

Budget Vote Debate 40 Sport and Recreation South Africa
by
Hon. KP Sithole, MP

20 May 2015

Honourable Speaker,

As the IFP, we support this budget, mostly because we want to see development of a Sports Academy, sports development in rural areas, townships and especially in schools countrywide.

On the face of it, the department of Sports and Recreation seem to project success, with our athletes involved in major sporting events taking place at home and around the world. However, many elements of our local sporting scene require urgent attention if we are to truly build a nation of athletes who can compete with the best in the world.

Enhancing effective participation in sport is one of the driving factors of the department, specifically based on the National Sport and Recreation Plan (NSRP). In order to get communities to fully embrace this vision, multi-purpose sports facilities are needed and it is encouraging that the department has allocated funds for this. However, when these funds are not allocated properly due to corrupt practices, it means sports development does not take place and young athletes are deprived of opportunities to thrive. Decisive measures need to be taken to curb this and measurable results need to be documented and communicated in order to show our people that development is truly taking place and the impact of corruption is reduced.

The delays in providing facilities also means that in schools that do not have them, learners are deprived of access to sports; recreation and physical activity is non-existent.

The recent appointment of Danny Jordaan as mayor of the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality requires a bold decision from the Minister to remove him as president of the South African Football Association, if he does not take the decision to resign himself. Jordaan's move into the political arena does not bode well for soccer and he must not be allowed to continue to lead it.

The lack of transformation is especially concerning and the minister needs to explain this. Just because we have a black player in a predominantly white team does not signify transformation - it must be seen happening even off the fields. There is a great need for transformation to take place specifically with regards to officials overseeing sports federations, because transformation begins with the leadership structures. The minister cannot claim success if he has failed to bring transformation in how sports are being governed.

Minister, ushela intombi ikuqome ize ibuye ikwane ungakaboni ukuthi isikuqomile.

One would think that the photograph that the honourable minister took with boxing champion Floyd Mayweather before his most recent fight signifies that boxing in South Africa is flourishing. But this is far from the case - boxing as a sport continues to decline because over the years support has decreased and even sponsorship is non-existent.

It would have been better for the Minister to rather focus his attention on how boxing administration and marketing can be improved, as well as helping this very popular sport to receive the proper support within communities.

Because unlike rugby and cricket, the higher one goes with boxing, the more limited the opportunities to excel in it. If this continues, communities will end up giving up on the sport because it is being neglected.

As a country we cannot allow sport to be focused only in the urban areas - the rural areas must not be overlooked. We need to have properly coordinated talents scouts in order to identify those individuals who can go to greater heights in their sporting codes.

If we are to embrace the sports development plan as a nation, more must be done to bring about transformation, deal with corruption and encourage communities to pursue greater sporting dreams.