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Kazakhstan Accelerates Reforms with New Initiatives

World Bank, Kazakhstan sign four new loans

ASTANA, February 2, 2008 – Kazakhstan accelerated reforms in key sectors of the country’s economy Saturday with the signing of four new loans from the World Bank aimed at supporting Kazakh reform and modernization initiatives in health, customs development, environmental cleanup, and making technology development more commercially oriented.

“These new reform efforts will provide a boost to Kazakhstan’s development and its aim of becoming more competitive in the world economy,” said **World Bank Vice President for Europe and Central Asia Shigeo Katsu**, who signed the loans in the presence of **Kazakhstan Prime Minister Karim Massimov**. *“The Kazakhstan authorities know that the main challenge for the country is to make sure that its increasing wealth translates into healthier, cleaner, and prosperous lives for its citizens. The World Bank is happy to support this effort.”*

The Kazakhstan reform efforts together total \$473.19, while the Bank’s four loans contribute \$173 million of that total, and are aimed at supporting the following Kazakh reform and modernization initiatives:

- **Health Sector** – The **Kazakhstan Health Sector Technology Transfer and Institutional Reform Project** will help introduce international standards and build long-term institutional capacity in the Ministry of Health and hospitals, medical schools, and healthcare providers. The loan will support the government’s health sector reforms.
- **Environmental Cleanup** – The **Ust-Kamenogorsk Environmental Remediation Project**, aims at addressing environmental pollution linked to industrial hazardous waste generated prior to 1990 in the city of Ust-Kamenogorsk. The city is home to 300,000 people and faces some of the most severe environmental pollution in the country.
- **Customs** – The **Kazakhstan Customs Development Project** will help reform and modernize customs administration in Kazakhstan by increasing revenue collection, improving transparency of customs operations, and promoting the use of internationally accepted practices.
- **Technology** – The **Kazakhstan Technology Commercialization Project** will strengthen Kazakhstan’s science base by introducing international peer review for

research funding based on scientific merit and commercial potential, and connect improved research and development of scientific groups to national and international technology markets.

The four loans signed Saturday mark the latest steps in the Bank's partnership with Kazakhstan. Since the country joined the Bank in 1992, Bank commitments to Kazakhstan have reached more than \$2.1 billion for 32 projects.

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