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National Heritage Council
SOUTH AFRICA

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SUBMISSION TO THE INDEPENDENT COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (ICASA) FOR A DEDICATED PROGRAMME / CHANNEL FOR INDIGENOUS GAMES

1. PURPOSE OF THE SUBMISSION

To propose to the ICASA to provide for a dedicated channel or TV slot for the broadcasting of Indigenous games

2. INTRODUCTION

The NHC is a Schedule 3A public entity established in terms of the National Heritage Council Act, 1999 (Act No. 11 of 1999) under the National Department of Arts and Culture of South Africa charged with the mandate to protect, preserve and promote heritage. The organization was formed on the 26th February 2004. Since its inception, the entity managed to place heritage as a priority for nation-building and national identity.

Our mandate includes amongst others,

- Policy development for the sector to meet its transformation goals;
- Public awareness and education;
- Knowledge production in heritage subjects that were previously neglected;
- Making funding available to projects that place heritage as a socio economic resource

Our vision is to “build a nation proud of its African Heritage”.

How shall we know if we have attained this vision:

- Knowledge about heritage
- Access to heritage
- Benefit from their heritage
- Utilise heritage in their lives, and
- Behave in a way that demonstrates their pride in heritage

3. BACKGROUND

Over the years the National Heritage Council has researched how sport has contributed towards the liberation of South Africa. Through that research, the entity has realized how connected sport and heritage is. Our forebears in sport have left a legacy that shines the sky and maps out an easy pathway for our current athletes to succeed. With a mandate to transform the heritage sector, sport is only but a tool through which such an objective can be achieved.

4. DISCUSSION

Prior to the colonialization of the Southern tip of the African continent, the indigenous people of the land had their own culture. A culture of inter and cross habitation or symbiosis between people, animals and the land.

They derived a plenty from the land for their survival and well-being. Their economic systems, meaning the sharing of limited resources, was a function of sharing; sharing work, sharing skills, and sharing resources; love for each other, realizing that Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu; humanity, protecting human life ahead of everything else; and spirituality. Their lifestyle was designed based on animal behavior except killing. Animals are loving and very protective of their young, just as human beings are. Animals love playing, chasing each other, rolling and tackling, springing and climbing. Both the young and fully grown animals enjoy playing. Killing by animals was seen as a necessary lifecycle for new life and a continuation thereof.

Animals have their own communication methods which can vary from bellowing, lowing, crackling, beating their body parts, trumpeting, hoofing, producing certain scents and many other forms of communication. This is similar to how people communicate. Humans play instruments, dance with their feet, singing songs of war, praise, victory etc. It is easy to see how the Tswana and the Khoi people mimic animals in their dance routines. Praise singers dress in animal skin and perform in a manner similar to animals appreciating each other.

Seasons also play an important role such as migration patterns, energy preservation, types of herbs and plants that they eat for their health against adverse weather conditions. Humans get clues from the animals whether the rains and storms are coming or not while the smell of the soil indicates the rains that are imminent. Think of calves running around in the morning dew or spring and summer rains and compare this to “nkce nkce Mlanjana” played by young girls and boys in the rain. Think of “nqaphela ndikhule” played by the young in the rain celebrating the beautiful warm showers.

Over centuries sport and games have always been played using the bare minimum and what was available. For a game called “upuca” the young girls would use little stones and where there were no stones available, the goat dried up dung would be used. U”gqaps” was always played utilizing ropes from cow hide. Some games only needed lines drawn using a stick or a rock where there was a hardened surface. Swimming was not only used for bathing purposes but as a recreational activity swimming like different animals whilst racing or competing.

Some activities that have now been modernized were part of the way of life of the African people. An example in this regard would be cross country running, hiking, swimming, climbing (trees and cliffs) and stick fighting.

5. MOTIVATION

As former President Nelson Mandela once said, **Sport** has the power to change the world; It has the power to inspire. ... **Sport** can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers”.

Having said this, Nelson Mandela was talking within a particular context. In this instance, reference is made to the fact that Africa today is besieged by many challenges that manifest through social ills, deep-seated hatred, perceived corruption and greedy tendencies of stealing from the poor (including bogus churches and priests), xenophobic attacks, women and children abuse, alarming murder incidents, racism and violence in any country, regrettably amongst others further adds to the erosion of the good morals and values in our society.

Despite all the societal challenges affecting our moral compass, the picture is not all that gloomy in that there are positive steps that the South African Government working with SADC, AU, UN, the different Commissions etc to redress the mass

that has become the daily bread for the South African society. Sport therefore can divert this daily pain and unite our divided society with an aim to build one nation.

As one of the key drivers for Indigenous Knowledge systems, the NHC would be pleased to realise that the sport fraternity also draws from these indigenous systems. The Entity is of the firm belief that in these types of games, life lessons can be learnt; the moral fibre will be based on solid and sound ethics; children will be taught young of disciplinary codes and honesty associated with playing such games.

The survival of these games was through oral lessons from previous generations and as such at times some have disappeared or became obsolete. One would have found games being centralised in one area and not the others. Television therefore offers:

- preservation of such games in an electronic format
- providing a wider reach for appreciation and promotion of different types of games
- motivation for the participants to dedicate themselves to those different codes
- learning about the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature
- development of the games
- exposure of the games for commercial benefits so that they can self-sustain

6. CONCLUSION

The NHC humbly submit this proposal with the hope that its own vision of “a nation proud of its African heritage” will be brought closer to being realised. That our society will behave in a manner that shows pride in their African Heritage.

Finally, it is hoped that the Committee will favourably consider this application and or submission.