

Remarks by Coen Teulings, Chairman of Merifin Capital, on the occasion of the launch of the Teulings Youth Sports Challenge at the Olympic Youth Development Centre (OYDC) in Lusaka, Zambia, on 28th May 2011.

Your Excellency, Honourable Minister of Sport, Youth and Child Development, Mr. Chipungu

Mr. Chamunda, Member of the International Olympic Committee

Dr. Veii, President of the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa, Zone VI

Mrs. Miriam Moyo, President of the National Olympic Committee of Zambia

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and privilege for me to congratulate you all, and in particular Mr. Clement Chileshe, Centre Director, with the 1st Anniversary of the OYDC, and what an anniversary it is: a vibrant centre full of activities for hundreds of children from the surrounding communities. I also feel honoured to launch the Teulings Youth Sports Challenge for 10-14 years old boys and girls in five sports: football, hockey, volleyball, tennis and basketball, for a period of 4 years.

This is the very first programme in the centre, which I feel proud of to sponsor. Sports managers and coordinators alike are doing a great job in preparing athletes and teams to compete in this challenge.

Sponsoring however, is conditional on progress being made on the basis of plans, budgets, reporting and accountability. “No progress, no money” is a proverb which now seems widely acknowledged. And I must say, having seen and heard what is going on here, that the team at the Centre is determined to make it work.

Today, we are however not celebrating “mission accomplished”. Ladies and Gentlemen, do not be mistaken, it is early days yet and the next few years will be critical for the success of OYDC. Many challenges remain ahead. The Centre still needs support from all quarters, be it Zambian authorities, the IOC, International Sports Federations or the private sector. Yesterday’s agreement to hold the under 20 games in zone VI also at this Centre next year is a prime example of this.

I would like to add that the Teulings Youth Sports Challenge is sponsored within the framework of the International Olympic Committee's mission to provide young athletes a facility to enhance and enjoy their sport, their education, their healthcare and attitude in life, resulting in responsible citizens and also hopefully more top athletes who are able to compete internationally and represent Zambia.

Sponsoring today should lead to an OYDC which in a few years time can stand on its own feet and generate sufficient income to sustain its own activities. An Olympic Youth Development Centre in Lusaka which is proudly owned by Zambian society for the benefit of its citizens and those in the region will be a magnificent achievement and will give me and I am sure all of us the greatest joy.

Thank you.

Coen Teulings,
Lusaka, 28 May 2011