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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Tel.: +251-115 517 70 Fax: +251-115 517 844
Website: [www. Africa-union.org](http://www.Africa-union.org)

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REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE AFRICAN UNION BORDER PROGRAMME

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 11th Ordinary Session held in Accra, Ghana, from 25 to 29 June 2007, the Executive Council endorsed the Declaration on the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) and its Implementation Modalities, as adopted by the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Border Issues, held in Addis Ababa, on 7 June 2007. The Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission and Member States to take all necessary steps for the implementation of the AUBP and submit regular reports thereon to the AU policy organs.

2. The present report first recalls the context in which the AUBP was adopted and the key elements of the Programme. It then proceeds to provide an update on the steps taken so far towards the implementation of the AUBP, since June 2007. The report concludes with observations on the way forward.

II. BACKGROUND

3. Since African countries gained independence, the borders – which were drawn during the colonial period in a context of rivalries between European countries and their scramble for territories in Africa – have been a recurrent source of conflicts and disputes in the continent. Most of the borders are poorly defined. The location of strategic natural resources in cross-border areas poses additional challenges.

4. This challenge was taken up early enough by African leaders who were inspired by the conviction that the achievement of greater unity and solidarity among African States and peoples requires the reduction of the burden of borders separating them. They were thus convinced that by transcending the borders as barriers and promoting them as bridges linking one State to another, Africa can boost the ongoing efforts to integrate the continent, strengthen its unity and promote peace, security and stability through the structural prevention of conflicts.

5. It is against this background that the Member States adopted a number of political and legal instruments to guide their efforts in the management of border issues. In this respect, the following are worth mentioning:

- the principle of the respect of borders existing on achievement of national independence, as enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), resolution AHG/Res.16(I) on border disputes between African States, adopted by the 1st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Cairo, Egypt, in July 1964, and Article 4 (b) of the AU Constitutive Act;
- the principle of negotiated settlement of border disputes, as provided for in resolution CM/Res.1069(XLIV) on peace and security in Africa through negotiated settlement of boundary disputes, adopted by the 44th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the OAU, held in Addis Ababa, in July 1986; and

- the Memorandum of Understanding on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), adopted by the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002 [Decision CM/Dec.666(LXXVI)], which provides for the delineation and demarcation of inter-African borders by 2012, with the assistance of the UN Cartographic Unit where required.
6. During the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa from 29 to 30 January 2007, the Commission was encouraged to pursue its efforts with regard to the structural prevention of conflicts, including through the implementation of the AUBP [Decision Assembly/AU/ Dec.145(VIII)]. As a follow-up to this decision, the Commission convened, in Addis Ababa, on 7 June 2007, the first-ever Conference of African Ministers in charge of border issues. The Conference adopted a Declaration on the AUBP and its Implementation Modalities, which, as indicated above, was endorsed by the Executive Council in Accra.
7. As spelt out in the Declaration, the AUBP aims at:
- addressing the issue of border delimitation and demarcation;
 - consolidating the gains made in the regional integration process, as demonstrated by the existence of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and of numerous large-scale cooperation initiatives; and
 - facilitating the development of cross-border integration dynamics sustained by local stakeholders.
8. In their Declaration, the Ministers stressed that the implementation of the AUBP should be effected at several levels – national, regional and continental - and that the responsibility of each of these levels should be determined on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity and respect for the sovereignty of States. In this regard, the Declaration specifies the respective roles to be played by Member States, RECs and the AU with respect to the various components of the AUBP, namely border delimitation and demarcation, local cross-border cooperation and capacity building.
9. With respect to resource mobilization and partnership, the Ministers requested the Commission to coordinate and implement the AUBP on the basis of an inclusive governance involving the Member States, the RECs, parliamentarians, locally elected representatives and civil society, as well as the European border movement, particularly the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the United Nations and other AU partners having experience in cross-border cooperation.
10. In order to launch the AUBP, the Ministers identified a number of initial measures to be taken by the Commission. These are the following:
- launching of a Pan-African survey of borders, through a questionnaire to be sent to all Member States, in order to facilitate the delimitation and demarcation of African borders;

- identification of pilot regions or initiatives for the rapid development of regional support programmes on cross-border cooperation, as well as support for the establishment of regional funds for local cross-border cooperation;
- working out modalities for cooperation with other regions of the world to benefit from their experiences and to build the necessary partnerships;
- initiation an assessment with regard to capacity building;
- preparation of a continental legal instrument on cross-border cooperation; and
- launching of a partnership and resource mobilization process for the implementation of the AUBP.

III. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUBP

11. As a follow-up to the Accra Decision, the Commission, with the financial support of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), organized a workshop in Djibouti, on 1 and 2 December 2007, to assist it in elaborating a three-year plan of action for the implementation of the AUBP. The workshop brought together representatives of RECs and other African integration organizations, including river basin institutions, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the UN Secretariat and other UN institutions, the European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS) and a number of specialized institutions and experts.

12. The workshop made it possible for the Commission to elaborate an implementation matrix, which covers a number of areas: capacity building; popularization; delimitation and demarcation, including the survey of African borders, the mobilization of resources and exchange of experiences; cross-border cooperation, including the elaboration of the required legal frameworks and the establishment of regional funds; partnership and resource mobilization.

13. In pursuance of the Accra Decision and based on this implementation matrix, the Commission has undertaken the following activities:

a) Pan-African Survey of Borders

14. As indicated above, the Declaration on the AUBP and its Implementation Modalities requested the Commission to launch a Pan-African survey of borders, through a questionnaire to be sent to all Member States, in order to facilitate the delimitation and demarcation of African borders. As a follow-up to this Declaration, the Commission prepared the requested questionnaire, which covers issues relating to the status of Member States' continental and maritime boundaries, as well as the contact details of the institutions responsible for border issues.

15. On 15 April 2008, my predecessor, Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konaré, wrote to all Ministers of Foreign Affairs/External Relations of Member States, to forward the questionnaire, highlighting its importance in the overall implementation of the AUBP. At the time of finalizing this report, ten Member States had responded to the questionnaire. These are:

- (i) Algeria;
- (ii) Burkina Faso;
- (iii) Cameroon ;
- (iv) Mali;
- (v) Mauritius;
- (vi) Mozambique;
- (vii) Namibia;
- (viii) Niger ;
- (ix) Sudan; and
- (x) Tunisia.

16. I urge all the Member States that have not yet done so to urgently fill the questionnaire. This will make it possible to have a comprehensive view of the status of African borders and facilitate the mobilization of the financial, technical and human resources needed for their delimitation and demarcation.

b) Establishment of a Boundary Information System

17. In order to facilitate the utilization of the information received in response to the questionnaire, the Commission has taken steps to establish a Boundary Information System (BIS). The core functions of the BIS will be to provide an overview of the status of all African borders based on the questionnaire returns. This will facilitate the monitoring of progress towards their delimitation and demarcation. Other functions of the BIS will include a database of African border experts and cross-border cooperation initiatives in the continent. On 15 July 2008, the Commission organized, in Addis Ababa, a technical meeting on the establishment of the BIS, which brought together experts from the RECs, the UN, GTZ and relevant African and international institutions. Based on the recommendations of that meeting, the Commission is currently mobilizing the required expertise, as well as acquiring the IT equipment needed to facilitate the operationalization of the BIS.

c) Sensitization on the AUBP

(i) *Regional workshops on the AUBP*

18. The effective implementation of the AUBP requires that the Programme be adequately popularized, so that the various stakeholders are given ownership of it. Within this framework, and on the basis of the recommendations of the Djibouti workshop of December 2007, my predecessor wrote, on 11 April 2008, to all the Chief Executives of the RECs. In the letters, he informed the RECs of the intention of the Commission to organize five regional workshops aimed at sensitizing the various stakeholders on the AUBP and mobilizing their support for its implementation, as well as assisting the RECs in elaborating regional action plans within the framework of the implementation of the Programme.

19. Following a preparatory meeting with the RECs, which took place in Addis Ababa on 14 July 2008, the key parameters and agenda of the proposed regional workshops were laid down. In this respect, the following was agreed upon regarding the dates and venues of these workshops:

- East Africa: in September 2008, in Kampala, Uganda;

- North Africa: in October 2008, in Algiers, Algeria;
- Central Africa: in February 2009, in Libreville, Gabon;
- Southern Africa: in March 2009, in Windhoek, Namibia; and
- West Africa: in April 2009, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

20. It was also agreed that these workshops would be organized based on the following generic agenda:

- status of the implementation of the AUBP;
- consideration of specific aspects of the AUBP (delimitation, demarcation and reaffirmation of African borders, response to the AU questionnaire on the status of African borders, cross-border cooperation, capacity building and resource mobilization);
- Boundary Information System for the AUBP;
- outreach strategy for the AUBP; and
- elaboration of regional action plans.

21. The first regional workshop took place in Kampala, from 24 to 25 September 2008, under the joint auspices of the AU and the EAC. The workshop was attended by the following members of the Eastern Africa region: Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Other participants included CENSAD, COMESA, ECCAS, ECOWAS and IGAD, the United Nations, GTZ and other partner organizations.

22. The workshop made a number of recommendations. Regarding delimitation and demarcation, the workshop encouraged the countries of the region to: establish, where appropriate, national boundary institutions and joint bodies with neighboring States; expedite the completion of the AU questionnaire on the status of African borders; and share their experiences among themselves, as well as with other regions in the continent and outside Africa. On cross-border cooperation, the workshop, among others, recommended the appointment of focal points at RECs and member States levels; the inventory of all cross-border initiatives in the region; and the establishment of an informal coordinating mechanism that would bring together COMESA, EAC and IGAD, as well as other regional initiatives, to coordinate all efforts relating to cross-border cooperation.

23. The second regional workshop took place in Algiers, for the Northern African Region, from 16 to 17 October 2008. Algeria, Egypt, Libya, SADR and Tunisia participated in the workshop. Other participants included representatives of CENSAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS and ECOWAS, as well as the UN, GTZ and other institutions.

24. The workshop welcomed the significant progress made by the countries of the region in the delimitation and demarcation of their borders. In order to consolidate the progress thus far achieved, the workshop recommended notably that concrete steps be taken to densify boundary beacons where required, to expedite the transmission to the AU Commission of the duly filled questionnaire on the status of African borders, and to forward the contact details of the border agencies and other relevant institutions and experts of the countries of the region, to facilitate inter-African cooperation in the area of delimitation and demarcation.

25. Regarding cross-border cooperation, the recommendations made include undertaking a comprehensive inventory of existing cross-border cooperation initiatives and agreements in the region; the deepening of local cross-border cooperation initiatives, including through the elaboration of appropriate legal instruments and the establishment of regional funds; the encouragement of the joint management of resources in border areas, where appropriate; and the strengthening of cross-border cooperation in the prevention and combating of terrorism, as well as transnational crime. Other recommendations were made with respect to capacity building, popularization of the AUBP and partnership and resource mobilization.

26. The three other regional workshops will be held in the first quarter of 2009. Based on the arrangements agreed to with the concerned RECs, the workshop for Central Africa will take place in Libreville from 19 to 20 February 2009; the one for Southern Africa in Windhoek, in mid-March 2009; and the one for West Africa, in Ouagadougou, in April 2009. At the time of finalizing this report, practical arrangements were being made with ECCAS for the holding of the regional workshop for Central Africa.

(ii) *Publication of a brochure on the AUBP*

27. In mid-August 2008, the Commission, with the assistance of UNHCR, published in a booklet format the Declaration on the AUBP and its Implementation Modalities. This booklet was circulated to all diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa, as well as to a number of institutions in the continent and outside Africa. It has also been posted on the AU website. Plans are also underway to publish a book on the AUBP entitled: "From barriers to bridges - Overview of AU's efforts to address border issues in Africa". This book will be a compilation of all relevant OAU/AU documents on border issues and will bring to a wider audience the initiatives and steps taken to date at the continental level to address border-related issues.

(iii) *Elaboration of an Outreach Strategy*

28. The Commission has also elaborated an outreach strategy, whose goal is to create awareness of, and support for, the AUBP among Member States and other actors, including civil society organizations and border communities. More specifically, the strategy aims at building a sustainable dialogue with key stakeholders and facilitating the implementation of the AUBP by highlighting its benefits. In this respect, steps will be taken to brand the AUBP as a Programme that seeks to transform borders from barriers to bridges. The objective is to make the AUBP easier to recognize and understand, so as to ensure a connection between the Programme and the different target groups. The outreach strategy is envisaged as a multi-year, multi-media and multi-level strategy campaign. It will thus be implemented in phases, using a variety of media channels to take into account the

different profiles of the target groups and working at different levels: continental, regional and national.

29. In the coming months, the Commission will embark on the implementation of the pan-African aspects of the strategy. Among other activities, it is planned to feature articles and place adverts in in-flight magazines of major African airlines, especially given their role in connecting the African countries and allowing exchanges between nations; carry out specific activities with pan-African TV broadcasters; and work with existing African film festivals to introduce awards for film making competitions on border issues.

c) Capacity building

30. In the Declaration on the AUBP, the Ministers stressed the need to carry out an inventory of African Institutions that offer training in border related issues, explore avenues for collaboration with relevant training centres outside Africa and, on the basis of the above, design a capacity building programme. In this respect, the Commission intends to launch, in the first quarter of 2009, a consultancy that would aim at making concrete recommendations on the knowledge infrastructure (educational institutions, funds and scholarship schemes) that would sustainably support the AUBP. This will involve the identification of Centres of Excellence and the elaboration of educational curricula.

31. The Ministers also requested the Commission to take the necessary steps for the enhancement of the capacity of the Conflict Management Division of the Peace and Security Department of the Commission to enable it play the role expected of it. I am pleased to report that two experts on border issues have been recruited to follow-up on the implementation of the AUBP. Other recruitments will be made in the coming months, particularly in order to speed up the operationalization of the BIS and to support cross-border cooperation initiatives.

32. In order to provide the Commission with all the expertise required for the elaboration and implementation of the AUBP, a Steering Committee, made up of African experts, was put in place in November 2006. The Steering Committee has made a valuable contribution to the efforts of the Commission, providing the requisite support for the convening of the various meetings organized in the run-up to the Ministerial Conference on Border Issues and the activities that were undertaken subsequently. On 10 and 11 July 2008, the Steering Committee met in Addis Ababa to review the status of implementation of the AUBP and prepare a programme for 2009. Steps are underway to review the composition of the Steering Committee and its role in light of the current human resources capacity of the Commission.

33. Similarly, the Commission has taken steps to encourage AU partners to support relevant African institutions. Following consultations with the Commission, GTZ has extended technical and financial support to the Nigeria-based African Regional Institute (AFRI), which is specialized on border issues. This support relates to the organization of cross-border workshops, training of trainers programmes for border administration authorities and institutional support to AFRI.

d) Partnership and resource mobilization

34. In their above-mentioned Declaration, the Ministers requested the Commission to coordinate and implement the AUBP on the basis of an inclusive governance involving the member States, the RECs, parliamentarians, locally elected representatives and civil society, as well as the European border movement, particularly the AEBR, the UN and other AU partners having experience in cross-border cooperation. More specifically, the Commission was tasked to launch a partnership and resource mobilization process for the implementation of the AUBP. I am pleased to report that the Commission has been able to mobilize significant support for the implementation of the AUBP, and is building close relationship with a number of partners, both bilateral and multilateral.

(i) *Germany*

35. On 13 February 2008, the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, wrote to my predecessor to offer the technical and financial support of his country to the AUBP. In his letter, the Minister stressed the importance of the delimitation and demarcation of African borders, as well as the promotion of cross-border cooperation, for the overall efforts aimed at preventing conflicts and ensuring the economic development of the continent. The Minister also indicated that Germany was prepared to work with individual AU Member States in the implementation of activities related to the AUBP.

36. On 5 March 2008, Chairperson Konaré wrote to Dr. Steinmeier to express AU's gratitude for the support of his country and to indicate that the Commission would work with GTZ to finalize the modalities of that support. Subsequently, the Commission and GTZ agreed on a support package revolving around the following:

- financial and technical support for the development of the BIS;
- financial support for the enhancement of the human resource capacity of the Commission;
- support for the development of a handbook covering methodology and best practices in the area of delimitation and demarcation;
- financial support for the convening of meetings and workshops relating to the AUBP; and
- financial and technical support to relevant African institutions and individual AU member States for the implementation of the AUBP.

37. For 2008, the German Government, through GTZ, has made available about 3.35 millions Euros to support AUBP related activities; out of this amount, 800,000 were directly allocated to the AU. These resources were used to support the convening of the following activities: the preparatory meeting with the RECs, held in Addis Ababa on 13 and 14 July 2008; the technical meeting on the BIS held in Addis Ababa on 15 July 2008; the two regional workshops held in Kampala and Algiers; and the 2nd International Symposium on Land, River and Lake Boundaries Management, held in Maputo from 17 to 19 December 2008. GTZ has also provided

equipment and financial support for the payment of salaries of the staff working on the implementation of the AUBP. The German Government is planning to allocate additional funds in 2009.

38. Furthermore, the German Government, through GTZ, is also providing direct support to individual AU member States. In this respect, GTZ has supported the demarcation of parts of the Mali/Burkina Faso boundary, as well as activities relating to the delimitation and demarcation of Mozambican borders with some of its neighbors. On cross-border cooperation, GTZ has also supported initiatives in West Africa.

(ii) *Italy*

39. As part of the implementation of the Italian-African Peace Facility (IAPF), the Italian Government has committed itself to funding some components of the AUBP to an amount of about US\$1.8 million. An exchange of letters to this effect took place, on 30 June 2008, on the margins of the sessions of the Executive Council and the Assembly of the Union in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, in June 2008. The Commission is awaiting the disbursement of the pledged funds.

(iii) *United Nations*

40. The Commission is also working closely with the UN, which, through its Cartographic Section, has an extensive experience on delimitation and demarcation. Significantly, the Solemn Declaration on the CSSDCA referred to above, which provides for the delimitation and demarcation of Africa borders where such an exercise has not yet taken place by 2012, stipulates that the assistance of the UN Cartographic Section will be sought where required. The UN has taken part in all the meetings organized so far by the AU with respect to the implementation of the AUBP. As part of the establishment of the BIS, the Commission is planning to send some of its staff to New York to learn more about the UN experience in recording, storing and using boundary data. Other collaborative actions are being contemplated.

(iv) *European Union*

41. In elaborating the AUBP, the AU, from the onset, examined the European model of cross-border cooperation as it could be a source of inspiration for initiatives on the continent. It is worth recalling here that cross-border cooperation initially developed spontaneously in Europe before being absorbed by the official integration policies. The INTEREG programme, which forms part of the EU's Cohesion Policy, is one of the main EU instruments to foster cross-border cooperation. For the period 2007-2013, the Community budget has allocated a total amount of about 8 billions Euros for cross-border cooperation. About 120 European regions implement cross-border cooperation programmes, and most of them are members of the AEBR, which, in the past few years, has shown interest in cross-border cooperation activities in Africa. The AEBR has, among others, participated in the preparatory meeting of experts that preceded the Ministerial Conference on Border Issues.

42. It is in this context that, during the 6th meeting of the bi-annual Joint EU-AU Task Force, held in Brussels on 17 and 18 September 2007, the two Commissions discussed extensively how best to work together towards the successful

implementation of the AUBP. It was agreed that the focus should be on the following: invitation to each others' meetings; exchange of experiences and best practices, including the elaboration of legal instruments for cross-border cooperation and capacity building; and twining arrangements between European and African border regions. The issue was also discussed during the 7th meeting of Joint EU-AU Task Force held in Addis Ababa on 17 and 18 April 2008. In the meantime, the EC participated in the Djibouti workshop. The Commission intends to pursue actively the cooperation initiatives with the EU, in view of the latter's wealth of experience in cross-border cooperation.

(v) *Organization of American States*

43. Latin America has developed a rich experience in dealing with border and territorial disputes. Hence, the Commission has endeavored to build a cooperative relationship with the OAS, with the view to benefiting from the experience of Latin America in the implementation of the AUBP. During the meeting between the OAS and the AU on the theme "Promoting Democracy in Latin America and Africa – from Rhetoric to Reality", held in Washington from 10 to 12 July 2007, the two parties agreed to exchange and cooperate on issues relating to demarcation and cross-border cooperation. Since then, the OAS has participated in two AU meetings, sharing its own experience, namely the Djibouti workshop and the International Symposium that took place in Maputo in December 2008.

e) International Symposium on Land, Lake and River Boundaries Management in support of Borderland Development

44. As part of the efforts to implement the AUBP, in particular in its components pertaining to capacity building and partnership, the Commission supported the convening of the Second International Symposium on Land, Lake and River Boundary Management, which took place in Maputo, Mozambique, from 17 to 19 December 2008. It is to be recalled that the First International Symposium on Land and River Boundaries Demarcation and Maintenance was held in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2006. At the Bangkok Symposium, the Republic of Mozambique offered to host in Maputo, in 2008, the Second International Symposium. It should further be recalled that, during the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Border Issues, the Head of the Mozambican delegation, Dr. Eduardo Koloma, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, invited all AU Member States to attend this important event.

45. This Symposium had, among others, the following objectives:

- promote exchange of experiences and best practices among countries regarding the management of international land, lake and river boundaries;
- facilitate the elaboration of guidelines on processes, methodologies and technologies for the management of land, lake and river boundaries, taking into account international experience and best practices;
- strengthen partnerships and cooperation between government representatives in charge of border issues and experts in academic institutions; and

- incorporate the management of boundaries in international assistance programmes.

46. The Symposium was opened by Dr. Benvinda Levy, Minister of Justice of the Republic of Mozambique, and a representative of the Commission. It was attended by the following Member States: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Republic of Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The following RECs were also in attendance: CENSAD, ECCAS and ECOWAS. In addition, the UN Secretariat, UN-ECA, the OAS, the World Bank, as well as GTZ and a number of international experts were also represented at the Symposium.

47. The Symposium, which featured technical presentations in plenary sessions and discussions both in plenary and working groups, provided an opportunity for the sharing of ideas and experiences on issues relating to cross-border cooperation, the delimitation, demarcation, reaffirmation and management of boundaries. Having stressed the need for continued and sustained efforts by the AU member States and Commission, the RECs and other stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the AUBP, the participants agreed as follows:

- boundary problems in Africa are not uniquely African. Thus, valuable lessons can be learned from delimitation and demarcation experiences in other parts of the world;
- boundaries may be perceived by borderland populations as imposed barriers which do not reflect local realities. Strategies need to be developed by Governments to sensitize and involve borderland populations in delimitation and demarcation exercises to ensure that clearly delimited and appropriately demarcated boundaries are seen as a valuable foundation for borderland development rather than a threat to local communities. Borderland populations also have much to contribute to the development and implementation of effective border management strategies;
- AU Member States need to intensify their efforts, as much as possible, in order to meet the time-limit set out by the CSSDCA Declaration for the delimitation and demarcation of African borders ;
- States engaged in boundary reaffirmation should, where necessary, consider agreeing on Protocols to existing delimitation and demarcation instruments which define the boundary;
- rivers and lakes boundaries create special challenges in terms of (a) delimitation and demarcation and (b) the management of shared water and other resources. The sharing of experiences and best practices in these areas is particularly crucial;

- some States face particular challenges in boundary demarcation due to the presence of landmines in border areas. Efforts should be made by concerned Member States with the support of the international community to clear mined areas to facilitate delimitation and demarcation exercises, as well as other cross-border activities;
- differing interpretations of terms used in the definition of boundaries can lead to disagreements over delimitation and demarcation of boundaries. The development of a multi-language lexicon of relevant terms should be a goal of the AUBP.

48. More specifically, the participants made the following recommendations:

- the establishment by the AU Commission of a working group to prepare a practical handbook on delimitation and demarcation in Africa, highlighting good practice in/guidelines for delimitation, demarcation, maintenance, reaffirmation and recovery of boundary marks. This working group could also be charged with preparing a lexicon of relevant terms as highlighted above;
- the launching by the AU Commission of a consultancy to: (a) identify options for enhancing boundary delimitation and demarcation research and training capacity in African universities and technical agencies, (b) map African capacity needs in delimitation, demarcation, reaffirmation and maintenance and source for assistance from development partners;
- the implementation by the Commission of steps aimed at facilitating the communication by the former colonial powers of all information in their possession concerning the delimitation and demarcation of African boundaries;
- the convening by the AU of an international Symposium in Africa focusing on border management, cross-border cooperation and borderland development;
- the promotion of an “African Border Day” to highlight its importance and encourage further efforts towards its implementation; and
- the establishment by Member States, as soon as possible, of National Boundary Commissions or similar agencies (where they do not exist), and bilateral arrangements to handle boundary matters between them.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

49. As stated by one expert on European borders: “Spatial boundaries have ambiguous features: they divide and unite, bind the interior and link it with the exterior, are barriers and junctions, walls and doors, organs of defence and attack and so on. Frontier areas (borderlands) can be managed so as to maximize any of these functions. They can be militarized, as bulwarks against neighbors, or be made into areas of peaceful interchange”. By adopting the AUBP, African leaders have clearly expressed their commitment to maximize the junction and bridge aspects of the African borders and ensure that they are managed in such a manner to contribute to the achievement of two key objectives of the AU, namely the structural prevention of conflicts and the deepening of the ongoing integration processes.

50. As indicated above, the inviolability of the borders inherited from colonization is considered a principle for Africa, and their demarcation a priority. However, the decision made by African leaders to retain the inherited borders was not predicated on a desire to confine each country within its own designated territory. On the contrary, it means that border delimitation and demarcation is a condition for successful integration. A non-defined border is susceptible to being a source of contention, and even conflict. Border delimitation and demarcation, in a way, removes its potential nuisance; it opens the door rather than closes it; it allows for a healthy process of cooperation and integration.

51. Nearly half a century after the political liberation of the Continent, the delimitation and demarcation of the borders inherited from colonization still face major technical and financial problems. Subject to the completion of the survey being currently carried out by the Commission, it is estimated that less than a quarter of African borders have been defined. This shows the magnitude of the work that African States have to accomplish in order to attain the objective set out in the CSSDCA Solemn Declaration, which is, the delimitation and demarcation of those African borders that have not yet been defined by 2012, at the latest.

52. Clearly, this situation is fraught with risks. Indeed, the lack of definition of borders gives rise to “undefined zones” within which the application of national sovereignty poses problems. In these zones, a simple contention between two communities can lead to inter-State tensions. When these zones have natural resources (water, forest, petroleum, mineral or any other resource), their management could prove to be difficult and be a source of misunderstanding. The prevailing state of affairs also constitutes a real obstacle to the acceleration of the integration process. Indeed, it is a concrete obstacle to the facilitation of customs and police procedures necessary for the regional free movement desired by African States, which, apart from the central role it plays in regional integration, also contributes to the structural prevention of conflicts. Without a clear definition of the borders between two national territories, it is technically difficult to put in place, for example, joint control posts.

53. In line with the Declaration on the AUBP, border delimitation and demarcation should go hand-in-hand with cross-border cooperation. The objective here is to strengthen the institutional integration dynamics within the framework of the RECs and other wide-scale regional initiatives, such as the river basin management organizations and transport corridors, but also to provide the requisite legal frameworks and appropriate financial instruments, as well as the much-needed political support, to the cross-border initiatives ushered in by local actors in areas as varied as security, health, education and trade.

54. The importance of local cross-border cooperation and the contribution it can make to the overall effort at conflict prevention and integration hardly need to be emphasized. From a political point of view, such efforts contribute largely to regional integration, confidence-building, good neighborliness, as well as to the implementation of the principles of subsidiarity and partnership. In institutional terms, their added value lie in the active participation of citizens, local government authorities and social groups on both sides of a border. Finally, from an economic point of view, they make possible the mobilisation of home-grown development potential, additional development in border areas, and sustainable improvement in territorial development and regional policies.

55. Over the past one year and a half, significant progress has been made in the implementation of the AUBP. The sensitization of the various stakeholders is underway; there is today a much greater awareness of the need to speed up the delimitation and demarcation of African borders; numerous cross-border cooperation initiatives are ongoing; steps have been initiated to contribute to the enhancement of African capacity; and AU partners are showing increasing interest in the AUBP, with some of them already making significant contribution to the funding of the Programme.

56. At the same time, it is clear that further efforts are required, for the challenges to be met are both numerous and daunting. In the coming months, the Commission intends to intensify its sensitization efforts through the completion of the series of regional workshops it has initiated jointly with the RECs and the implementation of critical components of the outreach strategy for the AUBP.

57. Efforts will also focus on the development of a legal framework for cross-border cooperation in Africa, with the convening of a meeting of legal experts sometimes in October 2009, as well as the launching of a consultancy on cross-border cooperation. Sustained attention will continue to be given to the issue of the enhancement of African capacity in the management of border issues. The Commission will also endeavour to facilitate exchange of experiences among AU Member States and with other regions outside Africa both on border delimitation and demarcation and on cross-border cooperation. Furthermore, the Commission will continue engaging Africa's partners to mobilize further resources and technical support for the AUBP. Given the cross-cutting nature of the AUBP, the Commission intends to convene a meeting bringing together all relevant Departments and Regional Offices to ensure greater synergy. Finally, the Commission is planning to convene the second Conference of African Ministers in charge of Border Issues in November this year, to review the status of implementation of the AUBP Declaration and agree on the way forward.

58. It is crucial that Member States fully play the role expected of them in the implementation of the AUBP. In line with the Declaration on the AUBP, this requires that the Member States take the necessary steps to facilitate and accelerate the process of delimitation and demarcation of African boundaries where such an exercise has not yet taken place, including undertaking or pursuing bilateral negotiations on all problems related to this issue; support local cross-border cooperation initiatives; and contribute to the enhancement of African capacity, in particular by facilitating exchange of experiences and collaboration between relevant African bodies.

59. I would like to commend the German Government for its invaluable support, which allowed the Commission to implement a number of activities and to build the minimum capacity required for the effective follow-up and implementation of the AUBP. I urge other AU partners to extend assistance to the AUBP. I also appeal to AU Member States in a position to do so to contribute financially to the implementation of the Programme.