**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION 1112**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO: 19-2020, DATE OF PUBLICATION 05-06- 2020: “Mr T W Mhlongo (DA) to ask the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture”**

Whether he will furnish Mr T W Mhlongo with a copy of the report of the benchmarking and fact-finding visit to the United Kingdom by officials of his department in 2019; if not, why not; if so, by what date? **NW1408E**

**REPLY:**

**REPORT ON THE BENCHMARKING VISIT TO THE UK UNDERTAKEN BY DAC AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN ROADIES ASSOCIATION ON TECHNICAL SERVICES FROM 24 FEBRUARY TO 01 MARCH 2019**

**DISCUSSION**

The Minister approved that the DG lead a South African delegation on a benchmarking exercise on technical services to the United Kingdom (UK) from 24 February to 01 March 2019. Please find the report on benchmarking study below:

1. The SA delegation was led by the Director General, Mr Vusumuzi Mkhize, and he was accompanied by the Director: International Relations, Mr John Mogashoa, and Deputy Director: Stakeholder Management in the DG’s Office and President of South Africa Roadies Association, Mr Freddie Nyathela.

**Meeting with the British Council**

1. The delegation met with the British Council to understand their mandate and work. The meeting was also to introduce the DG to the leadership of the British Council in the UK so as to encourage more collaborative work between the DAC and the British Council and solicit their support where necessary.
2. The Creative Cultural Industries (CCIs) is one of the key focus areas of the British Council. The Council view the CCIs as very critical in promoting economic opportunities and economic growth. The CCIs also addresses the unemployment of young people and promote entrepreneurship.
3. The delegation was informed that the British Council offices wherever they are based their focus on technical skills, mentoring, coaching and partnership. The SA delegation informed the British Council that SA is in the initial stages of planning to build an academy for the arts to train young people in particular in creative skills. The DAC and British Council agreed to continue to work together for possible partnership. The British Council also advised the SA delegation to engage closely with the British Council offices in SA and share areas of common interests for mutual support and partnership.

**Meeting with the SA Embassy in the UK**

1. The DG outlined the objective of the visit. The Embassy also appraised the DG on the status of relationship between SA and the UK in general and some of the work that is taking place in arts and culture.
2. Some of the issues that the Embassy is currently working on in partnership with the DAC and other partners in the UK are: the statue of O.R Tambo as part of the Heritage Liberation Route project and Edinburgh Festival. The O.R Tambo statue project is at various levels of development as it also involves the rehabilitation of a part of the city where it is installed.
3. The difficulty in finalising the OR Tambo statue is mainly due to the lack of funds to complete the project. The DG promised to look into the project and assist where possible to ensure completion. The Embassy also informed the DG that one of the key events in the UK is the Edinburgh Festival and Fringe Festival that takes place annually between July and August. The DAC involvement in the Festival has somewhat dwindled over the years. There is a need to find a creative way to maintain SA presence at the festival. Some of the ways are to have a stand at the festival to profile and support those South Africa artists who do find their own way to the festival in order to attract relevant decision makers to their event by way of hosting dinner and media engagements.

**Meeting with the Edinburgh Fringe Festival**

1. The festival is the longest running festival in the world having been established in 1947. The festival is only second to the FIFA World Cup in global audience and participation. It receives some of its funding from the British Council and the UK government.
2. One of the most important aspects of the Fringe Festival is the Marketplace where people buy works of art, various programming of the festival takes place and new artists are profiled. The Festival also indicated to the delegation that a programme called “Stage for Life” is available for mentorship and training for technical services in the areas of stage management and technical skills. However the trainee must be partnered with a senior technical person from the festival. Most of this training happens on the lead up to the fringe festival as it offers on the job training in various aspect of the technical services.
3. The Fringe Festival has invited DG to visit the Fringe Festival this year. In return, the festival will develop a programme for the DG that would allow him to meet with the decision makers and to learn how the festival is put together and to understand further the “Stage of Life” training programme.

**Meeting with the National Skills Academy**

1. The National Skills Academy was set up the by City Council as the voice of the employers for skills and creative industry. The National Skills Academy also focuses on research skills gaps mostly in the backstage as a result of industry not linking with the education institutions. The academy also focuses on apprenticeship, apprenticeship standards and framework. Skills diversity and inclusion and working with EFT colleges and creative cultural industries. The academy also offers courses not only in backstage but offstage as well such as administration. The academy is employer/industry run. Employers form the Board of the academy, are active in course design in terms of their need, help in dealing with marketing and publicity and serve as brokers as well. It is an ever expanding network as more employers are getting more involved in the creative and technical skills training. The focus of the training is also self-employment as most of the jobs are not long term.
2. The National Skills Academy has committed to support and engage South Africa going forward in the development of SA Cultural and Creative Technical Skill Academy.

**Meeting with the Backstage Academy**

1. The Backstage Academy is nestled in the middle of the creative and technical services industry. The Backstage Academy is a privately funded institution that bridges the gap between industry and education, working closely with the various institutions, practitioners, professions and other partners. Industry partnership is an integral part of what Backstage Academy is all about. There are three core companies to the Backstage Academy, namely: Brilliant, Backstage Academy and Light Structure that makes up the Production Park which is the campus on which Backstage is based or built. The Backstage live events production is made up of Design, Event Management and Sound Engineering and the other aspect to Backstage Academy is Production Futures which is about the future of the industry.
2. The Backstage Academy has a target of 14-18 years old. Each year about 100 students graduate in various fields, study and roles. Key critical success factors or model strategies for Backstage Academy are content development, funding strategies and industry partnerships. Some of the entry requirements to study at Backstage Academy is not related to the academic achievements of students, but issues of attitude and love for the industry, willingness of students to work in local communities and volunteerism are attributes that are required.

Backstage has agreed to partner with South Africa for the development of the SA Cultural and Creative Skills Academy