



BOTSWANA NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE



13th January, 2015

Homage to Lt Gen. Mompoti Merafhe



The country mourns the passing on of former Vice President Lt Gen. Mompoti Sebogodi Merafhe. While the sporting community remembers him for his stewardship and dedication in growing Botswana sport; at the Botswana National Olympic Committee (BNOC) we remember him as a man who championed the formation of the Olympic movement in Botswana, through the founding of the BNOC in 1978 and facilitation of recognition thereof by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1980. Lt Gen Merafhe was the founding President of the BNOC with Mr. Ishmael Bhamjee as the Secretary General. As the BNOC President, from 1980 to 1989 he led Botswana to her first participation in the Olympic Games which were held in Moscow, Russia, with a delegation of seven (7) athletes.

He served in the Confederation of Southern African National Olympic Committees (COSANOC), from 1978 – 1989. In 1987 he was elected COSANOC President, a position he held for two (2) years. From 1984 to 1989 he was an Executive Committee Member of Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) representing Southern Africa.

Through his dedication and passion for sport and his immense contribution to the Olympic Ideals, he was in 2007, recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and awarded the prestigious Sport and Promotion of Olympism Trophy. The trophy is presented to distinguished sports personalities who have made huge contribution to the development of organised competitive sport.

One of Lt. General Merafhe key achievements in the development of sport in Botswana was the upgrading of the National Stadium in Gaborone; recalls Mr. Negroes Malealea Kgosietsile, BNOC President, “Lt. General Mompoti Merafhe was able to mobilise financial resources more than what was contributed by Government for the upgrading of the stadium.” He motivated the upgrading of the National Stadium with three main objectives: A fitting centre piece for the celebration of Botswana’s 20th Anniversary of Independence thus the stadium had to be ready by 30 September 1986, provision of adequate office space for sport within one location and a venue for sports events which was to expected international standards, both objectives were achieved.

During his tenure as the President of BNOC, he was also immensely involved in the leadership of other sporting organizations, chairing the Botswana National Sports Council (BNSC) executive committee and the Botswana Amateur Athletics Association, as Patron on the former. Outside the Olympic movement he was an Executive Member of the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa (1980-1989) and Honorary Member of Supreme Council for Sports in Africa.

Rre Merafhe instilled discipline, commitment to serve voluntarily and service with distinction and treated all equally irrespective of age. He was indeed a role model to most yester sports leaders some of whom have carried on where he left. He was supportive even as he was now focussed in politics.

The BNOC believes Rre Merafhe sooner or later will be honoured in the area of sport in a fitting manner to ensure his legacy remains indelible in Botswana's sporting history perhaps some of the sports facilities being named after him in honour and appreciation of his noble contribution to sport.