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ENHANCING OPERATIONAL LAND BORDER SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE SAHELO-SAHARAN REGION

4 – 5 September 2013 – Tripoli, Libya

Concept note

I. CONTEXT

1. The porous nature of land borders in the Sahel region has led to its exploitation over the years by criminal groups engaged in human, arms, drug trafficking and contraband smuggling. This has further been exacerbated by the increased presence of terrorist groups that found a safe haven in remote areas. These groups are engaged in terrorist and criminal activity, including kidnap for ransom, and move across borders, posing a serious security threat to the countries of the region. The situation that has unfolded in northern Mali and its implication for the wider region, including migration and refugee flows and related humanitarian crises, was further evidence of the common nature of the complex problem facing the countries of the region.

2. These challenges have further highlighted the need for collective regional action, particularly in terms of border security cooperation. The objective is to prevent them from being exploited for illegal and criminal activity and ensure they remain bridges for cooperation and development as envisaged by the 2007 Declaration on the AU Border Programme (AUBP).

II. FRAMEWORK

3. The First Ministerial Meeting on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahelo-Saharan Region, convened on 17 March 2013 in Nouakchott, agreed to a number of measures to enhance security cooperation, including strengthening of border security through appropriate specific measures to prevent movements of terrorist and criminal groups, enhancing intelligence sharing among states of the region and strengthening national capacities, including through exchange of experiences, training and equipment.

4. Within the framework of the Nouakchott meeting, the first and second meetings of Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region were held in Bamako on 18 April and in Abidjan and on 20-21 June, 2013, respectively. These meetings served as a forum to jointly review the security situation in the region, assess action undertaken and existing gaps and exchange on the capacity building needs of national and regional structures in order to identify modalities for enhanced cooperation and sharing of intelligence. The second meeting held in Abidjan further called for the convening of a workshop to discuss and agree on specific operational measures to enhance border security and cooperation among states of the region, in line with the Nouakchott meeting outcome.

III. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOME

5. The present workshop will build on the conclusions and recommendations of the previous meetings organized within the context of the Nouakchott framework as

well as the areas identified in the Tripoli Plan of Action, adopted by the Regional Ministerial Meeting on Border Security, held from 11 to 12 March 2012. It will aim to discuss and agree on practical measures to improve cooperative and collaborative border management and control in the region. The workshop will thus:

- Discuss challenges to effective exchange of information among states and opportunities for improvement, including confidence building measures;
- Exchange on opportunities for maximizing and pooling existing ones, including through joint border patrols, mixed border posts and the establishment of cross-border security committees;
- Mapping of border posts as well as common routes of population movement, trade and trafficking in order to identify gaps and explore remedial action;
- Overview the existing legal frameworks and practices in border control, including with respect to cross border operations;
- Discuss gaps in collaboration between law enforcement and other relevant agencies, including customs, in particular the creation of synergies through the sharing of information/intelligence and existing resources and the organization of joint operations;
- Discuss issues relating to travel documents and identification and challenges to the access and use of existing databases;
- Exchange on the challenges and opportunities to integrated border management, including its three pillars of intra-service cooperation, inter-agency cooperation, and international cooperation.
- Exchange on the existing human capacities in the relevant agencies involved in border control and security and identify gaps in training and expertise;
- Identify issues relating to engagement with border communities, movement of refugees and migrants across international borders and how to protect their rights while ensuring effective border security;
- Discuss modalities for communication and coordination between countries of the region;
- Discuss the coordination and support role of the ACSRT, CISSA, ECOWAS, UFL and the relevant international organizations and how to enhance collaboration with these bodies;

6. The workshop is expected to conclude in:

- Risk assessment and mapping of gaps in border controls at formal and informal crossing points and agreement on collaborative remedial action;
- Mapping of gaps in legislation and practices and agreement on medium and long term measures to address such gaps;
- Development of training and human capacity building matrix;
- Agreement on enhanced modalities of communications between border agencies of the concerned countries as well as other related measures, including exchange programs and joint trainings;
- Development of a follow up mechanisms and delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the concerned states and the regional and international organizations in implementation of the outcome of the workshop.

IV. PARTICIPATION

7. Experts from the following concerned countries are expected to participate: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan and Tunisia.

8. Other regional and international organizations and bodies that will participate in the workshop include the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT); the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services in Africa (CISSA); the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS); the European Union Border Assistance Mission in Libya (EUBAM Libya); International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol); the International Organization for Migration (IOM); Libya Center for Strategic and Future Studies (LCSFS) ; the Sahel Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL); the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); the UN Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UNCTED); the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); and the UN Support Mission to Libya (UNSMIL).

V. DATE AND VENUE

9. The workshop will be co-hosted by the AU Commission and the Libyan Government from 4 to 5 September 2013 in Tripoli, Libya.

VI. CONTACT

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