

Media briefing notes on the Budget Vote by the Minister in the Presidency responsible for Women, Ms Susan Shabangu, MP to the National Assembly, Cape Town

16 Jul 2014

“Celebrating 60th Anniversary of the Women’s Charter and 20 Years of Freedom: Moving Women’s Agenda Forward!”

Good morning to you members of the media and Government Officials from the Department of Women and the GCIS.

On July 3, President Jacob Zuma signed a Proclamation establishing the Department of Women, located in the Presidency, reaffirming the country’s commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action. This is a positive step in enhancing the department’s role to lead, coordinate and oversee the transformation agenda on women’s socio-economic empowerment, rights and equality through mainstreaming, monitoring and evaluation.

We are currently engaged in a reconfiguration process to transfer the functions and responsibilities related to programmes for the rights of people with disabilities and children’s rights to the Department of Social Development as pronounced by the President on May 25.

A joint task team has been established to expedite the transition, guided by the Presidency and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).

At the departmental level this has necessitated a strategic re-alignment and restructuring exercise. We are reviewing all our programmes, taking stock of the human capital and financial needs, to move the women’s agenda forward.

In addition we will be reviewing the status, role, location and sustainability of the National Council Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) so as to strengthen efforts towards the elimination of GBV in our society.

As such, by the end of this month we will be undertaking our first departmental strategic planning session as the Department of Women in the Presidency to develop a five year strategic plan 2015 – 2020.

We are not departing from an unknown plane, there has been work done before us. Ours is to build forward, mindful of the foundation already laid. Let me therefore take this opportunity to reflect on some of the commitments that were made in the previous budget vote speech by my predecessor Minister Lulu Xingwana.

The department committed to advocate that more land be allocated to women by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform. We thus welcome the re-opening of the land claims process, and we will be monitoring how women benefit from it.

We also welcome the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform’s Final Policy Proposals on “Strengthening the Relative Rights of People Working the Land”. The Department of Women will submit inputs that will ensure that women working on farms, those that reside in farms and women married to farmworkers benefit from the process.

We had committed to finalising the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (WEGE Bill).

The bill was tagged as Section 76 and went through the National Assembly processes and was approved and referred for concurrence to the NCOP. Further amendments were made by the NCOP, however, due to the rise of parliament for end of the forth administration, it lapsed. We therefore intend to further consult and review this Bill.

We intent to, through communication ensure that the review process is an inclusive one and takes into consideration the multiplicity of views.

The Budget Vote we are tabling today seeks to consolidate the gains made in the previous term of office while also setting a firm foundation for the future with regards to women's empowerment and gender equality.

The overall budget for this financial year is one hundred and ninety eight million three hundred thousand (R198.3m) which includes the Sixty three million (R63m) allocated for the Commission for Gender Equality.

This budget, though, continues to pose limitations in fulfilling the mandate of this department. The reorganisation will therefore create an opportunity for adequate resourcing.

In the next five years, the priority of the Ministry in The Presidency responsible for Women will be to ensure that women's socio-economic empowerment and women's rights are mainstreamed across all sectors of society through:

- monitoring the extent to which social and economic circumstances of women are significantly improved.
 - promoting, advocating for and monitoring women's empowerment and gender equality.
 - promoting the understanding of differential circumstances of women and men in society and the impact of seemingly neutral decisions, plans, laws, policies and practices on either gender through capacity building on gender mainstreaming and responsive gender budgeting.
- facilitate and monitoring capacity building and skills development for women to participate meaningfully in all areas of the economy and the workplace
 - standardising and regularising of accountability with regard to the implementation of gender mainstreaming by both public and private sectors.

The mainstreaming will be anchored on the following pillars:

1. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Department of Women will play an oversight role by introducing monitoring and evaluation tools to keep not only the government but the private sector accountable when it comes to the mainstreaming of gender. The Department will work closely with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation to align our monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure harmonisation of our systems.

1 Research Agenda

We will pursue a strong research agenda to allow us to look at gaps which resulted in women not benefiting as anticipated. The research findings will allow the department to make the necessary interventions.

1 Gender Responsive Budgeting

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is one of the enabling tools to the mainstreaming of gender. A radical change is needed to ensure that all parties in the public and private sectors including NGOs implement GRB in all their planning, programmes, budgeting and expenditure processes.

Lest we forget, this year marks the 60th anniversary of the 1954 Women's Charter, which preceded the Freedom Charter of 1955, a clear indication that women were in their own rights pioneers in the struggle for liberation. The 1954 Women's Charter, together with the Freedom Charter of 1955 influenced and anchored the fundamentals of the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. It further informed the development of and influenced the 1994 Women's Charter for Effective Equality.

The *Women's Charter* called for the enfranchisement of men and women of all races (the right to vote and be elected to all state bodies), the right to full opportunities for employment with equal pay and possibilities of promotion in all spheres of work (equal pay for equal work), equal rights in relation to property, land rights, marriage and children; and the removal of all laws and customs that denied women such equality among others.

For the first time both black men and women voted in the historic general elections of 27 April 1994. All races voted as equals before the law. The dreams of women like Charlotte Manye Maxeke were realised. They must have ululated in their graves as one of the aims of the Women's Charter of 1954 was realised.

We also have to bear in mind that whilst celebrating 60 years of the Women's Charter, in 2016 we will further celebrate 60 Years of the 1956 Women's March to the Union Building under the heroic leadership of Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Sophie De Bruyn, Rahima Moosa, and many others.

It is, therefore, against this backdrop that we will be celebrating the 2014 Women's Month under the theme: "Celebrating the 60th anniversary of the women's charter and 20 years of freedom: moving women's agenda forward!" We will therefore elaborate on the programme for the National Women's Month on the 31st of July when we brief the nation of the plans for this year.

It is with heavy hearts, although, with great determination, that we will for the first time since the inception of the Mandela Day, be volunteering our services in recognition of his selflessness without Madiba. May His Soul Rest in Peace!

In line with the 2014 Mandela Day theme and the call by the President to take pride in our country and clean South Africa, the department has identified two projects.

On Friday we will spend our 67 Minutes of service at the Porter's House for Women and Children and The Rivoningo Care Centre in the City of Tshwane. Over and above cleaning, we will initiate legacy projects at the two centres which will go a long way in empowering women and young women with the basic skills that will enable them to be economically active.

In conclusion, we will during this term strive to ensure that women are lifted from a status of victims to victors.

We are committed to work with all stakeholders to bring about the desired change and make true of the saying that: “nothing about women without women”.

As women take centre stage in shaping their own future, the cause ahead of us dictates that we must not shy away from being unpopular as this might be inevitable, especially since we will be more visible from an oversight perspective.

The responsibility we have been charged with demands that we be firm and resolute in ensuring that women are major beneficiaries of all interventions in this second phase of our transition.

Ke a leboga!

Issued by: [The Presidency](#)