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P.O. BOX: 3243, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, TEL.: (251-11) 551 38 22 FAX: (251-11) 551 93 21
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org, situationroom@ausitroom-psd.org

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR WEST AFRICA
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION
BORDER PROGRAMME
OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO
23-24 APRIL 2009**

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR WEST AFRICA ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION BORDER PROGRAMME

OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO, 23-24 APRIL 2009

1. As part of the implementation of 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, Ethiopia, on 7 June 2007, and subsequently endorsed by the AU Executive Council at its 11th ordinary session held in Accra, Ghana, from 27 to 29 June 2007, a regional workshop for West Africa on the implementation of the AUBP was jointly organized by the AU Commission and ECOWAS in Ouagadougou [LAICO OUAGA 2000 (Ex Sofitel)], Burkina Faso, from 23 to 24 April 2009. The Workshop was opened by the Honorable Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization of Burkina Faso. Statements were also delivered by the Head of the Conflict Management Division of the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission and the Director for Free Movement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).
2. The Workshop was attended by the following Member States of the West Africa Region: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo.
3. The following Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were also in attendance: CEN-SAD, COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS and IGAD.
4. In addition, the following institutions and structures working in the field of cross-border cooperation and mechanisms also participated in the Workshop: African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), African Wildlife Federation, ENDA-DIAPOL, Ethiopia-Sudan Joint Border Development Commission, Liptako-Gourma Development Authority, Mano River Union, NEPAD, Niger Basin Authority, Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Sahel and West Africa Club/OECD. The following local cross-border cooperation initiatives SeneGambia, Sikasso-Bobo-Khorogo, Karakoro and Kano-Katsine-Maradi also participated in the Workshop.
5. The Workshop provided an opportunity to review the progress made in the overall implementation of the AUBP. In particular, the workshop focused its deliberations on the concrete steps being taken at the level of West Africa to follow-up on the specific aspects of the AUBP as they relate to delimitation and demarcation, cross-border cooperation and capacity building, as well as to other aspects of the Programme pertaining to its popularization, partnership and resource mobilization.
6. At the end of its deliberations, the workshop reached the following conclusions:

(a) Delimitation and demarcation

7. The workshop welcomed the significant progress made by the countries of the region in the delimitation and demarcation of borders (including the delimitation of maritime borders and efforts made towards the determination of the continental shelf) both within the region and between the countries of the region and other neighboring countries, and commended all the States concerned for their efforts and commitment. In order to consolidate the progress achieved thus far, the Workshop made the following recommendations:

- (i) Member States to expedite the delimitation and demarcation of borders where such an exercise has not yet taken place, keeping in mind the deadline set by the African Heads of State and Government in the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) adopted at the OAU Summit held in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002, which provides for the completion of the exercise throughout the continent by 2012. In this regard, ECOWAS and the countries concerned are encouraged to regularly update the AU of the steps taken towards the realization of this objective;
- (ii) concrete steps be taken to regularly maintain and, where required, densify boundary beacons so as to make them more visible such that risks of disputes are reduced. To this end, Member States should work out detailed plans, including the related financial costs, to facilitate the mobilization of the necessary resources for the exercise;
- (iii) urge Member States that have not yet done so to hasten the completion and transmission to the AU Commission of the questionnaire on the status of African borders which was sent in April 2008. The Commission will resend the questionnaire to facilitate the completion of this exercise before the end of 2009;
- (iv) Member States to communicate the contact details of their border agencies and other relevant institutions and experts to the AU Commission, as part of the response to the above-mentioned questionnaire, to facilitate inter-African cooperation in the area of delimitation and demarcation, through exchange of experiences and availability of experts;
- (v) in cases of border disputes, Member States should explore all options available, including recourse to African legal processes and conflict resolution mechanisms;
- (vi) encourage Member States to endeavor to acquire up to date mapping and cartographic information, as well as survey equipment, to facilitate accurate delimitation and demarcation exercises; and

- (vii) encourage Member States to undertake research in their respective colonial archives to retrieve records relating to their boundaries.

(b) Cross-border cooperation

8. The Workshop noted with satisfaction the initiatives aimed at furthering cross-border cooperation within the region and between it and other neighboring countries. The Workshop further appreciated the depth of the cross-border experiences and the dynamism of the civil society actors in the region, who view borders as a resource. In this respect, the Workshop highlighted the local cross-border cooperation initiatives involving some of the countries of the region and other neighboring States relating to the joint exploitation and management of trans-boundary resources and other issues such as illegal migration, cross-border crime, trade, health and education.

9. The Workshop recommended the following:

- (i) undertake a comprehensive inventory of existing cross-border cooperation initiatives and agreements in the region, in order to popularize them, assess their state of implementation and make recommendations on how they could contribute further to the achievement of the objectives of the AUBP. In this respect, the countries of the region will extend the necessary cooperation and support to the consultancy that the AU Commission is planning to undertake in due course, as part of the initial measures for the launching of the AUBP as spelt out in the Declaration adopted in Addis Ababa in June 2007. The Workshop welcomed the initiative by ECOWAS to convene a coordination meeting of all cross-border cooperation agencies of West Africa;
- (ii) highlight the links between all on-going cross-border cooperation initiatives with the relevant provisions of the AUBP, with the view to placing them under the umbrella of the Programme and sensitizing all the actors involved about its objectives;
- (iii) take further steps to deepen local cross-border cooperation initiatives, including through the elaboration of appropriate legal instruments and establishment of regional funds, as called for by the AUBP Declaration of June 2007. On its part, the AU Commission should facilitate exchange of experiences with other regions within the continent and beyond, particularly Europe, for capacity building and resource mobilization. As an initial step, the AU Commission should sponsor a field trip to other African RECs to facilitate exchange of experiences;
- (iv) encourage, where appropriate, joint management of resources, building on relevant experiences in the rest of the continent. The AU Commission should facilitate exchange of experiences in that regard;
- (v) strengthen cross-border cooperation in the area of prevention and combating of terrorism, as well as transnational crime; and

- (vi) the use of common African languages as working languages in addition to other official languages, as well as the use of African socio-cultural values to promote cross-border cooperation and regional integration with the support of institutions such ACALAN.

(c) Capacity-building

10. The Workshop stressed the critical importance of capacity building for the successful implementation of the AUBP, through, among others, training, exchange of experiences and research aimed at deepening the understanding of border related issues on the continent and building a strong knowledge infrastructure, as well as collaboration with relevant structures in and outside of Africa. The Workshop took note of the existence of the African Regional Institute, Imeko, Nigeria, and its training programme and publications in support of the AUBP. The Workshop further welcomed the decision by ECOWAS Commission to establish, along with UNESCO, a West African Institute for Regional Integration in Cape Verde.

11. The Workshop recommended the following:

- (i) inventory of all management, research and training institutions dealing with border issues in West Africa. In this respect, the countries of the region will extend the necessary cooperation and support to the consultancy that the AU Commission is planning to undertake in due course, as part of the initial measures for the launching of the AUBP as spelt out in the Declaration adopted in Addis Ababa in June 2007;
- (ii) networking amongst the relevant institutions in West Africa and with other similar institutions in the continent and outside Africa. The countries of the region should update the AU Commission regularly on the steps taken in this respect;
- (iii) development of boundary studies and border management curricula in the educational system, especially higher educational institutions of the countries of the region, with emphasis on regional integration;
- (iv) organization, with the support of the AU Commission and other relevant institutions, of training workshops for border authorities, to sensitize them on the AUBP and facilitate its implementation; and
- (v) develop appropriate African jurisprudence in the area of boundary disputes settlement between Member States, by using local, national and regional mechanisms for resolving such disputes.

(d) Popularization of the AUBP and follow-up with Member States

12. The Workshop stressed the need to effectively popularize the AUBP to ensure ownership at regional, national and local levels, as well as that of continued interaction between the Commission and Member States in the

implementation process of the Programme. To this end, and as part of the public relations strategy being carried out by the AU Commission, the Workshop recommended the following:

- (i) organization by the Member States of the West Africa region, by 2009, of national workshops bringing together all stakeholders, in order to sensitize them on the AUBP and its objectives;
- (ii) submission of briefings on the AUBP and its implementation during meetings on cross-border projects and programmes;
- (iii) use of national media and other relevant institutions to popularize the AUBP activities, including the translation of the Declaration on the AUBP into some African languages;
- (iv) appointment/designation by the Member States of the West Africa region of focal points for the AUBP, by the end of 2009; and
- (v) submission by the Member States of the West Africa region of regular reports relating to the implementation of the AUBP. The first reports should be submitted by the end of 2009.

(e) Partnership and resource mobilization

13. The Workshop noted with satisfaction the steps taken by the AU Commission to build the necessary partnerships and mobilize the required resources for the implementation of the AUBP, in accordance with the initial measures identified in the Declaration for the launching of the Programme, and expressed its gratitude to the partners who have so far provided technical and financial support (notably Germany, through GTZ). The Workshop encouraged the Commission to pursue these efforts in order to mobilize further support both from within and outside Africa.

14. The Workshop expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of Burkina Faso for having hosted this meeting and for its support, which contributed greatly to the success of this event.