Honourable Chairperson,

For the 2022/23 financial year the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture are focusing on a number of priorities which include amongst others

1. Opportunities to drive their ever-present transformation agenda;
2. The identification and development of historically marginalised and under resourced provinces who do not have theatre facilities – while existing theatre facilities are in a deplorable state and deteriorating more and more by the day – many examples come to mind, the most glaring of which is probably PACOFS in the Free State;
3. Supporting the professional sport system by ensuring that talent is encouraged to emerge from all communities in an equitable way, then nurtured and supported.
4. Seeking ways to form strategic collaboration by mobilising resources – hopefully not into the pockets of those who don’t deserve it, as we have seen during the entire covid-19 pandemic, as well as before and after it;
5. And of course the promotion of our national symbols, heritage sites, social cohesion and nation building - where one key project in this programme is the construction of the Monumental Flag.

Agbare voorsitter, ek het al vele kere in die verlede verwys na die verkeerde prioriteite van hierdie departement, maar hierdie moet die toppunt van verkeerde prioriteite wees.

THIS Monumental Flag project, which is set to cost around R22 million rand. In the department’s own words: “The flag needs to be highly recognized by the citizens (as if it is not) and has the potential to unite people as it becomes a symbol of unity and common identity.” I fail to see how yet another white elephant project on top of a hundred meter pole that cost the country millions of rands, while citizens are jobless, homeless, hungry and living in abject poverty will stoke the flames of national pride.

In this day and age, after just getting through a pandemic that has literally devastated the arts and culture industry in South Africa I dare say it is a slap in the face of artists and other practitioners in the industry to spend millions of rands on a flag and flagpole in the name of social cohesion and nation building. Dis ‘n skande, julle behoort julle te skaam.

Speaking of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the department long-term plans will be developed to focus on job opportunities and come up with sustainable interventions to prevent the loss of income in this sector. The words sustainable interventions and prevention of loss are often used by the department, but what happens in practice is far from this rosy picture. I also fail to see how long-term plans will be successful if the short-term interventions such as the R300 million emergency fund allocated to the department by the PESP and administered by the National Arts Council did not find its way to struggling artists but into the pockets of council members!

House chair, one of the department’s priorities, as I have mentioned is Supporting the professional sport system by ensuring that talent is encouraged to emerge from all communities in an equitable way, then nurtured and supported. This priority is largely covered by programme 2, which according to the department should predominantly contribute to a diverse, socially cohesive society with a common national identity. Once again it looks wonderful on paper but is the furthest thing from the truth in practice because the department itself, under the leadership of the minister, through its words and actions promote the exact opposite.

Kyk maar na die minister se uitsprake oor sekere burgers se erfenis, die vlamme van verdeling word aangeblaas deur te insinueer dat die totaliteit van Afrikanererfenis boos is.

Voorts word die stok van eiegeregtige rassisme-oordeel tog te maklik uitgepluk om prominente wit sportlui by te kom, sonder om vooraf deeglike en redelike ondersoek te doen. Die gevolglike reputasie, finansiële en emosionele skade nadat sodanige aantygings ‘n muis gebaar het is onmeetbaar, om nie eers te praat van die skade wat gedoen word aan die departement se eie doelwitte van nasiebou en sosiale kohesie nie.

Nee voorsitter hierdie departement slaag nie eers in sy primêre doel van nasiebou en vereniging nie, hy sluit uit, marginaliseer, diskrimineer, verkleineer, verneder, wanbestee en prioritiseer verkeerd en daarom kan geen begroting onder sy toesig slaag nie.

Ek dank u.