



## VISION SPORTS INSIDE: WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

By Charles Mutabi

**U**gandan woodball's transformation from infancy to worldwide recognition was confirmed two years ago with the hosting of the Beach Woodball World Cup at Entebbe.

The incredibly rare feat of hosting a World Cup not only paid tribute to standing of Ugandan woodball on the global stage, but it highlighted the impact of H.E. Zheng Zhuqiang.

The outgoing ambassador of China to Uganda was a central figure in the success of the event, typical of his contribution to Ugandan woodball during his five years in the country.

For president of the Uganda Woodball Federation (UWbF) Mark Kayongo, ambassador Zhuqiang has made "a tremendous contribution that has improved the branding and reputation of woodball within Uganda and the international community".

Kayongo says Zhuqiang became the "biggest advocate for Ugandan woodball on the international stage", adding that "on almost all woodball occasions he was invited, he attended himself".

Zhuqiang will be remembered fondly by Kayongo for "fully embracing the sport of woodball" and aiding its rapid growth on and off the course.

"We are bidding farewell to a man who has made a tremendous contribution to the development of woodball in this country. He donated new digitalised high quality woodball manufacturing machines, to overhaul the existing woodball machines, which were rudimentary and could not produce equipment that would match the international standard.

"And as nation mandated to produce woodball equipment for the African continent, this has been a great milestone and we remain indebted to him, the Chinese Embassy in

# ZHENG HAS GIVEN US A FOUNDATION



Outgoing Chinese ambassador Zheng and the First Lady Janet Museveni (left) have supported woodball



Woodball facility in the pipeline

## UWbF hails Chinese ambassador

Uganda and Chinese government."

Kayongo (pictured left) says Zhuqiang's leadership helped woodball grow into one of Uganda's most popular sports, and argues his impact was felt in Uganda and the entire region of East Africa and Africa.

This was thanks in part to Zhuqiang's contribution to the development of technical capacity. "When he had just come", recalls Kayongo, "he observed that there was a dire need for a growing federation like woodball to build human capacity and he created a bursary to sponsor officials and technical experts from Uganda federation to attend capacity-building courses in China annually.

"This has given us an edge because we now have a pool of trained professionals, who can support the game technically and administratively."

The UWbF are in the preliminary stages of a major development phase, in which land is being sought for the construction of the woodball federation headquarters, including a playing course, administrative block and equipment manufacturing plant.

Ndejje University, which has been a major partner with the UWbF, currently houses the sport headquarters.

Zhuqiang had pledged his support to the woodball project, so Kayongo is positive his successor will pick up where he left off.



Outgoing Chinese ambassador to Uganda H.E. Zheng Zhuqiang