and adequately mitigate the potential adverse social impacts of some measures, based on conclusions of the Poverty and Social Impact Analysis. They welcomed the assistance provided by partners such as the African Development Bank and the European Union. The complexity of the reforms and uncertainty surrounding the political dynamics in the two countries contribute to the risk of reform slippage. Directors emphasized the importance of close dialogue with the Burkinabe and Ivoirian authorities on reform implementation and efforts to ensure that stakeholders and the general public are aware of the planned reforms and their benefits. Directors emphasized monitoring progress and identifying lessons learned from this regional DPO, to identify the pre-conditions for other countries where this approach could be replicated.

---

\*This summary is not an approved record.