

**SPEECH BY HON. DR. NOAH WEKESA, EGH,
MP, MINISTER FOR FORESTRY AND
WILDLIFE DURING THE INTER AREA
SPORTS COMPETITION AT NAKURU
AFRAHA STADIUM ON 3RD NOVEMBER,
2009 FROM 2.00 P.M.**

Assistant Minister, Forestry and Wildlife,
Hon. Josephat Nanok

Permanent Secretary, Forestry and Wildlife,
Mr. M. A. M. Wa-Mwachai

Chairman Kenya Wildlife Service
Hon. David Mwiraria

Director Kenya Wildlife Service,
Dr. Julius Kipng'etich

Invited Guests,

Kenya Wildlife Service Staff

Members of the Press,

Friends,

Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to join you here today as you celebrate this unique event for a state corporation. When one mentions our country Kenya abroad what comes into mind of many, are the runners and wildlife.

Those are the two products that are synonymous with the Kenyan brand. Other sports, such as rugby, hockey, tennis, cricket and swimming are also coming into the world's attention. It is therefore exciting to note that KWS encourages sports within staff. Yesterday, we had a rare opportunity of meeting the fastest runner in the world Mr. Usain Bolt, and the experience was encouraging. Let's hope he will encourage more famous runners to visit our country.

I am informed that during the just concluded Stanchart Marathon, KWS participated as a corporate team, and a number of staff members completed the various races. We have also hosted other sporting events, including the *Sotokoto Marathon*, *To Hell's Gate on a Wheelbarrow* and *Cycle with the Rhino*. I understand there are plans to have more events in other parks, which bring together KWS staff and stakeholders. All these serve to raise awareness on conservation issues, and to forge better relationships that encourage support for the environmental conservation.

Besides ensuring healthy and fit individuals, these games are important as they encourage teamwork and bonding, which increases productivity. However, beyond this, the games provide staff with the opportunity to discover and explore their hidden talents.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am glad to note that a number of KWS staff have gone on to become champions in various disciplines, including international marathons and rifle competitions. Sports have become a major source of income, and should be encouraged from an early age. By providing clarity of roles within the institution our effort and other stakeholders is not in vain since we endeavour to do everything in our power to guarantee our future survival by ensuring the integrity of our protected areas.

We also want to work with local communities to resolve human wildlife conflict. The communities living around our protected areas benefit and assist us in stamping out illegal bush-meat trade, and wipe out poaching and other security threats to our flora and fauna.

At this juncture I am tempted to say that I will be very glad if one day I am invited to officiate at an inter-parastatal sports day. In our Ministry, our mandate of protecting, conserving and sustainably manage the forestry and wildlife resources is really broad. We need to once in a while mingle and appreciate one another as a Ministry. This is a challenge to you and I await your response.

This morning we participated in the Thanksgiving Service, during which a lot was said therefore, I do not wish to make a long speech now as we are here to exercise our bodies. Mine is to wish you well during the coming three days. Enjoy yourselves, make the most of the activities, and ensure you become a closer knit family. With these very few remarks, I declare the KWS sports officially open.

Thank you