

SUDAN BORDER MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY

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Trade and Cross-Border Economic Cooperation

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Summary

- Cross-Border Trade and Economic Cooperation are drivers for the development of border zones, setting out an environment conducive to the development of infrastructure, markets, transports and other social sectors.
- Trade and economic Cross-Border Cooperation are among the mechanisms that contribute to peacemaking and development in border zones.
- Trade and economic sectors are the most dynamic domains in Cross-Border Cooperation processes. They should be regulated and integrated within a common vision and shared objectives.
- Commercial exchanges and economic relations beyond borders are most effective when there is peace and stability and when each stakeholder is recognized and their role promoted in border management frameworks.
- It is also essential that the process of setting up a framework of trade and economic Cross-Border Cooperation be done in a concerted way and with inclusive strategies that involve all concerned stakeholders.

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Introduction

The secession of the south and the forthcoming establishment of two contiguous and neighbour states - Sudan and South Sudan - mean the construction of economic and trade relations on new foundations. Both the North and South of Sudan are focussing their policies and plans on economic diversification and development of the agriculture sector which has an enormous underexploited potential. Currently, oil is an important revenue resource for the South and North. This perspective gives the border area between the two new countries importance as a place where a solid dynamic of economic cooperation and trade may be built.

This briefing provides some evidence on the relevance of the cross-border approach in developing and implementing economic and trade policies of both countries. Regional and sub-regional organisations such

as the African Union and ECOWAS will be discussed.

Significance of Cross-Border activity

Cross-Border Cooperation is a concept used in West Africa to describe all forms of cooperation existing among entities at different levels (States, regions, cities, villages, etc.), civil society organizations (associations, socio-professional organizations, NGOs, etc.) and populations located in cross-border areas separating two or more States. It includes all formal and informal relationships among those political, economic, and/or social organisations. It strongly relies on geographical proximity between neighbour territories and the **"border effect" on the one hand,, and on the dynamism of populations and local actors who, generally, share the same living conditions and are bound by strong family, social, economic and socio-cultural relationships on the other hand.**

Cross-Border Cooperation is viewed by both regional (AU) and sub-regional (e.g. ECOWAS)¹ organizations as leverage to:

- Promote and reinforce peace, security, and stability, ensure social and economic development, and support the effective application of community laws and regulations;
- Reinforce and develop good neighbourly relations among cross-border local communities and authorities from two or more member States, as well as ratify agreements and arrangements necessary for this purpose;
- Accelerate regional integration, open up cross-border areas and help achieve socio-economic development of cross border spaces and community spaces (REC).

This new guidance brings together and binds decentralization and integration processes. The implementation of initiatives aiming at reinforcing cross-border cooperation helps to combine two levels of intervention and implementation of policies, achieved by a transfer of competences by national institutions i) to supra-national institutions such as ECOWAS and ii) to local and territorial communities. Those two levels, through the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity, are linked via the national level which acts as a mediator and interface. From this point of view, cross-border cooperation potentially appears as a powerful instrument for articulating intervention policy and implementation levels.

Evidence from other contexts has shown that Cross-Border Cooperation has an important socio-economic added value.

One of the first benefits of the establishment of cross-border economic and trade cooperation is the creation of an environment conducive to the development of infrastructure, development of transports and markets in national peripheries that are most often neglected and marginalised in the implementation of development policies. Thus adopting a cross-border economic cooperation and trade perspective contributes to the improvement in the planning of spatial development and regional policy.

Trade and economic cross-border cooperation also promotes the realisation of local potential by reinforcing the local actors as initiators of cross-border cooperation. In a well supported cross-border economic dynamic, a large panel of actors participate and interact. Chambers of commerce, socio-professional associations (farmers associations, beekeepers associa-

tions), transport agencies, small and medium scale companies, trade unions, cultural and social institutions, environmental organisations and tourism agencies can be involved.

Producers' organisations can establish agreements with merchants/retailers on both sides of the border. The Federation of Economic Interest Groupings PELLITAL that intervenes in Northeast border between Senegal and the Gambia has been working since 2005 to facilitate the trade of fruit and vegetables by its members. PELLITAL has set up a trade commission **open to Gambian "bana bana" traders who buy and sell** gardening products in the Gambia. To this end, a regulatory framework to secure the chain of production and marketing of gardening products has been set up. In this partnership, market gardeners in the area of Pata (Senegal) are sure to sell their products and Gambian traders have favourable conditions for marketing such as payment after resale in the Gambia, differential pricing and exchange rate.

To facilitate free movement of traders and their goods, GIE PELLITAL has developed a permanent dialogue with control services from both countries (customs, police, gendarmerie, immigration police, forestry commissions, etc.). In doing so, harassment has been reduced and information is provided to traders on regulations in the domain of free movement of persons and goods. To facilitate the free movement of products, a permanent dialogue is instituted with the control services of the two countries (the customs, police, gendarmerie, immigration, water and forestry departments, etc). **The free movement of persons and goods constitutes the backbone of cross-border cooperation.** It is at the heart of the initiatives of the **numerous players that offer cross-border projects.**

Such mechanisms enable traders to ensure the **security of the production and marketing sub-sectors** for garden products. Commercial exchanges based on local production and import goods represent a major vehicle of the dynamism of local initiative-driven **cross-border cooperation.** **Generally, systems of markets, held weekly or otherwise, are scattered all over cross-border areas. Such networks of markets feeds the sub-regional markets which serve as collection and redistribution points.**

¹The Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional group of fifteen countries, founded in 1975

Guiding Principles to Inform a Policy Framework

At Regional level: The African Union implements the African Union Border Programme (AUBP)². It was launched officially on June 7, 2007 by the Conference of African Ministers in charge of border issues. Ministers, adopted the Declaration on African Union Border Programme and its implementation modalities. The overall goal is the structural prevention of conflicts and the promotion of regional and continental integration and, more specifically:

- The facilitation of, and support to, delimitation and demarcation of African boundaries where such exercises have not yet taken place;
- The reinforcement of the integration process, within the framework of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other large-scale cooperation initiatives;
- The development, within the framework of the RECs and other regional integration initiatives, of local cross-border cooperation initiatives;
- Capacity-building in the area of border management, including the development of special education and research programmes.

Various regional sensitization workshops on the AUBP have been held and in each of these meetings³ REC's Member States have been strongly encouraged to establish institutional and organisational frameworks and to develop and implement Cross-Border projects and programs. Recommendations were made and elements of action plans identified.

At Sub Regional Level (e.g. ECOWAS): The "Pays-Frontière" concept memorandum on proximity integration was adopted during the Meeting of Foreign Affairs in Accra (Ghana) in January 2005. This was followed by the Decision A/DEC.2/01/06 on the adoption of the "Pays-Frontière" Concept and ECOWAS Cross-Border Cooperation Development during the 29th Heads of States and Government Session held in Niamey (Niger) on 12 January 2006. These strong acts mark the political recognition of local Cross Border cooperation initiatives within ECOWAS. It will be seen later whether the decision has contributed to the achievement of the strategic vision adopted in June 2007 which consists of establishing a "Borderless West Africa" and moving from a "States of ECOWAS" to a "People of ECOWAS" by 2020. Thus the "ECOWAS Cross-Border Initiatives Programme was developed by the organization as a pillar of Sub-Regional Cooperation in

order to bring together the Regional Integration Process and Local Populations and demarginalization of cross-border spaces, through relevant and joint projects, achievable in short term in order to promote and reinforce peace, cooperation, stability and development of cross-border areas, and the sub-region as a whole".

At bilateral Cooperation level: Sudan and Ethiopia established in March 2000 a Joint Border Development Commission (JBDC) to promote border security and cooperation between the two countries; to make easy the interactions between the communities and individuals settled on the border regions; and to ease the movement of people and goods.

Border trade is regulated on the basis of a legal instrument: a protocol signed in May 2001. This instrument specifies that the border trade is done by licensed people of bordering region within a radius of 90 km. It also says that the fluxes of the trade should be channelled through recognised customs posts and the import and export value should not exceed USD 500. 18 commodities from each country are recognised as tradable.

Policy objectives to inform policy frameworks

At the 2nd Conference of African Ministers in charge of Border Issues held in March 2010 in Addis Ababa, the African Ministers reaffirmed their support for the implementation of the AUBP. Among the initiatives to inject new dynamics into cross-border cooperation, they agreed on the following:

- The launching of comprehensive inventories of existing cross-border cooperation initiatives and agreements in the various regions by all the RECs and other relevant regional initiatives, before the end of 2010. Its purpose is to popularise the initiatives, assess their state of implementation and make recommendations on how they could contribute further to the achievements of the objectives of the AUBP. The AU Commission should coordinate the undertaking of these inventories;
- The establishment by Member States that have not yet done so of joint cross-border cooperation mechanisms with their neighbours, by 2011;
- The adoption, by the concerned countries, of additional measures for local initiatives for cross-border cooperation, including the preparation of appropriate legal instruments and the speeding up of the creation of Regional Funds, as recommended by the June 2007 Declaration on the AUBP.

²This takes place through the AU Department of Peace and Security and more specifically, through its Division of Conflict Management.

³Kampala (Uganda), in September 2008, for East Africa; Algiers (Algeria), in October 2008, for North Africa; Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), in April 2009, for West Africa; Libreville (Gabon), in May 2009, for Central Africa; and Windhoek (Namibia), in October 2009, for Southern Africa

Based in these agreements, a national cross-border policy should be in coherence with national development strategies and be a response of the needs of the populations living in the border zones.

Potential application in the Sudanese Context

Concerning guiding principles to inform policy frameworks in the context of Sudan, the cross-border space consisting of States of Blue Nile, Sennar, White Nile, Southern Kordofan and Southern Darfur in the North and Upper Nile, Unity, Warrap, Northern Bahr El Ghazal and Western Bahr Al Ghazal in the South is the area that concentrates the bulk of economic resources: oil, arable land, pasture and livestock. These resources are at the heart of the conflicts and the tensions between the states and between the communities. Setting up of shared and collaborative mechanisms of control, access and exploitation of these resources could be laid upon a proactive cross-border cooperation policy between North and South Sudan.

Trade between the two countries should be organised and regulated with the prospect of a fluidity of movement in people and goods. Border areas indeed have a high potential for economic development – particularly in the agricultural and trade domains – which is so far largely unexploited. Isolation and under-equipment, disparities in public development policies, confinement of economic dynamics in national frameworks and degradation of natural and productive resources are all barriers to harnessing this potential.

With regard to a cross border policy in the Sudanese context, the policy should enable the implementation of a comprehensive initiative for achieving small- and medium-scale projects in the fields of education, health (human and animal); access to drinking water and sanitation, management of natural resources; production of renewable energy (biogas, solar energy);

agriculture, livestock, etc.

These projects should facilitate the mobility of people and goods. This could be supported by a comprehensive strategy that consists of capacity-building of community-based organisations in the area of prevention management and resolution of conflict.

It is also important to create and develop a media system that allows populations access to information and to relay to the decision-makers their views and opinions. Community media, and specifically community radio stations, are practical and adapted tools for promoting interaction between populations, communities and the decision makers, especially in cross-border contexts.

Implementing these projects is not only a response to the needs expressed by the people and a response towards attaining the MDGs but also may also provide justification for the widest possible "peace dividend" sharing.

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Resources

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