**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION No.492-2023**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 4-2023 dated 24 February 2023:**

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

What are the relevant details of the agreement that was signed and/or agreed to by him and the Vice-Premier of the People’s Republic of China during the third meeting of the High-Level People-to-People Exchange Mechanism between South Africa and China? **NW537E**

**REPLY**

The People to People Exchange Mechanism is a structure set up to drive South Africa-China relationship in the social sector, under the framework of bilateral cooperation and Global Development Initiative.

There was no specific agreement signed between the Hon. Minister Nathi Mthethwa and his counterpart, H.E Ms Sun Chunlan of People’s Republic of China during the 3rd PPEM meeting between the two countries.

However, the two co-chairs signed a minutes of the meeting which serves as a review and report on the work done in the last three years since the 2nd PPEM was held and commitment to new goals to be achieved until the 4th PPEM to be held in 2025.

The agreed minutes covers work in the field of Education (Both Higher and Basic Education), Science, Technology and Innovation, Culture, Sports, Health, Media, Tourism, Youth, Women and Local Government. The commitment as captured by the agreed minute will be implemented by the respective Departments based on the individual bilateral agreements signed between the respective departments in the two countries.

The progress and any challenges will then be reported to the Minister who is the Co-Chair via the South African Co-Coordinator of PPEM, Deputy Minister Manamela, whose task is to coordinate the work of PPEM at an operational level. Minister Mthethwa as the Co-Chair of PPEM will then intervene at the appropriate level to ensure the work is carried out and the agreed outcomes as captured in the minute are implemented.

Nevertheless, during the 3rd PPEM, three Letters of Intent were signed between the two countries in the areas of Higher Education, Science and Technology and Tourism.

In Higher Education, the letter of intent commit the two countries to sign an agreement (2023-2027) to further pursue the following objectives:

1. Chinese Government scholarships
2. Expansion of education collaborations
3. Exchanges of students, academics, and experts and
4. Joint research project among others

In Health, the letter of intent calls for the following:

1. Prevention and treatment of tumors and non-communicable disease
2. Control and prevention of infectious diseases
3. Advanced diagnosis and treatment technologies such as genomic sequencing
4. Traditional medicine
5. Twinning of Hospitals
6. Vaccines and pharmaceuticals and
7. Creating a training platform at the NICD.

In Science and Innovation, the letter of intent calls for the two countries to implement joint SA-China short-term study visits and SA-China joint exchange programs among young scientists, research institutions, and universities for a period of 6 months among others.

Following the signing of the letters of intent, the participating department in PPEM will individually pursue the signing of agreements and/or MoU’s as per their individual needs. Each country will follow its own internal process in terms of signing the respective agreements