



**DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE PRESIDENCY: WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES**

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

BUDGET VOTE SPEECH

ADDRESS

**BUDGET VOTE SPEECH BY HONOURABLE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
PRESIDENCY FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES,**

PROFESSOR HLENGIWE MKHIZE

VIRTUAL PLATFORM, DELIVERED FROM GAUTENG

DATE: 22 JULY 2020

Honourable House Chairperson,

Honourable Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

Honourable Minister in the Presidency: Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane

Honourable Ministers, Deputy Ministers,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

The Commission on Gender Equality

Development Partners

Honoured Guests

Fellow South Africans

Honourable Chairperson, My budget vote address today is sadly delivered amidst a devastating outbreak that its impact will be felt for a long time to come – particularly by women, youth, persons with disabilities and the LBGTQIA++ community, as they continue to be the most disadvantaged in our society.

These are unprecedented times – not only for South Africa but globally. This pandemic has laid bare the deep rooted fault lines of inequality that is entrenched in our society – not just from 1994 – but one that is embedded in the history of mankind and institutionalized and legalized during the colonialist and apartheid eras.

Inequalities, discrimination, prejudice, bigotry, sexism and homophobia have a long history, which manifest in patriarchal, toxic and harmful practices and negatively impact the most vulnerable sectors of our society. It has not only destroyed families and damaged communities over the decades, but has impacted the life of every South African in a profound manner – where we **all** continue to be participants, either as beneficiaries or actors. It would be a missed opportunity if we as the legislature fail to reflect today, and therefore unpack, how these fault lines go way deeper into our long history – much earlier than 1994.

Honourable Chair, as a consequence of this unprecedented period, the department has adjusted its budget and targets in contributing to government's response to addressing the pandemic. We are still a government that cares.

The Department continues to do work towards ensuring that women, youth and persons with disabilities are placed at the centre of development programmes. Our response to inequality is premised on programmes being inclusive, geared towards rectifying imbalances of the past, and closing gaps in representation and participation. We continue to endeavor for dismantling stereotypes and misogynistic agendas, and unpacking structural drivers of inequality. We strive to break heteronormative and patriarchal systems that benefit conformity and a select group of privileged individuals.

The Honourable members will recall that in my budget vote address in 2019 I spoke at length about the priority focus on economic empowerment and programmes initiated for women, youth and persons with disabilities. I wish to add that economic justice and rights continues to remain a top priority for the department and the country as a whole. Towards this, we need to optimize the economic zones interventions, in particular how we tap into multinational initiatives and ensure that they empower local people, especially young people in our country.

Youth, women and persons with disabilities are all under one roof in the department and this presents immense opportunities and inherent potential. Therefore we must encourage strong leadership to ensure that Government's adjusted economic packages and interventions are optimized to turn the tide around for women, youth, persons with disabilities and members of the LGBTQI+ sectors.

We need activists and strong leaders from these sectors, especially young activists, who will be prepared to stand up and be counted. They must be able to unpack how the economic recovery programme of tomorrow addresses the needs of these sectors in an inclusive way while remaining cognizant that many industries are and will be facing their most devastating times to come.

The theme for the Youth Month in June this year was on “Youth Power”. Youth power must be harnessed now so that they are the emerging leaders within the various communities across the country to tap into the opportunities available in the economic recovery programme, making sure that they are able to get women and particularly young women, young men and persons with disabilities from urban and rural communities to benefit from the opportunities available in the making of sanitary products, masks, protective clothing, soaps and sanitisers, among others.

We are encouraging young people, including young people with disabilities, and those within the LGBTQI+ communities to take up the cudgels of leadership and utilize this power they have to be the spark that ignites the change we are striving for. We know that through-out history, revolutions started by young people have brought about immense social and economic change. Our youth must not remain strangers to the opportunities that are out there.

Honourable Chairperson, in line with Government’s strategy of implementing the District Development Model, we are convinced that interventions and implementation targeted at the district and local level provides opportunities to address specific issues pertaining to specific sectors at these levels. Thus strong leadership by women, youth, persons with disabilities and the LGBTQI+ sector at these district and local levels is encouraged, so that they grasp the power inherent in them to engage in economic opportunities, to change patriarchal societal norms and values that undermines their rights and dignity and retards their empowerment and advancement in society.

The strengthening of the national gender machinery, the youth machinery and the disability machinery can also be embarked upon through the district model, where structures can be set up at district, ward and community levels to address inequalities from the ground up - to tackle gender based violence and femicide, unemployment, lack of access to schooling especially for children with disabilities, access to basic services such as water, sanitation and menstrual health and hygiene, ECD access, among others. We see the district development model, driven by our young leaders as facilitating support for SMMEs and cooperatives owned and managed by women, youth and persons with disabilities through skills development, market access, development funding and access to information.

The District Model must also be used to address issues concerning the systemic injustice, discrimination, exclusion and hate crimes that the LGBTQI+ sector faces, and which have been exacerbated by COVID-19. One of the main concerns is that of their safety and freedom from violence perpetrated on them even by families. We call upon society to ensure that they are not kicked out of their homes during this critical period, and as a result subjected to further atrocities, inequalities and inhuman treatment.

This year, UN Women is leading a global campaign called Generation Equality with a concerted focus on addressing issues through Action Coalitions led by select world leaders so that globally we are able to attain gender equality by 2030. His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa, has been given the honourable task of championing the Action Coalition globally on Economic Justice and Rights.

This meshes very well with His Excellency's chair ship of the African Union this year, where the President is also focused on African women's economic advancement on the continent, declaring the next ten years the Decade of Financial Inclusion and Economic Empowerment of African Women. In line with this the Department has adopted the theme "Generation Equality: Realising women's rights for an equal future" for the National Women's Month in August this year.

All of this interfaces and intersects our strong focus on women's economic justice and rights within the social relief and economic recovery interventions and package, as well as the bold call to young women activism and leadership to create and drive the impetus towards an equal future where there is equal pay for work of equal value; sharing of unpaid care work and domestic work; end to gender based violence and femicide and equal participation in political, social and economic life.

South Africa, like the rest of the global community, more than ever today, need young leaders who are committed to actions that seek to ameliorate domestic and global challenges, stand up for civic education, equality human rights and environmental and economic justice.

Honourable Chairperson, the country continues to be ravaged by the scourge of gender based violence and the brutal killing of our women and girls. We are hard at work establishing the structures, reporting systems, and infrastructure required to support the work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on GBVF. We continue to pursue several interventions outlined in the National Strategic Plan (NSP) on GBVF, and in the establishment of the National Council on GBVF. As we undertake our work as District Champions I wish to remind honourable members of our work in assessing and supporting local structures to set up to respond to GBVF.

Honourable Chairperson, Government is concerned that despite various instruments and undertakings persons with disabilities continue to be marginalised and face barriers in their participation as equal members of society. We need platforms that provide opportunities for all spheres of government and civil society to plan collectively in addressing the rights and needs for persons with disabilities for social integration. Our work targets addressing prejudices in society and transformation of workspaces and social spaces for universal access and design. We continue to consult and work towards the Disability Rights Bill so that these issues can be addressed and enforced.

Now, more than ever before, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities must establish itself as a centre of government department committed to mainstreaming programmes that respond appropriately to the challenges facing women, youth, persons with disabilities and the LGBTQI+ sector.

Malibongwe!