

# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

## READOUT: U.S. Candidate for President of the World Bank Ajay Banga Visit to Cote D'Ivoire

March 7, 2023

ABIDJAN - On March 6 and 7, U.S. candidate for President of the World Bank Ajay Banga visited Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire as the first stop on his global listening tour.

On March 6, Banga met with leaders at the African Development Bank (AfDB) including President Akinwumi Adesina, as well as AfDB executive directors. During his meetings at AfDB, Banga stressed the importance of reinforcing cooperation between the AfDB and the World Bank, sought feedback on development challenges facing the continent, and highlighted areas for further cooperation, including work on economic development, climate resilience, gender equality, and private capital mobilization.

Later, Banga held a roundtable with representatives of over a dozen civil society organizations (CSOs) in Cote D'Ivoire, including groups working on public health, good governance, education, and climate change. During the conversation, Banga sought input on how the World Bank can better meet global challenges alongside CSOs, which serve as critical partners in advancing goals like addressing climate change, combating poverty, and mitigating fragility.

On March 7, Banga toured the World Bank's Electricity Transmission and Access Project in Yopougon — a \$325 million project which aims to increase access to and the reliability of electricity in Cote D'Ivoire. So far, this project has provided new or improved electricity service to 185,000 people, electrified 82 villages, improved transmission lines, and reinforced 12 substations. During the visit, Banga stressed the fundamental role of expanding access to electricity in supporting economic development efforts, and highlighted how renewable sources of electricity can provide increasingly affordable and easily deployable access to energy. During a roundtable discussion, Banga also heard from beneficiaries about how the project had improved their lives through reliable access to electricity.

Afterwards, Banga met with ambassadors from African and Middle Eastern countries in Cote D'Ivoire for a discussion on their priorities. This group included ambassadors from Gabon, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, Qatar, UAE, Morocco, Egypt and the charge d'affairs representing Lebanon.

Later, Banga met with senior Ivorian government officials, including Vice President Timeko Meyliet Kone and Prime Minister Patrick Achi, as well as Minister of Economy and Finance Adama Coulibaly, and Minister of the Budget Moussa Sanogo. During meetings, Banga and Ivorian government leaders exchanged views on key priorities like mobilizing private sector investments, bolstering climate adaptation, and providing economic opportunities for young people. Banga expressed admiration for Cote D'Ivoire's economic development strategy and thanked the government for their announcement of support for his candidacy to lead the World Bank.