INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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Venue: Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Third Edition of the Abidjan Border Forum to Promote Peaceful Coexistence, Social Cohesion, Development and Security between Border Communities in Africa

Under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, H.E. Alassane Dramane Ouattara, and of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the African Union Commission are jointly organising the third edition of the Abidjan Border Forum (ABF), themed "Border Communities: Culture, Integration and Security", from 20 to 22 October 2026 at the Abidjan Exhibition Centre (*Parc des Expositions d'Abidjan*) in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

The three-day event, which will be opened by H.E. Robert Beugré Mambe, Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, and H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the AU Commission, aims to highlight the strategic role of border communities in promoting social cohesion, regional integration, and cross-border security. Specifically, participants will review the current understanding of the cultural, social, and economic dynamics of border communities; identify gaps between regional and subregional regulatory frameworks and their on-the-ground implementation; highlight successful cross-border initiatives in inclusive and integrated border governance; and formulate operational recommendations for the strategic positioning of border communities within continental, regional, and national border governance policies.

The Forum, which will also be attended by the Ivorian Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, will bring together more than 2,000 delegates and border stakeholders from across the continent and the country, including policy and decision-makers from AU Member States, the AU and subregional organisations, technical and financial partners (TFPs), border management agencies, representatives of border communities, practitioners and researchers. The discussions will focus on key themes, including the role of culture in transforming borders from barriers to bridges; the challenges of integration in a changing Africa; cross-border cooperation to support the integration of peoples, territories and economies; placing people at the heart of the transformation of African borders, including delimitation and demarcation processes; border security; and cross-border local knowledge for border stabilisation.

This third edition of ABF, in line with Agenda 2063 and the continental vision for cross-border cooperation, is grounded in the principle of the inviolability of "borders existing at the time of independence" to preserve peace, security and stability and to foster inter-state collaboration. It draws on relevant frameworks, including the African Union Border Program (AUBP) of 2007, the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (2014, Niamey Convention), and the AU Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance (2020, AUBGS), and makes community engagement a driver of development in border areas. It promotes intercultural exchanges and cross-border cooperation to showcase a border-governance model that accommodates the heterogeneity of actors and cultures, supporting a peaceful, prosperous, and developed Africa.

The Forum builds on the first edition held in 2022, which examined links between borders and collective security in Africa and recommended that states prioritise diplomacy and negotiation to resolve border disputes and to strengthen the participation of women and youth in mechanisms that foster peace in border areas. It also builds on the second edition, organised in 2024, which focused on green borders, the interplay between shared natural resources and security challenges, and contributed to the ongoing international debate on the environment and climate, which clearly intersects at the borders.

The Abidjan Border Forum is therefore an innovative platform that offers opportunities for exchange and interaction every two years among state, non-state, national, regional, and international border stakeholders, for an **"Africa that thinks about borders, by itself and for itself"**. It is a continental platform for reflection and concrete action on border governance in Africa. It is a transnational instrument that serves African states, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, private-sector actors, Civil Society Organisations, and development partners, fostering synergies for collective action in support of integrated and sustainable border management.

As part of the Forum's efforts to raise awareness of sustainable border governance, Mr Seydou Koné, also known as Alpha Blondy, a multi-award-winning celebrity artiste and brand ambassador for the third edition of the Abidjan Border Forum, and his band, the Solar System, will close the gathering with a live performance at the Abidjan Exhibition Centre on 22 October 2026 at 7:00 pm.

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