STATEMENT BY H.E. AMB. SMAIL CHERGUI,
COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY,
ON THE COMMEMORATION OF THE AFRICAN BORDER DAY+
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AU MASTER ROADMAP ON SILENCING THE GUNS
Honorable Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council,  
Distinguished Members of the Council,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, at the outset, to express my gratitude to you Mr. Chairperson and to the Members of the Peace and Security Council for convening this virtual meeting to commemorate *African Border Day within the framework of the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns in Africa*.

On Sunday, 7th of June, we held a virtual celebration of the 10th African Border Day within the context of the AU theme of the year – Silencing the Guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa’s development. We also celebrated African Border Day amidst the new coronavirus, COVID-19, outbreak. The 10th African Border Day was an opportunity to highlight the commitment of Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to the principles of the African Union Border Programme (AUBP). That is, the principles that guide the Commission’s interventions in supporting its Member States in the realization of a united and integrated Africa, through *peaceful, open and prosperous borders*.

Guided by this vision and the cornerstone *Article 4 (b) of the Constitutive Act* as a visionary contribution of our founding furthers to the prevention and resolution of conflicts through *the respect of borders existing on achievement of independence*, I take this opportunity to present the *Progress Report of the African Union Commission on the Implementation of the African Union Border Programme*, which has been circulated to all PSC Members. This report presents the progress made in the implementation of AUBP, from January 2019 to the 1st quarter of 2020. The report considers the Programme’s implementation at continental, regional and national levels along its three pillars: delimitation/demarcation, cross-border cooperation and capacity building. Furthermore, it presents challenges and recommendations for the Programme’s consolidation. Let me take this opportunity to highlight key elements from the Progress Report.

**First**, I wish to commend the continued efforts of Member States to clarify their common boundaries. Member States are *jointly*, at one stage or another, engaged in the long, expensive and delicate process of delimitation and demarcation of their boundary lines. However, in this context, it is obvious that the deadline of 2022 for the delimitation/demarcation of all African inter-state borders– as set by the African Ministers in Charge of Border Issues- will hardly be respected. The extension of the deadline must be considered.

**Second**, in 2019, we have witnessed progress in the establishment of national border commissions and the development of national/regional border policies. The gradual institutionalization of structures responsible for the governance of borders and the development of holistic border policies are a testament to the central role more Member States are assigning to borders in maintenance of peace, security, and sustainable development. I take this occasion to recommend that national (and regional polices) align with the guidelines and recommendations of the African Union Border Governance Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance, adopted in February 2020.
Third, we take note of the multiplication of the institutionalization of cross border cooperation as a tool for the sustainable development of borderlands. In West Africa, at national and regional levels, there has been a sustained proliferation of cross border cooperation initiatives. Some East African states have embraced the cross-border cooperation dynamic even though none, for the moment, have signed or ratified the African Union Convention on Cross Border Cooperation. I call upon Member States to sign, ratify, and domesticate the AU Convention on Cross Border Cooperation.

Fourth, I would also like to inform you that the AUBP is contributing to the AU’s coordinated response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa. At this very moment, the Programme is accompanying Member States and RECs in their efforts to limit the spread and the impact of the pandemic through cross-border cooperation and the stabilization of border areas. Measures to distribute protection and hygiene equipment for border personnel and to raise awareness of the border population are under way. I call on Member States to coordinate their response to the pandemic across interstate borders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In February 2020, an important milestone was achieved when, the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, adopted the African Union Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance. The Strategy aims to provide the continent with a consensual vision of the role and place of inter-state borders in the implementation of continental policies, as defined by the decision-making bodies of the African Union in line with the pertinent provisions of the AU Constitutive Act and the Protocol establishing the PSC. It provides guidelines for Member States to align their national border governance policies along the relevant AU provisions and recommendations. While continuing to support Member States in their delimitation/demarcation and cross border cooperation efforts, the AUBP will pay particular attention in ensuring ownership of the newly adopted Strategy.

I therefore call upon all Member States, RECs/RMs to redouble governance initiatives on African interstate borders in order to strengthen their contribution to achieving the objectives of Agenda 2063.

I thank you.