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IN CHARGE OF BORDER ISSUES,
PREPARATORY MEETING OF EXPERTS**

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“HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT FOR THE AUBP”

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I. CONTEXT

1. The African Union Border Programme (AUBP) embodies four central objectives:

- a) the facilitation of, and support to, delimitation and demarcation of African Land and Maritime boundaries where such an exercise has not yet taken place;*
- b) the reinforcement of the integration process within the framework of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other large-scale cooperation initiatives;*
- c) the development, within the framework of the RECs and other regional integration initiatives, of local initiative cross-border cooperation; and*
- d) capacity building in the area of border management, including the development of special education and research programmes.*

2. These objectives need to be read in the context of such basic Policy Instruments as:

(a) BP/MIN/Decl. (II) First Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues, *Declaration of the African Union Border Programme and its Implementation Modalities, Addis Ababa, 7 June 2007*; (b) Ex. CL/352 (XI) – *Decision of the AU Ex. Council taken at the 11 Ordinary Session, Accra, 27-29 June 2007*; and (c) EX.CL/Dec.461 (XIV) – *Decision on the Implementation of the African Union Border Programme* .

3. Whereas objective (a) above is concerned with properly inscribing borderlines on the ground, (b) and (c) address the need to turn international boundaries into bridges rather than allowing them to remain and develop into future sources of division and conflict. The juxtaposition embodies a creative tension, rather than a contradiction, and it is one that the AUBP seeks to resolve on the principle of sound fences facilitating good neighbourliness. This presumes a regular and informed flow of information between actors at different levels. Building capacity in three specific areas is fundamental to achievement of the objectives as a totality:

- (i) the furtherance of synergies between demarcation and co-operation activities;
- (ii) the generation and sharing of information and experiences between Member States, RECs and other stakeholders in order to facilitate smoother operations in respect of each objectives (a) to (c);
- (iii) ensuring appropriate mental orientation for the AUBP as strategy for cross-border cooperation and regional integration.

4. The capacity-building dimension of the AUBP may be construed as the ligament that binds the other objectives of the AUBP together. It is fundamental that it be regarded in this light rather than as an add-on to objectives (a)-(c), because it provides the operative mechanisms that will enable the AUBP to meet the stated objectives as a totality.

II. THE MEANING OF CAPACITY-BUILDING

5. The objectives of the AUBP cover some activities that are essentially technical and others that involve institutional and human resources development. Capacity-building relates to both.

(a) On demarcation and demarcation:

- (i) There is a need to build specialized skills, including surveying, mapping and the selection/interpolation of appropriate boundary markers. It is important that there are mechanisms in place for sharing knowledge about technical options and best practice.
- (ii) There is a strong case for building a central repository for the dissemination of some information, possibly in a digital format that can be web-based.
- (iii) There is also a need to build supportive, multi-disciplinary and applied research in collaboration with legal experts, historians, geographers, anthropologists, political scientists and others with relevant specialisms.

(b) On the promotion of regional integration:

- (i) There is a need for the gathering and dissemination of up-to-date information on existing initiatives to promote regional integration.
- (ii) There is a need for sharing of information on best practice in co-operation with RECs and other stakeholders.
- (iii) There is a need for purposive training programme that promote and deepen awareness for regional integration .

(c) On cross-border co-operation:

- (i) There is a need for the maintenance of up-to-date information on existing efforts to promote cross-border co-operation.
- (ii) There is a need to showcase successful new initiatives, such as pilot projects relating to the twinning of border towns. This might be done through a web-based format
- (iii) There is a need to build supportive, multi-disciplinary and applied research that can draw on the experience from other parts of the world and monitor progress on cross-border co-operation in Africa.
- (iv) There is need for specific training programmes, notably focused on appropriate re-orientation of the personnel of border-enforcement outfits and civil administrations of border areas.

III. MEETING THE CAPACITY-BUILDING NEEDS OF AUBP

6. There is a balance to be struck between supporting initiatives that can yield results in the short-term, and actively promoting others that are necessarily medium- and long-term in scope. The AUBP will be supporting capacity-building initiatives, but it is important that the capacity of AUBP itself be strengthened in the shape of personnel and infrastructure for the Unit within the African Union Commission.

- *Short-term Measures:* These include providing relevant technical, strategic and administrative services to facilitate the achievement of core objectives. It also includes show-casing initiatives as they come to fruition. Finally, quick gains can be made by building partnerships with research networks and research programmes that already exist.
- *Medium-term Measures:* Building capacity involves strengthening institutions and human resources through training programmes (seminars, workshops conferences). It also entails the fostering of an environment that is conducive to integration and co-operation through engagement with the media and other outlets for public engagement. Finally, there is a need for publications in paper and digital formats to disseminate information about the progress made and the challenges ahead.
- *Long-term Measures:* These cannot be postponed, but have to be tackled at the earliest possible stage. However, their beneficial effects are only likely to become obvious within a longer time-frame. This includes measures to build regional perspectives into curricula in the educational sector, strengthening borderlands research and teaching and establishing a new knowledge infrastructure aimed specifically at meeting the AUBP objectives.

IV. THE PROGRESS SO FAR

7. The implementation of the capacity building component of the AUBP Four-Point Agenda has been severely constrained by a couple of factors:

- (a) *The support from Africa's Development Partners has been less than anticipated. Of the several bodies that have been contacted only the German development agency, GTZ has, responded positively.*
- (b) *There has been competition for finite resources from the other components of the AUBP, mostly notably from the pursuit of border demarcation which is a priority.*

8. The danger is that, in the context of a lack of resources, capacity-building will come to be seen as an optional extra rather than an integral component that is fundamental to the success of the programme as a whole.

9. Nevertheless, there have been some successes during the initial 2008-2010 Plan period. These include:

(a) *Developments at the AU Commission Headquarters*

- (i) *Staffing and equipment of the AUBP Unit* in the CMD (Conflict Management Division) of the Peace and Security Department of the Commission;
- (ii) *Development of the AU Boundary Information System* in the AUBP Unit;
- (iii) *Production of essential handbooks* (e.g. one book on the AUBP a Handbook on Delimitation and Demarcation, with other titles planned on Good Practices in Cross-Border Cooperation and on Capacity Building itself);
- (iv) *Successful sensitization workshops in the AU's Five Pillar Regional Economic Communities* which were attended by representatives of other RECs;
Kampala, EAC, 25-26 September 2008,
Algiers, NA, 16-17 October 2008,
Ouagadougou, ECOWAS, 23-24 April 2009,
Libreville, ECCAS, 21-23 May 2009,
Windhoek, SADC, 22-23 October 2009,
- (v) *Organization of a consultancy for a Continental Legal Instrument on Transfrontier Cooperation*, including a Review Meeting of Experts, Bamako, Mali, November, 2009.

(b) *African Regional Institute, Imeko, Nigeria*

10. With the generous support of GTZ, the Institute has carried out infrastructural improvements and hosted two training programmes:

- A six-week 'Train-The-Trainers, programme in Border and Borderlands Studies, for Senior Academics drawn from selected Nigerian Universities';
- A one-week 'Executive Cross-Border Security and Policing Class' for Senior Police and Border-Enforcement Officers drawn from both sides of the Nigeria-Benin Border.

11. The Institute aims to become Africa's leading example of a New Knowledge Infrastructure, providing distinctly specialized training and research services in support of the AUBP as strategy for reinforcing wider African integration.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS

(a) *Making Progress*

12. The 2008-2010 phase of the AUBP implementation has understandably focused on the short and medium-term dimensions of capacity-building. However, the long-term dimensions cannot be ignored or postponed without impairing the programme as a whole. More specifically, the consultancy on capacity-building, based on provisions of sub-section C of Paragraph 5 of the 2007 Declaration (Implementation Principles), has not been commissioned. This has stood in the way of producing an inventory of specialized institutions that might be important to the furtherance of the capacity-building agenda. A number of relevant institutions spring to mind in Africa and elsewhere. Those located in Africa are:

- African Regional Institute (for Cross-Border Relations and Regional Integration Studies and Orientation), Imeko, Nigeria;
- Centre for Studies on Regional Integration of the Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique, recently established with the solicited support of the UN-ECA;
- The West African Regional Integration Research Institute, Cape Verde, a UNESCO-inspired initiative approved by the Authority of the Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS but yet to begin operations;
- Special Masters Degree programme on 'Security and Management of Transfrontier Areas', Jointly Run by Sub-Institutions in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Law and International Relations of Omar Bongo University, Libreville, Gabon, and University of Yaoundé II, Yaoundé, Cameroun;
- Centre for African Regional Integration and Border Studies (CARIBS) of the University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria, established in late 2000 but put in abeyance since 2008;
- The African Borderlands Research Network (ABORNE), a Europe-based Africanist initiative, with African members, headquartered at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh in the UK.

13. Some of those institutions located outside Africa are:

- European University Institute, Florence, Italy, established in 1972 by the then European Economic Community and now an Institution of the European Union;
- Europa Institute, Faculty of Law, University of Edinburgh, UK;
- European College, Bruges, Belgium;
- European Cultural Centre, Lausanne, Switzerland;
- International Boundaries Research Unit (IBRU), Durham, UK;
- The International Scheldt Faculty (ISF), founded 1990;
- Nijmegen Centre for Border Research, Radboud University of Nijmegen, Netherlands;
- Centre for Inter-American and Border Studies, University of Texas at El Paso, Texas, U.S.A;
- The Joint Border Research Institute, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, U.S.A;

- El Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF), Tijuana, Baja California, Northern Mexico.

14. Some of these institutions focus on research and others offer more applied training programmes. The AUBP could usefully build capacity both by learning from the example of some of these institutions and by selectively deploying some of their services. There is no single model of training that applies across the board. The programmes that are appropriate for border officials are different to those suited to policy-makers and to those concerned with the legal and technical aspects of boundary delimitation and demarcation. The role that the AUBP can usefully play is to facilitate access to information and to broker the delivery of specific programmes according to specific needs.

(b) Information and Capacity-Building

15. Training programmes and workshops are discrete events, although refresher courses should ideally establish continuities. By contrast, capacity-building also involves an ongoing process of gathering, exchanging and disseminating relevant information to interested parties. There is a need for AUBP to concentrate not merely on technical aspects, such as mapping and surveying, but also to create a web-based system to facilitate the regular flow of information. A well-maintained website would enable the AUBP to highlight its work, provide public access to relevant documents, furnish web links to partner institutions and showcase examples of best practice. There are some examples of such websites in existence. Serious consideration should be paid to the delivery of a format that will be readily accessible to users within African countries where bandwidth is often a constraint. This should go together with the strengthening of the capacity of the AUBP Unit itself.

VI. PROJECTIONS FOR 2010-2012

16. Given the conceptualization of the AUBP as a strategy for structural prevention of conflicts and reinforcement of African regional integration, the long-term dimensions of capacity-building are strongly recommended for adoption in the next phase of the implementation. The realization of the special consultancy on capacity building, aimed at a comprehensive and comparative 'Survey of Relevant Research and Training Institutions' in and outside Africa should be a priority for the 2010-2012 Phase of Implementation. The same is true of a web-based portal for the AUBP.

17. Other priorities include:

- a continent-wide curricular review at primary, secondary and - particularly urgently - tertiary levels, aimed at inculcating values, perspectives and insights of cross-border cooperation and regional integration;

- a focus on improving the syllabi of the training schools for the Police and Border-Enforcement Outfits of Member States and the imperative for specialized training and retraining of supervisors;
- support for existing training programmes and courses and the development of new initiatives;
- active work (within the AU Commission) to enable the Department of Peace and Security, which houses the AUBP, to forge more systematic collaboration with its counterpart for Education;
- intensified efforts at resource mobilization and partnership to include other African development partners, especially the institutions and establishments in the UK, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain as well as the U.S., and Canada, in view of abiding historical connections and other manifest interests in matters relating to modern State territories and boundaries in Africa.