



BUDGET VOTE 20 SPEECH

WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

DELIVERED BY

HONOURABLE MS SINDISIWE CHIKUNGA

Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

OCCASION

Mini Plenary Debate on Vote 20: Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (M46)

DATE

Wednesday, 13 May 2026

TIME

10:00 – 12:15

VENUE / PLATFORM

Marks Building, Room 46 | Hybrid Mini Plenary Sitting
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa

SECTION 1: OPENING

- **Honourable House Chairperson,**
- **Honourable Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee and Members of the Portfolio Committee,**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament**
- **Hon. Deputy Minister Steve Letsike,**
- **Acting Director-General of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, and your Team,**
- **Our Guests,**
- **And Fellow South Africa,**

This Budget Vote is being presented in a year of profound historical and constitutional significance for our Nation. South Africa commemorates the **70th Anniversary since the 1956 Women's March**, a defining act of resistance against injustice under the theme "**Empowered Women Empower Nations**", **50 Years** since the **1976 Youth Uprisings**, when young people reshaped the course of our history. We will mark the golden jubilee under the theme "**RESET@50 The Future Calls**", and as South Africa commemorates **30 years** since the adoption of our democratic Constitution, the supreme law and expression of our collective aspirations for dignity, equality, accountability, justice and freedom. These milestones converge at a time when we are engaged in National Dialogue, calling on all of us to reflect

not only on how far we have come but on the urgency of the work that still lies ahead.

As winter announces itself so sharply across our country, we are called to remember the cold morning of **9 August 1956**, when the women, mothers, grandmothers, factory workers, domestic workers, teachers and nurses of our country rose with clarity of purpose and marched to the Union Buildings against a system that sought to regulate their movement, suppress their dignity, and confine their place in society.

They declared a truth that still speaks to us today: **no nation can claim freedom while its women remain unfree, “wathinta bafazi wa thinti mbokodo” – “you strike a women, you strike a rock”**. We commemorate the women on whose shoulders we stand today. We commit to empower women to empower Nations.

Twenty years later, on the cold morning of **16 June 1976**, the youth of our country rose with the same moral clarity. The generation of **Tsietsi Mashinini, Hector Pieteron, Hastings Ndlovu, Antoinette Sithole** and many others confronted an education system designed not to liberate the mind, but to prepare Black children for servitude.

Honourable Members,

Women and young people were not spectators in the making of our democracy. They were activists, organisers, agitators, builders, visionaries and revolutionaries. Their courage forms part of the same unbroken thread that connects the women of 1956, the youth of 1976 and the women who helped shape our constitution.

Over the past 32 years of our democracy, we have made important strides. We have built democratic institutions where once there was exclusion. We have expanded access to education, public participation, gender equality, social protection, public health, representation, skills development, opportunities and the rule of law. We have come a long way and yet we remain far from where we want to be.

But the work of freedom continues. The struggle continues.

Aluta Continua.

In a world increasingly marked by intolerance, divisions and disregard for the sovereignty and dignity of nations, South Africa must remain firm in the values that birthed our democracy.

It is in this spirit that we table **Budget Vote 20**: as a statement of the work we have done, and the work we will continue to do, to advance the rights, dignity and inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities.

SECTION 2: THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR 2026/27

Honourable Members,

The Medium-Term Development Plan sets out three strategic priorities for this administration: **driving inclusive growth and job creation; reducing poverty and the high cost of living; and building a capable, ethical and developmental state.**

For our department, these priorities require that all women, young people and persons with disabilities are not treated as an afterthought, but are placed at the centre of government planning, budgeting, implementation and accountability.

Against this backdrop, our department's 2026/27 priorities are set to **accelerate women's empowerment and GBVF prevention and response; confront youth unemployment and NEET group vulnerability; deepen disability inclusion; institutionalise responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and auditing; and strengthen coordinated state and societal action from fragmented interventions to measurable impact.**

To implement this programme of action, the Department tables a total allocation of **R2.2 billion** for the **2026/27 financial year.**

Of this allocation, **R241 million** is allocated to the operational work of the Department.

An amount of **R1.8 billion** is allocated to the **National Youth Development Agency** to expand youth development,

entrepreneurship, employment pathways, skills development and paid service opportunities.

An amount of **R111 million** is allocated to the **Commission for Gender Equality**, and **R46.5 million** to the **National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide**.

We will use these resources to advance this mandate through policy, legislation, advocacy, mainstreaming, monitoring, evaluation, research, coordination, and partnerships across government and society. This is how we give meaning to the struggles we commemorate this year: by moving from memory to measurable impact.

SECTION 3: LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PRIORITIES

In this financial year, we will take forward the **Promotion of Women's Rights, Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill**, following consultations already undertaken, as we work towards presenting the Bill to Cabinet.

We will advance the **South African Youth Development Bill**, which will be submitted to Cabinet as a discussion document, gazetted for public comment, and taken through consultations across all nine provinces during this financial year.

We will also continue work with the **South African Law Reform Commission** on the **Disability Rights Bill**, with the intention of tabling it in Parliament.

The Department will also advance work towards a **National Strategy against Teenage Pregnancies**; the deputy minister will expand on this work.

In this financial year, we will produce research to inform the development of the national strategy on the **care work** because no society can claim equality while burden of paid and unpaid care work remains invisible; unsupported and inequality carried by women.

Our task is clear: to move from policy commitments to measurable accountability.

SECTION 4: WOMEN – SAFETY, DIGNITY AND ECONOMIC POWER

Honourable Members,

No nation can claim freedom while its women remain unsafe, unpaid, unseen, or excluded from the economy.

This is the truth that the women of 1956 understood. It is the truth that must continue to guide our work today.

Our work on women's empowerment is anchored in a simple principle: **women's safety, dignity and economic power cannot be separated.**

Since the adoption of the **National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide**, government has worked to strengthen a coordinated and multisectoral response to GBVF.

In this financial year, following the classification of GBVF as a National Disaster and the subsequent cabinet approved action plan, we will support the establishment of the **National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide** to lead South Africa's response to GBVF. We will continue to strengthen monitoring of the NSP across government, cabinet clusters and sectors.

We will deepen prevention work through the **Comprehensive National Prevention Strategy**, particularly our flagship project – **positive masculinity focused on boys; young men and older men**, including targeted interventions in schools, communities and stakeholders.

We will continue to strengthen **GBVF Rapid Response Teams** and support the **100-Day Challenge model**, to resolve practical blockages in the justice and support systems.

Honourable Members,

We will continue to advance women's economic empowerment through programmes that open access to markets, finance, procurement and strategic value chains.

Through **WECONA, Women in Trade, the Women's Cooperative Financial Institution**, and interventions in agriculture, mining, oceans and the green economies and manufacturing value chains. We will work with public and private sector partners to ensure that all women, irrespective of age, are not merely beneficiaries of development, but owners, producers, traders and leaders in the economy.

This will include leveraging the critical Mineral strategy to place women and youth at the centre of South Africa's mining expansion and industrial plans.

Following the signing of the Public Procurement Act, the National Treasury has published the general Public Procurement regulations for public comments. We encourage our sectors to make inputs into these regulations. It is critically important.

SECTION 5: YOUTH – RESET@50 AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Honourable Members,

As we commemorate **50 years since the 1976 Youth Uprisings**, under the theme “**Reset@50 – The Future Calls.**”

Through the **National Youth Development Agency**, we will place significant resources behind this work.

The **R1.8 billion** NYDA allocation aims to expand youth development interventions across the country.

With this allocation, the Agency will fund at least **2 600 youth-owned SMMEs**.

It will expand paid service opportunities under the **National Youth Service and Presidential Youth Employment Intervention** from **40 000 to 100 000 young people**.

It will provide business development support to **23 500 young people**. It will support employment and job placement for over **26 000 young people**.

It will develop a **National Youth Fund Strategy** to increase risk capital for youth-owned enterprises, including enterprises owned by young women, young persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ youth and other marginalised young people.

Chairperson, as we fight to have all public service and private sector posts filled, **no young person should be overlooked because of the so-called overqualification with no experience**. Young people with qualifications must be given an opportunity to work and gain

experience. Moreover, we wish to stress that, our call extends for those above the age of 35 years.

As part of this national commemoration, we look forward to gathering with young people, communities, and Honourable Members in **Soweto, tomorrow on the 14th May, to launch the golden jubilee** and on **16 June 2026**, where the nation will honour the generation of 1976 and recommit every young person to learn, work, serve, innovate, lead and thrive.

SECTION 6: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES – FROM POLICY TO LIVED INCLUSION

Honourable Members,

A democracy that is inaccessible to persons with disabilities is an incomplete democracy.

In the **2026/27 financial year**, our work will focus on Economic inclusion that remains central to our work.

As part of the G20 legacy work the Department will advance work towards a **Disability Inclusion Centre of Excellence**. The deputy minister will expand on this one.

SECTION 7: MONITORING, INTERNATIONAL WORK AND THE CARE ECONOMY

We will also continue to use research, evaluations and evidence-based tools such as the Socio – Economic Empowerment index to track progress towards real inclusion.

The CGE will use its capacity to conduct research in areas that aim to mainstream gender equality.

Honourable Chair,

International commitments strengthen the implementation of domestic laws, policies, budgets, services and accountability.

South Africa is currently finalising its Country's **Sixth CEDAW Report** for submission to the United Nations by **30 June 2026**. We will continue to advance our commitments in the **African Union, SADC as interim chair and chair of the Women Empowerment, the Commonwealth, BRICS**, and other multilateral platforms.

Following South Africa's leadership of the **G20 Empowerment of Women Working Group**, the Department will continue to drive our legacy projects, which are **Positive Masculinity, Disability Inclusion Nerve Centre and Financial Inclusion** for all women.

SECTION 8: CLOSING

Honourable Members,

I wish to acknowledge the

- Honourable **Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee, Ms Liesel van der Merwe** and Member of the Portfolio Committee for their continuous guidance and support.
- I thank the **Honourable Deputy Minister, Hon. Steve Letsike** and the Ministry staff;
- Our **Acting Director General: Ms Dineo Mmako** and her Departmental Team;
- The **Chairperson: Dr Sunshine Myende**, Board Members, the CEO and the Staff of NYDA.
- The **Chairperson: Adv. Sepanya Mogale** and Board Members of the CGE
- Co-Chairpersons of **WECONA, Ms Namhla Mniki and Ms Futhi Mtomba**
- The Disability Rights, Youth and Women's Machineries along with our development partners for their unwavering support and hard work.

This Budget Vote is part of your work.

I therefore commend **Budget Vote 20: For the Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities** to this House.

I thank you.