

Joint Press Release

Integrated Border Stability Mechanism Set to Strengthen Border Governance and Security in West African Countries

Abidjan, 14 September – The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) launched an Integrated Border Stability Mechanism (IBSM) aimed at strengthening cooperative border governance and security in areas strategically relevant for regional stability.

While instability has been a recurring theme in the Sahel and West Africa, violent events have become more frequent and deadly in recent years and their underlying dynamics have grown increasingly complex.

In this context, the establishment of IBSM as a multilateral coordination platform will contribute to strengthening cooperation between actors involved in governance and border security in West Africa. The initiative will also facilitate the development and implementation of regional and national strategies, and policy frameworks to improve governance and integrated border management in ensuring better border stability. The stakeholders involved in this new integrated governance mechanism will benefit from a structured framework for sharing information and building capacities in immigration and border governance.

This initiative is in line with the [African Union \(AU\) Strategy for a Better Integrated Border Governance \(2020\)](#), which stresses the positive potential of “borders as vectors to promote peace, security and stability, and to improve and accelerate integration through effective governance of borders while facilitating easy movement of people, goods, services and capital among AU Member States.”¹

“As you know, Côte d'Ivoire, like other sister countries in the subregion, is facing attacks in its northern part. You will therefore understand that any initiative relating to improving the management and security of our borders is important to us,” said General Touré Seydou, Diplomatic Advisor to the Ministry of Interior and Security, on behalf of the General Vagondo Diomandé, Minister of the Interior and Security of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, “I sincerely hope that the work will result in relevant resolutions that will guarantee stability on the borders of the countries of our subregion,” he added.

Furthermore, the inaugural meeting stressed the need for a joint and comprehensive response based on the AU's Integrated Border Governance strategy, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regional and national policy frameworks.

Ms. Giovane Biha, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, UN Office for West Africa, and the Sahel (UNOWAS) said “It should be noted that the African Union’s Integrated Border Governance Strategy recognizes the primary responsibility of Member States for effective border governance. We, the partners, have a key responsibility to accompany and support them in appropriating this mechanism, in order to guarantee its sustainability and effectiveness. So, my

¹ Union (AU), *African Union Strategy for a Better Integrated Border Governance*, Addis Ababa 2020, p. 4.
Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/african-union-strategy-better-integrated-border-governance-enarpt>

message is the transfer of skills and experience, and strengthening ownership with adequate means and resources.”

“To our West African partners: The IBSM is the response to your rightful demands for a better coordinated international support to strengthen border security and border management capacities. It is your capacity building coordination mechanism,” added Mr. Tobias Grothe, Head of Section Security Sector Reform, German Federal Foreign Office.

The establishment of the Integrated Border Stability Mechanism, IBSM, was made possible by the financial contribution of the German Federal Government through the Federal Foreign Office and also supported by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

For more information, please contact:

UNODC:

Estela Costas Gandón, M&E and Communication Officer, estela.costasgandon@un.org

UNOCT:

Laurence Gerard, Head of the Communications Unit - Office of the Under-Secretary-General, gerardl@un.org

IOM:

Joëlle Furrer, Regional media and communication lead, jfurrer@iom.int