



**REMARKS BY THE BARINGO COUNTY GOVERNOR, H.E BENJAMIN CHEBOI  
DURING THE LAUNCH OF BARINGO HALF MARATHON 2014 ON 25<sup>TH</sup>  
SEPTEMBER, 2014**

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

- **The Group Managing Director, ABC Bank, Mr. Shamaz Savani**
- **The Chairman, Paul Tergat Foundation, and Baringo Half Marathon Patron and International Olympic Committee member Mr. Paul Tergat**
- **Other Baringo County Officials present**
- **Elite athletes here present**
- **Members of the press present**
- **ABC Bank staff**
- **Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning.

I am pleased to join you on this momentous occasion as we launch the 2014 edition of the ABC Bank Baringo Half Marathon, which is the biggest athletics event in Baringo County. We are very pleased as a county, to be associated with both ABC Bank and the Paul Tergat Foundation through this marathon.

Let me take this opportunity to thank ABC Bank and the Paul Tergat Foundation for inviting me to this event, and for supporting us by creating for us an opportunity to come together as a county every year through the unifying power of sports.

I also invite ABC Bank to engage us to explore more opportunities for partnership in Baringo County. In fact I invite you to consider opening a branch in our county to be part of our growth journey and to work together more closely in areas of mutual interest for the greater good of our people.

The Bank has demonstrated its commitment to supporting talent development among our youth, and we are indeed very grateful. I am glad these efforts have already begun to bear fruit, as Mr. Shamaz has just testified about Alfred Barkach's recent win in the 10,000 meters in the recent East Africa Schools Games Championships in Dar es Salaam. These are the next athletics champions who will keep the Kenyan flag flying high in the international athletics arena.

My government is equally committed to supporting not only athletics but other sports as well, as a way of encouraging our youth to pursue sports as a viable career option. Mr. Paul Tergat is no doubt the best example of a successful athlete; it is possible for more young people to excel in athletics. However, due to the many challenges they face, most talented youths might not realize their potential. Due to financial constraints, most of them lack the resources and access to training facilities.

This is why efforts by corporates like ABC Bank will go a long way in bridging the resource gap to give more youths a launching pad to their sporting careers.

Baringo County is home to some of the well known athletics stars such as Paul Tergat, Mary Keitany, Joshua Chelang'a, William Chebon, Jonah Birir, Benson Cheron and many others and every day the list grows longer.

These men and women have in fact demonstrated that sports is a viable career that our young people can meaningfully pursue. Some of the successful athletes have invested in various businesses, creating employment for many of our youths.

Besides being a lucrative source of income, sports keeps the youth constructively engaged, thus keeping them away from destructive or unlawful activities. It is also a useful vehicle for bringing people together and hence contributing to society building and peaceful coexistence among different communities.

Needless to say, there are other enterprises that benefit from athletics and athletes, for example, hotels, insurance firms, travel and tours, law firms, and many others. With their resources, these athletes have made tremendous contribution in the development of communities where they come from. It is for this reason we are dedicated to mainstreaming sports in our county governance and management affairs.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As the host county, this event means a lot to us. The marathon will help expose the investment opportunities in our county, and attract some investor appetite.

Baringo County has immense economic potential, with agriculture being the main economic activity. Livestock farming contributes up to 30 percent of agricultural GDP, and supports human wellbeing through provision of nutrition, income and employment to thousands of residents. Bee keeping and fish farming also contribute significantly to the economic status of the county.

Crop farming is another major economic engagement of the county residents, with close to 20 different crops being grown both commercially and for subsistence. Coffee farming contributes up to 49 percent of the county's agricultural income, while cotton and macadamia contribute 28 and 23 percent respectively.

However, this is far from close to the full potential of the county; much more remains latent and it is my desire to see more investors, both local and foreign, partner with us to unleash the hidden wealth in Baringo County.

My government is keen on increasing production in the agricultural sector in the county by using value chain approaches in enhancing productivity. We are also encouraging the youth to actively engage in agricultural production at farm level for employment and wealth creation and on our part we will facilitate the sourcing of ready market for their produce.

Fishing also takes place particularly in Lake Baringo, providing income for the people living around the lake. The lake is a major tourist attraction site and is home to wildlife such as hippopotamus, crocodiles and an abundant variety of fish and birds, making the region a paradise for nature lovers.

The nearby Lake Bogoria National Reserve is home to one of the world's largest populations of flamingoes. The shore of the lake is lined with spouting geysers, spurting steam and bubbling geothermal pools.

Bird watching is another tourist and nature lovers' activity that is unique to our county, given the unrivalled wide variety of bird species. I welcome tourists, local and foreign, as well as investors, to sample our beautiful county's offers.

A number of hotels offering excellent dining and accommodation adequately serve the many visitors to the area. Further investment in the hospitality sector could see a rise in the industry's capacity.

Owing to its picturesque scenery, the county also offers ideal locations for film shooting. We also have an extensive good road network, making movement of people and goods around the county easy.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As an emerging economic hub in the Central Rift region, we are putting in place measures that will boost the county's productivity and support other key sectors such as tourism and sports.

We have embarked on a power generation project in partnership with Cummin Cogeneration. The project will inject 12 Mega Watts in to the national grid using the Mesquite wood, locally known as *'Mathenge weed'*. Besides boosting the country's power generation, the project will also benefit farmers who will supply the plant with the raw material. To produce one mega watt, it will take 800 farmers to supply the raw material, translating to 96,000 farmers who will benefit directly by supplying the biomass to the project.

We are also investing in water resources development and management for irrigation to address perennial food shortage and to enhance access to clean and affordable water for domestic consumption.

Baringo County has immense agricultural potential not forgetting the largely untapped beef and dairy potential. The county is home to one of the only two running cotton ginneries in the country. The county has all the ecological zones hence a variety of soils supporting a wide variety of investments.

## **Finally Ladies and Gentlemen**

I would like to take this opportunity to personally welcome you to Baringo County. Come run and enjoy the beauty of our county and the hospitality of our people.

I hereby declare the ABC Bank Baringo Half Marathon 2014 Edition officially launched.

Thank you!