



Exxon Mobil Public and Government Affairs Manager Nathaniel Jallah, a Marathon volunteer, Charles Cooper, Youth and Sports Minister Lenn Eugene Nagba, a 10km race participant, race director Eunice Dahn and RLJ Hotel General Manager Roderick Peck

2015 Marathon Launched

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--Over 200 Register in Opening Day

By:

By Leroy M. Sonpon, III

Around 200 persons, including Youth and Sports Minister Lenn Eugene Nagbe, foreigners and the youth registered to participate in the 2015 Liberia Marathon over the weekend.

Last Saturday's launch was not only greeted with passion, having been postponed thrice because of the deadly Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) but as a "new beginning" in celebration of the strength and commitment against the fight of the resurgence of the Ebola virus, according to Chief Launcher Minister Nagbe.

He said the fervor of the November 8th Marathon isn't only about the event but is about symbolizing that the country is "free of no-transmission of the virus."

Minister Nagbe, a former sprinter, who is poised to participate in the 10km race, encouraged every Liberian as well as foreign residents in the country to use the marathon to celebrate a fresh start after the pandemic.

He promised government support to the Marathon.

Liberians are to pay L\$60 and L\$120 for registration fees for the 10km and half-marathon, while

non-Liberians will pay US\$26 and US\$34.

Registrations run up to Sunday, October 25 – and it can be done at the Daily Observer Newspaper offices on Benson and Macdonald Streets and the Merit Travel Office, Kaba Building, Benson and Mechlin Street.

The 2015 Marathon Race Director Ms. Eunice Dahn said the run is in memory of those who lost their lives and also a dedication to those who survived the Ebola tragedy.

She explained that the Marathon is divided into two races: half-marathon race (from Freeport to the ELWA Compound) and the 10km race (from JFK Hospital to the ELWA Compound).

According to Ms. Dahn, every weekend, volunteers will “Take the registration forms to communities as a way of creating awareness for the marathon.”

The General Manager of the RLJ Hotel, Mr. Roderick Peck said the Marathon is steeped in history and would always mark out its participants as men and women of great strength and courage.

He said the first long distance run was done in 490BC over two and a half thousand years ago, when a young soldier named Pheidippides left the battle field shedding his arm out as he ran to Athens, Greece to deliver just one word to his fellow Athenians, Niki ---- victory!.

“Many thousands of marathons have been run since, and it takes courage and strength not just of the body but the mind as well perhaps the mind is the most important,” Mr. Peck said.

He added: “The determination never to give up the sheer will-power to keep placing one foot in front of the other when all of your body is crying out to rest, it is this will-power and this desire to triumph over all that stands in our way that makes this a race that Liberians should cherish and excel.”

The RLJ Hotel is the newest sponsor of the 2015 Liberia Marathon.

Mr. Nathaniel Jallah, the Public and Government Affairs Manager of ExxonMobil–Liberia said briefly that his institution remained supportive of the Liberia Marathon and is positive that this year’s Marathon would achieve its objective.

Speaking on behalf of Liberia Marathon Trust, Charles D. Cooper thanked the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other Ministries for the collaboration; Monrovia City Mayor, Clara Doe Mvogo for her invaluable assistance as well as the Liberia National Police for providing security and traffic control in past events, and to the Red Cross for providing medical volunteers.

Mr. Cooper also hailed ‘Spark BSC’ and ‘Run For’ for providing a grant of US\$4,000 and US\$3,000 respectively to begin preparations for the Marathon.

There will be 22 cash prizes – eight prizes for half-marathon, from 1st to the 3rd winners and a Patriot Prize (exclusively for Liberians) for each category as well as for the 10km race, and the wheel chair and crutches category has three separate winners.

Cash prizes for the winners are yet to be announced, according to the organizers.

It’s likely that the lack of sponsorship might force organizers of the marathon to make substantial cutbacks for the 2015 event’s US\$100,000 estimated budget, including a one-third reduction in prize money.

Race director Eunice Dahn told Daily Observer that the organizers are hopeful of sponsorship and assistance from the Liberian government for the November 8th Liberia Marathon.