

Honourable Speaker of the NA

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The UN2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a stark reminder that countries must deliver on Goals 5 and 16, specifically to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, and to promote peaceful and inclusive societies which includes responsive participatory and decision making at all levels of society.

The latest global ranking as reported by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, shows that only 4 countries in the world that have 50% or more women parliamentarians, – Rwanda (61%), Cuba, Bolivia and the UAE.

It is within this context that I believe we must begin in order to have a more equal society where basic human rights and the dignity of women are realised.

The role of parliaments across the world is to oversee how policies and budgets are allocated in order to achieve justice across gender lines.

We as parliamentarians and legislators cannot be paying lip service to gender equality when we cannot ascertain how our own budgets and programmes are measured specifically.

The Common Wealth Parliamentary Association has proposed gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) as a method for addressing the gender gap which persists in most countries and result in women suffering economic exclusion and enjoying fewer rights than men.

Gender-responsive budgeting practices has been incorporated in a number of international and regional agreements such as the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union Agenda 2063 which has

established an international normative framework which sets goals for women's economic empowerment and their attainment of equal rights. Countries which are signatory to these agreements therefore have a legal mandate to implement aspects of GRB in their budgeting and planning processes.

Research has shown that a gender responsive budget results in much more equality across gender lines, including boy and girl children and not just for women. It proposes including analysis of women in their social context into government budgeting and planning instruments so that programmes aimed at improving women's circumstances can be appropriately designed and targeted.

This includes programmes that not only direct resources towards women's economic empowerment but targeted approaches to lighten the burden of unpaid care work on women and to help combat discriminatory cultural practices that prevents women from exercising their rights and realising their full potential.

Gender responsive budget is therefore more than merely increasing the budget for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality priorities but requires gender-responsive review of policies, legislation and financial planning instruments. It should therefore ideally be accompanied by a complimentary monitoring and evaluation framework. This in turn requires that government departments and institutions to report quality gender-disaggregated data to inform these oversight practices.

South Africa was a leader in GRB back in the 1990s, being the third country in the world to adopt GRB. These early efforts were, however, short lived, and not succeeded by a comprehensive GRB policy; albeit until recently. Although a framework was approved by cabinet in 2019 to relook at legislation, nothing has really changed.

In the latest Med Term Strategic Framework, there remains poor inclusion of gender priorities and a continued lack of gender-

disaggregated data. An analysis of the South African 2014-2019 Medium Term Strategic Framework revealed that only 7 percent of all indicators in explicitly mentioned gender.

We as parliamentarians need to understand that gender-disaggregated reporting on government programme indicators is necessary for successful GRB. South Africa has not prioritised narrowing the country's gender gap in recent years, as evidenced by the country's outdated policies, under-resourced gender machinery and lack of gender priorities included in key budgeting and performance plans.

The WCPP will begin to look at becoming the first gender sensitised parliament in SA. Without this step, we cannot initiate gender based budgets that are crucial to ensuring a more equal society. It's time for us as parliamentarians to really act and institute change from within.

I thank you