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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**PNGOC turns 60 years today**

The Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee (PNGOC) turns 60 years today 02nd of August 2021 since its inception in 1961

Having had a long and colourful history through the years of growth, transformation and changes in its name to what it is now known:

The Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee, has one executive Board that deals with 3 international entities namely; the Pacific Games Council (1962), Commonwealth Games Federation (1962) and the International Olympic Committee (1974) with their respective games on a four year cycle of events.

Since its establishment in 1961, its main mission was to develop PNG Athletes and prepare them for participation in major international multi-sports events in the Pacific Games, Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games embodying and promoting the values and principles of friendship, respect, non-discrimination, solidarity and universality through sports.

PNGOC President Sir John Dawanicura in marking the occasion, said that, “As we look back on our impressive history over the last 60 years, we know we have so much to be proud of and so many reasons to celebrate this milestone”.

“In the 6 decades the membership has grown from a few sports to 40 affiliated National Federations today. This period has also witnessed PNG and Team PNG with representation at 11 Olympic Games, 14 Commonwealth Games, 16 Pacific Games, 9 Mini Pacific Games, 4 Youth Olympic Games and 4 Commonwealth Youth Games. The highlight of these would have been the hosting of 3 Pacific Games, with the recent 2015 Games in Port Moresby being the most spectacular and memorable. The hosting of these Games also capitulated the country forward in the development and establishment of sport facilities and structures on par within the region”, Sir John said.

* Some key milestones achieved in the 60 years include;
* Hosting 3 Pacific Games (1969, 1991 and 2015)
* Opening of Olympic Haus in 2019
* Visit of IOC President to PNG in 2019
* Signing of MOU between PNGOC & PNGSF witnessed by IOC President & former Prime Minister – Peter O’Neil in 2019

“Most fundamental of the legacies was not only the capacity building of Team PNG (athletes & officials), and improvement of sporting facilities. An important cornerstone for this success is the contribution by countless volunteers who run the sports programs and in their various capacities as executives and committees on National Federations”, he said as he acknowledged the great contribution of many of our people to the growth of sports in the country”.

“Transformation at PNGOC also entailed inclusiveness in sport through the incorporation and promotion of gender equality and equal representation with the increased in sporting roles taken up by women as athletes, administrators, coaches and officials as part of the wider Olympic Movement values”.

“Development over these 6 long decades has seen us build strong relationships, good governance and best practises. We are a values based organisations built on Honesty, Excellence, Respect and Openness. We value our partners and key stakeholders who has been on this shared journey with us over many years.

As PNGOC commemorates 60 years of existence, this milestone has also presented an opportunity to re-energised and look into the future with a new vision.

A defining year, 2021 also heralds in an era of new beginnings while managing the expectations of living in the “new normal” in sports, the PNGOC has just launched its new direction with the charter of a new Strategic Direction 2021-2024 and Team PNG’s new Performance Strategy.

This is hoped to provide the scope of development and identification of sport specific talent in the 40 sporting national federation codes in PNG within the new term and beyond, for absolute success at future international multi-sports events.

While there will be a small significant celebration done to mark the anniversary today, the official celebrations to mark the event has been moved back to later in the year to be held after the 2021 Independence anniversary this year, as the focus is still on Team PNG taking part in the Tokyo Games, in Japan.

The organisation started with a one man show with John Dawanincura (now Sir John) recruited as the first official employee in 1984 after he’s participation with the PNG Team in the Montreal Olympic Games in 1976, to be what it is now. Today the PNGOC has a total of 17 permanent employees serving in various capacities.

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