



CLOSING REMARKS

By H.E. Louis Lobong Lojore
Governor of Eastern Equatoria State, South Sudan
During the Closing Ceremony of the Ateker Cup of Nations

Theme:

“Bridging Borders, Building Champions”

Soroti City, Uganda | 16–22 August 2026

*Your Excellences and Distinguished Leaders,
Honorable government representatives from the four countries,
Representatives of the Ateker Communities,
Organizers and Sponsors of the Ateker Cup of Nations,
Our Football Teams, Players, Coaches and Officials,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is a great honour to join you here in Soroti City for the closing ceremony of the Ateker Cup of Nations under the inspiring theme, **“Bridging Borders, Building Champions.”**

Today, we are not simply closing a football tournament; we are celebrating peace, unity, culture, friendship and our shared Ateker identity and heritage across our borders.

My dear Ateker Community,

On behalf of the Government and people of Eastern Equatoria State in the Republic of South Sudan, and on my own behalf, I would like to convey warm greetings and best wishes from H.E. General Salva Kiir Mayardit, The President of the Republic of South Sudan, to the entire Ateker across the region.

The President commends this initiative for bringing our people together through sport, culture, youth engagement and peaceful coexistence.

He said our national borders should connect our people, not divide them. Our shared heritage must remain a source of peace, strength and cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I sincerely commend the Iteso people and the wider Bukedi community for initiating this important platform in 2021.

What began as an effort to promote culture, peace and sportsmanship has grown into a regional engagement for bringing together Ateker communities from South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia.

As Ateker communities in the four countries, we share ancestry, culture, traditions, values and a common aspiration for peace and prosperity across our shared borders.

Let us therefore ensure that political and administrative borders never become barriers to our social, cultural and historical relationships.

Dear young people,

This Ateker cup of nations is intended to bring you together to embrace our shared heritage and history, showcase our cultures and talents, bring our young people to know each other and become ambassadors of peace across the region. It is also to create a harmonious situation to enable our respective countries enjoy bilateral relations and improve businesses across our shared borders where revenue generation across the borders will be improved and be a benefit to our countries. It also not about winning the trophy but it is meant to expose how discipline the Ateker communities are.

In special way, I would like to thank and welcomed the other extended Ateker groups that have join in participating in this year's edition, the Lango of South Sudan and Uganda and called upon the rest of the Ateker extended members, the Otuho and Bari speaking groups of South Sudan to appear in the next edition.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I commend the Governments of Uganda, South Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia, as well as our cultural leaders, organizers, sponsors, coaches, referees, security personnel, volunteers, players and supporters for making this tournament a success.

I encourage the organizers to continue expanding and rotating the Ateker Cup of Nations among our four countries so that more young people can participate and experience the spirit of Ateker unity.

With these remarks, I congratulate all participating teams for their outstanding sportsmanship and congratulate the champions of this year's tournament.

I also thank the people and leadership of Soroti City and the Republic of Uganda for their warm hospitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we celebrate this achievement, I would like to conclude by putting forward the proposal that let's take the Ateker Cup of Nations to the next level by establishing permanent Ateker social centers for both sporting and cultural activities in each of our four countries.

I call upon the Ateker communities in each country to contribute collectively towards the establishment and construction of these centers and engage our respective governments, private sector, development partners and friends of the Ateker community to contribute to support this vision.

This can become one of the lasting legacies of our future generation, a place where future generations can proudly embrace with happiness and pride.

Let us return home carrying not only trophies and medals, but also friendship, peace and a renewed commitment to unity.

I thank you all.

H.E. Gen. Louis Lobong Lojore
Governor,
Eastern Equatoria State,
Republic of South Sudan