NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION NO. 2543

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**Mr. M W Rabotapi (DA) to ask Minister of Arts and Culture**

1. Whether his department contributed any funds to the funeral of a certain person (name and details furnished) if not, what is the position regarding the contribution of funds towards the costs of an artist’s funeral; if so, (a) what is the total amount that his department contributed and (b) what are the further relevant details? NW2957E

**REPLY**

The DAC has been faced with requests to assist in situations where some of artists passed on. These requests normally come from bereaved families. However, it should be noted that, in the absence of formal policy in this regard, it became important to:

a)  Appreciate the historical fact that many South African artists experienced the worst isolation and marginalisation of their works during apartheid. Despite these challenges artists continued to share South African talent and culture with the world.

b) Most of these artists are currently in the late 60s and beyond. Therefore they can no longer do work as they reached their peak during very difficult moments of the country. A lot of the works remain legendary and continues to shape the arts and cultural landscape of the country.

In relation to the above, the DAC has responded to requests related to the passing on of various legends. The financial assistance is subject to the availability of funds. Amongst them are the following:

1.The late Mr Ben Nomoyi who was in the film industry  in the early 1970s. He was able to produce works that ensured entry into the Guinness book of records. An achievement that was never recognised for many years.

1. The late Pat Matshikiza who was a jazz artist was also assisted.
2. The late Mr David Masondo, one of the pioneers of Mbaqanga music which is unique to our country and resonated to broader society.
3. The late Mduduzi 'Mandoza' Tshabalala, one of the Kwaito stars that emerged on the eve of the democratic dispensation. His music connected with society at large and deepened the social cohesion at the much need time when the country was going through a very difficult transition. Therefore he remains symbols of social cohesion.
4. Ms Pinise Saul who died recently in London her family as well was assisted with the preparation of the funeral.

The artists were assisted to the tune of R95 000 individually. It’s only 'Mandoza’ who is the youngest amongst them but the DAC strongly considered the role of his music to unite the country.

Accordingly, the focus has been on the legends of our country and who are elderly. A process is underway to determine a comprehensive criterion because sustainability of such help is in doubt. The Ministry has setup a structure of legends, which focuses on preserving the works of these legends for generations to come. It is believed that this endeavour will find innovative ways of ensuring that some of these welfare concerns may be mitigated. Currently, many of our legends are involved in various programmes, especially the master classes to share their skills with the youth.