

AFRICAN UNION

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DECLARATION ON

THE AFRICAN UNION BORDER PROGRAMME AND MEASURES FOR ITS CONSOLIDATION

ADDIS ABABA, 6 OCTOBER , 2016

Preamble

We, the Ministers of Member States of the African Union responsible for inter-state borders held our Meeting on African Border Issues in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 6 October 2016 to review the implementation of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP), based on the presentation and assessment of the achievements made by the African Union Commission (AUC) and on the report of the national experts, who met from 3-5 October 2016;

Taking note of the progress made by the AUBP at the continental, regional and national levels, as well as the ever-increasing interest in the Program from Member States of the African Union (AU) since its launch in 2007;

Acknowledging the outcomes of previous meetings held in Addis Ababa on 7 June 2007 and 25 March 2010, as well as on 17 May 2012 in Niamey;

Reiterating our determination to address the challenges in the implementation of the AUBP, including resource constraints, the slow ratification of the Niamey Convention by Member States and the 2017 deadline for the delimitation and demarcation of inter-state borders;

Reaffirming the important role AUBP plays with regard to its contribution to the structural prevention of conflicts, the promotion of regional and continental integration, the strengthening of economic and social development in Africa;

Recommitting to the principles upon which the AUBP is based, as stated in the relevant instruments of the AU, particularly the principle of the respect of borders existing at the time of accession of our countries to independence (Cairo 1964: AHG/Res.16(1)); the principle of peaceful settlement of border disputes; and the commitment to delimit and demarcate African

inter-state borders, where this exercise has not yet taken place, as pillars of peace, security, economic and social progress;

Taking note of the need to provide sensitization and training on border issues to decision-makers, border professionals and communities in the border lands;

Acknowledging the challenges in conducting a clear assessment of current African borders, which would allow for a better evaluation of the needs in terms of demarcation, and to define – more accurately – a strategy for the implementation of the AUBP.

Hereby adopt the following:

1. **Encourage** all Member States to accelerate the delimitation and demarcation of their inter-state borders, where this exercise has not yet taken place.
2. **Recognize** that the deadline of 2017, set by the Assembly of the Union in July 2011 in Malabo, for the delimitation and demarcation of all African inter-state borders will not be achieved.
3. **Recommend** the extension of the deadline for the delimitation and demarcation of the inter-state borders of Africa from 2017 to 2022.
4. **Appeal** to the AUC to conduct an assessment of the status and all activities conducted within the framework of the AUBP, as well as an annual review on the African Border Day (June 7) based on annual reports by Member States – submitted jointly or individually – in order to monitor the progress and challenges of implementation.
5. **Take note** that the Niamey Declaration recommended finalizing the Draft Integrated Border Management Strategy, which is now titled the Draft AU Border Governance Strategy. We **agree** that the Draft should be sent to Member States for thorough review ahead of a validation meeting suggested to take place in the first quarter of 2017.
6. **Urge** the Member States to develop and implement a national policy on borders and to set up and sustain a national body responsible for border issues, if not yet done, and **reiterate** the importance of Member States to jointly request the AUC's assistance in the implementation of AUBP activities.
7. **Appeal** to the AUC to facilitate possible access by Member States to historical, legal and cartographic documents and technical instruments to facilitate the delimitation and demarcation of their inter-state borders.
8. **Recommend** that Member States strive to make use of diplomatic means in settling their differences and disputes on the course of their boundary lines before taking recourse to judicial mechanisms.
9. **Strongly encourage** Member States to accelerate the ratification and implementation of the African Union Convention on Cross-border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) and to develop and implement programs aimed at cross-border cooperation, including the joint management of resources, in order to develop borderlands, while engaging the local authorities and communities.

10. **Request** effective coordination between the AUC and RECs regarding the implementation of activities together with Member States and partners; and **encourage** the full respect for the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity in order to avoid duplication of efforts.
11. **Request** the AUC to commission research, facilitate the publication of good practices, and coordinate the development of training curricula and the organization of regional trainings.
12. **Call on** the Member States to allocate national budget lines to fund their delimitation, demarcation and cross-border cooperation programs, and **recommend** to the AUC to strengthen the structure of the AUBP Unit with the necessary financial and human resources with the required competence.
13. **Reaffirm** our appreciation to Germany and all international partners for the support provided towards the implementation of AUBP and **appeal** to them to sustain their support.
14. **Encourage** all Member States to hold an annual celebration commemorating the Border Day on the 7 June.
15. **Reiterating** our adherence to the respect of the principle of the inviolability of borders as stated in the pertinent legal instruments of the AU, the Charter of the OAU- adopted during the Assembly of the Heads of States and Government in Cairo 1963, as well as the AU Constitutive Act.
16. **Call upon** the Chairperson of the AUC, after endorsement of the present Declaration by the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense and Safety and Security, the Executive Council and the Assembly, to take all the necessary measures for the consolidation of the AUBP and keep the competent bodies of the African Union and its Member States regularly informed on the progress made in its implementation.