



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

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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

MS MAITE NKOANA-MASHABANE

VIRTUAL PLATFORM, DELIVERED FROM GAUTENG

DATE: 22 JULY 2020

Honourable Chairperson

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

Honourable Members

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with sadness that we learnt of the passing of Ntate Andrew Mlangeni this morning. Last week, we also lost another heroine of our struggle Mme Zindzi Mandela. I would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the families of Mlangeni and Mandela on the passing of these two giants.

Honourable House Chairperson,

It is an honour to present this year's Budget Vote Speech of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. The Department is central to our collective objective of inclusive development of our country.

We also have an important role in the mainstreaming of gender, youth and issues affecting persons with disabilities. Our focus continues to be on inter-sectionality because women, youth and persons with disabilities continue to face many challenges in our society.

Honourable Members,

We are living in uncertain times. Our country is facing the two pandemics of the corona virus and gender-based violence and femicide.

COVID-19 Pandemic

With regards to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Government continues to tirelessly implement various measures to save the lives and livelihoods of our people from this pandemic.

We are concerned that during the pandemic of COVID-19 and national lockdown, there is potential for gender-based violence, in particular domestic violence and rape and sexual assault to increase in this period, given that women and children would be locked in their homes and confined with their abusers. This is a concern that we all share.

There is also the concern of the lack of access to menstrual health and hygiene products by indigent women and girls, such as sanitary towels, water and soap. COVID-19 threatens women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Our Government has adopted progressive interventions to alleviate the worst social impacts of COVID-19. These include but not limited to the establishment of homeless shelters; expansion of provision of psycho-social support services; measures to ensure support for gender-based violence victims including declaration of GBV-related services as essential services and strengthening the capacity of the GBV Command Centre.

On our part, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has contributed to the COVID-19 response plan with a particular focus on mitigating the negative impact of the pandemic on women, youth and persons with disabilities.

The Department has also partnered with the Department of Social Development, UNFPA and WaterAid to ensure Menstrual Hygiene Management is accessible to vulnerable women and girls.

Furthermore, the Department has been participating actively in government structures to coordinate the response to COVID-19, including key workstreams and the Natjoints. This is to ensure that interventions are deliberately targeted at these sectors and

that these sectors benefit from social and economic relief packages.

Working with development partners, we will ensure that women in poor communities have access to free sanitary dignity products.

As the country continues to battle with Covid-19 pandemic, we would like to encourage everyone in our country to wear their masks, regularly wash our hands with soap or sanitise and do their part to observe social distancing.

Fellow South Africans,

Our response to Gender-Based Violence

The second pandemic confronting our country is gender-based violence and femicide. During recent months, our country has witnessed the brutal killing of innocent women and children.

The perpetrators of these horrific crimes are men, our brothers, our sons and our fathers. I wish to reiterate our condemnation of gender-based violence in our country as there no excuse to

commit these heinous acts.

I would like to express our sincere condolences and solidarity to all families who lost their loved ones in the hands of this pandemic, perpetrated by men.

As we continue to fight this scourge of gender-based violence and femicide, we are aware that the fight is bigger than government. We need communities to join and help us eradicate this pandemic. We would like to call upon our communities to come together against this scourge and expose perpetrators and not turn a blind eye.

As government, we will continue to improve our response to gender-based violence and femicide in the context of the District Development Model.

We will ensure that perpetrators are brought to book whilst taking good care of the victims. We will engage all structures of society through on-going dialogues, education and healing sessions. We want to work with communities so that we can get to the root of this pandemic.

Honourable Chairperson,

You will recall that the gender-based violence and femicide National Strategic Plan was approved by Cabinet in March this year. This Plan will build onto existing structures that are working well at community level such as the Police, Victim Empowerment Programmes, religious organisations and civil society networks.

Cabinet has also established the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide. Due to the urgency and scourge of gender-based violence in the country, Cabinet instructed the IMC to establish the Gender-Based Violence and Femicide Council which will consist of government and civil society organisations to immediately implement the National Strategic Plan and later put legislation in place.

While government is eager to establish the Council, the structure is not in place as some civil society organisations still wanted legislation to be in place before the establishment of Council. We continue to work on this.

In the absence of the Council, we therefore asked for volunteers

with expertise in the different pillars to implement the activities in the different pillars of the National Strategic Plan.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

South Africans are tired of gender-based violence and femicide. On a daily basis, the Department receives emails and phone calls of citizens volunteering to be part of the teams to implement the programs in the National Strategic Plan.

From individuals, to faith-based organisations, civil society organisations and the private sector, South Africans are joining hands to fight and eradicate this pandemic.

We must also integrate the National Strategic Plan targets into their plans and government departments as they reprioritised their APP and Strategic Plans, they must include NSP targets in their plans. We also encourage every Portfolio Committee to monitor that these are included including programmes of Parliament.

Honourable Chairperson,

Women's Month Celebration

During the month of August, we will celebrate Women's Month under the theme: "*Generation Equality: Realising Women's Rights for an Equal Future*". It is an opportunity to reflect on the journey South African have travelled in their quest for equal opportunities and total emancipation.

The Department will continue to work with other stakeholders including government departments, Parliament, Portfolio and Select Committees, civil society and the private sector in the preparation for the commemoration of Women's Month.

The emphasis on this theme aims to pay tribute to previous generations of women who have sacrificed so much to ensure women's rights are realised.

It also expresses the passing of the baton so that the youth and in particular young women can run with the important objective of gender equality and women's economic empowerment in this decade. We will also utilise Women's Month to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on women.

Generation Equality

The Department will also work with other departments in the context of the Inter-Ministerial Task Team on Generation Equality to support the work of the President in executing the objective of financial and economic inclusion of African Women.

As you are aware, the President in his capacity as the Chairperson of the African Union has committed the AU to advancing the economic empowerment of women on the continent.

Honourable Members,

Mandate of the Department

The Department remains committed to implementing its core mandate and programmes. We will continue to address the persistent inequalities facing women, youth and persons with disabilities.

We recognise that women, youth and persons with disabilities in informal settlements and rural areas have been hardest hit by the effects of Covid-19.

In the past week there was a release of the findings of the National Income Dynamics Study Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey that shows the heightened levels of hunger, loss of income and unemployment, particularly by the disadvantaged sectors.

The report indicates that 3 million people lost their jobs between February and April this year – 2 million of which were women – poor, Black African women, mainly in the informal sector.

This means that access to family planning and other essential health services for women including pregnant women were not freely available and restricted unintentionally by lockdown regulations.

Honourable Members,

We are pleased that for the first time, the Medium Term Strategic Framework of the sixth administration includes cross-cutting deliverables relating to women, youth and persons with disabilities in each of the seven priority areas of the MTSF.

In addition, departments are now required to incorporate gender, youth and disability deliverables and targets in their Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans.

The President ensured that the Ministerial Performance Agreements integrate relevant targets on women, youth and disability rights. The performance agreements of Directors General and other public service managers will also be aligned.

Honourable Chairperson,

The Department is mandated to lead on socio-economic transformation and implementation of the empowerment and participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities through mainstreaming, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation.

Women's participation in the labour market are concentrated in the low-skilled sector while inequitable resource distribution continues to prevail, rural women are more vulnerable than urban women. Land ownership remains highly skewed in favour of men.

There are also many obstacles for the economic participation

and empowerment of women, youth and persons with disabilities.

Honourable Chairperson,

You will recall that, in my budget speech last year I committed to re-introduce the WEGE Bill and have submitted this to the Head of Government Business.

However, due to the challenges of corona virus, all Departments have been asked to reprioritise the number of Bills that must be tabled in Parliament in 2020. The WEGE Bill will now be reintroduced in the 2021/22 financial year.

Honourable Members,

In his State of the Nation address, President Ramaphosa outlined the seven priorities of the 6th Administration and five fundamental goals for the next decade. The President also emphasized the importance of social cohesion and safe communities.

Our dream still remains that of women, the youth and persons with disabilities as well as the LGBTQIA+ community walking

freely in the streets of this country at any time, participating in the development of the country and creating wealth without any fear of violence towards them.

Honourable Chairperson,

Budget allocation

The budget allocation of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities stands was R778.5 million for the 2020/2021 financial year. With COVID-19, the budget was reduced by R133,2 million. This includes the amount allocated to the Commission for Gender Equality and the National Youth Development Agency.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Honourable Chairperson and Honourable Members of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities for their continued support and cooperation.

In addition, I wish to thank Deputy Minister Mkhize; Acting Director-General, Senior Managers and staff of the Department for their continued hard work in executing our mandate.

As I conclude, I am reminded of the words of an ardent women's liberation advocate, Charles Fourier, when he said:

“The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women towards freedom, because in the relations of women to man, of the weak and the strong, victory of human nature over brutality is most evident. The degree of emancipation of women is the natural measure of general emancipation”.

Finally, the Department I lead reaffirm that we shall spare no effort in contributing to the empowerment of women, youth and persons with disabilities in our country.

Malibongwe!