**ANNE WAFUKA STRIKE**

"Success to me means never giving up, no matter what the odds." Anne Wafula Strike.

Wheelchair racer Anne Wafula Strike is a Paralympic athlete, model, motivational speaker, wife and mother. In 2004 she became the first ever female wheelchair racer from East Africa to compete in a Paralympic Games, a remarkable achievement considering she hadn’t even sat in a wheelchair until arriving in the UK in 2000.

She was born a normal, healthy child into a family of eight in a small village in Western Kenya. Life was very tough but got even tougher when she contracted polio at the age of two, despite having being given a vaccine. Unfortunately it was out of date and didn’t work and there followed a very difficult few years when she was almost totally paralysed. Thanks to the love and care of her family she fought the disease and managed to recover the use of the upper half of her body. However, she remained paralysed from the waist down, and was forced to get around by crawling until her parents managed to get her some steel callipers and crutches made by a local craftsman.

She never let this stand in her way and with strength and determination she fought to be the equal of her able bodied friends. Her parents were determined that she should receive the same opportunities as her siblings and they sent her to school to get an education. She excelled and consistently came in the top half of her classes. She did her exams and got excellent ‘O’ level and ‘A’ level results and won a place at university.

Life there was very tough as she struggled with grit and determination to attend all her lectures on the huge campus. Despite the weight of her callipers and crutches she let nothing stand in her way and graduated in 1994 with a Bachelor of Education degree and became a teacher. She received an award from President Moi of Kenya for being the most inspirational student of her year.

In her athletic career she has continued to improve, despite the many setbacks placed in her way. She has consistently performed at a very high level and has been rewarded by being voted Kenyan Sports Personality of the Year in 2004, Essex Sports Personality of the Year in 2006, and Harlow Disability Sports Award winner in 2008.

Outside of sport Anne does a lot of charity work and is Goodwill Ambassador for Action on Disability and Development, including campaigning for the UN Charter on Human Rights for people with disabilities, and is also a Patron of the Harlow Canal Boat Project. This work has been recognised by invitations to 10 Downing Street, House of Lords, and Parliament. She is also a Sporting Champion and has attended events on their behalf all over the South East of England.

Anne is an inspirational woman who is highly articulate and an excellent exponent of motivational speaking. She is brilliant with whatever audience she is addressing, whether they be school children or top professional business people.

**To book Anne for your event, please call Parliament on +44 (0) 1202 242424**