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ASA SUBMISSION TO THE NATIONAL SPORT AND RECREATION AMENDMENT BILL

1. Background

Our focus will be to ensure that SASCOC as a body is able to execute its mandate of facilitating access, redress and equitable distribution of sporting opportunities with unequivocal bias to the historically disadvantaged communities. We will also attempt to ensure that sports development at any level remains the focal area of the operations within SASCOC, this not withstanding the work that has already been done by this organization in this regard.

The ACT purports to “***provide for the promotion and development of sports and recreation and the co-ordination of the relationships between***” all stakeholders within the sporting fraternity and this again should be the focus of this Bill.

We must not in any way separate sport transformation away from the national transformation agenda the rest of the country is engaging in. Sports in our view continues to form part of an ongoing developmental discourse that the state and all revolutionary forces have engaged themselves in and thus bodies such as SASCOC play a highly significant role in achieving some of these goals.

Notwithstanding international practices and norms in as far as intervention on the part of government is concerned, there has always been concern from our part with regards to this level of intervention or lack thereof, where national federations have not aligned themselves to the transformational objectives we have set ourselves. Our past dictates to us that we need to put more efforts and amass all resources necessary in trying to achieve these objectives.

2. The role of SASCOC

As envisaged by the Amendment Bill, SASCOC will be the sole “***recognized national coordinating macro body for the promotion and development***” of sports in the country. This in our view suggests that this body will therefore determine the direction that sport in our country will take. This places a huge responsibility on this organization in as far as the national agenda is concerned.

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The reality is that the disparities created by our past are still visible even though this body has been given the mandate to reverse these. The issue of separate development is still rife within the fraternity and has not been resolved, 12 years into democracy. We are still very far from reaching the acceptable levels of the reflection of the demographics of the country within both the administration of sports and representation in our national teams.

To this end, SASCOG has become a highly contested terrain infested with agents working against change. Their objective is to destabilize whatever gains we have scored thus far and serve as impediments to whichever ones we might be working towards.

It is therefore our view that Sports and Recreation South Africa should play a more active role in administering sports and not only handing the responsibility to SASCOG. This Bill needs to provide the ministry of sports with the relevant impetus to intervene where necessary particularly in cases involving disputes within SASCOG itself. The nature of this organization is consensus seeking/based and will seldom have unanimity in decision making; hence the ministry's intervention is very critical.

We need to work against outsourcing the responsibility of transformation out of the realm of government to institutions such as SASCOG. Government at the end of the day is the chief custodian of the transformation discourse with the rest of society benefiting from it. It cannot be that civil society organs drive this agenda without the direct involvement of the government.

This will further preclude to a larger extend individuals and organizations to collude and monopolize issues within SASCOG. The nature of the issues we are faced with, within the fraternity demands an active ministry that is completely hands-on with the running of sports.

3. The role of GOVERNMENT

Government remains ultimately responsible for creating an atmosphere relevant to the accordance of equal opportunities to all its citizens to participate and administer sport in the country. It should therefore oversee the above and ensure implementation thereof.

The provision of physical facilities for sports and recreation at national level should not be mandated to SASCOG as it deals with high performance sport. We feel strongly that government is better placed to execute this function as it will make sure that facilities are provided from community sport level to high performance level. However SASCOG may advise government on the provision of high performance sport facilities. Whereas when it comes to management, SASCOG can be directly involved.

Article 10 (b) subsection 3 should be the sole responsibility of SASCOG.

It should be left within the prerogative of the Minister to issue regulations or policies that are aimed at promoting equity, representivity and redress in sports and recreation. We do not believe guidelines will be able to achieve this important function as it will be people's prerogative to follow them or not.

SASCOC should from time to time and when introducing new guidelines, consult with the Minister and seek his approval as a form of accountability on the part of SASCOC. We are of the view that the Minister should be empowered to intervene where necessary, especially when the majority of the citizens are denied access.

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