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***“I want to improve the
living conditions for the
14.500 people living in
my rural municipality”
Baba Kamate***



Peace and Security Department

AUBP, PSD

Newsletter

Foreword by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security *H.E. Ambassador Smaïl Chergui*



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It is my pleasure to share with you the 1st edition of the bi-annual newsletter of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP). Our 1st edition will examine the efforts of the Commission, Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to implement the African Union Border Programme.

The establishment of AUBP has enabled the Commission to fully exercise its role in the structural prevention of conflict through the delimitation/demarcation of borders and the implementation of effective border governance. The Programme offers a platform for the negotiated resolution of border disputes and the promotion of regional and continental integration through cross border cooperation. It remains an important tool at the service of all Member States and RECs.

2020 – the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic – has made implementation of the AUBP even more challenging. It has underscored the necessity of finding lasting solutions for the joint management of epidemics and pandemics in borderlands and cross border spaces.

It has become a question of human security: the human security of millions of people crossing borders each day and the human security of border communities.

Our newsletter documents the commitment of Member States and RECs to implement the principles of AUBP in the face of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It highlights the efforts of the Commission, through the Programme, to support Member States and RECs in their efforts to limit the spread and impact of the pandemic through cross border cooperation and stabilization of the border areas. It also features on-the-ground implementation of activities by Member States to delimit/demarcate their inter-state boundaries.

While commending these efforts, I take this opportunity to reiterate my request to Member States which have not yet done so, to sign, ratify, and domesticate the African Union Convention on Cooperation Cross-border. I would also like to highlight the availability of another tool to assist Member States; the African Union Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance. It contains relevant guidelines and recommendations to promote cross-border cooperation across the continent.

I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to our partners for their relentless support in the area of border governance.

I hope you find this edition to be both informative and insightful.

H.E. Ambassador Smaïl Chergui
Commissioner for Peace & Security
African Union Commission

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News from the AUBP Unit

Celebrating the 10th African Union Border Day



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African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues adopted 7 June as a day to popularize the importance of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) as a tool to promote peace, security and regional and continental integration in Africa.

In 2020, the African Border Day was, for the first time, celebrated virtually. Through the @AU_PSD twitter channel, the AUBP unit shared video messages from representatives of RECs, Ministries and Border Commissions from AU Member States on the occasion of the African Border Day. H.E. Amb. Smail Chergui @AU_Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, in his statement, urged AU States to recommit to setting up mechanisms to improve the security and living conditions of citizens in border communities and to put human security first, as we support resilient cross-border cooperation (Video message). African Border Day is an opportunity to recognize important milestones such as the AU Convention on Cross Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) and the African Union Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance.

Drafting Tri-junction Treaties between Member States

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As part of its assistance to Member States in the delimitation and demarcation of boundaries, the African Union Commission (AUC), through the African Union Border Programme (AUBP), organized, on 07 December 2020, a virtual workshop on tri-junction treaties. Presentations and exchanges focused on the international best practices on the establishment of tri-junction points and on the modalities of writing a tri-junction treaty. A tri-junction is a geographical point at which the boundaries of three countries meet. Worldwide there are approximately 176 international tri-junctions. Nearly half are situated in rivers, lakes or seas.

The following Member States participated in the meeting: Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. In addition, the virtual workshop aimed to build confidence and trust between these Member States whose border lines converge at a tri-point. During the meeting participants reviewed the following tri-junctions: DRC, South Sudan and Uganda / Uganda, South Sudan and Kenya / Namibia, Botswana and South Africa / Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe / Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique.

Based on their joint decisions, the AUBP is willing to support Member States in their reaffirmation processes of the existing tri-junctions and developing treaties at at tri-junction points, where such an exercise has not taken place, and the demarcation of the tri-junction points shared by the Member States.

What is happening at the AU?

PSC reviews the Progress Report on implementation of the AUBP

The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) held its 930th meeting on 11 June 2020 in commemoration of African Border Day. The session was also part of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020.

On this occasion, H. E., Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, highlighted the progress made in implementing the African Union Border Programme (AUBP). In this regard, he welcomed the efforts made by Member States to clarify their boundaries and the gradual institutionalization of cross-border cooperation. He also emphasized the contribution of the AUBP to the AU's coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, including its support to Member States in their efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic at interstate borders.

Following the review of the progress report on the implementation of the AUBP between January 2019 and March 2020, the PSC welcomed the progress made at both national, regional and continental levels and acknowledged the Programme's contribution to the structural prevention of conflict, the promotion of regional and continental integration and the strengthening of socio-economic development in Africa. In addition, the PSC welcomed the contribution of the AUBP to the AU's overall response to COVID-19 in Africa, in particular through its support to Member States and RECs/RMs in their initiatives to combat the pandemic at borders. The PSC also urged the African Union Commission to continue working in close cooperation with Member States and RECs/RMs while respecting the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity. Finally, the PSC recommended that the AUC develop and implement a capacity-building Programme on border governance for the benefit of Member States.

The STC DSS encourages the use of border governance instruments



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The Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Security and Safety (STC DSS) held its 13th Meeting on November 5, 2020 in virtual form. The meeting examined the conclusions of the 16th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces and of the Heads of the Security and Safety Services held on November 3 and 4, 2020.

In his opening Remarks, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, Commissioner updated the Ministers of Defense of the AU Member States on the state of peace and security in the continent and on the progress made in operationalizing the African Standby Force, despite the CoVID-19 Pandemic.

At the end of their deliberations, the members of the STC DSS made a statement in which they reiterated the call to

Member States to ratify the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) and to develop national border policies in line with the AU Strategy for a Better Integrated Border Governance.

The Strategy provides a set of advice for African decision-makers, enabling them to reconcile the governance of their borders with the objectives, values and principles of the AU. It helps Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to develop national and regional border policies and at the same time facilitates the harmonization of border governance procedures and practices.

The AU Convention for Cross Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) is an instrument for promoting cross-border cooperation and a tool for the prevention and the peaceful settlement of border disputes; establishing stability; and facilitating the development and shared management of borderlands.

Since its adoption by the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government on June 27, 2014 in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea), 17 countries have signed The Niamey Convention and 5 have ratified and deposited the instruments of ratification. The African Union Convention for Cross-border Cooperation will enter into force thirty (30) days after the receipt by the President of the Commission of the 15th instrument.

AUBP on the Ground

Covid-19 sensitization campaign with Cameroonian Ministry of Health



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The COVID-19 sensitisation campaign in Cameroonian border regions, jointly implemented by the ECCAS Borders Programme and the Ministry of Health of Cameroon (MINSANTE) took place in the Northern region of Cameroon. They were targeting the often marginalised and under-informed communities along the borderline with Tchad and aimed at raising awareness about the pandemic among local authorities, cooperatives and border populations to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The campaign included visits to all border districts along the borderline, meeting with local authorities, traditional leaders and representatives of civil society to analyse the state of information and preparation in the fight against the pandemic. In several border villages, like Figuil and Maidigrin, mini-workshops allowed for a targeted sensitisation of village representatives and the population. From September 13-17, a regional sensitisation workshop on COVID-19 in border regions took place in Garoua for all representatives of the different districts in the area of Northern Cameroon.

Bridging borders to bring the African Union, Ethiopia and Germany closer together



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AU Commissioner for Peace and Security H.E. Ambassador Smaïl Chergui and German Ambassador Stephan Auer handed over two field vehicles and land surveying equipment to the Government of Ethiopia. Ambassador Woinisheh Tadesse, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that the contribution would improve technical capabilities of Ethiopian border officers to meet the objectives of the AUBP.

Landlocked Ethiopia is bordered by Eritrea to the north, Djibouti and Somalia to the east, Sudan and South Sudan to the west, and Kenya to the south.

SND Africa: Operationalization of Moyale One Stop Border Post: To Spur Economic Growth, Cross Border Cooperation and Social Integration



© SND Africa

Moyale is a vibrant, strategic and old colonial border town centrally located between Nairobi and Addis Ababa, through which the Great North Road traverses. The town is inhabited by different ethnic communities with strong social, political and economic ties.

The Kenya and Ethiopia border straddles a distance of about 860km that has great potential to support mutually beneficial integration between the two countries and their communities. However, recurring ethnic conflicts, smuggling of goods, human trafficking, unsafe migration, proliferation of small arms and light weapons have persisted for years hindering any meaningful cross border socio-economic activities.

Both states share a historical friendship, which can be reinforced through seamless cross border trade as a catalyst to promote borderland development. Cumulatively, it is estimated that both countries can provide a market of about 150 million people capable of developing a strong regional value chain. It is in recognition of this fact that both countries with the support of regional bodies agreed to establish a One Stop Border Post (OSBP) in order to exploit dormant strength and potential opportunities. The OSBP process was launched in 2015 when the President of Kenya and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia signed an MOU at the border with the aim of establishing cross border activities to foster peace and sustainable development targeting Marsabit County (Kenya) and the Borana Zone (Ethiopia). Both states sought to utilize the OSBP as a tool to support the transformative shift towards peace and prosperity for the communities along the border. Fully operationalizing a One Stop Border Post is incredibly challenging.

There are illegal trade routes, locally referred to as Panya routes, are used by unscrupulous traders and businessmen to defraud both governments of millions of dollars in tax revenue every year. In addition, the routes are commonly used by local ethnic militias during inter communal conflicts and human and drug traffickers to smuggle immigrants and narcotics on a regular basis. Moreover, illegal routes expose women traders to various risks including sexual harassment, arrest, confiscation and loss of goods to commoners.

On 09 December 2020, the President of Kenya and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia inaugurated the Moyale OSBP.

In line with the African Union's vision of creating a united and integrated Africa with peaceful, open and prosperous borders, SND in collaboration with the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) is implementing a pilot project aimed at supporting the operationalization of Moyale One Stop Border Post to spur economic growth, cross border cooperation and social integration. The project supports awareness raising on the importance of One Stop Border Posts (OSBP) among the local communities and its contribution to peace, security and integration.

The project also supports joint dialogue forums on integrated border management systems between officials, elders and business people. It further addresses the representation gaps created by the current composition of border management committees whose membership is drawn from government agencies only by creating an alternative platform through which other stakeholders can also air their grievances.

Once fully operationalized, the Moyale One Stop Border Post presents an opportunity to deter cross border crime, ensure human security, minimize the transactional cost of doing business, improve the livelihoods of border communities and enhance international social and economic integration.

Strategies for Northern Development Africa (SND) is a local Non-Governmental Organization working with nomadic pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya and Southern Ethiopia. Follow [@SNDAfrica](https://twitter.com/SNDAfrica) on Twitter.

Examples from the civil society: LPI's Response to COVID-19



© GIZ 2019

Upon the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic and following respective measures taken by governments in the region to contain the spread, the Life & Peace Institute and its partners working in the borderlands took several measures to contribute to preventing the spread of the virus. Borderland CSO partners were instrumental in distribution of personal protective equipment - primarily face masks- to community members as well as facilities for sanitising e.g. water tanks and soap. For example, in Moyale Ethiopia the Inter Africa Group, a partner of LPI, together with borderlands CSOs in several border points between Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, were involved in the distribution of PPEs, water tanks, soap. In Moyale Kenya, Livestock Marketing Association (MLA) was involved in distribution of face masks, sanitizers and water containers to livestock traders along the border.

CSOs were also involved in advocacy campaigns and community mobilisation, education and capacity building on the pandemic.

The Inter Africa Group (IAG) for example mounted a 9 day-campaign in which they, in collaboration with health officials and local elders, moved around the community using trucks mounted with loudspeakers passing messages about the pandemic and the actions community members needed to take to prevent themselves and their loved ones from contracting the disease. In Busia Uganda, the Alliance for Sustainable Health and Wealth (ASHWA) which is a youth organisation, worked in collaboration with the local government to reach out to their constituents with campaign messages on social distancing, sanitising and provision of PPEs

Another critical involvement by borderland CSOs was to engage with government agencies on discussions about the question of testing, for essential service providers. In Busia Kenya and Uganda, for instance, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union (ATGWU) effectively engaged the two governments on the question of harmonising the PCR testing requirements for truck drivers providing services between the two countries. It should be noted, that prior to this discussion, very long truck queues, stretching up to 17 km, some ferrying perishable goods, were characteristic of the border crossing point. As such, while awaiting clearance, truck operator would interact with local communities for several days, becoming spreaders of the disease.

Life & Peace Institute promotes peace through people-centred conflict transformation in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and DRC. Follow [@LPI_voices](#) on Twitter.

Reaffirming 888km: Malawi & Mozambique



© Ministry of Lands, Malawi

Landlocked Malawi shares a large border of a total length of 1400 km with neighboring Mozambique (land 888 km, lake 322 km & river 190 km). The boundary between Malawi and Mozambique was defined by the Anglo-Portuguese Agreement of 11th June 1891 followed by several addendums. The land boundary was partly physically demarcated and surveyed by the British and the Portuguese, but border pillars were built far apart. This made it impossible for both the local communities and public institutions to physically pin-point where the boundary line passed through.

A joint survey team from both countries has been working on the reaffirmation and densification of the border. From October 19th to 22nd the Ministry of Lands and Housing (Malawi) and the National Institute for Maritime and Border Affairs, IMAF; (Mozambique) conducted a joint boundary inspection. The inspection aimed at reviewing the progress made and the challenges faced during the work.

The Malawian Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development and the President of IMAF headed the tour. On behalf of the African Union Border Programme, both countries received supplies and support to facilitate exchanges at the technical level. Mozambique received from all-terrain vehicles to support the mobility and transport of the technical team. After the achievement of the final stretch, additional border pillars were built and 888km of the land border was reaffirmed.

"Re-affirmation and demarcation of boundaries in Africa will make physical boundaries clear and visible on the ground to all boundary users. As such, border related disputes and conflicts between neighboring countries will be minimized, if not prevented" said Kezzie K. Msukwa, Minister of Lands from Malawi.

Implementing the 1988 Treaty: DRC & Zambia



© Ministry of Lands, Zambia

A small area of Tanganyika province has been at the center of a border dispute between the DRC and Zambia for several decades. The portion of the border between Lake Moero and Lake Tanganyika was originally defined in 1894 as a straight line between the Luvwa River on Lake Moero and Cape Akalunga on Lake Tanganyika at about 8° 15'. However, the exact position of Cape Akalunga was not identifiable and caused a difference in interpretation.

A treaty signed in 1989 by the DRC and Zambia resolved this dispute inherited from colonization by delineating about 200 km of borders between Lakes Moero and Tanganyika. While the treaty has made it possible to put a common position on paper, its concrete application has been slow due to a lack of logistical means. Border incidents between the two armies occurred in 1996, 2006, and September 2016 around a Congolese town that was easily accessible from the Zambian side, while on the Congolese side, a swamp made it difficult to access. In mid-March, fighting broke out between the Congolese and Zambian armies, killing one man on each side, when Zambian troops occupied two villages in the southeastern Congolese province of Tanganyika. After this most recent incident, talks between Congolese and Zambian experts began in August in Lubumbashi.

After mediation by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the DRC/Zambia joint commission started working in September on the 250km land section between Lake Tanganyika and Lake Mero. Composed of topographic surveyors, cartographers, geodesists and many other experts, this team is carrying out the reconnaissance of the border and the construction of support points on both sides of the common border between the DRC and Zambia. In early November, the experts proceeded to the installation of geodetic markers at the border. These points will serve as benchmarks for the construction of border markers that will be erected from April 2021 in execution of the 1989 treaty. Their work was accompanied by sensitization and information campaigns for the local population on both sides of the border.

Face Mask Production: Iwoye (Ketou), the Border Region of Benin and Nigeria



© ABeGIEF

On the occasion of the celebration of the African Border Day (June 7th), Benin organised a training of trainers for women at the Benin-Nigeria border. Security forces taught 25 women from both sides of the border how to sew reusable face masks. The women can now replicate their knowledge and teach an additional 125 women. The joint training contributed to fostering cooperation and builds trust between security forces and the local border population. The face masks are also a great opportunity to create revenue in the rural border area. The masks will be sold for 0,20 to 0,30 EUR.

The border between Nigeria and Benin has been closed for more than a year. Nigeria closed its borders with Benin in August in a bid to stop the smuggling of food and other goods. The Benin-Nigeria border used to be a major trading route for the sub-region.

Enhancing Mobility for Female Traders in West Africa: Agoue, the Border Region between Benin & Togo



© ABeGIEF

As part of the Border Week celebrations in Benin, the Beninese Agence ABeGIEF (Agence Béninoise de Gestion Intégrée des Espaces Frontaliers) distributed 250 biometric ID cards to female traders from Togo and Benin.

With the new ID cards, merchants can identify themselves and prove that they come from an ECOWAS member state.

A representative of a women's organisation and female trader who has received a biometric ID card said: *"With the new identity cards we no longer have to be afraid and no longer have to cross the border illegally. Middlemen and smugglers have taken advantage of the fact that we can't read and write. We had to pay them a lot of money to smuggle us and our goods across the border."* Women represent a large proportion of traders in informal cross-border trade in agricultural products and are particularly vulnerable to exploitation due to illiteracy.

The ECOWAS states adopted the first protocol on the free movement of persons and goods as early as 1979.

Mono River: a Natural Border between Benin and Togo



© ABeGIEF

In Africa boundaries follow rivers for nearly 26,000 kilometers, 32% of the total continental boundary length. The Mono River is the major river of eastern Togo.

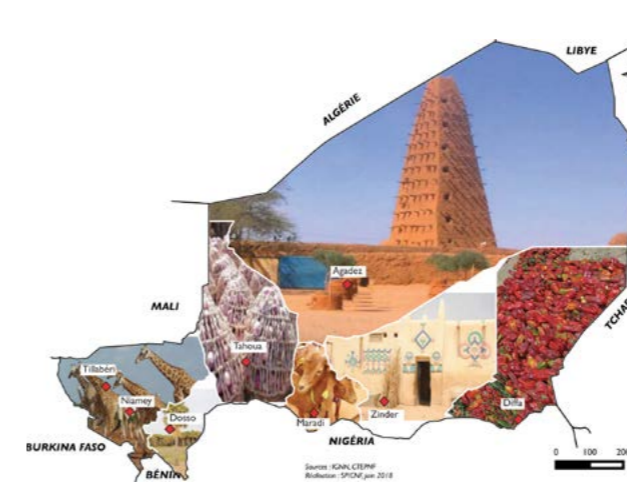
Along the southern portion of the river towards its mouth, it forms the international boundary between Togo and Benin. The river drains into the Bight of Benin through an extensive system of brackish water lagoons and lakes, including Lake Togo.

Rivers as international borders create numerous challenges for boundary-makers. Often the boundary is simply described as 'the river', which automatically creates uncertainty over the location of the boundary. Even when a particular line within the river is specified, for example the middle of the main channel used for navigation or the median line between the banks, locating that line with precision is rarely a simple exercise.

In early October a joint technical team from Benin and Togo undertook delimitation work along the Mono River to determine the median line between the river banks. During this mission the team could delimitate 20 km of the river. On the navigable part of the river, which is close to its mouth, bathymetric soundings will be done to determine the depth of the water. Bathymetry, the study of underwater depth of oceans, lakes and rivers, is the underwater equivalent to topography.

The watercourse of the Mono River is scarce and very irregular. It experiences long periods of low water with complete dryness, which makes it challenging for delimitation and demarcation.

New Website for Niger's Border Commission



© CNF Niger

Niger's border commission recently launched its new website: <https://www.cnf-niger.ne/>. Through the new website the border commission informs the public about its tasks and responsibilities.

The border commission's mission is to inventory, study and analyze all documents relating to the borders of the Republic of Niger for their delimitation and demarcation. The Permanent Secretariat of the National Border Commission (SPCNF) ensures the implementation of the decisions of the national border commission, which it informs and to which it reports on the activities carried out within the framework of the delimitation/demarcation of Niger's international borders.

Niger shares a borderline about 5690 km with 7 neighboring countries: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Nigeria and Chad. Among them are 5117,98 km land borders, 465 km river borders and 107,2 km of borderline on lake Chad.

In 2019, Niger also elaborated a new national border policy to improve the management of its borders.

The overall objective of this policy is to *"contribute to the management of national borders through the promotion of peace, security, sustainable development and cross-border cooperation in order to ensure better living conditions for the populations of border areas."*

COVID-19 Sensitization Campaigns in the Sahel



© Direction des frontières, Mali

The Malian Border Directorate received personal protection equipment and portable wash basins for its border regions to curb the cross-border spread of the pandemic. During sensitization campaigns held at health centers in border villages, the kits were distributed. Sessions about Covid-19 and its risks informed the local population about measures to prevent an infection. Mayor Moussa Sangare from the rural municipality Fakola (border Mali/Cote d'Ivoire) said *"At the beginning of this crisis, we had nothing. Today with this support we found our smile again. We are very happy to receive good information about this virus as well as material to protect us"*.

Border posts are high risk zones for the spread of the virus from one country to another. But many people also use informal border crossings for trade or work which exposes the border population as well.

Youth Engagement in Border Areas: EAC's Efforts in Peace and Security



© EAC YAP

"As rural areas, border communities face a silent threat due to COVID-19 affecting local health and livelihoods, young people have to act to support vulnerable communities by creating resilience through sensitisation and putting in place mitigative innovations." With this statement, Jean Claude Mugisha, EAC Youth Ambassador, outlined the role of the youth to engage border communities in the fight against COVID-19. The results of this engagement are the focus of a new report launched jointly by the EAC Youth Ambassadors (EAC YAP) and GIZ-AUBP on the 27th November 2020 at the EAC Secretariat in Arusha, Tanzania.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in East Africa, border areas have been critical zones with restrictive measures to prevent cross border transmissions. These restrictions further created challenges on economic activities and reportedly exacerbated cross border trafficking. For example, the stigmatization of cross border truck drivers transporting essential goods in the EAC region but later perceived as carriers of the virus in border areas such as Namanga (Tanzania-Kenya). This stigmatization worsened when the driver would stop at border points and interact with border communities for services such as food and accommodation.

A joint sensitisation campaign by EAC YAP and GIZ-AUBP covered in the new report tackled these aspects and ensured that communities understand facts about the disease and know how to protect themselves without stigmatising a specific group. EAC YAP in Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda have been reaching out to communities at EAC borders sensitising local communities as well as border agencies on protection and prevention of COVID-19 in line with the EAC Regional COVID-19 Response Plan.

Through a series of online messaging campaigns, EAC YAP have been further raising awareness. Ruth Ogolla, EAC YAP, highlighted during the report launch, that superstitious beliefs were still present in border communities making people more vulnerable to infection. *"It is the role of youth to engage with communities and let them know what information is correct."*

Additionally, through sms campaigns, EAC YAP have been providing an exchange platform between border communities and national as well as regional authorities. This allowed the suggestions and concerns of communities to be addressed. In addition, a media campaign through local community radios informed border communities on best approaches to conduct trade and cross border movements during the pandemic while respecting the measures taken by relevant authorities.

These radio spots were derived from interviews conducted by EAC YAP with national and regional authorities which addressed challenges faced by the border communities due to the pandemic.

During the report launch, Mohamadou Abdoul, Advisor GIZ Support to the African Union Border Programme (GIZ-AUBP), stressed the importance of engaging border communities during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of regional integration efforts, *"Border development is an integral part of regional integration since borders are natural areas to enter the implementation of regional and continental policies."* Petriker Paul, EAC YAP, pointed out that post-COVID more direct youth engagement with border communities would support peace and security in the EAC region.

In line with this, the report's conclusion outlines that border zones need to be prioritized as part of the regional and continental development agenda. Border zones accelerate cross border movements of people as well as services that enable the socio-economic and political prosperities of neighboring counties.

Public link to download the report accessible [here](#)

Youtube recording link accessible [here](#)

Photos for the session report launch and videos accessible [here](#) (will be updated)

Short summary video on Youtube accessible [here](#) Follow [@EAC_yap](#) on Twitter.

Clarifying the Border: Niger & Nigeria



© GIZ

The border commissions of Niger and Nigeria jointly undertook the demarcation of their border and the sensitization of the border populations in November.

The intervention area covers the border between Sokoto and Katsina state sectors on the Nigerian side and the regions Zinder and Tahoua on the Nigerien side.

Over 19,3 km of the border is newly demarcated. The construction work of 39 intermediate pillars and one main border pillar is currently being concluded. The distance in between the intermediate pillars is 250m. They are designed to increase the visibility of border line especially in hot spots with a high risk of conflict. Before the demarcation work started, both border commissions undertook an awareness raising mission along the border. The principal message to the border communities was that no one would lose their land or nationality through the construction of the new border pillars.

A clearly demarcated border contributes to the peaceful coexistence of the border communities.

Delimitation/Demarcation Exercises: South Sudan & Sudan

Having signed and ratified the Agreement on Border Issues in 2012, Sudan and South Sudan, with assistance from the African Union Commission, through the AU Border Programme (AUBP), established the Joint Boundary Commission (JBC), Joint Demarcation Committee (JDC) and Joint Technical Team (JTT).

In this regard, from 02 to 09 November 2020, and the 12-19 November 2020, the AUBP facilitated the meeting of the JDC of South Sudan and Sudan, in Juba (South Sudan) and Khartoum (Sudan) respectively. The JDC meetings aimed to implement the directives of the JBC by submitting a complete and detailed description of the boundary line as per the Border Issues Agreement (2012).

The JBC will then convene a meeting to evaluate the progress made and issue further directives.

It is important to note that the work of the JBC and JDC is complimentary. The JBC issues policy directives to the JDC for their implementation. Feasibility of the implementation of said policy directives is, however, guided by on-the-ground technical realities, which the JDC conveys to the JBC.

On the basis of the outcomes of the JDC meetings, AUBP will facilitate the next meeting of the JBC of South Sudan and Sudan, as a part of its overall support to the two Member States in the implementation of the Border Issues Agreement.

Behind the scenes interview

“I want to improve the living conditions for the 14.500 people living in my rural municipality”, Baba Kamate, 42, married with 3 children – Mayor of Lanfiala, Mali



© Direction des frontières, Mali

Baba started as a teacher and worked in the school administration before becoming Mayor of Lanfiala in 2016. Now he is responsible for the 14.500 people living in his municipality that borders neighboring Burkina Faso. His municipality consist of 17 smaller villages and is landlocked and difficult to access. The next town Tominian is about 100km away and Mali's capital Bamako is almost 600 km away. Most people in Lanfiala work in agriculture (dry crops), livestock breeding and small trade.

Due to the closeness with Burkina Faso, they also trade with their neighbors across the border. Currently the municipality is constructing a weekly market.

Lanfiala was first informed of COVID-19 Pandemic through the radio and TV. So far Lanfiala hasn't had a Covid-19 case. *“But as Mayor, it is my task to work on preventing Covid-19 in my municipality. I am mobilizing NGOs and partners to provide information and training about Covid-19 as well as personal protection equipment. Besides that, I am providing our two health centers with Covid-19 test equipment.”* says Baba. *“The support from the AU Border Programme together with Mali's National Directorate of Borders made it possible to strengthen preventive measures against the spread of Covid-19 in our municipality and across the border to Burkina Faso.”* They organized awareness sessions for representatives of the population (e.g. youth and women associations) on the modes of propagation and measures to prevent coronavirus disease. *“We also received handwashing kits, masks and fever thermometers. With only 15 drinking water supply points in the municipality, the handwashing kits are very helpful.”*

Social media highlight

African Union Peace
@AU_PSD

Since the outbreak, Conflict Prevent'n & Mediat'n efforts have been affected; While #COVID-19 continues to pose multifaceted challenges, it also gives us the opportunity to be innovative; to work collectively to prevent & respond to security threats- Amb.
[@NgogaFred](#) #CPEWD, #AUPSD

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Ambassador Fred Ngoga Gateretse is the Head of Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division at the African Union Commission (AU). The Division includes the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise, and the AU Border Programme (AUBP).

Upcoming events & trainings

Online Training: Introduction to International Boundaries: Definition, Delimitation and Dispute Resolution by IBRU: Centre for Borders Research at Durham University

International boundaries are a major source of friction between neighbouring states. Many land boundaries remain poorly defined and fewer than half of the world's potential maritime boundaries have been fully agreed. Governments recognise the value of clearly-defined boundaries, yet the political, economic and social complexities of boundary regions, as well as the details of topography and history, often make resolving competing territorial and jurisdictional claims extraordinarily difficult.

This online training course provides a simple, contextual overview of international boundaries and the practical measures that can be taken to resolve international boundary disputes. Through a series of short online lectures and a final practical exercise, the course explores the relevance of borders and looks at land and maritime boundary disputes, before covering methods available for dispute resolution.

Programme

- Introduction to Boundaries
- States and Territories
- The Continuing Relevance of Borders
- From Borders to Boundaries...and Back Again
- Boundary Disputes
- Boundary Practitioner Martin Pratt on Land Boundaries: 'Practical Considerations in Land Boundary Definition and Recovery'
- UNCLOS and the Limits of Maritime Zones
- Maritime Boundary Delimitation
- Boundary Practitioner John Brown on Maritime Boundaries: 'Clear as Mud: Low Tide Elevations, Equidistance Lines and Baselines'
- Methods of International Dispute Resolution
- International Dispute Resolution under UNCLOS
- Introduction to the Boundary Delimitation Exercise

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