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Sport is mass-based and belongs to the people, but apartheid has ensured that it belongs to the white minority. Glaring examples can illustrate this, such as the fact that only five per cent of the population can swim and only one sports stadium has been built in Soweto in the last 30 years.

Sport cannot be merely seen as a weekend pastime for the rich - it is a means of development of the people ,by instilling discipline, sound body and mind and certainly by building co-operation, team spirit and national pride. Look at how the international sports boycotts dented the pride of apartheid South Africa. These aspects of co-operation, team spirit and national pride are vital to the process of transformation and nation building and the democratic movement faces the challenge of making sport accessible to all and allowing the fruition of talent with its resultant pride.

As an immediate legacy of apartheid, we are faced with enormous numbers of frustrated youth, many of them out in the streets. Sport can and should channel their energies in a positive direction.

Moreover, sport is one of the most effective means of uniting across race, class and religion. The sight of the newly joined black and white soccer teams in the heart of Conservative controlled Boksburg surely signals to all the vision of a new South Africa.

The National Sports Congress, now called the National Olympic Sports Congress, (NOSC), was formed in 1988 to challenge apartheid sport, with the primary objective of laying the foundation for a mass-based democratic movement within sport which would be an integral participant in the struggle to abolish apartheid. Its successes have been beyond expectation and in its short lifespan it has mobilised sportspeople into a broad, democratic, non-racial movement. It is built on democratic principles and consultation, firm in the belief that it is the sportspersons, themselves, who should determine what is in the best interest of sport.

The affiliates of the NOSC include democratic sports structures and all disciplines. The NOSC's call, for which it is famed, 3one egom.ing.-.gggelm.g..tghe.,.4..gggmtml.1.1,.ng.....t.1:agglx:: is fast becoming reality

with soccer, karate and road-running now united across racial lines and cricket, swimming, tennis, squash and athletics in the process of so doing. Most progressive sports bodies in South Africa agree that the emergence of a single, unified, non-racial sport federation is an essential prerequisite before any consideration is given to the lifting of the sports boycott.

The NOSC is organising and broadening its base on three levels:  
h through sporting codes to form national controlling bodies;  
h through area and regional sports formations, such as the recently formed Soweto Sports Congress which includes all sport disciplines;  
h through schools. Only last weekend, the National Schools Sports Congress was launched, representing 14 regions and the majority of schools in the country, most of them under the DET. (As part of the democratic movement, the call for one education department and schools for all was reinforced).

Now the NOSC has launched a Sports Charter Campaign, in which all sportspersons, from across the spectrum, will be invited to participate in the drawing up of the Charter. This Charter, to be adopted in April, will no doubt act as a blueprint for the future organisation and administration of sport in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Within the framework of building a non-racial and democratic sports culture, the developmental priorities are:

h opening up existing sport facilities and resources to all and building infrastructures and facilities in deprived communities, especially in rural areas;

h development and training in sporting, technical and administrative skills;

s establishment of a national newsletter,

The programme of action initially targets athletics, as it is the backbone of the Olympic Games. We long for the day when a South African team, representing a democratic, non-racial, non-sexist South Africa, competes at the Olympics, fielding for the first time ever black South African sportspersons.