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A COUNTRY IN CONSTANT TRANSFORMATION

Thanks to oil revenues, Equatorial Guinea has developed modern infrastructure that strengthen the attractiveness of its economy.

Participants in the last Summit of the African Union, last June in Malabo, undoubtedly marveled at the beauty of Sipopo, the new district connected to the capital by a highway of 50 km long, and which has a clinic of 120 beds, a conference center, a five-star hotel with 200 rooms and presidential villas. This is a costly project, but it is at the image of the sacrifices the government of Equatorial Guinea wants to make for the development of infrastructure.

How much did Equatorial Guinea invest in developing its economic and social infrastructure? Very clever who could say that exactly, so much this country has changed, due to the massive investments made by the Head of State, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, in the construction of ports, airports, roads, bridges, universities, hospitals, power stations, water towers, schools and secondary schools. Over the last years, the amount spent on the development of public facilities to boost the competitiveness of Equatorial Guinea, was estimated at 1,500 billion FCFA. This accelerated building of quality infrastructure impresses any visitor, and even the leaders of rich countries, like Nicolas Sarkozy, the

French Head of State, who, in a letter to his Equatoguinean counterpart, voiced his full admiration: "The international events that Equatorial Guinea hosted this year highlighted the transformation that your country has achieved over the past decade, thanks to a policy of massive investment in infrastructure, including for education and health, and a strong economic and social growth." These flattering statements, expressed by the French Head of State by way of congratulations to the Equatoguinean government which is working hard to modernize the country, are generally shared by all visitors.

In the ports sector, where the aim is to increase trade with the outside world, Equatorial Guinea has achieved a real leap by completely reconfiguring the port of Malabo, to provide it with 1,300 linear meters of dock and a container terminal. As the only deep water port in the region, it can handle deep draught vessels. "It will safely receive ships of 9,000 or even 11,000 containers, and could become one of the first ports for transshipment in Central Africa", explained one of its builders. This platform is equipped with ultramodern handling equipment likely to accelerate the pace of container handling.

One of the most impressive infrastructure projects is certainly the city of Oyala, created from scratch in the heart of the forest. It is a reflection of the government policy: ambitious and modern. This new administrative, university, industrial and tourist city will spread over 32,000 ha along the river. Its university of international standard, will host 14 faculties with a total capacity of 10,000 students.

As for road infrastructure, they aim as much to open up regions across the country as to connect the Equatoguinean borders to neighboring countries to promote trade towards Gabon and Cameroon. From now on, brand new tarmacked roads link major Equatoguinean cities to neighboring countries, which supply food and labor for the country. In addition, the construction of the two highways was launched: Bata-Mongomo and the Oyala bypass road. In other words, the development of infrastructure is the sector which gives the highest visibility to the economic emergence policy driven by the Equatoguinean Head of State.

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