

AFRICAN UNION

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
930TH MEETING

11 JUNE 2020
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(CMXXX)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 930th meeting held on 11 June 2020, in Commemoration of the African Border Day within the framework of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020,

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling Decision 563 of the 17th Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, held from 19 to 23 July 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, which proclaimed 7 June as the African Borders Day;

Also recalling the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 26 to 27 June, 2014, which adopted the African Union Convention on Cross Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention), which aims to promote cross-border cooperation and to ensure peaceful resolution of border disputes, as well as the 12th Ordinary Session of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS), held on 19 December, 2019, in Cairo, Egypt, which adopted the African Union Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance;

Further recalling the Ministerial Declarations on the African Union Border Program and the Measures for its Consolidation, held 7 June 2007, 25 March 2010, 17 May 2012, and 6 October 2016, respectively and the relevant decisions of the Executive Council and the Assembly of the Union;

Reaffirming the AU principle of respect of borders existing on achievement of independence and the principle of prohibition of the use of force or threat to use force among Member States of the Union, in line with Article 4 (b) and (f) of the AU Constitutive Act, as well as other relevant instruments and decisions of the AU;

Recalling the Cairo Resolution [AHG/Res.16(1)] adopted by the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the OAU, held in Cairo (Egypt) in July 1964, and Resolution [CM/Res.1069(XLIV)] adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU at its 44th session, held in Addis-Ababa, in July 1986, on negotiated settlement of border disputes, shared commitment to pursue delimitation and demarcation of borders as pillars of peace, security, stability, economic and social progress;

Also recalling the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (2003), which highlights the importance of natural resources, especially in border areas where their management and exploitation often generate inter-state border disputes; **further recalling** the relevant provisions of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, which calls for accelerating the settlement of border disputes with a view to preventing inter-state conflicts and promoting peaceful settlement of borders disputes;

Emphasizing the fundamental principle of sovereign consent of parties involved in a border dispute to involve the AUBP, in line with article 5 (a) and (i) of the Declaration on the African Union Border Program and its implementation modalities as adopted by the Conference of African Ministers in charge of border issues held on 7 June 2007, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which states that “*The delimitation and demarcation of boundaries depend primarily on the sovereign decision of the States*” and,

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Welcomes** the Progress Report of the African Union Commission on the Implementation of the African Union Border Program (AUBP) from January 2019 to March 2020, which provides information about the status of implementation of the Program by Member States with the support of the AU Commission; as well as the statement by H.E Ambassador Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and security on the commemoration of the African Borders day, within the framework of the AU Master Roadmap on silencing the guns in Africa;
2. **Acknowledges** the progress made in the implementation of the AUBP at the national, regional and continental levels, and the Program’s important contributions to the structural prevention of conflicts, promotion of regional and continental integration, and strengthening socio-economic development in Africa;
3. **Looks forward** to a Continent with secure, peaceful, prosperous and integrated borders, which promote peace, security, stability and socio-economic development; **emphasizes** that peace and security in Africa are intrinsically linked to good border governance; **underlines** that peaceful resolution of border disputes contributes significantly to structural prevention of conflicts in Africa and, in this context, **encourages** Member States to continue to promote peaceful relations and good neighborliness;
4. **Commends** the contributions of the AUBP to the AU’s overall response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, among others, by assisting Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) in their efforts to fight the pandemic through cross-border cooperation and the stabilization of border areas. In this context, Council **encourages** Member States, in the specific context of the COVID-19 pandemic, to facilitate humanitarian assistance and allow transportation and delivery of anti-COVID-19 medical supplies and food to the population in need through their borders, while at the same time maintaining the necessary precautions to prevent further spread of COVID-19;
5. **Commends** all Member States that have implemented the recommendations of the AUBP and **encourages** all those which have not yet done so, to endeavour to do so. In the same context, Council **commends** Member States which have signed and ratified the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) and **encourages** those which have not yet done so, to also do the same. Council **further encourages** Member States to develop and implement cross-

border cooperation programs, including One-Stop Border Posts (OSBP), where possible, and joint management of trans-boundary natural resources, while affirming that such cooperation is subject to the sovereign decision of countries involved;

6. **Underscores** the importance of delimitation and demarcation of inter-state borders in the Continent in accordance with article 5 (a) and (i) of the Ministerial Declaration on the African Union Border Program and its implementation modalities that affirms the sovereign nature of the decision that is based on the consent of Member States involved and, in this regard, **encourages** all Member States where this exercise has not yet taken place to allocate required resources for the delimitation and demarcation of their international borders, as well as for promoting cross-border cooperation initiatives and to explore sustainable means and ways of mobilising resources towards border governance programmes;

7. **Underscores the importance** for Member States to develop and implement national border governance strategies, in line with the AU Strategy on Better Integrated Border Governance and to further strengthen national structures responsible for border issues and, in this context, **requests** the AU Commission to continue providing technical support and to sensitise Member States on the importance of developing national border policies in line with the recommendations of the AU Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance ;

8. **Welcomes** all evolving cross-border cooperation initiatives in various parts of the Continent and **requests** AU Commission and the RECs/RMs, as well as Member States, to continue to work closely together in the implementation of the AUBP, within the framework of the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity. In this regard, Council **requests** the AU Commission to develop an AU training curricula on border governance and to organize regional training programs. Council **also requests** the Commission to work with Member States in mobilizing funding, capacity building and technical assistance in the management of borders;

9. **Stresses the importance** for Member States to develop biometric identification database of their citizens and the need to further enhance cross-border collaboration and information sharing on safeguarding and securing their borders, including through intelligence sharing and joint operations in addressing cross-border security threats, such as terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime, money laundering, drugs trafficking, human trafficking, illegal exploitation of natural resources, particularly, at border intersections of affected Member States;

10. **Underlines the need** for Member States to continue linking border management with trade and economic issues, particularly in establishing border infrastructure cooperation initiatives, such as the concept of One Stop Border Posts (OSBP), with the necessary legal and institutional frameworks and facilities, as well as to promote development along border to benefit communities on either side;

11. **Highlights the need** to transform borders into catalysts for development and integration in Africa, in order to facilitate intra and inter-regional, as well as continental trade through the

implementation of continental flagships such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), in order to enable free movement of goods and services, thereby reducing transit costs and time. In this respect, Council **encourages** Member States, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its, 30th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, on 29 January 2018;

12. **Emphasizes the need** for continuous engagement and collaboration between Member States and RECs/RMs to ensure that all African borders are demarcated by 2022 in line with the implementation period stipulated by the AUBP on boundary delimitation and demarcation; **calls upon** the AU Commission to continue to assist Member States, upon their request, in delimiting and demarcating their borders where this has not yet been done so as to meet the AUBP deadline of 2022;

13. **Highlights** the importance of availing the AUBP with the necessary resources to enable it to more effectively discharge its mandate in supporting cross- border cooperation, as well as to respond to the requests of Member States on border related issues;

14. **Stresses** that the new Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department should ensure that issues relating to supporting Member States, upon their request, in borders issues mainly the delimitation and demarcation of African borders, as part of structural conflict prevention, are adequately catered for in terms of human and financial resources;

15. **Encourages** all Member States to commemorate African Borders Day on 7 June, each year, and to implement AU legal instruments relating to borders;

16. **Decides** to remain seized on the matter.