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Conclusions of the 1st Joint Retreat of the AU Panel of the Wise and the ECCAS Committee of Elders Strengthens Cooperation on Border Dispute Resolution in Central Africa

Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, 27 November 2024 – The African Union (AU) Panel of the Wise and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Committee of Elders, under the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise), convened their inaugural joint retreat from 25 to 26 November 2024. The retreat was co-chaired by Hon. Justice Effie Owuor, Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise, and H.E. Marie-Madeleine Kalala, Chairperson of the ECCAS Committee of Elders, in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

This landmark retreat was convened in line with the decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 1212th and 1222nd meetings, which tasked the Panel of the Wise to enhance mediation, dialogue, and conflict prevention efforts in Central Africa. The retreat provided an opportunity for the Panel and the Committee to deepen their understanding of the region's geopolitical dynamics, with a specific focus on border and territorial disputes.

The retreat's deliberations culminated in the adoption of a six-point resolution aimed at strengthening coordination and advancing collaborative efforts to address border-related challenges in the region:

1. **Advocacy for Policy Action:** Committed to sensitizing the decision-making organs of the AU and ECCAS on the critical importance of resolving border-related disputes in Central Africa.
2. **Collaborative Conflict Resolution:** Agreed to collaborate in the prevention, management, and resolution of border and territorial disputes, leveraging their respective expertise and influence.
3. **Development of Joint Strategies:** Directed their Secretariats at the AU Commission and ECCAS Commission to formulate a joint strategy and roadmap for addressing select border disputes in the region.
4. **Validation of Joint Initiatives:** Agreed to convene a follow-up meeting to review and validate the proposed strategy and roadmap.
5. **Community Engagement:** Undertook to engage border communities, traditional and religious leaders, and local authorities in promoting dialogue and utilizing traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution.

6. **Commitment to Peaceful Coexistence:** Reaffirmed their dedication to using their good offices to foster good neighborliness and peaceful coexistence among member states and resolved to remain actively engaged on this matter.

The Panel of the Wise and the ECCAS Committee of Elders expressed their appreciation to the Government and People of the Republic of Congo for their exceptional hospitality and support in hosting this critical meeting.

This inaugural joint retreat marks a significant step in strengthening regional mechanisms under the PanWise framework and underscores the shared commitment of the AU and ECCAS to fostering sustainable peace and stability in Central Africa.

For further information please contact:

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