



press release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ELITE INTERNATIONAL RUNNERS READY FOR STANDARD CHARTERED HONG KONG MARATHON 2008

[Hong Kong, 15 February 2008]: Nearly 4,000 international runners from more than 60 countries will take part in the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008 alongside with almost 46,000 local runners on Sunday, 17 February. Some of the world's top athletes gathered today for the Meet-the-Athlete Press Conference at the Victoria Park. Mr Benjamin Hung, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited, Mr Alex Moh, President of Hong Kong Amateur Athletic Association (HKAAA), Mr William Ko, Chairman of Organizing Committee of Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008 and Mr Simon Yeung, Chairman of Organizing Committee of the 11th Asian Marathon Championships attended the press event and welcomed the runners.

Commenting the competitive field, Mr Benjamin Hung, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited said, " Since 1997, Standard Chartered has been sponsoring the Hong Kong Marathon for the 12th consecutive year. Today, we are so excited to meet the athletes who are ready to try the new race route. The new finish at Victoria Park not only allows the runners to race between buildings of the urban Hong Kong, but also promotes importance of sports and health to the community. We wish them all good luck and an enjoyable run on Sunday! "

The Full Marathon and Half Marathon will again follow its famed urban route starting at Nathan Road in Tsim Sha Tsui, run along Canton Road, West Kowloon Highway (south bound), and turning after crossing Cheung Tsing Tunnel (Kowloon Bound) and Ting Kau Bridge (Kowloon Bound), joined by the Half Marathon at Western Harbour Tunnel towards Hong Kong Island. Runners will continue to run through the business districts of Central, Admiralty, Wanchai and Causeway Bay and finish at the Victoria Park.





Public are welcomed to join and cheer for the race alongside the routes in Wanchai and Causeway Bay from 8am to 11am on Sunday. There is also limited space set as public cheering zone at Victoria Park from 6am to 1pm (from 6am to 12nn/ 1pm? Pls align with Chinese version).

Mr William Ko, Chairman of Organizing Committee of Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008 also urged the public to join the cheering, saying, "The Standard Chartered Marathon has been growing as one of the most important races in the sporting field as well as in the local community. Nearly 50,000 runners get ready for Sunday and we are looking forward to experiencing the excitement and intensity of the competitions." It is also announced today that Honourable Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China, will be the officiating guest of the Starting Ceremony for the Full Marathon.

The Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008 again serves the final race of Standard Chartered's global marathon sponsorship initiative, the Greatest Race On Earth (GROE). Launched in 2004, the GROE sees teams of marathon runners chasing the fastest cumulative time over four Standard Chartered marathons around the world for a total prize purse US\$1,080,000. This year's GROE includes Standard Chartered marathons in Nairobi, Singapore, Mumbai and Hong Kong. The champion teams will be receiving US\$100,000 and the famous golden baton, symbolizing the strong team spirit required by marathon.

For the Men's Nations Challenge, Kenya Team B is leading his compatriot Kenya Team A by 9 minutes 5 seconds, and further ahead of Team Uganda by another 10 minutes 30 seconds. Team Zimbabwe, who was second in the Nations Challenge last year, is trailing at the fourth place only at a margin of 1 minute 37 seconds.

Kenya Team A will be represented by Vincent Kiptoo Kiplagat, whose personal best time is 2:10:49 achieved at 2007 Ottawa Marathon, and about 7 minutes better than the Kenya Team B runner Cyprian Kiogara Mwobi, the champion of 2007 Safaricom Lewa Marathon. Team Uganda is sending their best runner Alex Malinga. The heroic Malinga set the national record of 2:12:12 at the 2005 Helsinki IAAF World Championships and finished 12th at the 2007 Osaka World Championships (2:20:36).



For the Women's Nations Challenge, Kenya Women B leads field by a margin of 9 minutes to Kenya Women A and over 30 minutes to Team China. Hellen Cherono Koskei, second runner up of the 2007 Seoul Marathon and silver medalist of the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games Marathon will be running for Kenya Women B for the championship. Feng Xia Yang, the 8th-placed finisher of 2007 Beijing Marathon will take the challenge for Team China.

The 11th Asian Marathon Championships will be held in conjunction with Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008 this Sunday. 32 elite runners from 15 Asian countries will take part in the Championships and run for national glory. This is Hong Kong's second time appointed as host city of the Asian Marathon Championships. Lai Hok-yan, Lau Kwong-man, Ng Kam-tai, Lai Ka-wai, Fan Sui-Ping and Wong Siu-ping will form the Hong Kong Team and push for success in the hometown.

Bahrain will send two great men to Hong Kong this time – Abdulhak El Gouche and Khalid Kamal Yaseen, who represented Bahrain in 2006 Doha Asian Games and 2007 Osaka IAAF World Athletics Championships. El Gouche is one of the top Asian marathon runners, who achieved his personal best time of 2:11:49 in 2006 Rome Marathon. Khalid Kamal Yaseen is an experienced runner who once helped Bahrain to win a silver medal in 2006 Doha Asian Games (2:15:36).

Traditional marathon powerhouses China and Japan will sorely be tested in next month's battle. Chinese representative Su Wei acquired encouraging results in 2005 Beijing Marathon (2:16:26; 11th) and achieved his personal best time of 2:14:53 in 2007 Beijing Marathon with a top-10 finish. Fukuoka Koichiro from Japan achieved his personal best of 2:16:50 in 2007 Lake Biwa Marathon with a 14th place.

China, Japan and Peoples' Republic of Korea take absolute advantages among the world of women's marathon in Asia. Jong Yong Ok, an experienced runner from Peoples' Republic of Korea, showed great determination to win. Jong has just achieved her personal best time of 2:26:02 in 2007 Pyongyang Marathon recently and had encouraging performance in 2007 Beijing Marathon (2:32:28; 7th). She is confident in grasping the Asian Marathon Championship title with justified optimism.



Japanese runner Hikichi Mika is an up-and-coming star of women's marathon. She did extremely good result and achieved top-10 position by her first time participation in 2006 Nagoya Marathon (2:31:03). She also achieved top-6 position in 2007 Tokyo Women International Marathon (2:34:14).

China will send the 19-year-old youth woman runner Zheng Wen-rong, junior runner-up of 2007 National Cross Country Championships. Her amazing performance in 2007 Shanghai Marathon (2:38:10, 2nd-runner-up) helped her win the qualification to compete in the Asian Marathon Championships. Moreover, Zheng Wen-rong achieved her personal best time of 2:35:29 in 2006 Beijing Marathon.

About the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008

The Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon 2008 will be held on Sunday, 17 February 2008. The Marathon is Hong Kong's largest participatory sporting competition and has set another participation record this year with nearly 50,000 registered runners.

The 10km Challenge start will be at 5:15am for runners who expect to finish within 1:10:00 of starting. The 10km Run 1, Run 2 and Run 3 will start at 5:40 am, 6:10 am and 6:40 am respectively. Half Marathon start will be at 7:00am while Full Marathon will begin at 7:45am.

Standard Chartered Hong Kong is in its 12th years of title sponsorship to the Hong Kong Marathon. Additional sponsors and supporting parties include: New Balance Athletic shoes (Hong Kong) Limited, Watsons Water, Citizen Watches (HK) Limited, Crown Motors Ltd., iDS (Hong Kong) Ltd., LLA Consultancy Ltd., Hong Kong Tourism Board, Information Services Department, Western Harbour Tunnel Co. Ltd. and Transport Infrastructure Management Ltd..

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