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0521790956 - The World Bank: Structure and Policies - Edited by Christopher L. Gilbert and David Vines

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The World Bank is dedicated to the promotion of sustainable economic development and to poverty reduction throughout the developing world. It faces new challenges as capital shortages are replaced by large but volatile capital flows. The contributors to this volume argue that the Bank's greatest asset is its accumulated knowledge and experience of the development process, and propose that it organise itself around the concept of a 'Knowledge Bank'. They propose a shift in priority, away from lending with conditionality imposed on borrowing governments, towards assistance to governments in devising good development strategies. Part One examines the existing structure of the Bank and considers the World Bank as an institution. In Part Two the effectiveness of World Bank assistance is evaluated. This book provides essential reading for politicians, civil servants, workers in the non-official sector, and academics and students involved or interested in the development process.

Christopher L. Gilbert is Full Professor in the Department of Finance and Financial Sector Management at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. He is also a Visiting Professor of Economics at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London.

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Joseph E. Stiglitz was, at the time of writing, serving an appointment to the World Bank as Senior Vice President for Development Economics and Chief Economist. Previously, he served as Chairman of the US Council of Economic Advisers from June 1995, and was a member of the Council and an active member of President Clinton's economic team from 1993. Mr Stiglitz is on leave from Stanford University, where he is a Professor of Economics. He was previously a professor of economics at Princeton, Yale and Oxford. In 1979, the American Economic Association awarded him its biennial John Bates Clark Award, given to the economist under forty who has made the most significant contribution to economics. His work has also been recognised through his election as a fellow to the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Econometric Society.

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Acknowledgements

In early 1994, the UK Economic and Social Research Council (the ESRC) launched the Global Economic Institutions (GEI) Research Programme, with the objective of funding academic research on the functioning of multilateral economic organisations and about the global institutional structures within which economic activity takes place. As part of this programme, a group of researchers has been considering the structure and policies of the World Bank. This book, which brings together that work, is edited by Christopher Gilbert (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, Queen Mary and Westfield College, London and CEPR), who has led the research, and David Vines (Balliol College, Oxford, Australian National University and CEPR), who is Director of the GEI Programme.

The initial presentation of some of this work took place at the 1996 American Economic Association meetings in San Francisco, and a further discussion meeting was held in the World Bank in February 1997. This led to a workshop on 'The Future of the World Bank' at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London on 24 June 1997. The success of that meeting led us to embark on the project of assembling this book. All but two of the chapters have been commissioned, and written, specially for the book. The two editors visited the Bank on a number of occasions in the course of 1998 and 1999, to discuss the contents of the book with economists, and with operational staff, within the Bank. As their work was beginning, they were asked by Jan Gunning (Oxford University and Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam) and Paul Collier (Oxford University, now at the Bank) to write a chapter on the future of the Bank for a 'Special Feature' of the *Economic Journal* on the Changing Roles of the World's International Financial Institutions that appeared just as this book went to press; a greatly revised version of that paper has become chapter 2 of this book.

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