

25th October 2010

DDR Official Launch in Wau, Western Bahr El Ghazal.

His Excellency the Acting Governor of Western Bahr El Ghazal and the Chairperson of South Sudan DDR Commission officially opened the demobilisation site in Wau by jumping over a white bull as it was being slaughtered.

In his speech the Acting Governor put a major emphasis of the benefit the former soldiers bring to their communities once reintegrated and that they are part of the larger restructuring of the military which will help the country develop; soldiers who have fought for over twenty years have contributed to their country already.

William Deng Deng the Chairperson of the SSDDR Commission spoke at length to the crowd about the demobilisation process in relation to the peace and security in South Sudan. On behalf of the Integrated UN DDR Unit Mustapha Tejan-Kella gave special tribute to the real heroes of the DDR programme – the soldiers and women associated with armed forces that are due to join the demobilisation process in Wau.

The event was attended by Col Benjamin from the SPLA and other SPLA representatives. To signify the 3600 participants selected to benefit from this DDR programme in Western Bahr El Ghazal over the coming months, ten members of the SPLA were disarmed during the ceremony – five men and five women.

Also part of the ceremony involved the UN officially handing over the DDR State Office to the South Sudan DDR Commission through the intermediary the Acting Governor of Western Bahr El Ghazal.

The South Sudan DDR State Coordinator Romano Opio and his team including support from the Integrated UN DDR staff arranged a colourful and entertaining launch ceremony. There were traditional dance groups and the very popular Sudanese singer Awilo 2 who managed to get the dignitaries up to dance with him. Students from St Pauls Senior Secondary School performed a drama they devised using the DDR key messages to help people understand the upcoming demobilisation process in an amusing and engaging manner. Local school children and former soldiers made up the diverse audience who definitely enjoyed the show.

