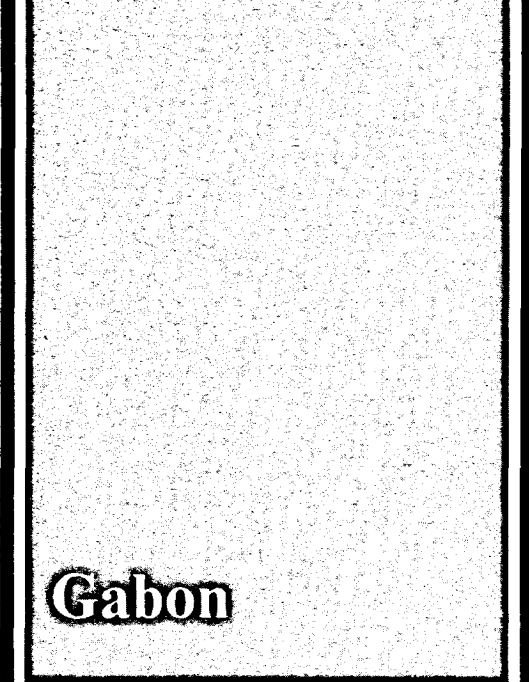




Gabon

Date of independence:	August 17, 1960
Capital:	Libreville
Population:	1,300,000 according to the Gabon government (1980). The World Bank estimates the population to be 800,000
President and Head of State:	His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo (1967)
Economy:	Mixed (member of OPEC)

Canada/Gabon Relations: Canada and Gabon have maintained diplomatic relations since 1963. Over the years, a number of official visits by ministers and heads of state have been made between the two countries. The co-operative program with Gabon is limited because of the country's economic status as a member of OPEC, but joint projects are greatly welcomed. Commercial relations between our two countries have become fairly extensive. Several Canadian firms are involved in large-scale projects; these are development-related or involve the construction of government buildings.

His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo: The President was born December 30, 1935 in Lewai. After serving in the armed forces, he entered the Department of Foreign Affairs (1960-62). He was made Assistant Director and then Chief of Staff of President Léon Mba (1962-65). He became Vice-President of the Republic on November 12, 1966 and President on November 28, 1967. President Bongo founded the Gabon Democratic Party (PDG) on March 12, 1968 and became its Secretary General. He has been President of the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) since January 1977.