**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1829-2020**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 32 – 2020: DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE: 21 AUGUST 2020.**

**Mr BS Madlingozi (EFF) to ask the Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture**

1. Whether, given that R250 million owed to musicians currently in the bank account of South African Music Rights Organisation NPC (SAMRO), while mainly black artists are struggling to make end meet during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are any measures in place to assist musicians to obtain their money; if not, how does the Department intend to reach out and assist the desperate musicians; if so what measures are in place? **NW2223E**

**REPLY**

1. The Department has engaged SAMRO CEO regarding the money that is apparently in the account and it was explained to us that this money relates to undocumented work that is currently in limbo until such time that the true owners have come forth to claim the money. It is a normal practice that if the money is not claimed by any person, such will be distributed to authors after the five year holding period has expired. However, and in the light of the COVID challenges SAMRO has taken a decision to reduce the five year holding period into three years and thus ensuring that a proportion of the amount is made available. It is fair for SAMRO to be in a position to safeguard this money and properly allocate and report it. It also came to our attention that SAMRO is in the process of allocating some of this money targeting senior practitioners, and this would go a mile towards addressing the challenges brought by the pandemic.

I am sure you are aware also that on 18 August 2020, I announced the second wave of the Departmental COVID-19 Relief Funding for the arts, culture and heritage sector. The second wave will take into account the shortcomings and experiences of the first rollout. The relief will be available to mainly categories of performance and celebrations; music; festivals and events; books and publishing as well as heritage practitioners. Other practitioners will be covered through the partnership with the Department of Small Business and Development (DSBD).

In addition, the Solidarity Fund has made available 10 000 food or cash vouchers of R700 to the department, amounting to R7 million. The department is working with sector organisations and the provinces to develop a list of practitioners who will benefit from these vouchers and each province will receive 1 000 vouchers which can either be redeemed as cash or for food, with beneficiaries to be identified as follows: 50% urban and 50% rural areas.