



PRESS RELEASE

14th AFRICAN BORDER DAY CELEBRATIONS

Cotonou, 14 June 2023: The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Republic of Benin, marked the 14th African Border Day on 12th and 13th June 2024. The event was held under the AU's annual theme, *"Educate an African fit for the 21st century: building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa"*. The mission was facilitated by the Benin Agency in Charge of Integrated Border Management (ABeGIEF), under the leadership of Dr. Marcel Baglo, Director General.

On 10 June 2024, the Commune of Bassila welcomed a joint delegation led by the Prefect of the Department of Donga and Dr. Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, AU Director of Conflict Management Directorate. The delegation inaugurated a series of infrastructural projects, including furnished classrooms, an administrative block, a borehole with a submersible pump, and a volleyball court.

On 11 June 2024, the village of N'Djakata, in the Commune of Ouake, along the border of Benin and Togo, welcomed the joint delegation. The inauguration of furnished classrooms, a furnished teachers' housing unit, and a borehole with a submersible pump took place in the presence of local administration, security forces, His Majesty the King of Sèmère, and his court. The delegation also visited a market garden, to support women's livelihoods.

On 12 June 2024, the delegation toured the village of Iwoye, in the Commune of Ketou, situated along the border of Benin and Nigeria. The delegation inspected the boundary pillars, the cross-border and cattle markets, and other infrastructure.

The 14th African Border Day celebrations showcased Benin's commitment to investing in education, infrastructure, and livelihoods to foster and promote prosperity and resilience among its border communities. The development of borderlands presents an opportunity for cross-border cooperation and engage local stakeholders who are pivotal to the success or failure of security and development in border areas.

Engagements with local authorities in the Communes of Bassila, Ouake, and Ketou underscored the need to institutionalise cross-border cooperation by establishing cross-border mechanisms to foster good neighbourliness, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence.

The 2nd Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues, held in March 2010, agreed to *"the institution of an 'African Day' of borders, in order to further highlight the importance of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP) and encourage additional efforts for its implementation"*.

African Border Day is aimed to raise awareness among stakeholders about the role of borders in promoting peace, security, and stability, and to highlight the efforts of the AU Border Programme in promoting and strengthening regional and continental integration.