

MOTION

RATIFICATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION CONVENTION ON CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

HONOURABLE SPEAKER

I beg to move that this August Assembly do consider and ratify the **African Union Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention, 2014)**.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER

The African Union adopted the Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) in 2014 to provide a continental legal framework for Member States to strengthen cooperation across shared borders. The Convention seeks to promote peace, security, regional integration, and sustainable development by encouraging collaboration in trade, infrastructure, migration management, and community development. Since its adoption, The Gambia is yet to ratify the African Union Convention on Cross border cooperation.

Ratifying the Niamey Convention is critical for The Gambia because it would strengthen border governance, enhances peace and security with Senegal, supports land tenure management and aligns with Africa's Agenda 2063 vision of turning borders into gateways for integration and development.

It will interest you to note, Honourable Speaker, that Cabinet has granted approval for the ratification of the Niamey Convention during its 17th Meeting held on Wednesday, 3rd June 2026 (**see attached the Cabinet Conclusion**).

HONOURABLE SPEAKER

The urgent ratification of this Convention is necessitated by the following considerations:

Regional Integration: The Gambia shares dense human and economic ties with Senegal and therefore, ratification of the Convention would formalize cooperation in trade, infrastructure, and cross-border investment. Further, it institutionalizes frameworks for joint commissions and shared resource management.

Peace and Security: The ratification of the Convention would provide mechanisms for peaceful settlement of border disputes, strengthens collaboration against trans-organized crimes, enhance judicial cooperation in investments, prosecutions and evidence sharing.

Land Tenure and Boundary Management: The ratification of the Convention would support delimitation and reaffirmation of colonial-era boundary pillars, help manage land tenure disputes affecting communities along the frontier as well as provide legal framework for sustainable governance of shared lands.

Economic Development: When ratified, the Convention would help transform border zones into catalysts of growth, facilitate free movement of people and goods, boosting local economies and encourage joint investments in infrastructure and resource exploitation.

International Commitment: The ratification of the Convention would demonstrate The Gambia's adherence to African Union instruments anchors the Agenda 2063 aspiration of "borders as bridges, not barriers" and reinforces credibility in regional and continental diplomacy.

HONOURABLE SPEAKER

The Senegalo-Gambian Boundary Management Commission, comprising the boundary management structure of The Gambia and Senegal, was established as a bilateral mechanism to manage, clarify, and densify The Gambia – Senegal boundary, prevent disputes and promote peaceful cross-border cooperation. It functions as a joint body that engages communities, resolves land tenure conflicts and strengthens security and integration. Department of Boundary Management was created in 2025 under the Ministry of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs to serve as the administrative and technical arm of the National Boundary Management Committee.

For the Senegalo-Gambian Boundary Management Commission to be able to fully execute its mandate of providing structured framework for boundary reaffirmation, densification and demarcation, sensitization and dispute resolution, ratification of the Convention would consolidate and elevate the achievements of the Senegalo-Gambian Boundary Management Commission. It will also provide a legal framework for harmonizing land rights, ensuring communities benefit from secure tenure as well as support joint development projects in health, education, and infrastructure for border population through support from international partners.

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Administratively, ratification of the Convention would promote inter-agency coordination where the National Boundary Committee must coordinate with Ministries of Interior, Defence, Trade, and Foreign Affairs.

Legally, ratifying the Niamey Convention provides a continental legal framework that strengthens the Commission's mandate and ensures that bilateral work is anchored in African Union standards, reducing ambiguity in boundary governance.

Financially, the ratification of the Convention would provide opportunity for donor support in capacity building of National Boundary Committee Staff, infrastructure and equipment, operational funding and external support from partners like AU, ECOWAS, EU, UNDP, World Bank.

HONORABLE SPEAKER

I beg to move that this August Assembly do consider and ratify the Niamey Convention as a matter of urgency and authorizes the Government of The Gambia to deposit the Instrument of Ratification with the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, to enable The Gambia to benefit from its provisions and advance national interests in border governance, peace, and development.

By: Honorable Hamat N.K Bah
Minister of Lands, Regional Government and Religious Affairs