

UOC nears National Olympics



Sports hierarchy. NCS's Diana Kwesiga (in green) and Special Presidential Assistant Gunter Lange (standing, 4th R), plus IOC Member William Blick (standing, R) join UOC leaders for a photo moment. PHOTO/JAMES MUGISHA

Template. The Games would be akin to the Olympics with multi-sports disciplines involved. If UOC pull this off, it will one of their biggest pet-projects.

BY MAKHTUM MUZIRANSA

Uganda Olympic Committee (UOC) hopes to hold its first ever National Olympic Games (NOGs) in December. The Games would be akin to the Olympics with multi-sports disciplines involved.

"This idea was mooted long ago and has been held by various UOC executives but we are trying to actualize it," the body's general secretary Beatrice Ayikoru, said at their annual meeting (AGM) held at Mestil Hotel, Nsambya on Satur-

day. UOC vice president (administration) Godwin Kayangwe is the lead on this and shared that 15 of their 34 member federations responded to questionnaires seeking views on how these Games would run.

UOC was seeking feedback on dates, host cities, formats for each discipline, duration of the games.

"Most of you said they should be held at the end of the year. We are looking at having them for 10 days with just UOC members sports involved," Kayangwe told the federation delegates at the AGM.

"We want federations to set regulations for their disciplines 90 days prior to the Games and for the sports programme to be confirmed six months in advance," he added.

While at it, UOC has to come up with ideas on funding, anti-doping, handling disputes, what form of ranking (medals, points) to use at the competition, among others. UOC has appealed to government to fund the idea and if plans

SPORTS ACT

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materialize, the final programme could be rolled out in June.

Commonwealth Games

The more available plans now are to prepare for the October 31 - November 13 Youth Olympics in Dakar, Senegal and to send a contingent of 55 athletes to the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in

July. Kayangwe is Uganda's Chef de Mission (CDM) and he expects 35 of the athletes to be female.

Among sports with open allocations for slots, athletics will have the largest number with 12 athletes. Boxing will have six, swimming four, judo two, and one for cycling.

Netball and 3x3 women's basketball that have already qualified will have 12 and four athletes respectively. Para swimming (1), para athletics (2), para powerlifting (4), and weightlifting (3) are expected to take up other slots depending on their ongoing qualification processes.

Money and compliance

Meanwhile, UOC's AGM would be incomplete without undertones on compliance with the National Sports Act for their members. Federations and associations still grapple with the National Council of Sports (NCS)'s requirement to show they have a nationwide character. "The biggest chal-

lenge now is finances. We spent over Shs100m to hold our elective assembly and have delegates from over the country to vote us into offices. Can UOC mobilize resources to support federations because this compliance regulation, if effected, directly threatens the membership of UOC," boxing boss Moses Muhangi, said.

UOC president Donald Rukare diplomatically answered that "we have a good relationship" with NCS, which was represented by legal advisor Diana Kwesiga on the day.

"(Non-compliant) federations were supposed to be de-registered months ago but due to our quiet engagement, which we do not want to publicise, we got some reprieve. In fact, there is a willingness from NCS to handle each federation with its own merits.

"We urge you (federations) to keep communication channels with NCS open but also, the UOC cannot divert IOC money to cater for things we do not have in the budget," Rukare said.

Muhangi had also expressed his disappointment at UBF having never received any direct funding from UOC despite regular payment of affiliation fees (Shs250,000 per year) for the eight years he has been at the helm of boxing.

"In 2024, we were instructed by the IOC not to support any federation affiliated to the IBA (International Boxing Association)," Rukare said as he referenced the longstanding wars to control amateur boxing between IBA and the World Boxing Federation (WBF).

"In fact, if we were strict, we would not let you in here, but we understand your duo affiliation (to both IBA and WBF) and we are still observing the situation. We cannot spend on you directly but if the money comes from government or our private sponsors, we can support you as we have been doing with giving boxers tickets for certain championships," Rukare said at the AGM, where they also revealed their partnerships with Blacklyf and Hive Digital.

12

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