



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

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**BUDGET VOTE SPEECH**

**MMAPASEKA STEVE LETSIKE, MP**

**AT THE**

**PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
COMMITTEE ROOM S12A**

**ON**

**12 JULY 2023 | 14:00**

House Chairperson,  
Hnr Minister,  
Chairperson and Members of the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth  
and Persons with Disabilities,  
Honourable Members,  
Fellow South Africans,

I must congratulate everyone who has been appointed to lead the 7<sup>th</sup> administration, following the clarion call made by South Africans on 29 May 2024 at the polls. We are confident that this administration, under the capable leadership of President Ramaphosa, will rise to the task of reinstalling dignity, and ensuring a better life for all so that South Africa truly belongs to all who live in it.

The will of South Africans from all walks of life was sealed and expressed through the peaceful and inclusive polls. It is also a stark reminder of the preamble in our Constitution that we all, and I quote:

**“Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.”**

Chairperson,

As we table the budget for the first year in the 7th Administration, I am reminded of the inaugural State-of-the-Nation address for our democracy by uTata Nelson Mandela when he said:

***“The government I have the honour to lead and I dare say the masses who elected us to serve in this role, are inspired by the single vision of creating a people-centred society.***

***Accordingly, the purpose that will drive this government shall be the expansion of the frontiers of human fulfilment, the continuous extension of the frontiers of the freedom.***

***The acid test of the legitimacy of the programmes we elaborate, the government institutions we create, the legislation we adopt must be whether they serve these objectives.***

***We must construct that people-centred society of freedom in such a manner that it guarantees the political and the human rights of all our citizens.”***

We table this Budget to advance the ideals of a government that is people centered. This is a new chapter of a government that continues to expand the frontiers of freedom and guarantees the political and human rights of all citizens. Our government shall pass the acid test of legitimacy when evaluated against these ideals.

Chairperson,

I must commend the 6<sup>th</sup> Administration in that a target was set that in the 2020-2023 period, there will be directed focus on improving governance processes toward ensuring clean governance and management of the public purse.

We stand here today, with the department having received 4 unqualified audits opinions from the Auditor-General over the 2018/19 to 2022/23 financial years.

The occurrence of irregular expenditure was reduced from R47 million in the 2017/18 financial year to R187 000 in the 2023/24 financial year.

The department also improved on the payments of supplier invoices within 30 days, from 99.03% in 2019/20 to 100% in 2022/23.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Administration will build on this progress toward ensuring clean governance and accountability.

Chairperson,

The rampant levels of Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in South Africa are a direct attack on the Bill of Rights, particularly as women in our diversities in South Africa do not feel safe at work, in the streets, in places of learning, in spaces of worship and worse still, in our very homes.

This abhorrent social ill necessitated that the President declares Gender-Based Violence and Femicide as a second pandemic after COVID-19. This adds to the other additional public health threats and pandemics that the country has been dealing with such as HIV and TB, which pandemics disproportionately affect women, youth, persons with disabilities and the LGBTQI+ community. The death of a single person is a death too many, and we all must be hostile to GBVF in all its iterations.

Engagements have been held with various stakeholders toward an all-of-society approach to ending this scourge, as we all agree that there is no single panacea to address the GBVF challenge. We have held the various Presidential Summits, and consequently, the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (NSP on GBVF) has been developed and is being implemented. The President also assented to the National Council on GBVF Act, which act establishes a Council to better coordinate our response the GBVF pandemic.

The National Council on GBVF Act mandates us all to engage in an integrated and holistic consultative approach to address among others, mental health and social ills such as substance abuse, harmful cultural practices and the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment, in which this case demands that prevention agenda be prioritised. These are some of the causes of teenage pregnancy, which should not be accepted as a norm in lite of statutory rape of which people must be held accountable for and also address the prevalence of HIV and STIs. In the heart of this, as a country we should deal with patriarchy, misogyny, sexism and homophobia.

Chairperson,

I must stress that our approach to GBVF cannot be business as usual. The implementation of the NSP on GBVF and its linked programmes are currently not funded adequately, given the current status quo. That reality must change.

We call on Parliament to lobby that more funds be directed to what remains one of the biggest challenges facing the women of South Africa who make up more than half of the population.

**HONOURABLE MEMBERS,**

The Department continues to strengthen the implementation of the Sanitary Dignity Implementation Framework.

The Department undertook interventions to support the economic empowerment, participation and ownership of women youth and persons with disabilities through collaboration with the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) on the Sanitary Dignity Programme (SDP). In this context, we are working on value chain management within the sanitary dignity process, to ensure that certain designated groups benefit from procurement set asides in the implementation of the framework.

A Business case study has been developed which includes empowerment through support programmes to ensure competence in doing business with the government. The aim of the research for this Business Case on Sanitary Dignity Programme has been to examine economic opportunities – especially for the participation of women SMMEs in the manufacturing, storage, packaging, distribution and waste management industry within the sanitary value chain, while not forgetting the main purpose being to promote menstrual health for young girls at school.

It is our wish that South Africa steps towards adequate access of sanitary products for all young women in their diversities no matter the financial situation with dignity and pride.

Chairperson,

The Constitution provides that:

***“Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms.”***

Consequently, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities is implementing legislative and other measures to protect and advance the rights of persons with disabilities.

It is trite that the challenges experienced by persons with disabilities are gendered, and young girls and women with disabilities remain vulnerable and victims of gender-based violence femicide and crime, to the point of having children whose fathers are not known. The Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities working with the JCPS Cluster departments will continue to raise awareness on access to justice and redress for persons with disabilities to ensure that they fully access the social and justice system.

The department in collaboration with the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation conducted an evaluation on the implementation of the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities covering the period between 2017-2022, to identify gaps that

exist in implementing the policy directives and the nine strategic pillars to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities in the country.

We will continue to analyze draft Annual Performance Plans of government departments to promote disability-inclusive planning in the country.

Unemployment remains a significant challenge for persons with disabilities in South Africa. To address this, the Cabinet approved the 6<sup>th</sup> annual progress report on the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with a recommendation that all government departments and state-owned entities are required to increase the equity target for persons with disabilities from the minimum 2% to 3% for the 2024- 2025 financial year towards a progressive realisation of the 7% employment equity target by 2030 as required by the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Development Plan.

For effective advocacy and mainstream for disability inclusion, the department must strengthen the policy and legislative environment, strengthen institutional mechanisms for disability mainstreamed delivery of services, stakeholder engagement and management and increase awareness raising programs on disabilities. All these is achieved through collaborative consultation , planning, execution with the disability sector of organizations of and for persons with Disabilities.

The National Disability Rights Machinery ensures interface and integration of the disability agenda between government and civil society in line with the “**Nothing about us without us**” principle to maximize the effective participation and representative voice of persons with



disabilities as contained in the United Nations Convention and the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

We have signed an MOU with the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) to establish a Disability Centre to develop programmes for persons with disabilities. The Centre will also establish a workshop to manufacture the assistive devices that are so needed by persons with disabilities.

To strengthen the involvement of the sector, the President furthermore has established the Presidential Working Group on Disability as an advisory body on matters of disability. This forum will continue to serve a body where issues affecting persons with disability are brought to the attention of the Executive.

The South African Law Reform Commission is in the process of developing the Disability Rights Bill to regulate the rights of persons with disabilities, and it is a priority for my department.

The Discussion Paper will be widely consulted with citizenry in this financial year.

We have also gazetted and published four strategic frameworks on disability, namely Universal Design and Access, Reasonable Accommodation, Awareness Raising and Self Representation. All duty bearers have been capacitated on the frameworks to mainstream for disability inclusion. It is mandatory for all duty bearers to develop implementation plans in line with the frameworks.

Disability is not homogenous and is very diverse. To remove barriers limiting participation of persons with disabilities and discriminatory

practices that perpetuate stereotypes, negative attitudes, perceptions and myths, the Department is developing Advocacy Manuals on different disabilities from a human rights perspective to educate and increase awareness and education on Disabilities to broader society.

We have further managed to mainstream for disability in BRICS and submitted the concept for the establishment of the BRICS Disability Forum. The member states have adopted and approved its establishment.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities branch has a budget of R4 million for goods and services for Advocacy, Mainstreaming, Monitoring and Evaluation. It is therefore impossible for this unit to reach out effectively and support the disability sector. Parliament is requested to advocate for a better budget in this regard.

Chairperson,

South Africa ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 and is under an obligation in terms of the Convention to domesticate its articles and to implement the rights of persons with disabilities outlined in the convention. During 2024-2025, South Africa is required to submit **the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> periodic UN country report** to respond to the UNCRPD Committee's concluding observations made in 2018 and its List of Issues released in September 2023.

We are leading the coordination of the development of this report and will communicate and consult with all government departments and stakeholders. During 2024-2025 the DWYPD will undertake a research

project to develop an evidential basis to understand the challenges experienced by persons with disabilities more importantly propose recommendations by the findings of the research. The report will serve as a leading source document to guide government departments and stakeholders when considering policies and interventions in climate change.

## **HONOURABLE MEMBERS,**

The Council for Gender Equality serves to strengthening and deepening constitutional democracy in South Africa through the promotion, protection, development, and attainment of gender equality.

Through this mandate, the CGE has successfully litigated women's rights, e.g. litigation on redistribution orders in the constitutional court. Furthermore, the CGE has led and supported Ms Caster Semenya's World Athletics case at the equality court advocating for fairness and equality in sport.

Due to its resource restriction, the commission is finding it challenging to increase its reach in all communities due to budget constraints and limited resources. This limits its mandate as a chapter 9 institution that is accountable to Parliament.

The latest baseline allocation as received from the National Treasury for the 2024/2025 financial year is R93,6 million which is R7 million less than the 2022/23 financial year baseline allocation.

I implore this house to advocate for a better allocation of resources as the equality of women is necessary for the liberation of our country. This was articulated aptly by the OR Tambo when he said:

***“South Africa will never be free as long as women are not free.”***

## **IN CONCLUSION,**

Indeed, we can do more working together, as we remain loyal to the mandate of improving the livelihood of the people and more importantly Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities as vulnerable groups in society. Ours is a mandate to advance government’s commitment to achieve gender equality and improve the lives of people in South Africa. It is now or never.

The department’s Budget Vote make a solemn pledge that seeks to liberate women, youth and persons with disability in their diversities in their homes, streets, workplaces, and every space they occupy.

I join Minister Chikunga to table Budget Vote 20 for the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, for the 7<sup>th</sup> Administration.

I thank you.