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COMMUNIQUÉ AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE VISIT TO CANADA OF
MR. LOUIS-GASTON MAYILA, MINISTER AND
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE GABONESE REPUBLIC

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan, announced today that Mr. Louis-Gaston Mayila, Minister and Secretary General of the Government of the Gabonese Republic, visited Canada from October 20 to 31, 1980.

During his visit, Mr. Mayila had talks with various Canadian dignitaries, in particular the Right Honourable Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, to whom he delivered a personal message from El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic; the Honourable Pierre De Bané, Minister of Regional Economic Expansion; the Honourable Charles Lapointe, Minister of State for Small Business; and senior officials of the Department of External Affairs, the Privy Council Office, Treasury Board, the Department of Finance, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Export Development Corporation and the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. He also had private discussions with representatives of the World University Service of Canada.

The Honourable Pierre De Bané, on behalf of the Canadian Government, and Mr. Mayila, on behalf of the Gabonese Government, signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing a Canada-Gabon Bilateral Commission.

Mr. Mayila visited Toronto, where he met with businessmen and toured the de Havilland Aircraft of Canada plant, among others. In Montreal he had talks with His Worship the Mayor, Jean Drapeau. Mr. Mayila was received by the Montreal Chamber of Commerce, and he met businessmen involved in the energy, rail transport, technical training and pharmaceutical sectors.

He also went to James Bay and toured the site of the hydro-electric project there. In Quebec City, Mr. Mayila had discussions with Mr. Yves Bérubé, Minister of Energy and Resources, and with senior officials of the Department of Intergovernment Affairs, the INRS (Institut national des recherches scientifiques) and the SOQUIP (Société québécoise d'initiatives pétrolières).

Mr. Mayila's visit provided an opportunity for the two sides to acknowledge the particularly warm and friendly relations between Gabon and Canada. The talks were conducted in a cordial and co-operative spirit, underlining a similarity of views on a wide variety of subjects.

Mr. Mayila and the Head of the Canadian Government expressed satisfaction with the constructive development of our bilateral relations. On behalf of the President of the Gabonese Republic, Mr. Mayila paid tribute to the Canadian Government and people for their interest in Gabon.

The visit provided an opportunity for the two sides to discuss in depth a number of trade matters, in such fields as rural electrification, transportation and agriculture. The Export Development Corporation indicated its interest in considering medium and long-term credit facilities for funding projects of Canadian exporters who have identified spheres of action in which their expertise could be used in the development of Gabon. The possibility of providing a revolving line of credit to fund initiatives of small and medium-sized Gabonese businesses that wish to purchase equipment and machinery from Canada was also considered. In this connection, there will be a technical mission to Gabon from the Export Development Corporation in early 1981.

With regard to co-operation between the two countries, Canada announced its decision to encourage Canadian institutions to undertake development projects in Gabon, by means of a financial complement within the framework of institutional co-operation. In addition, within the framework of the Canadian International Development Agency's Industrial Co-operation Programme, a Canadian financial complement will be provided to Canadian businessmen who wish to locate in Gabon. In this context, the Canadian Government is also giving financial support to the World University Service of Canada in its efforts to recruit Canadian teachers. The Canadian authorities are also prepared to assist in the reorientation of the Middle School of Commerce in Port Gentil as well as in the Vocational Training Centre project in Oloumi and the regional hospital centre projects which will be assigned to Canadian institutions. Furthermore, Canada is prepared to make available to the Gabonese authorities two technical advisers.

Before leaving Canada, Mr. Mayila talked again with the Honourable Pierre de Bané. It was agreed at that time that the first meeting of the Canada-Gabon Bilateral Commission could be held in Libreville in March 1981. Both parties attach great importance to this upcoming meeting at which the various co-operation projects between the two countries will be assessed and ways of pursuing and bringing to fruition the prospects for trade and development, examined during Mr. Mayila's visit, will be studied.