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PRESS RELEASE

The African Union Border Program holds its 2nd Coordination Meeting with RECs in Lusaka, Zambia

Lusaka, 25 November 2015: the African Union Border Program (AUBP) convened a two-day coordination meeting with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) from 24 to 25 November 2015, at the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia. The meeting is a follow-up to the 1st Coordination Meeting held in October 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria. Both meetings aim to adopt an inclusive approach to Border Management by creating a platform for the RECs to interact among themselves and update the AUBP on their border management initiatives for the implementation of the Program.

The meeting highlighted the importance of the RECs in the implementation of the AUBP in accelerating regional and continental integration and the need for a common approach to border management at all levels.

The meeting provided an opportunity to review and update the AUBP-RECs Joint Roadmap for Border Management adopted in Abuja in 2013, and came up with a draft Report on the status of borders on the continent and the different initiatives on cross-border cooperation to be presented at the ministerial conference in 2016.

The meeting was organised with the support of the GIZ/AUBP.

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NOTE TO THE EDITORS

Consultative and planning workshop on border delimitation, demarcation, management, stabilization and development in the Great Lakes region: The Peace and Security Department Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Division (PCRD) and the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) planned this consultative and planning workshop on border delimitation, demarcation, management, stabilization and development in the Great Lakes region as a follow up to the 4 December 2014, Annual Joint Boundary Review and Planning Meeting held in Dar es Salam. During the meeting, Burundi, DRC and Uganda held a side meeting with the AUBP to express their readiness to conduct delimitation and demarcation of their borders and have a joint border management to ensure safe and secured borders in the region.

The PCRD, during its consultative meeting with the RECs held in Addis Abeba from 27-28 October 2014, was requested by the ICGLR to support the implementation of cross-border

development projects formulated under the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) with a view to promoting peace-building efforts and cross-border collaboration that will lead to sustainable peace and security in the region. This is also in line with the existing support being provided by the AUC under the joint AU-KfW-COMESA Trading for Peace Programme aimed at post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building through building trade infrastructures at border areas thereby promoting community welfare and collaboration through trade to support peace-building and security efforts.

About the Establishment of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP): The African Union Border Programme (AUBP) was established by African leaders in January 2007 at the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Government of the African Union. On 7 June 2007, the declaration on the AUBP was adopted at the first conference of African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues, held at the AU Commission in Addis Ababa. This Declaration was endorsed by the AU Executive Council, at its 11th Ordinary Session held in Accra, Ghana, from 25th to 29th June 2007.

With the numerous border related tensions and disputes, even outright wars, on the African continent since the 1950s-1960s, the creation of the AUBP constitutes a direct response to the need to preserve the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity for peace and security on the African continent. At the same time, the AUBP places an emphasis on its proactive strategy of conflict prevention in order to forestall the necessity of conflict resolution.

The AUBP is therefore the embodiment of African States' commitment to transforming borders into "bridges" for cooperation, integration and socio-economic development, and to overcome negative perceptions of borders as "barriers" as per the motto of the Programme.

Decisions adopted by the African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues

The African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues adopted the following three Decisions, empowering the AUBP and providing it with useful tools to relate border matters to peace and security issues on the continent:

1. The Declaration on the African Union Border Programme and its Implementation Modalities by the African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues, adopted on 7th June 2007. This Declaration was endorsed by the AU Executive Council, at its 11th Ordinary Session held in Accra, Ghana, from 25th to 29th June 2007
2. The Declaration on the African Union Border Programme and the Modalities for the Pursuit and Acceleration of its Implementation by the African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 25th March 2010 ; and,
3. The Declaration on the AUBP and its status of implementation and the draft convention on cross border cooperation by the African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues in Niamey, Niger, on 17th May 2012

Objective of the AUBP: The object of the AUBP is to prevent and resolve border-related disputes and to promote regional and continental integration, which constitute a tool in the structural prevention of conflicts in Africa. It aims to do this by 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; and advising the Commission and other organs of the African Union on border-related matters.

Achievements of the AUBP: At the instigation of AUBP, several concrete results have been achieved, especially in the area of demarcation. To date, 29,000 km of Africa's borders representing 35% of the total border length of 83,000 km can be considered as having been delimited and demarcated. About 14,000 km of the boundaries are undergoing re-affirmation works. When completed the goal of demarcating 50% of Africa's borders will have been achieved.

About the Niamey Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation: The Convention, which was drafted in Niamey, Niger, in 2012, is a document mapping the way forward for the promotion and institutionalisation of cross-border initiatives. The African Ministers of Justice, who adopted this Convention, have presented a legal framework, which emphasises the high priority of border management and cross-border cooperation in order to achieve unity and integration.

The Niamey Convention is a concrete result of the African Union Border Programme's objective to promote cross-border cooperation in mapping and surveying, infrastructure, communication, socio-economic development and trade, and also border security.

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