NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION NO. 4444-2022

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.49-2022 DATED 18 NOVEMBER 2022:**

**Mr B S Madlingozi (EFF) to ask the Minister of Sport, Arts and Culture**

How does he justify launching the Mzansi National Philharmonic Orchestra, a project that will cost R21,5 million each year and benefit a few white persons when a lot of artists, creatives, sportsmen and sportswomen, who are black in majority, are still crying to be saved from the COVID-19 pandemic devastation? **NW5572E**

**REPLY**

We are fully aware that an incorrect narrative has been promoted with the sole purpose of causing mistrust on what the department is doing. However, the truth of the matter is that the Mzansi National Philharmonic Orchestra sets a new trajectory for addressing apartheid legacies and/or the past injustices in general. These practices are so pervasive and only aimed at maintaining the status quo of separate development. To put this into context, funding of the orchestras in the country remained skewed and only benefited certain social grouping, in particular the white minority. While policy restructuring was done in the 1990s, with the creation of a National Arts Council (NAC) a process that centralised the distribution of arts and culture funding, the annual ring-fenced funding for the three orchestras in three different provinces was also established and kept until recently. It is well known that this practice largely benefited the KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra (Durban), the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (Johannesburg) and of course the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra (Cape Town), to the exclusion and at the expense of many township orchestras, let alone the impediment of the development of orchestras in other provinces.

Without the policy changes that was introduced recently, the R21,5 million would have been directed to support the previously advantaged particularly the KwaZulu Natal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra and Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra. I am certain that this is not what we want. Our progressive policies demand, inter alia, greater black economic participation and access to basic social services for all. Therefore, the orchestral landscape cannot be left behind to be same. As progressive government, our intention is to take development of orchestral music to other areas other than Cape Town, Joburg and Durban so that we can advance the country and develop our indigenous orchestras and genre. For instance, the National Orchestra has started making real changes to touch the lives of the previously disadvantaged.

I am proud to announce to the house that the National Orchestra is currently in consultation with the Mpumalanga Chamber Orchestra to provide necessary assistance and training, this as part of development of orchestral music in the Mpumalanga province. We never had something like this before in Mpumalanga, as well as other provinces such as Limpopo, Northwest, and the Northern Cape to mention but few. As part of this drive, the National Orchestra will on 10 December 2022 send about 30 professional musicians and a conductor to be part of the Mpumalanga Chamber Orchestra concert. Prior to the concert, a workshop and rehearsals will be conducted, this as part of skills development.

Informed by the Revised White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, it is our intention to effectively contribute to the elimination of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and the building of a cohesive and united society in which the diverse artistic, cultural and heritage traditions of the society, flourish. We can only achieve this if the available resources are spread beyond the colonial urban centres of Cape Town Durban and Johannesburg but into the peri-urban and rural communities.