

The Handover Ceremony of 'The Project for Judo Dojo Construction' in Gaborone

13th March 2017

Embassy of Japan in Botswana

On the 28th February 2017, the Handover Ceremony of "The Project for Judo Dojo Construction" (Grant Assistance for Cultural Grassroots Projects) was held in Gaborone. The dojo (Judo training hall) was named "Sensei Itsubo Memorial Dojo" in honor of the late Keisuke Itsubo who was a JICA volunteer and Judo coach at the Botswana Judo Federation (BJF). Itsubo unfortunately met his untimely demise in an accident back in 2014.

The ceremony was well graced by over 130 participants, of which among them was the Ambassador of Japan to Botswana, H.E. Mr. Masahiro Onishi, President of BJF, representative of International Judo Federation (IJF) and Botswana Government senior officials such as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sport and Culture Development, Chairperson of Botswana National Sports Commission (BNSC), President of Botswana Olympic Committee as well as many local Judokas. A representative of Japanese NPO Solidarity of International Judo Education donated Judo attire to BJF. The NPO Chairman Yasuhiro Yamashita is also the Vice Chancellor of Tokai University where Sensei Itsubo and Judoka Haruka Tachimoto, the 2016 Rio Olympic Games Gold medalist studied. Ms. Tachimoto also came to Botswana from Japan to attend this ceremony to honor her friend Itsubo.

After the declaration and ribbon-cutting for official opening of the facility by Ambassador Onishi, Judo demonstration was performed by BJF Judokas and Judoka Tachimoto played with Judoka Gavin who is former student of Sensei Itsubo and the first Botswana Judoka to compete in the Olympic Games at Rio de Janeiro.

On the following day, Judoka Tachimoto visited two primary schools in Gaborone to perform Judo demonstration and do some interviews with aspiring students. Later she returned to the new dojo to train local judokas, which was a good opportunity for her to strengthen friendship with local Judokas.

The dojo was constructed through not only the assistance from the Government of Japan but also assistances from IJF, Itsubo family and BNSC which donated land. It is expected that some Judokas among those who train at this dojo will compete at the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020.



Ribbon-cutting by Ambassador Onishi



Signboard of the dojo



Photo with Sensei Itsubo



Tachimoto training local Judoka