

GUIDELINES ISSUED TO PRESERVE CULTURE WHILE PROMOTING EQUALITY

ITESO CULTURAL UNION MOVES TO END HARMFUL CULTURAL PRACTICES

By Faustine Odeke

The Iteso Cultural Union has launched gender and family guidelines aimed at eradicating harmful cultural norms and practices that perpetuate sexual and gender-based violence.

The guidelines, developed with financial support from the International Justice Mission (IJM), intend to preserve and protect the Iteso culture in line with human dignity and to promote peace, equality and harmony within families.

It also intends to clarify customary marriage practices

BETWEEN THE LINES

☉ The Iteso Cultural Union is the third cultural institution supported by the International Justice Mission in developing such guidelines.

to prevent misuse or misinterpretation, to ensure the coexistence and continuity of the family. The guidelines will also strengthen community structures, support family welfare, and protect women, men and children from harm, while aligning the Iteso culture

with national and international human rights standards.

The guidelines prohibit incest, bestiality and adultery, and condemn acts of defilement and adultery, calling for stronger deterrent action against the perpetrators who should face prosecution.

While launching the guidelines at King George Stadium in Tororo municipality on Tuesday, Emorimor Papa Iteso Paul Sande Emolot said the function marked a significant milestone in strengthening family life and protecting the community from harmful practices.



From left: Obara Nahaama III, Mike Mudoma, Kimani, Emorimor Papa Iteso Paul Sande Emolot and his wife Juliet Among, during the launch of the Iteso Family and Gender Relations Guidelines at King George Stadium in Tororo municipality on Tuesday

The Emorimor said for generations, some people have mistaken culture as a tool for oppression, particularly against women and girls, denying them the deserved opportunities, respect and dignity.

“The culture of the Iteso, like that of our neighbours, has always attached great value to women and entrusted them with key responsibilities, especially in managing household resources and the family economy. Crops, produce and the well-being

of the household were, and remain, roles under the care of women,” he said.

The Emorimor added that there is no justification for denying women the rights and dignity that accompany these responsibilities.

Juliet Among, her royal majesty, the queen of Iteso, called upon men to have mutual respect for their women and have time for their families.

The launch was also attended by several dignitaries, including the Bugisu cultural leader, Mike Mudoma, and the

King of Samia Bugwe, Robert Obara Nahaama III.

IJM country director Wamaitha Kimani said the guidelines affirm culture as a powerful force; one that protects the dignity of vulnerable women and children, upholds justice and promotes co-existence.

Kimani commended the leadership of the Emorimor and Iteso Cultural Union for taking bold steps and unwavering commitment to eliminate gender-based violence in Teso sub-region.