AFRICAN UNION BORDER PROGRAMME (AUBP)
Uniting and integrating Africa through peaceful, open and prosperous borders

Introduction

African boundaries have since the demise of colonialism been a source of great concern to independent African states. Despite inheriting colonially-drawn boundaries, there have been recurrent disputes, some violent, over poorly marked or unmarked boundaries; posing a challenge to the regional and continental integration efforts. In January 2007, the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union took a decision that encouraged the Commission to pursue efforts aimed at structural prevention of conflicts through the implementation of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP). In June 2007, the African Ministers in charge of border issues adopted the Declaration on the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) and its Implementation Modalities. This declaration was endorsed by the Executive Council of the African Union, at its 11th Ordinary Session held in Accra, Ghana, from 25 to 29 June 2007. However, the interest of the AU in border issues can be traced to July 2002 when it adopted a Memorandum of Understanding on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) that recognized border delimitation and demarcation as factors for peace, security and economic and social progress, and provided for their delimitation and demarcation by 2012.

Justification for the Establishment of the AUBP

- To address the persistence of lack of delimitation and demarcation that gives rise to ‘undefined zones’, within which the application of national sovereignty poses problems, and constitutes a real obstacle to the deepening of the integration process.
- To address cross-border criminal activities through pragmatic border management.
- To consolidate the gains made in the regional integration process, as demonstrated by the existence of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and of numerous large-scale cooperation initiatives.
- To facilitate the development of cross-border integration dynamics, which are sustained by local stakeholders.

Political and Legal Instruments Guiding the AUBP

- Resolution AHG/Res.16(I) on border disputes between African States, adopted by the 1st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Cairo, Egypt, in July 1964.
- Article 4 (b) of the AU Constitutive Act which calls for “respect of borders existing on achievement of independence.”
• Memorandum of Understanding on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), adopted by the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002 [Decision CM/Dec.666(LXXVI)], which provides for the delineation and demarcation of African boundaries by 2012 where such an exercise has not yet taken place.
• Decision of the 8th Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa in January 2007, encouraging the Commission to pursue its efforts towards the structural prevention of conflicts, especially through the implementation of the AUBP.

AUBP Vision

A united and integrated Africa with peaceful, open and prosperous borders

AUBP Mission

The prevention and resolution of border-related disputes and the promotion of regional and continental integration, which constitute a tool in the structural prevention of conflicts in Africa

The Strategic Objectives of the AUBP

• Facilitating and supporting the delimitation and demarcation of African boundaries where such exercise has not yet taken place.
• Reinforcing the integration process, within the framework of the RECs and other large-scale cooperation initiatives.
• Developing, within the framework of the RECs and other regional integration initiatives, local cross-border cooperation.
• Building the capacities of member states in border management, as well as in border studies and research.
• Advising the Commission and other organs of the African Union on border-related matters.

AUBP Implementation Modalities

The AUBP is being implemented at national, regional and continental levels on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity and respect of the sovereignty of Member States.

a) The delimitation, demarcation and management of boundaries depend primarily on the sovereign decision of the Member States. The AUBP is closely working with Member States to undertake and pursue bilateral negotiations on all issues relating to the delimitation, demarcation and management of their borders, while aiming to protect and promote the interests and rights of border populations. The AUBP is assisting the Member States in mobilizing the necessary resources and expertise needed to delimit, demarcate and manage their boundaries.
b) Local stakeholders are the primary drivers and key players of cross-border cooperation. The AUBP is working closely with RECs to facilitate local initiatives that promote cross-border cooperation. The AUBP, in partnership with the RECs, is planning to establish regional funds to finance and has drafted a convention on cross-border cooperation that is under consideration by key decision-makers before adoption. The AUBP is also taking the necessary steps to ensure that cross-border cooperation is included in the major international initiatives launched in favour of the continent, as well as play a coordination role and facilitate the exchange of information and good practices between the RECs.

c) The AUBP, with partners such as Germany's GIZ, is assisting African countries to develop their capacities in the areas of border delimitation, demarcation and management. It is doing this by carrying out an inventory of African institutions that offer training in these domains, exploring avenues for collaboration with relevant training centres outside Africa, and designing a capacity building programme.

d) Since boundary making and maintenance are cooperative undertakings that require various stakeholders to work together, the AUBP is forging partnerships of locals, states and foreign stakeholders particularly the United Nations and former colonial powers that have records on African boundaries. The AUBP is also building networks and establishing partnerships with research and training institutes to build the capacities of Member States to delimit, demarcate and manage their boundaries.

e) In view of the fact that the exercises of delimiting, demarcating and managing boundaries are very expensive and highly technical, the AUBP is working closely with States and RECs to mobilize the required resources and any other necessary support needed to delimit, demarcate and manage African boundaries.

Implementation Partners

- Member States
- RECs (ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA, ECCAS, SADC, IGAD, CEN-SAD & UMA)

Supporting Partners

- GIZ
- UN Agencies (UNDP, UNDPA, and UNDPKO)

Further Information

For further information, please contact:

African Union Border Programme
AU Commission, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Tel. (251-11) 371 6577
Fax (251-11) 551 9371
E-mail: situationroom@africa-union.org