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Message from H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, African Union Commission, on the Occasion of the Celebration of the 13th Edition of African Border Day

7 June 2023

Since its establishment in 2010, African Border Day has been celebrated across the continent to highlight the importance of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) and to encourage all parties involved to make additional efforts in its implementation.

This event offers us the opportunity to take stock of the progress made, the difficulties encountered and the challenges to be addressed in the implementation of the AUBP. It is also an opportunity to sensitize all relevant actors on the role and relevance of African interstate borders in promoting peace, security and stability as well as strengthening regional and continental integration processes.

This year, we celebrate the 13th edition of African Border Day under the African Union's theme of the year 2023: "*Accelerating the implementation of the AfCFTA*". The theme could not be more appropriate in view of the importance of good border governance including the free movement of people and goods. The rapid, safe and expeditious processing of the flow of people, goods and vehicles at border crossing points is indeed a guarantee of the acceleration of the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

The actions carried out under the AUBP contribute to the achievement of the AU theme of the year. For example, the Programme facilitated the exchange of experiences between ECOWAS and EAC on the management and functioning of One-Stop-Border-Posts (OSBPs) with a study visit by some Member States from West Africa to the Namanga OSBP along Kenya-Tanzania border. In addition, the Programme supported an exchange visit of West African women's informal cross border traders associations to Busia OSBP along the Kenya-Uganda border to dialogue with their East African counterparts.

These experience sharing initiatives between the RECs and their Member States are part of a wider process of institutionalizing cross-border cooperation. Each year, significant progress is made, notably with the signature of bilateral framework agreements between neighbouring

States, agreements between decentralized structures, the creation and establishment of cross border bodies, the development and implementation of cross-border cooperation initiatives etc. This encouraging dynamic must be sustained and amplified in all the cross-border areas of the continent. It must support and galvanize the acceleration of the implementation of the AfCFTA.

I urge the RECs, Member States and all relevant stakeholders to redouble their commitment to effective border governance which will serve as a lever and driver for the rapid achievement of the AfCFTA objectives, contributing to the transformation of the Continent.

I call on the RECs, Member States and all relevant actors to draw on the guidelines and recommendations of the African Union Border Governance Strategy to develop regional and national border policies and strategies that contribute to translating the AfCFTA into reality.

Finally, I reiterate my encouragement to Member States to accelerate the processes of signature, ratification and domestication of the African Union Convention on Cross Border Cooperation. This instrument, implemented, will greatly facilitate the acceleration of the implementation of the AfCFTA.

It is in the hope that these calls will be heard that I wish you a wonderful African Border Day celebration.