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## **Team PNG to Birmingham to be announced**

**“Endorsement of athletes to the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, United Kingdom, will be announced in March 2022 after the PNG Olympic Committee (PNGOC) Justification Committee (JC) meets at the end of February 2022, said PNGOC Secretary General Auvita Rapilla.**

“Whilst JC is in deliberation, National Federations have been reminded to provide all requirements for the Commonwealth Games preparations and for accreditation purposes”, Rapilla said.

Targeted sports for these Games include Athletics, Beach Volleyball, Boxing, Rugby Sevens, Squash, Swimming, Table Tennis, Weightlifting and Para Sports – Athletics and Table Tennis. She added that Athletics, Boxing, Squash and Swimming will fill the open allocations quota of which Papua New Guinea has only 31 slots available. The other sports in Beach Volleyball, Rugby Sevens, Table Tennis, Weightlifting and the Para Sports will have to qualify to participate in Birmingham.

Rapilla also said that: “The Final team to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games is subject to final endorsement by the Justification Committee, respective qualifying systems and continuous monitoring of athlete performances and preparations”.

At the 2022 Commonwealth Games Sports Meeting Number 3 held on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2022, the PNGOC team advised National Sports Federations that letters of endorsement will be provided after the JC Meeting in March.

Mrs Rapilla also announced the General Management Team (GMT) to Birmingham which includes:

- Michael Henao, Chef de Mission;
- Gorethy Semi, General Manager;
- Dr Kapua Kapua, Chief Medical Officer (CMO); and
- Matthew Natusch, Head Physiotherapist.

Mr Henao is no stranger to this role, having held this position at the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games and 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games. He has also been part of the General Management Team to the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and he will continue to provide leadership and direction to the rest of the GMT and Team PNG. Mr Henao is currently employed by Digicel PNG as Head of Legal and Regulatory.

As a former employee of PNGOC and also having served as a member of GMT to one of the past Pacific Mini Games, Gorethy Semi is familiar with the Games Operations and will provide the support to the Chef de Mission as the General Manager. She is currently the Head of Marketing & PR for BSP Financial Group.

Dr Kapua has served as a member of the medical team for Team PNG to various Games since 2017 where he was part of Team PNG to the Vanuatu 2017 Pacific Mini Games. Since then he has assumed the role of CMO for Team PNG to various Games since 2018, including the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games, Samoa 2019 Pacific Games and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. No stranger to sports, Dr Kapua has been involved with Rugby Union as an athlete, Team Doctor and Team Manager.

Team PNG's Head Physiotherapist Mr Natusch has also been part of Team PNG to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, Ashgabat 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, Vanuatu 2017 Pacific Mini Games, Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games, Samoa 2019 Pacific Games and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. He has also worked with a lot of sporting bodies in PNG including Rugby League and Rugby Union.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Ms Kessie Tadap

Media & Communications Officer

Mobile: 76724040

Email: ktadap@pngoc.org.pg