

Over 400 Ex-Soldiers Graduate in Eastern Equatoria State

by Poni Allen Ladu | 14.07.2011

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TORIT — In Eastern Equatoria State 448 former combatants have been awarded with their graduation certificates under DDR programme. The participants completed training in various sectors including carpentry, small business management, food processing, tailoring, agriculture, driving and construction among others. The training was organised by the German International Cooperation Services (GIZ IS), contracted by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

The Deputy Governor of Eastern Equatoria Nartisio Loluke Munir was the guest of honour during the graduation ceremony. He encouraged the excited celebrants to strive and be job creators rather than job seekers. He advised them to put their newly acquired skills to good use so as to support the State to grow and develop. He also advised them to join cooperative groups so that they can access and benefit from learning and improving on their skills. "With the new skills you have acquired, work together and cooperate with one another, that way we will be able to fight disease, poverty and hunger in our new country," the Deputy Governor said.

Speaking on behalf of GIZIS, Mr. Pierre Jauwert the site manager congratulated the former combatants for their efforts throughout the training, thanking the South Sudan Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration Commission (SSDDRC) for their contribution and continued support in reintegrating the participants in the DDR programme. He appealed to the Government to give more support to former combatants.

"By working hard and committing yourselves to the training, you have greatly contributed to the development and peace of the country. This will be considered as an example for other DDR programmes," Jauwert said.

The State Coordinator for Eastern Equatoria, Mary Achomo informed the gathering that the Disarmament and Demobilisation in the State was launched in 2010 and 1,800 combatants have been demobilised. Because of the referendum preparations last year, the programme was put on hold and training resumed early this year. She appreciated and thanked GIZIS and the UN family for their support. Achomo called upon the former soldiers to work together and support each other in order to fully integrate in the community and participate in nation building.

Like many other programmes, the DDR programme came into being as a result of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that called for the rightsizing and professionalization of the army. It is a Government led and owned programme with the United Nations Development Agency (UNDP) providing technical support on Reintegration and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) providing technical support in the demobilization component of the programme.