

Budget Vote 20 : Sport and Recreation South Africa

UCDP Siphon Mfundisi

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Chairperson,

There was a time when South Africans strongly believed that Sports and Recreational activities were likely to play a significant role in our racially divided society. Unfortunately that does not seem to be happening. Participation in sports is reportedly very low especially in our schools, which explains why we are not doing well even in our national teams.

There are obviously many benefits in sport participation especially for children; we therefore need to interrogate the cause/s for lack of interest. Could it be that our children feel so despondent that even if they obviously have talent, chances of them advancing in sports are determined by arbitrary unwritten conditions, such as where they are born, their skin colour and where they are schooled?

There seems to be no coherence in the manner in which government departments work. For instance, the Department of housing will boast of a number of houses that they've built for people living in squatter camps, but when you visit these areas, you will not find sporting facilities, as if to say that children in these areas have no interest in sports or do not deserve to be in sports.

Transformation in Sports remains a lip service with no commitment from decision makers. National sporting teams remain skin colour coded. If we are lucky we'll

see one black player in the cricket team and one also in Rugby despite having many black children participating in these sports in their schools and communities and displaying tremendous talent. Similarly, we'll see one or two white players in our soccer teams.

Some sporting codes appear to be on the brink of extinction, such as Boxing and Netball which are hardly ever aired on our television screens. For a while now there have been talks on having a Netball Premier League and it is difficult to follow the progress or hold ups on it. It is pleasing to learn that the Minister intends making his mark in schools during his tenure. It is all well and good to say that sports must be promoted in schools, but do schools have required infrastructure and facilities?

Is there a program that links the Departments of Education, Sports and Recreation, Social Development, Health and Public Works in promoting sports? The burden of disease is obviously heavy on South Africa and therefore it is in the interest of the Health Department to have citizens participating in sports as part of living healthy lifestyles. Young people engaged in sports are generally well behaved compared to their counter parts who don't, it is therefore in the interest of Social Development to have more people participating in sports and Public Works ought to ensure that we have desired facilities. Physical education has to be reintroduced in schools after all *mens sana in copore sano!* (A sound mind in a sound body)

There is a general lack of sporting facilities as much as there is poor upkeep of those available. Stadiums such as those in Mabopane and Mmabatho are left to lie fallow and rot in disuse yet a new one is rising in Soshanguve, a stone's throw from Mabopane. This should not be allowed to continue where resources of the state are harnessed to form a legacy for the masters of the day.

A close look has to be cast into the circumstances around the glaring omission of Caster Semenya from Sascoc's Operation Excellence. Let us not have our rare talent buried alive.

We in the UCDP wish to pray much the strength of the minister yet dissuade him from pursuing, like he has promised, the Comrades 2012 champion Ludwick Mamabolo case especially as Dr Victor Ramathesele the chairman of the anti drug body has announced that they were not going to appeal against the findings but would instead strengthen their methods of examination in future.

Let us pat the Minister on the shoulder for bailing out the swimming team on their way to England.

We wish the minister well in his endless efforts to douse fires across the sporting codes.

As the UCDP we thank the minister for having decided to rake the Sports awards evening function to Sun City there is no better place south of the Equator to beat that resort, the product of the UCDP.

The UCDP supports the budget