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Lobong Explores Educational and Regional Cooperation in Soroti City, Uganda

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Soroti, Uganda —The Governor of Eastern Equatoria State, Gen. Louis Lobong Lojore, has concluded an exposure tour of major higher learning institutions in Soroti City aimed at boosting educational cooperation and institutional development.

During his tour, Governor Lobong visited Soroti University, Busitema University, and the East African Civil Aviation Academy (Soroti Flying School). The delegation explored specialized academic programs and vocational pathways, particularly in piloting and aircraft maintenance, that could benefit students and institutions in Eastern Equatoria State.

Beyond academic engagements, the Governor undertook a hiking expedition to the historic Opiyai Rock, taking time to appreciate Soroti's natural landscape and rich cultural heritage.

Governor Lobong arrived in Soroti ahead of the official closing ceremony of the Ateker Cup of Nations on August 22. The visit underscores the deepening educational, cultural, and cross-border ties between Eastern Equatoria State and Uganda's Teso community, reinforcing the tournament's broader spirit of regional unity and shared heritage.

Women advocates and male allies graduate with skills to strengthen lobby and advocacy, psychosocial support and GBV prevention in Juba

Women advocates and male allies pose with certificates after graduation at Quality Hotel, Juba.

More than 50 women advocates and their male allies in South Sudan have successfully graduated from a transformative training program organized by PAX for Peace Organization (PAX), marking the completion of the final training to the third cohort under the Empowered Women Influence (EWI) programme.

The graduation ceremony follows a series of specialized workshops and concluded with psychosocial support and trauma counselling follow up from August 18th to 20th, 2026 at Quality Hotel in Juba. The EWI programme is fully funded by the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO).

In his keynote speech during the during the award of the certificates, and on behalf of the PAX South Sudan Country Director, PAX Senior Project officer, John William urged graduates to apply the knowledge gained to transform their societies. You have spent three intensive days learning how to address both personal and community trauma, while also navigating legal and advocacy gaps affecting women. "You also had an opportunity of learning a lot of things about the situation of South Sudanese," William said. "I hope that when you go out, you will support yourself and one another."

Furthermore, William underscored that peace begins with individuals and their communities, noting that trauma, burnout, and mistreatment of women remain persistent challenges. Accordingly, the empowerment of women as guided by resilience, legal knowledge and supportive community action—can help strengthen social cohesion and long-term stability.

William thanked key program facilitators, who included Psychologist Rev. Dr. Alice Muse, and Counsel Amanya Joseph, who led the governance, lobby and advocacy sessions. He noted that South Sudan has experienced conflict for many years, with a large portion of the population traumatized, and that healing is necessary for community recovery..

"The certificates awarded to you demonstrates your relentless efforts in the workshops, and it has not come out of nothing… We would like to see to it that in future you'll be able to do good work… with a healthy mind and body." William stated.

Meanwhile, PAX Project Officer for the EWI project, Martina Kani, called on graduates to lead change in their respective communities through their professions.

Martina highlighted the project's gender-balanced participation model, which provides for 40% male involvement and 60% women involvement, describing it as an affirmative-action approach meant to strengthen inclusion while sustaining accountability. "You have interacted amongst yourselves, and you gone through psychosocial support, trauma healing and counselling sessions. Additionally, you have benefitted from governance, lobby and advocacy trainings," Martina said. "The men who attended these valuable sessions are also empowered and ready to deliver… as part of the project affirmative action.

Moreover, Martina expressed appreciation to the German Government for fully funding the project and urged participants to create measurable community impact by using both their advocacy skills and healing competencies.

On her part, the Psychologist and facilitator, Rev. Dr. Alice Muse, encouraged graduates to apply counselling and stress-management skills in ways that protect them from emotional exhaustion and improve their effectiveness when handling sensitive GBV-related cases.

Remarkably, Dr. Alice provided practical examples, including the real-life strain faced by working parents, illustrating how stress and long work hours can affect families and children, and explaining that reducing unnecessary burdens, delegating duties, and prioritizing emotional wellbeing can improve resilience.

"You can imagine… how to balance being a father at work?" Dr. Rev. Alice explained. "Sometimes we mix the two, and then it becomes a problem, so that either one of these will suffer… If you are working in an office and you are everything, you are dying. Delegate duties." Her message aimed to help advocates and male allies manage stress so that trauma counselling and professional service do not cause burnout or emotional breakdown.

In his keynote speech Counsel Amanya Joseph, the facilitator of the specialized workshops on governance, lobby and advocacy, emphasized professional networking among graduates and urged them to pursue practical ways of handling GBV-related cases within legal systems.

Moreover, Counsel Amanya reminded participants that the training supported both legal practice and psychosocial intervention, helping them strengthen the way they respond to victims' needs. "For us lawyers, we know that we are dealing with a lot of traumatic experience and a lot of stress. Therefore, you need counseling. You need support," Counsel Amanya Joseph said. "May you continue to learn and learn and learn as you go out to your various workplaces."

He further encouraged graduates to coordinate with stakeholders and institutions to improve case handling, strengthen accountability, and support legal reforms connected to women's rights.

The graduates expressed deep gratitude to PAX and its donor, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for the training's combination of legal empowerment and emotional healing.

Advocate Jane (anonymous participant), praised the facilitators for their dedication from the beginning of the training cycle. She said the program helped her recognize and address burnout and internal stress. "I was burning out from inside," she said. "I've realized that a lot of things have worked out in my life."

Another female beneficiary, Advocate Victoria (anonymous participant), described how the training helped her better understand both psychosocial and legal challenges affecting women. She identified issues including domestic violence and discrimination and explained that violence often extends beyond women to children and that legal protection gaps continue to weaken accountability.

Victoria further argued for practical solutions, including awareness activities through radio, television and newspapers; community dialogues; partnerships with government and relevant stakeholders; and targeting schools using innovative approaches such as drama to reshape harmful norms. "Our legal gaps are still a very big challenge," Victoria said, calling for stronger enforcement of Laws, advocacy for amendments of Laws and policies, and education-focused interventions to change community narratives.

Interestingly a male ally, Advocate John (anonymous participant), appreciated PAX and the German Government for training that strengthened both advocacy and psychosocial support. He said he gained new approaches to handling GBV concerns and managing court-related stress as a lawyer. "I learned a lot of things… of most importance is how to address issues of Gender Based Violence in our communities," John said. "I also enjoyed psychosocial support sessions… I am really grateful for benefitting from EWI Project of PAX."

Conclusively, the graduation also highlighted PAX's approach of building a mass of trained lobbyists and advocates to mentor others as well as to contribute to reducing GBV-related harm while advancing gender equality. The graduands reaffirmed their renewed commitment to forgiveness, healing, and active community leadership, joining a broader effort to strengthen women's rights and reduce gender-based violence across South Sudan.