



Center of African Borderland security and development studies

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***"BORDER COUNTRY" IN AFRICA;
FIRST ALL AFRICAN FORUM ON "BORDER COUNTRY"
TO BE HELD IN BAMAKO MALI 7 JUNE 2021***

***CONTRIBUTION OF AMBASSADOR Aguibou DIARRAH to the XIII International
Round Table during the XIX Strategic Forum on 26 October 2020
Saint Petersburg***

26 October 2020

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INTRODUCTION

This presentation of Ambassador A. DIARRAH to the XIX Annual Strategic planning Leaders Forum of the Regions and cities of Russia shows the “Border Country”, African Cross-Border cooperation dynamic, and the perspective of the First All African Forum on “Border Country” to be held in Bamako Mali next seven (7) June 2021.

African public policies have undeniably been marked since 2000 by a strong desire to promote cross-border cooperation in matters of regional integration. This voluntarist and sustained impetus for a stronger integration of peoples and economies is impressed as much by the magnitude of the population dynamics in Africa as by the borders conflicts and the constraints imposed by globalization.

In addition to the institutional integration which finds it difficult enough to stimulate regional construction, informal and popular integration is developing, supported by various initiatives which are expressed on both sides of the borders, demanding more cooperation between States.

The combination of efforts between the institutional and popular levels questions the role of border policies and the definition of adequate instruments for strengthening the process of regional integration in Africa. It is more a question of examining the role of States, Regional Economic Communities, the African Union, border populations and development Partners in the process of promoting African regional integration.

I. CONTEXT

African states and their borders are directly derived from colonial legacy. Colonial boundaries upset the pre-colonial borders once based on marked sociological and human realities.

Current borders are indeed characterized by their fragility and precariousness. This results from the fact that their definition did not obey any objective criteria, the opinion of the populations concerned and of economic and socio-cultural realities on the ground having been masterfully ignored. Only narrow mathematical factors presided over the routes, thus breaking the economic and socio-cultural balances historically established on the continent.

Borders designed in this way could only raise problems after the independence of African States. This precarious situation of the African border lines could create confusions in the border areas. They are constantly subject to challenges which often lead to fratricidal conflicts.

Facing with this observation, the search for integration has always been a permanent quest for African leaders; the political will of the governments exists. There are eleven (11) main regional institutions on our continent: such as;

- *Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (15 countries)*
- *West African Monetary Union (UEMAO) (8 countries)*
- *Arab Magreb Union (UMA) (5 countries)*
- *Saharian & Sahel Union (CEN-SAD) (7 countries)*
- *Central Africa Commun Market (CEMAC)(6 countries)*
- *Southern African Commun Market (COMESA) (21 countries)*
- *Southern Africa Development Community (SADEC) (14 countries)*
- *Community Economic Indian Ocean (CEOI) (3 countries)*
- *Community of East Africa (EAC) (3 countries)*
- *South Africa Community Union (SACU) (5 countries),*
- ***and a continental institution, African Union Commission (AUC) (54 countries)***

All of these regional institutions have made real integration efforts, but the results are below people's expectations. It is therefore necessary to energize the integration process, in this context "Border country", or "Border zone" is widely mentioned as a cornerstone for the promotion of true local integration through cross-border cooperation.

BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENT



Source: African Union

LIST OF COUNTRIES BY REGION

<u>Eastern Africa</u>	<u>Central Africa</u>	<u>Northern Africa</u>	<u>Southern Africa</u>	<u>Western Africa</u>
- <i>Burundi</i>	- <i>Angola</i>	- <i>Algeria</i>	- <i>Botswana</i>	- <i>Benin</i>
- <i>Comoros</i>	- <i>Cameroon</i>	- <i>Egypt</i>	- <i>Eswatini (ex-Swaziland)</i>	- <i>Burkina Faso</i>
- <i>Djibouti</i>	- <i>Central African Republic</i>	- <i>Libyan</i>	- <i>Lesotho</i>	- <i>Cape Verde</i>
- <i>Eritrea</i>	- <i>Chad</i>	- <i>Morocco</i>	- <i>Namibia</i>	- <i>Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)</i>
- <i>Ethiopia</i>	- <i>Congo</i>	- <i>South Sudan</i>	- <i>South Africa</i>	- <i>The Gambia</i>
- <i>Kenya</i>	- <i>Chad (Brazzaville)</i>	- <i>Sudan</i>		- <i>Ghana</i>
- <i>Madagascar</i>	- <i>Congo, Democratic Republic of the</i>	- <i>Tunisia</i>		- <i>Guinea</i>
- <i>Malawi</i>	- <i>Equatorial Guinea</i>			- <i>Guinea-Bissau</i>
- <i>Mauritius</i>	- <i>Gabon</i>			- <i>Liberia</i>
- <i>Mozambique</i>	- <i>Sao Tome and Principe</i>			- <i>Mali</i>
- <i>Rwanda</i>				- <i>Mauritania</i>
- <i>Seychelles</i>				- <i>Niger</i>
- <i>Somalia</i>				- <i>Nigeria</i>
- <i>Tanzania</i>				- <i>Senegal</i>
- <i>Uganda</i>				- <i>Sierra Leone</i>
- <i>Zambia</i>				- <i>Togo</i>
- <i>Zimbabwe</i>				

Some statistics below show African realities, including its size, population, population density, individual countries, major languages, major cities, population growth rate, etc.

Area: 30,415,873 sq. km

Population: **1,225,080,510** inhab. (2016)

Population density: **40** inhab. /sq. km

Countries: **54** countries

Main Languages: Arabic, Swahili, French, English, Portuguese, Berber, Pulaar, Afrikaans, Malagasy, Amharic, Tigrigna, Wolof, Hausa, Zulu, Lingala, Bambara, Somali, Moré, Yoruba, Soninke, Dioula, Agni, Bété, Baoulé, Fang, Kituba, Susu

Main cities: The following are the top 20 cities of Africa, by decreasing order of population size: Lagos, Cairo, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Algiers, Khartoum, Luanda, Ibadan, Dar es-Salaam, Kano, Abidjan, Alexandria, Addis Ababa, Accra, Bamako, Casablanca, Cape Town, Durban, Dakar, Lomé, Conakry and Pretoria.

The African continent covers 6% of the Earth's surface and 20% of the global land surface. It covers 30,415,873 sq. km, including islands, which makes it the third largest on the globe. With more than 1.2 billion inhabitants, Africa is the second most populous continent after Asia and represented 16.4% of the global population in 2016. The continent is bordered by **the Mediterranean Sea to the North, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the Northeast, the Indian Ocean to the Southeast and the Atlantic Ocean to the West.**

Africa is crossed around its middle by the Equator and has several types of climates: hot and humid close to the Equator, tropical in the regions between the Equator and the Tropics, hot and arid around the Tropics and temperate in highlands. The continent is characterized by erratic rainfall patterns. In the absence of glaciers or mountain aquifer systems, there is no means of natural climate regulation, except for the coastal areas. Dry lands represent 60% of the African continent. Nevertheless, the continent is generously endowed with natural resources – it is called the “**paradise of biodiversity**” – and **is home to the world's second largest continuous forest, namely the Congo Basin forest. But, this environment is threatened** by deforestation and a decline in biodiversity, due to climate change and anthropogenic pressure.

Africa is considered as the cradle of humanity, where the ancestors of Man first appeared and from where the modern man then spread over the rest of the globe about 200,000 years ago. The Sahara, the world's largest hot desert, has created a hiatus, leading to distinct developments between the North and the

South. Historically, the civilization of ancient Egypt developed along the Nile; Sub-Saharan Africa saw the birth of its own civilizations in the savannah areas and Northern Africa, which is the southern shore of the Mediterranean.

*The continent has **the largest population growth rate in the world.***

Contemporary Africa is in a situation where the weight of its demography is difficult to manage (unemployment, education financing, etc.) because it remains the least developed continent economically, despite a strong growth since the beginning of the 21st century, which has allowed the emergence of a fertile middle class with higher incomes. It is also often facing terrorist violence in some areas.

Economically, the continent is the gold and oil supplier of the Western, and to a lesser extent, Eastern countries.

II. DEFINITION OF "BORDER COUNTRY"

*The " **Border Country**" is a geographical area where people live linked by history, culture, geography, but separated by dividing lines between two or more countries".*

- 1. The "**Border Country**" is an action perspective constituting a step forward for grassroots integration through the identification of real spaces of integration;*
- 2. It helps to facilitate the harmonization of sectorial policies of states and local authorities (education policy, health policy, collective security policy)*
- 3. It serves to play the role of links in West African land use planning;*
- 4. Finally, it serves to promote the cross-border intercommunity.*

*This concept of "Frontier Country" must tend towards a paradigm level of borders, centered on historical and natural regions and on the real potential of these regions. It is not a question of reshaping the borders (intangibility of borders), it will only be a question of going beyond it, making bridges to face the new challenges and the crises which threaten the existence of our countries as "**Nation State**".*

Foundations of the concept of "border countries"

The "Border Country" must be: for states wishing to ensure economic, political, social and cultural promotion on the one hand; for the sub-regional integration organizations created for this purpose on the other hand; an ideal framework for consultation and cooperation making it possible to create a fruitful partnership between grassroots populations, local actors such as elected officials, economic operators and civil society.

The concept's implementation strategy should therefore be based on the following elements:

- A real and affirmed political will of the States of the West African sub-region;*
- A geographical framework in which are located a set of border localities developing between themselves economic, social and cultural exchange relations;*
- A framework for consultation between national and local administrations on the management of border issues;*
- An action plan for implementing the "Frontier Countries" concept;*
- An effective involvement of sub-regional integration organizations in the implementation of programs and projects aimed at cross-border cooperation between the states that compose them.*

BORDERS COUNTRY GOALS

The goals of are, to facilitate; to strengthen the integration process within the framework of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other large-scale cooperation initiatives; to strength border management capacities, including the development of Special Economic Zones. Finally, it intends to develop capacity building of staff in charge of border management.

III. RESULTS ACHIEVED IN CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN AFRICA

*One of the historic achievements of AUBP is **the adoption of the Convention on Cross-border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) on May 2012 in Niamey (Niger)**. The adoption of this legal instrument by the Conference of Heads of States and Governments in **Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) in July 2014** is a major achievement since the Cairo resolution in 1964 concerning the principle of respect of existing borders at the independence days. The Convention provides*

the promotion of cooperation in various areas, with a view to mutualize efforts on the management of border areas,; the mapping and geographic information, the socio-economic development, the exchange of information, the trade, the concerted management of energy and natural resources, security (including the fight against cross-border crime, terrorism, piracy and other forms of crime), the demining of cross-border areas in the post conflicts situation, the institutional development in all areas to manage mutual interest.

*A second important achievement in the field of cross-border cooperation is for the first time in the continent the **construction and the opening in 2013 of the health Center at the border between Mali and Burkina Faso**, in benefit of the surrounding rural communities of the two States.*

IV. RESULTS IN THE AREAS OF AWARENESS AND PARTNERSHIPS

*The **“Border day”** has been fixed on 7 June of each year all over Africa in accordance with the decision adopted by the 17th summit of head of state of Africa held in Kampala on 25 July 2010. This date was chosen as a tribute to the first declaration of AUBP adopted on 7 June 2007 by the First Conference of Ministers in Charge of Border Issues held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). The objective of this celebration is to reiterate the importance and the challenges of the border management as a tool of conflict prevention, development and integration.*

In the context of partnership;

*African Union Border Program collaborates with some centers of research. It has in fact signed a memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the **Association of European Border Regions – (AEBR)**. The **Center of African Borderland security and development studies** intends to build partnership with whenever **International Institutions in Europe, dedicated to security, integration, and development.***

***Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and Cities and Border Regions Associations all over in Europe** and the **Center of African Borderland security and development studies** can develop relationship by defining, implementing and evaluating cross-border cooperation practices based on their experiences. Likewise, European experts can participate, together with their African colleagues, in a major capacity-building program.*

V. FIRST SYMPOSIUM ON “BORDER COUNTRY” TO BE HELD IN BAMAKO/MALI 07 JUNE 2021 (AFRICAN BORDER DAY)

PROJECT: BAMAKO SYMPOSIUM ON AFRICAN BORDERS

Organizing in Bamako in Mali in the Sahelo-Saharan zone an annual symposium on the issue of borders, and border countries is of indisputable legitimacy.

This is evidenced by the commitment of certain current or retired heads of state and of certain African patriots in the integration and overcoming borders / obstacles to go towards the gateway border, a necessary step towards the African Federation.

- **Procedure for establishing the doctrinal of the symposium:**

The doctrine of the symposium refers to a global vision embracing the practices of border management and changes impacting the perception of borders: going beyond the Berlin paradigm in order to materialize a new paradigm based on the withering of borders, after 60 years of Independence of our States

- *The concept of “**Border Country**” adopted at the Sikasso seminar in March 2002 is extremely topical. The aim of the Symposium is to disseminate and apply it across the continent.*
- *The critical context of the security and political crisis in the tri-border area, and now in most of the African region, reveals that the natural expansion vessel of threats is unmistakably regional space. Problems and their solutions can only be tackled head-to-head on a region-wide scale. No country, even the biggest or the most powerful, can do it alone. The only option is collective action, pooled at the regional level; there is not any other way.*
- *The definition of a doctrine in these senses requires the establishment of a task force, in other words a think tank which works to define the thematic content of the symposium but also to give guidelines for the holding of its first edition. In this case, this is a very small group providing leadership for the symposium.*

- **Prerequisites**

- *The symposium will be African.*

- *It stems from a strong political commitment and a strong involvement of certain African Presidents, in office or in retirement, followers of the pan-Africanist ideas.*
 - ❖ *It assumes the strong commitment of sub-regional organizations*
 - ❖ *The evolution of ECONOMIC WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS) towards a regional monetary and economic space, ECOWAS of peoples,*
 - ❖ *The interest of the United Nations and the International Institutions for stability, the mutualisation of public policies in matters of security and development.*
- **Partnership**
 - *The symposium could be of interest to cartography, geodesy, spatial imagery, telecommunications, mobile telephony and transport companies: this approach poses the problem of sources of funding.*
 - *It requires the establishment of partnerships, Institutional and financial, solid and lasting: African Governments acquired in the vision, European Union? Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), the African Diaspora, Civil Society, the International Organization of La Francophone (OIF), Regional and Cities of Russia. World Bank, UNESCO; etc.*

In addition to these Institutions and other organizations, the Symposium will establish a solid partnership with Universities, Research Institutes, NGOs, and academic resource persons in Africa, Europe and elsewhere in the world. The strength of such a space lies in a strong partnership. The "Bamako Symposium" being part of sustainable.

- **Conduct of the Symposium**
 - *It is dedicated to sharing concrete experiences of cross-border cooperation in Africa, especially by integrating the rural dimensions but also urban and megalopolitan. It is a place of listening, an agora.*
 - *He is primarily civilian, but he is aware of the military and security issues that can be dealt with in separate workshops.*
 - *It could be used to disseminate the achievements of the African Union Border Program (AUBP), ECOWAS, and any other "success story" relating to the African border.*

- *The challenge is to successfully launch the launch, once the intellectual, political, financial and media conditions are met: aim for **June 07, 2021 African Border Day**.*
- *It will be up to a steering committee, coupled with a scientific committee, to prepare and lead it: final objective sought, location and logistics, speakers and protocol, communication and drafting of reference texts.*
- *The participants are first of all actors in the field, selection to be made by the Scientific Committee.*
- *His work will be published, in video and online.*

- **Funding:**

The organization of the Symposium required the mobilization of resources to ensure the completion of a number of activities, namely:

- *carrying out a study on behalf of the symposium;*
- *The costs of participating in the symposium (plane ticket, accommodation, catering / per diem);*
- *Communication costs;*
- *Rental of the conference room....*
- *Media charges, etc.*

This support may require the participation of several partners interested in the symposium with regard to the themes at stake.

Probable roadmap September 2020- June 2021:

The holding of the Symposium necessitates adopting a roadmap in which the activities planned within this framework fit. This sheet can be structured around:

1. *The identification and obtaining of the adhesion and the commitment of the personalities to constitute the task force (think tank);*
2. *The holding of a first videoconference meeting of the think tank to coordinate views and determine the various tasks;*

*The setting of the date of the symposium with regard to the schedule for the execution of the various tasks; proposal **June 07, 2021 African Border Day**.*

3. *The determination of the participants to mobilize with regard to the annual objective of the symposium and the themes to be addressed;*
4. *Preparation of the Symposium Budget;*
5. *Miscellaneous.*

VI. CONCLUSION

Despite the slowness of regional integration across Africa and the countless difficulties, it is a requirement for African governments, the Civil Society, the African business community, International Institutions, and Africa's strategic Partners to work together in synergy in order to put the Cross-Border Cooperation approach at the heart of the policy of development and integration processes.

*It is for this purpose that “**Border Country**” is evoked as a sure tool which should contribute effectively to triggering a dynamic of integration and development in Africa.*

Initiator:

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