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SIGNING CEREMONY – AIDE MEMOIRE BETWEEN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP AND BORDERLESS ALLIANCE

Accra, Ghana 30 July 2013 - At an official signing ceremony held today, the African Development Bank (AfDB) Group and Borderless Alliance (BA) signed an Aide Memoire at the Bank's Ghana office.

Borderless Alliance is a private sector-led coalition to promote and facilitate regional trade and reduce transport costs and delays across West Africa. The Alliance has organized two successful Borderless Conferences during which the Bank participated in panel discussions. At the last Borderless Conference held on 21 to 22 February, 2013, in Accra, Ghana, the Bank was further invited to participate in a Roundtable with Partners and the General Assembly, the highest policy organ of the Borderless Alliance

It is noteworthy that the signing of the Aide Memoire, is underlined by a shared objective and significant alignment of interest in the areas of regional integration, enhanced intra-regional trade, reduced non-tariff barriers and related reduction in the costs of doing business, including reduced transport costs and delays across West Africa. For the Bank, this is underpinned by its Integration Strategy for West Africa, whose key pillars are linking regional markets and building capacity for effective implementation of the integration agenda, with emphasis on investments in regional transport infrastructure and related trade facilitation measures (such as one-stop border posts). In pursuit of this objective, the Bank has so far dedicated a cumulative amount equivalent to USD 1.1 billion for regional operations in West Africa, with the transport sector accounting for 41% of allocations, while financial sector received 18%, power sector (16%), and agriculture and rural development 12%.

On its part, since the official launch of the Borderless Alliance in May 2012, its leadership has been constantly working on establishing an effective, credible and sustainable institution that can deliver results against the high expectations from the

regional stakeholders. Today, the Borderless Alliance is the leading private sector-led advocacy platform in promoting regional integration and removing barriers to trade and transport in West Africa, through the fight against bribery and corruption at border posts that hinder free movements and add to the costs of doing business. It has done this by publication of evidence based surveys and analyses and the launch of a number of Border Information Centres (BICs) at some border posts: Ghana/Togo (Aflao/Kodjoviacope) Ghana/Burkina Faso (Dakola/Paga), Nigeria/Benin (Seme/Krake), Ghana/Côte d'Ivoire (Noe/Elubo) and the Port of Dakar in Senegal. The BICs undertake a number of responsibilities such as information dissemination on customs procedures; feedback information; training; and facilitating dialogue within the border community, including relevant agencies and stakeholders on both sides of the border. This is in addition to the organization of the highly successful Borderless Conferences that bring together public and private sector stakeholders from around the region to review developments and make important recommendations. A number of critical projects in pursuit of the foregoing activities are also in the pipeline, including the very ambitious "Borderless Pass Initiative".

Given the shared objectives, and desire to building upon the already existing excellent relations between the Alliance and the Bank, it is indeed heartwarming that both sides have worked closely to bring the signing ceremony to reality. In pursuit of the objectives, the Bank will be drawing upon insights and experiences from a rich pool of trade facilitation/aid for trade and other Bank-wide programmes. These include the Trade Facilitation Framework, Trade Transparency Initiative, Trans-Gambia Bridge transit corridor, Arusha–Namanga transit corridor, Abidjan–Lagos Highway Corridor, the Customs Modernization Action Plan being developed collaboratively under an MOU with World Customs Organisation and related trade facilitation support for the Mano River Union (MRU), the UEMOA and selected MRU countries such as Liberia.

The Bank welcomes this opportunity for a closer collaboration with Borderless Alliance and looks forward to a very fruitful association with the Alliance. Similarly, the Borderless Alliance seizes this opportunity to express its appreciation to the Bank for taking an active interest in the activities of the organization, especially given the Bank's wealth of experience, resources and influence as the premier development oriented finance institution on the continent.

The African Development Bank was represented by Mrs. Marie-Laure **Akin-Olugbade**, Resident Representative in Ghana, while Borderless Alliance was represented by the President of the Executive Committee, Mr. Ziad **Hamoui**.