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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1024TH MEETING (MINISTERIAL)**

**19 AUGUST 2021
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

PSC/MIN/COMM. 1024(2021)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) at its 1024th meeting held at ministerial level on 19 August 2021 on the Implementation of Aspects of Peace and Security related to Border Governance in Africa.

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling the Decision [Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (XIV)], adopted by the 14th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union on Silencing the Guns in Africa, held on 6 December 2020, in Johannesburg, South Africa; the AU Convention on Cross Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 26 to 27 June 2014; the Declaration of the 12th Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS), of December 2019, in Cairo, Egypt, and the Decision of the 33rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which adopted the African Union Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance; the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, adopted by the OAU Assembly Session held in Algiers, on 15 September 1968, as well as the Revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources adopted by the AU Assembly on 7 March 2017;

Bearing in mind the Ministerial Declarations on the African Union Border Program (AUBP) and the measures for its consolidation, adopted earlier, on 7 June 2007, on 25 March 2010, on 17 May 2012, and on 6 October 2016;

Cognizant of the principle of peaceful settlement of border disputes as provided for in Resolution CM/Res.1069 (XLIV) adopted by the 44th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the OAU, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 1986; as well as Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMXXX)] adopted at its 930th meeting held on 11 June 2020, under the chairship of Algeria, 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;

Noting the opening remarks by H.E. MBELLA MBELLA, the Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Cameroon, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of August 2021; the statements by the Chairperson of the AU Executive Council, Vice- Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of Congo, H.E. Mr. Christophe Lutundula, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye and the representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as the Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), H.E. Wamkele Mene;

Reaffirming the AU principle of respect of borders existing on the attainment of national independence by Member States and as enshrined in the Cairo Resolution AHG/Res.16 (1) adopted by the Ordinary Session of Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity, held in Cairo in July 1964, in line with Article 4 (b) and 4 (f) of the AU Constitutive Act;

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

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

1. **Welcomes** the efforts being deployed by Member States and the RECs in implementing the AU Border Governance Strategy at national regional and continental level, including its peace and security related aspects;
2. **Also welcomes** the progress recorded, thus far, by the AU Commission in the implementation of the African Union Border Program (AUBP), **while commending in particular** the continued technical support spearheaded by the Commission to Member States, thereby significantly contributing towards addressing the border governance related structural root causes of violent conflicts in Africa, in addition to promoting peaceful co-existence and good neighborliness, as well as regional and continental integration;
3. **Also commends** the Member States that have already signed and ratified the Niamey Convention on cross border cooperation and **encourages** other Member States that have not yet done so, to also consider doing the same; **further commends** all Member States that have already signed and ratified the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development, adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on 27 June 2014, and **also encourages** the other Member States which have not yet done so, to also consider doing the same;
4. **Encourages** Member States to adopt and implement cross-border cooperation programs, including joint management of transboundary resources, One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs), towards developing their borderlands and to facilitate the free movement of persons, goods and services pursuant to the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment;

5. ***Calls upon*** Member States, which have not yet done so, to accelerate the delimitation and demarcation of their borders, as well as to develop and implement national border governance strategies in line with the AU Strategy on Better Integrated Border Governance and, to this end, ***requests*** the AU Commission to continue to provide Member States with the required technical support;
6. ***Reiterates*** the importance of transforming borders into catalysts for national, regional and continental integration and development and, in this respect, ***encourages*** Member States to continue to pursue peaceful methods of addressing their border disputes and to fully utilize the AUBP ***while re-emphasizing*** the need for continuous engagement and collaboration between Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (REC/RMs), and the AUBP, with a view to ensuring that all African borders are demarcated by 2027;
7. ***Calls on*** Member States to continue to further enhance their cooperation and collaboration in securing and managing their borders, including among others, through the establishment of joint border commissions, joint patrols/operations, intelligence and information sharing, as some of the means and ways of further enhancing their efforts in combating scourges that include, among others, terrorism, proliferation of illicit weapons, trans-national organized crime, drug and human trafficking, violent extremism, illegal exploitation of natural resources along the common borders and illicit trade in fauna and flora;
8. ***Underscores the urgent need*** for Member States to redouble their investments in further enhancing the institutional capacities of their national law enforcement agencies, particularly those responsible for border security and management;
9. ***Notes with concern*** the absence of a distinct entity or unit within the newly established Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) under the new organizational structure of the AU Commission and, in this context, ***recommends*** to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, through the Executive Council, to consider as appropriate, a dedicated structure on the AUBP within the new PAPS Department, after following the established due process through the relevant AU policy Organs;
10. ***Requests*** the AU Commission to continue to collaborate with the RECs/RMs in addressing border disputes between and among Member States, subject to the sovereign consent of the Member States involved and to expedite the implementation of the AU Border Governance Capacity Building Strategy;
11. ***Calls*** on Member States to enhance their efforts in order to establish common arrangements for the management of their trans-boundary resources and ***condemns*** the illegal exploitation of natural resources of other Member States, in conformity with the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, adopted by the OAU Assembly

Session held in Algiers, on 15 September 1968, as well as the Revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources adopted by the AU Assembly on 7 March 2017;

12. Expresses appreciation for the support being received from a number of development partners towards the implementation of the AUBP;; **stresses the urgent need** for Council to convene a session dedicated to consideration of the role and contributions of AU development partners in the implementation of the AUBP and **requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to redouble his efforts in the mobilization of the necessary technical, human, knowledge and financial resources, to enable the AUBP to more effectively discharge its mandate and address the challenges faced in the implementation of the AUBP;

13. Decides to remain actively seized on the matter.