

MINI PLENARIES (BUDGET VOTES)

Vote 37: Sports, Arts and Culture

Hon. Inkosi Luthuli, MP

21 July 2020

Honourable Speaker,

The Department of Sports, Arts and Culture has an important role to play in preserving our sports personalities, artists, cultural sites and representatives.

The Covid-19 lockdown has unfortunately impacted the stakeholders of this Department and forced them into financial difficulty, as their trade is reliant on performance and tourism.

We welcome the relief packages provided to support those who have lost their income as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown but are concerned about the some of the operations of this Department relating to such.

The Department's current process for dispersing funds is very worrying, as it lacks transparency. This lack of transparency will shield those who are guilty of wrongdoing from any sort of accountability. During the tabling of the first budget reports it became apparent that there were some serious issues relating to fairness and transparency, such as who appointed the Board in charge of approving funds. In this case, the sole power rested with the Minister.

We need greater transparency by this Department if, in fact, it does not have anything to hide.

What concerns me regarding the distribution of funds, is that we see funds are not being distributed equally or fairly. Some people get more money than others without any reasons being cited. This smacks of a partisan approach by the Department to only benefit a few.

Furthermore, we see that R100 million of the Covid-19 Sector Relief Fund has not yet been dispersed. This leaves beneficiaries vulnerable to financial difficulty. This money must be transparently dispersed, and we call on the Department to submit their financials to the Committee on a quarterly basis, so that we are sure that the R100 million does not find its way into the pockets of those guilty of fraud and corruption.

Finally, we need to see a greater presence by the Department through the provision of educational materials when sports and cultural activities are slowly reopened.

These should inform the public regarding the ways each sporting code or cultural activity will resume while ensuring Covid-19 safety precautions are maintained.

The IFP supports the Budget.

I thank you.

Contact:

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