



**PARLIAMENT**  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

*Women's Roundtable: Accelerating Women's Empowerment  
and Development, through Engendering the National  
Development Plan and Financing for Gender Equality*

South African Parliament  
Cape Town

**ENGENDERING THE  
NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
AND GENDER  
RESPONSIVE BUDGETING**

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) is a blueprint or plan that aims to guide State action to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. As the plan driving Government's strategic actions, the NDP is an important instrument for advancing the rights of women and ensuring greater gender equality. The appropriate legislative frameworks and implementation plans must be in place for this to happen. It is however important to note that this alone will not necessarily eradicate gender inequality, as the implementation of the strategies and plans that emanate from legislation will determine its ultimate outcome. A key measure for ensuring gender transformation and equal participation between women and men is the allocation of budgets to effect policy and legislative changes. The link between economic and political empowerment is key to enhancing the equal participation of men and women in decision-making – economic and political resources must be accessible to both men and women in order to address inequalities between them. In order to achieve the empowerment of women, various measures can be employed to ensure that states do indeed meet their developmental goals. One such measure is gender budgeting.<sup>1</sup> If addressing gender imbalances is a priority, its importance should be reflected in resource allocation and inclusion in the design of policies and strategies aimed at improving equality for women.

A budget is the most comprehensive statement of a government's social and economic plans and priorities. In tracking the flow and use of financial resources, gender responsive budgeting can determine how public funds are raised, how they are used and who benefits from them. Therefore, implementing commitments towards gender equality requires intentional measures to incorporate a gender perspective in planning and budgeting frameworks and concrete investment in addressing gender gaps. Gender-responsive budgeting is not about creating separate budgets for women, or solely increasing spending on women's programmes. Rather gender-responsive budgeting seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. It should be based on in-depth analysis that identifies effective interventions for implementing policies and laws that advance women's rights. It provides tools to assess the different needs and contributions of men and women, and boys and girls within the existing revenues, expenditures and allocations and calls for adjusting budget policies to benefit all groups. Gender-responsive budget analysis, along with legislation, and other practical policy measures can address gender bias and discrimination. It is a step not only towards accountability to women's rights, but also towards greater public transparency and can shift economic policies leading to gains across societies.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to outline the importance of engendering the NDP, and the ways in which programmes can be more effective with the appropriate resourcing, and the role of gender responsive budgets in this regard. It concludes with recommendations for Members of Parliament in ensuring gendered implementation of programmes and budgeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Cáceres, R. M. (n/a) Overview of Gender-responsive Budget Initiatives

<sup>2</sup> Wehner, J. & Byanyima, W. (2004) Parliament, the Budget and Gender

### 2. WOMEN AND THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The country's National Development Plan (NDP) recognises the need for an inclusive and integrated rural economy, with the aim of implementing effective land reform, ensuring food security, and developing the potential of industries such as agro-processing, fisheries and tourism.<sup>3</sup> The ultimate role of Members of Parliament is to represent the needs and interests of their constituents, the majority of which are women. In order to create both gender-sensitive Parliaments as well as improve gender relations in society, Members of Parliament, both men and women, need to take the following into consideration.

In terms of women, the NDP recognises the need to transform the economy to encourage the full participation of women, and highlights public employment as an avenue for extending employment to women. It supports the active role of women as leaders in society, and addresses the need for social, cultural and religious barriers to be breached for the advancement of women. The document also determines that by 2030 those living in South Africa should have no fear of crime and especially those most vulnerable, children, women and persons with disabilities should be protected. There should be security of tenure for women who are farmers, and services should be provided for women (for example safe drinking water, electricity and quality child care) in order for women to have the time to seek and keep employment. Additionally, the Department of health is tasked with implementing a nutrition programme for pregnant women and for children, and for the expansion of antiretroviral treatment.<sup>4</sup>

While the NDP makes reference to women and the importance of gender equality, it does not articulate in concrete terms the actions necessary for facilitating gender equity within all spheres of society. This explicit articulation is necessary because this implores all implementing agencies to deliberately outline plans in line with the principles of gender equality, and to attach resources to these plans.

However, while it is critical that the national blueprint for action explicitly integrate the needs of women, it is equally critical that the strategic plans of departments articulate them. Strategic and performance plans of departments are an integral part of departments' budgeting processes, and thus present a crucial opportunity to ensure both plans and budgets are not gender blind. Given that strategic plans and their accompanying performance plans and their implementation are directly linked outcomes oriented service delivery agreements signed by the President and results based programme planning, they provide a very practical way of holding the Executive accountable for the gendered implementation of programmes and initiatives. These plans are further located within the context of broader plans, policies, projects and programmes, including those concerning long term infrastructure and development proposals.<sup>5</sup> It is important to institutionalise the principles of gender equity within departments by linking the gender equality aspirations of the NDP with departmental strategic and performance plans and budgets. In this way the lives of ordinary women can be impacted in a real way.

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<sup>3</sup> National Development Plan (2011)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> National Treasury (2010) Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans

## 3. ENSURING GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETS

The 1966 UN Women Meeting adopted the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights required States to implement measures to realise the economic rights of women, including taking budgetary measures to maximise resources in this regard.<sup>6</sup> Gender mainstreaming as a concept then surfaced internationally in 1985 with the UN Third World Conference on Women hosted in Nairobi. Further, the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action includes commitments by States to allocate sufficient resources to meeting women's social needs and conducting gender impact analysis.<sup>7</sup> Thus there is a clear mandate from the United Nations to incorporate a gender perspective to budget processes. A review of the Platform for Action in 2000 suggest the following:<sup>8</sup>

- There should be explicit attention given to budget processes at the national, regional and international levels;
- States, civil society and other actors must cooperate to do the following:
  - incorporate a gender perspective into the design, development, adoption and execution of all budgetary processes, as appropriate, in order to promote equitable, effective and appropriate resource allocation;
  - establish adequate budgetary allocations to support gender equality and development programmes that enhance women's empowerment; and
  - develop the necessary analytical and methodological tools and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation;

The 2015 United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Conference highlighted the concern that global financial instability is a threat to the economic progress of women because of how resources are redistributed to sustain big business and that this had been accompanied by financial deficits both in domestic resources and Official Development Assistance (ODA).<sup>9</sup> Gender responsive budgets can contribute to women's development in various ways, including by:<sup>10</sup>

- Recognising and valuing contributions made by women to the economy as well as the private sphere (reproductive and domestic arena);
- Ensuring women's leadership in politics, the economy and other institutions;
- Transforming the State to focus on the poorest in society and those that most need government intervention;
- Advancing the focus on macroeconomic issues and increasing advocacy capacity among women's organisations.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Human Rights (2015) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> UN Women (1995) Fourth World Conference on Women

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/>

<sup>8</sup> Hanna, C. (2008) Mainstreaming gender perspectives in national budgets: an overview

<sup>9</sup> United Nations. (March 2015) Summary Report: The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns 20

<sup>10</sup> Budlender, D. (2005) Expectations versus Realities in Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives

The importance of gender responsive (GRB) budgets lies in their usefulness in assisting to bridge inequalities between men and women and facilitate development by integrating gender issues into macroeconomic policy and budgets. In general, GRB initiatives have not been successfully applied to mainstream budgets, which comprise over 90 per cent of government expenditure. Instead, they have tended to concentrate on allocations targeting women and girls, which comprise a very small proportion of national budgets. The following are principles of good budgeting:<sup>11</sup>

- **Comprehensive:** The budget must cover all the fiscal operations of government, encompassing all public expenditure and revenues, to enable full and informed debate of the trade-offs between different policy options.
- **Predictability:** Spending agencies should have certainty about their allocations in the medium-term to enable them to plan ahead. Stable funding flows support departmental planning and efficient and effective delivery.
- **Contestability:** No item in the budget should have an automatic claim to funding. All policy and attached funding should be regularly reviewed and evaluated in order to ensure prioritisation and optimal performance of spending agencies.
- **Transparency:** All relevant information required for sound budgetary decision-making should be available in an accessible format, and in a timely and systematic fashion. Budget information needs to be accurate, reliable and comprehensive.
- **Periodicity:** The budget should cover a fixed period of time, typically one year, and the process of compiling the budget should follow a clear and reliable schedule that is agreed upon and published in advance.

Gender budget analysis is usually divided into three categories. The first category considers whether government departments had clearly targeted gender-based expenditures (such as special education initiatives for girls). The second category focused on whether there is equal employment opportunity expenditure on government employees (such as the provision of crèche facilities), while the third category judged mainstream budget expenditure on its impact on both male and female adults and children. A gendered analysis describes the situation of these groups and assesses whether policies could address their situations. Thirdly it ascertains whether a budget had been allocated to implement gender-sensitive policies and, if so, whether it had been spent as planned. Lastly, it examines whether the policy and expenditure promotes gender equity.<sup>12</sup>

While gender responsive budgeting is specific to identifying flows of financial resources as they serve women, it is still important that gendered budgets adhere to these principles. Not only does this create more legitimacy for gendered budgets, it also means that this process becomes imbedded in the mainstream budget process and information on what departments spend on becomes more available. There have been several attempts at tracking the budget from a gendered perspective in South Africa, and these are detailed below.

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<sup>11</sup> Budlender, D. (2005) Expectations versus Realities in Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives.

<sup>12</sup> ILO Bureau for Gender Equality (2006) Overview of Gender-responsive Budget Initiatives

## 4. GENDER BUDGET INITIATIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1996 the Commonwealth Secretariat (CommSec) launched a pilot project of government-led GRB initiatives in Barbados, South Africa, Sri Lanka. These were designed to enhance government capacity to apply gender analysis to policy and budgets. South Africa's Women's Budget Initiative was launched in collaboration with Members of Parliament (first the Joint Standing Committee on Finance, and then the Joint Committee on the Quality and Status of Life of Women) and civil society organisations Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE). A "Women's Budget" was then prepared from 1996 until 2000. The CommSec's strong history and work expertise in linking the impacts of macroeconomic policy on women (e.g. past work done by the 1989 Commonwealth Expert Group Engendering Adjustment for the 1990s) assisted in securing buy-in for the project. Focusing on the expenditure side of the budget allowed for the fine-tuning of the approach. There was direct access to the Minister and senior officials due to the CommSec's structure, and gender mainstreaming was a cross-cutting issue in its projects.<sup>13</sup> The initiative had some successes that can be considered the strengths of the programme, and can be articulated as follows:<sup>14</sup>

- Improved ability to determine real value of resources towards gender-specific groups;
- Greater debate on the notion that all policies and programmes are 'gender-neutral';
- Enhanced collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and where it was not available, the GRB process exposed weaknesses in information systems with respect to the scarcity of data;
- Given the participatory nature of the process, this was an opportunity for Government officials to receive a form of gender training that is easy to apply;
- Analysis of the presence of equal opportunities in the public service; and
- Methodology can be used to address other forms of social need and disadvantage (e.g. race).

Despite the successes, there were also weaknesses, which were as follows:<sup>15</sup>

- There was a need for more political support from Finance Ministries;
- The need for enhanced capacity building on integrating social policy issues with public spending;
- Lack of knowledge on gender issues on the part of Government officials, which limits high-level commitment to the work;
- Need to develop tools for analysing the impact of Government revenues;
- Need for greater coordination for programme implementation at the country level;
- More attention to the issue of 'continuity' since the process of gender analysis takes time. Although the budget cycle is an annual process and

<sup>13</sup> Budlender, D. (2005) Expectations versus Realities in Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives

<sup>14</sup> Budlender, D. and Hewitt, G. (2003), Engendering budgets: A practitioners' guide to understanding and implementing gender-responsive budgets

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



- gender concerns could be quickly integrated into it, gender analysis implementation and its results often take longer; and
- Limited budgetary power of Members of the legislative. Limited power of lawmakers prevented them from amending budgets.

The 2005 Women's Budget Initiative was seen as a continuation of the previous initiative, although it did not continue past this one year. A gender-sensitive budget is not merely about equality but about equity, and while such budgets were not separate budgets for men and women, they brought gender awareness into the policies and budgets of all departments. A gender budget combines technical knowledge for equitable policymaking, with advocacy and engagement with powerful interests and institutions. A gender responsive budget would, among other benefits, improve efficiency by ensuring that expenditure benefited those who needed it the most. It would assist in tracking implementation and reducing corruption while improving transparency and accountability.

More recently, the South African Parliament's Research Unit went through a costing exercise which sought to analyse the service delivery costs associated with combating gender based violence. This research concluded that while gender based violence had cost implications for the State, departments were not spending what they should on responding to gender based violence and also needed to fully examine what it would take to implement legislation meant to protect women. Recommendations included the establishment of a funding model for gender based violence which would articulate the roles of different departments and agencies involved in combating violence against women including the National Council on Gender Based Violence, the Departments of Justice, Police and Social Development, the South African National AIDS Council, and the National Task Team on Hate Crimes. It was also recommended that Parliament develop a mechanism for tracking expenditure by departments, and that these departments report to Parliament on a quarterly basis on the impact of their funding. It was suggested that the Department of Social Development review its partial funding of services such as shelters for victims of domestic violence, and the provision of counsellors. In addition, the suggestion was made that the budget for sexual offenses courts be ring fenced in order to prioritise the efficient running of these courts.<sup>16</sup>

Most recently the Multi-Party Women's Caucus (at steering committee level) embarked on a process to resuscitate the gender budget initiative by looking at the budgets of both the Women's Ministry and the extent to which the Department of Rural Development took the needs of women into account. The need for the ring fencing of specific budgets, set aside to implement programmes that advance gender equality, as well as the need to monitor the implementation of programmes to ensure that women benefit equitably was discussed.

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<sup>16</sup> Thorpe, J., Wakefield, L., & Watson, J. (2014) Costing gender-based violence: An analysis of some of the service delivery related costs.

## 5. MONITORING THE GENDERED IMPACT OF NATIONAL BUDGETS

Tracking the impact of budgets is critical in not only evaluating results after initiatives have been implemented, but in ensuring consistent monitoring as implementation happens. There are three broad steps that can be distinguished in a gender responsive budgeting initiative, summarised as follows:<sup>17</sup>

- **Awareness:** the key objective of this initial phase is to make gender disparities more visible. Access to sex-disaggregated data is vital to gender-specific analyses of revenues and expenditures in budgets. This phase also includes building the capacity and sensibility of key stakeholders. The involvement of civil society is essential in raising awareness. Budgets are often analysed to reveal how existing allocations affect gender equality: analysts first seek to establish an overview of gender-specific inequalities within a sector (using sex-disaggregated data), and subsequently look at the policies and programmes addressing this sector. Only by examining actual implementation and the associated outcomes is it possible to assess whether government policies are in fact addressing the identified inequalities – for example whether girls have the same access to schooling as boys.
- **Accountability:** this phase usually extends GRB initiatives from the initial one-off analysis of budget allocations to cover the entire budget cycle, including strategic plans and annual performance plans. In this way gendered budget allocations evolve from information about gender inequalities in budget allocations, and encourage a sense of accountability for gender equality objectives.
- **Change (Action):** this phase is the ultimate objective of GRB initiatives and implies changing government budgets and policies. This necessitates the introduction of additional tools and methods – not least in relation to monitoring and evaluating the impact of the change in allocations. Very few documented examples of GRB initiatives have progressed to this third phase. It is, to quote Sharp (2007), “generally thought that GRB initiatives have a greater measurable track record in generating analyses than changing budgets and policies”

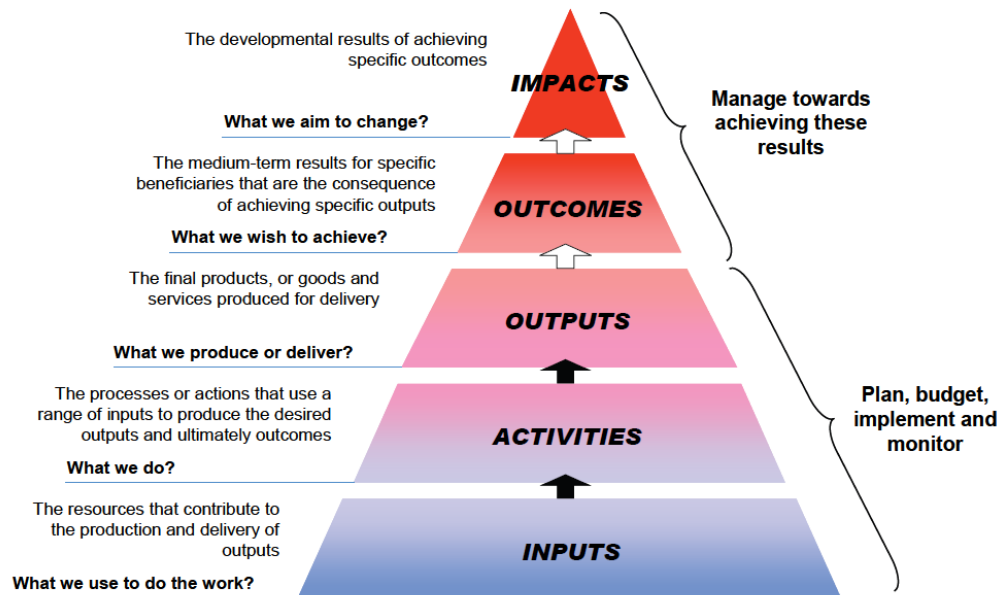
However, even if a GRB initiative does not meet its overall, long-term objective of changing government budget allocations, it may still to some extent “succeed without success” by initiating a process and/or dialogue on gender equality, triggering engagement and co-operation between stakeholders interested in budgetary transparency, and helping to establish that gender inequality does not make good economic sense. Gender responsive budgeting is an iterative process that may not follow a linear path, however it is important that parliaments evaluate their own processes, in order to determine a way forward.<sup>18</sup> In the South African budget cycle, the following outlines key performance information concepts that are aligned to government's outcomes orientated approach.

<sup>17</sup> Sharp, R. (2003), Budgeting for equity: Gender budget initiatives within a framework of performance oriented budgeting

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



Figure 1. Key performance information concepts<sup>19</sup>



This framework guides the development of strategic and annual performance plans. Using the framework can assist in clarifying the relationship between policies and programmes, and departmental budgets.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Women's occupation of seats in Parliament is not only important in its own right, but for the effect it can have on the quality and perspective of decision-making. In enacting policy, Legislatures should take into account the gendered implications of its parliamentary oversight and legislative mandate. The following are recommended to ensure more equitable budgets:<sup>20</sup>

- Members should ensure adequate funds for the Women's Ministry and the Commission on Gender Equality;
- Poverty reduction programs and their budgets should be formulated in a transparent manner and should include grassroots women's groups' participation;
- Gender disaggregated data should be requested both from Treasury as well as departments;
- Budgets should be clearly linked to gender equity outcomes, and these must be articulated by every department - There should be strict focus on outcomes for women;
- Based on evidence-based research, where there are budget deficits, allocation shifts should be recommended in education and health where women's wellbeing is affected;

<sup>19</sup> National Treasury (2010) Framework for Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans

<sup>20</sup> World Bank (2007)

- Ensure the revenue measures including fuel levies and sales taxes do not adversely affect women;
- For each sector, resource allocations to particular sectors should be monitored to ensure that they benefit women.

More basic or traditional budget reforms focus on reporting budget entries (or line items) to better reflect and demonstrate whether the underlying objectives are met (this is called programme-based budgets). More advanced reforms focus on establishing a link between the budget and initial objectives, enabling assessments of how well the government's policies correspond with its budget allocations. This would include measures of outputs and outcomes in the budgetary framework, allowing for a review of effectiveness and efficiency.<sup>21</sup>

### 7. CONCLUSION

The 2015 Estimates of National Expenditure details the allocation of resources and how institutions have spent their budgets in previous years. While key performance indicators are included for each budget vote, these are not detailed enough to determine allocations specifically set aside for women's programmes, as well as the extent to which general programmes contribute to women's lives. This is an important distinction. There is a need for the ring fencing of specific budgets, set aside to implement programmes that advance gender equality, as well as need to monitor the implementation of programmes to ensure that women benefit equitably.

It is not enough to have women represented in decision-making positions – there must be significant participation of women, and the participation must result in influencing policy decisions and direction. Members of Parliament have a particularly important role to play in applying a women's human rights framework and advancing the gender agenda through their oversight function. This means applying a gendered perspective to the monitoring, evaluation and analysis of all parliamentary business, as well as when engaging with government departments and civil society. It is about considering the impact of all legislation, policies, programmes and resource allocations on the lives of women and gauging whether a positive change in their lives will be effected through these frameworks and allocations.

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<sup>21</sup> Kovsted, J. A. (2010) Gender equality, women's empowerment and the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness

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