



REMARKS MADE BY THE GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR, ABC BANK MR. SHAMAZ SAVANI DURING THE LAUNCH OF ABC BANK BARINGO HALF MARATHON 2014 ON 25TH SEPTEMBER 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

- **The Baringo County Governor, His Excellency Benjamin Cheboi**
- **Other Baringo County Government officials present**
- **The Chairman, Paul Tergat Foundation, and Baringo Half Marathon Patron Mr. Paul Tergat**
- **Members of the press present**
- **Distinguished guests**

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

I am happy to see you all here today as we launch this year's ABC Bank Baringo Half Marathon. Before I make my remarks, let me thank you, Governor Cheboi and all invited guests for making time out of your very busy schedule to be with us today.

The ABC Bank Baringo Half Marathon is an annual event initiated many years ago by the renowned athlete and International Olympic Committee Member Mr. Paul Tergat, with us here this morning, through the Paul Tergat Foundation. He is also the Marathon Patron.

Please join me in applauding Paul for conceiving this noble initiative and for giving us the opportunity to be part of it.

ABC Bank took up the title sponsorship last year. The primary objective of this half marathon is to promote and sustain high quality standards of athletics in Kenya through identifying and nurturing athletic talent among the youth in Baringo and neighboring counties, by providing them with a platform discover their potential, and to become world champions.

Sponsoring the marathon last year, being our first such undertaking ever, was a great learning experience. We are, as a matter of fact, amazed at the immense athletics potential that exists in Baringo and neighboring counties. Through our involvement in this area, we have become aware of the need to tap and nurture this talent to keep Kenya's athletics torch burning. Being part of the Kenyan success story is greatly rewarding in itself.

We have also come to appreciate more the role of sports in business and of athletes as brand ambassadors; the ABC Bank brand is now more popular and competitive in the Rift Valley region, thanks to the partnership with the Baringo Half Marathon.

Despite teething logistical and other challenges in managing the athletes spread across the training camps, we are encouraged by the progress made by the coaches and athletes to date.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This year's marathon will be on 1st November in Kabarnet Town, Baringo County and our plan is to raise the profile of the event further. As the Title Sponsor, we have increased the sponsorship kitty from 5 million shillings to 10 million for the marathon sponsorship and athletes' development.

Additionally, we have increased the total prize purse to 3 million shillings with the first prize being 300,000 shillings each for men and women in the 21 kilometer category. We have introduced a Schools Category, which will be the key highlight of the marathon, with prizes for both schools and winning students.

Schools will register teams of ten for both boys and girls to participate in the 6 kilometer category. The winning school will receive Ksh. 100,000.

To increase participation, we have extended the invitation to other counties neighboring Baringo, such as Kericho, Nandi, Elgeyo Marakwet, Uasin Gishu, West Pokot and Nakuru. We also expect some participants from Kisii, Nairobi and Machakos Counties.

We have once again invited athletes from Ethiopia and other East African Countries to headline the event. Besides increasing the stature of the event, their presence here will also enhance its competitiveness. In return, we will be reciprocating with athletes from the half marathon participating in the Great Ethiopian Run in later November.

Another unique aspect of this year's marathon is the closer involvement of the Baringo County Government, with whom we have worked closely and the synergy has really been the fuel driving us to do it again.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kenya is acclaimed globally for the sporting prowess of its athletes. It has become common place to see Kenyan athletes scoop the gold, silver and bronze medals in a single event. It is also inspiring to see the Kenyan flag hoisted and the National Anthem played on the international arena. These bring a lot of joy and pride in our country.

What, however, can be missed in this inspiring story is the challenges these athletes have had to overcome to rise to stardom. When they started out, many of them endured many difficulties,

compounded by lack of a proper support system in place to facilitate them. Most did not have the advantage of getting a platform, facilitation or training to test and grow their skills.

This is why ABC Bank, in partnership with the Paul Tergat Foundation have taken up the task of providing the much needed support to young talented athletes to make it possible for them to achieve their dreams. As a sponsor, ABC Bank believes in taking an active role in the sporting careers and personal development of young athletes.

During last year's marathon, we picked twelve youths who performed exceptionally well and placed them in various training camps under dedicated professional coaches to set them on the path to glory.

Indeed some of them have participated in local and international events and performed well. For example, in the recently concluded Brookside East African Secondary Schools Games in Dar es Salaam, Alfred Barkach, who is one of our sponsored athletes and is with us here today, clinched the gold medal in the 10,000 meters race in 29 minutes. Others have taken part in international events in India, Japan, Morocco, and other countries.

This attests to the fact that there is immense athletics potential that has to be tapped and properly fostered if we are to keep our country's flag flying in the international athletics arena. That is why the ABC Bank Baringo Half marathon is about more than just running; it is about birthing dreams and sustaining Kenya's glory.

It is certainly our joy to see our athletes shine. However, success comes with its own challenges, and needs to be managed properly lest it becomes a cause for failure. We have heard unfortunate cases of some sportsmen and women who have been highly successful in their careers but later wasted away because they could not manage their hard-earned wealth.

To ensure the next generation of our champions does not take that route, we are investing in developing them to lead successful lives off the track. Our support program includes personal development in key areas such as personal finance and investments, handling media and public speaking, anti-doping policies, managing sponsorship contracts among other life skills.

This year we will be refining further, our model for managing athletes, building on our experience since last year to yield even better results with our athletes in future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today's launch also marks the beginning of registration for participation in this year's marathon. We have set up registration centres in all of our branches. Registration can also be done on our Facebook page ABC The Bank or www.abcthebank.com/baringohalfmarathon and payments made via direct deposit in to the marathon account **ABC Baringo Half Marathon** or via Mpesa Pay Bill number **111777**.

School teams will register with Ksh. 1,000, individual senior men and women with Ksh. 500 and individual students with Ksh. 200.

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you all and Kenyans from all walks of life, to register for the marathon. We look forward to seeing you in Kabarnet on November 1st.

Thank you.