**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION No. 2054-2021**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 17-2021 dated 27 August 2021:**

**“Inkosi B N Luthuli (IFP) to ask the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture:**

In light of the composition of Team South Africa at the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics, what steps (a) has the Government taken to ensure that in future events of a similar nature, the South African national teams will represent the demographic composition of the South African population and the transformative spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, and (b) is the Government taking to assist talented young persons from disadvantaged backgrounds and previously excluded populations to prepare and train to represent the Republic in international Olympics competitions? **NW2291E**

**REPLY**

The Department recognizes that access to participation opportunities cannot be realized without provision of sporting facilities at the community level and at the school sport which both will act as feeders. The transformation of sport requires a multi-pronged approach which has fundamentals embedded in the lower level of participation to maximize access.

Whilst recognizing that provision of sport facilities is primarily a Constitutional Responsibility of Municipalities, the Department with its limited financial resources has over the years been providing multi-sport courts particularly in schools, community gyms and play parks.

This we believe will contribute significantly in the transformation of sport in all sporting codes to reflect the demographics of our society.

Notwithstanding the fact that talent identification, athlete development and athlete preparation is the responsibility of the Federations at National. Provincial and Local Level, the Department has been implementing the Schools Sport Programme. Through the MoU with DBE, the Department has been able to fully implement its part of the MoU i.e. deliver the school sport district tournaments, assist learners to participate at the provincial and national school sport championships. Annually we assist about 2500 schools with the equipment and attire. We also provide teachers responsible for School Sport with capacity building programmes in various skills like Sport coaching, administration and first aid.

The Department also has a Club Development Programme. This programme is meant to ensure that there is a structured process to support the community leagues in the provinces which are implemented with the Sport Federations.

In addition to these interventions the Department has been implementing the Athlete Support Programme.

Athletes supported through the scientific support programme seeks to provide dedicated support to identified talented athletes identified by National Federations to reach their optimal performance.

Athletes are also supported through the Provincial Sports Academies by providing dedicated support to talented athletes who are at a provincial level with the potential of progressing to national level of the through high performance sport system.

In addition, athletes are supported through the Sports Bursary programme which targets 50 athletes a year. While the number of athletes seems to be miniscule for any meaningful impact to be made, the reality is that as new intakes enter the programme, others exit on having completed Grade 12. Support is given to athletes who have been identified by different Sport Federations during the National School Sport Championships and then placed into Sport focus schools. The support provides R100 000 per athlete per year from Grade 8-12 for 5 years. Support is provided in particular, to previously disadvantaged individuals (women and athletes with disabilities) remains critical in Governments endeavour to achieve transformation in sport.