



23 April 2013

**Summary of key issues emanating from the SONA that affect women, children and persons with disabilities**

**WOMEN**

**“Improving the status of women remains a critical priority for this Government.”**

This statement made by the President in his address reflects an acknowledgement that women are critical to the sustainable growth and development of South Africa. However, despite this acknowledgement, it is disheartening that no more mention of specific interventions and programmes for women has been made throughout the speech. Explicit mention of women was only made in relation to legislation and issues of violence.

**Issues directly mentioned**

Legislation	Violence against women
<p>New legislation:</p> <p><b>Women’s empowerment and gender equality bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislates the equal representation of women in decision-making positions and criminalises practices that discriminate against women and girls</li> </ul> <p><u>Concerns/challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ No call for bill to be fast-tracked</li> <li>⇒ No resource commitments</li> </ul> <p>Existing legislation mentioned:</p> <p><b>Domestic violence act, protection from harassment bill, prevention and combating of trafficking in persons bill</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The above legislation is highlighted by the president as legislative mechanisms to protect women</li> </ul> <p><u>Concerns/challenges:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Lack of implementation</li> <li>⇒ Lack of resources – financial, human</li> </ul>	<p><b>President highlights that “violence against women is unacceptable” and needs to be eradicated.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of the national council on gender-based violence as a coordinating structure to advocate for the combating of violence</li> <li>Law enforcement agencies have been directed to prioritise cases of violence against women and children.</li> <li>Increase in personnel at family violence, child protection and sexual offences units is mentioned</li> </ul> <p><u>Concerns/challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ More commitment in the form of, for example, dedicated human and financial resources is required.</li> <li>⇒ There is also no indication of an overarching government plan or framework to address the increasing violence against women.</li> <li>⇒ Is the responsibility of dealing with issues of violence against women primarily that of the ministry/ department for women, children and people with disabilities?</li> </ul>

**Areas for intervention not mentioned**

Although it can be inferred that proposed plans and programmes to increase growth and development in the country will also benefit women, it is imperative that specific commitments

are made in this regard. The areas identified below are where specific gendered observations and considerations are needed.

<b>Job creation and economic empowerment</b>	⇒ Specific mention is made of youth employment. Women are disproportionately affected by unemployment and no mechanisms to address the gendered implications of unemployment have been introduced.
<b>Infrastructure development</b>	⇒ These projects will certainly benefit women in the various communities where infrastructure development will take place, it is important that women be consulted in the planning process, as well as be provided opportunities for employment in these developments.
<b>Education</b>	⇒ Adult education programme - How many women have had access to and benefited from this programme, particularly those in rural areas who are disproportionately affected by education constraints.
<b>Health</b>	⇒ Key health achievements noted include the increase in life expectancy and the decrease in infant and child mortality. However, there is no mention of maternal mortality and measures to reduce the high numbers in this regard.
<b>Land reform, women on farms</b>	<p>⇒ It is not indicated how many claims have been finalised thus far, and it would be important to ascertain what the number of female beneficiaries in this regard have been, particularly in rural areas.</p> <p>⇒ President highlights need for peace and stability in the agricultural sector and notes that the living and working conditions of farm-workers should be improved urgently. Given that despite legislation, women's job security and tenure on farms is often dependent on the employment of their husband, this is an important area to be addressed and requires targeted intervention.</p>

⇒ **Areas for Oversight**

- ⇒ Monitor progress and the implementation of legislation (such as the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill)
- ⇒ Monitor departmental budgets to ensure gendered consideration and targeted expenditure in relation to women's empowerment
- ⇒ Scrutinise government programmes, projects and policies to gauge whether they are mainstreaming issues of gender
- ⇒ Request disaggregated data in relation to departmental strategies and targets
- ⇒ Monitor delivery on indicated targets, i.e. National Gender-based Violence Council, prioritisation of crimes against women and children, increased capacity at FCS units

## CHILDREN AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Issues directly mentioned	
Children	Persons with disabilities
Consultation with children on what should be given priority in the SONA	Three of government priorities are important for persons with disabilities – health, creating decent work and education
The plan for the government for 2013 would be to establish a national task team to strengthen maths, science and technology results	National summit on social cohesion
The establishment of the presidential remuneration commission to review the remuneration of teachers	Implementation of the programme of work in ensuring a national socially inclusive society, will be done in collaboration with the social cohesion advocates, which consists of various eminent persons in various sectors of society
The implementation of the FCS units within saps have secured a 70% conviction rate for crimes against children	
The president highlighted the progress made with regards to the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Bill	

Indirect implications on plans that the SONA might have covered	
<p>The NDP contains proposals for tackling the problems of poverty, inequality and unemployment. It is a roadmap to a South Africa where all will have water, electricity, sanitation, jobs, housing, public transport, adequate nutrition, education, social protection, quality healthcare, recreation and a clean environment. – President Jacob Zuma, SONA 2013</p>	
Children	Persons with disabilities
The president mentioned multiple initiatives that could have constituted matters that would affect the children of South Africa. However, in this analysis one cannot see any specific matter that would solely affect children, without viewing it in a disability context as well.	Three billion rand has been approved for the job fund, which will create more jobs
It is worthy of noting the significant decreases in infant and under five mortality	The activities of departments must be aligned with the national development plan
	Certain disabilities might render certain persons more vulnerable to life threatening diseases. This should be viewed as a contributing factor to the current life expectancy at birth rates,



	<p>together with others such as the scourge of HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis.</p>
	<p>The president highlighted that the NHI fund will be created in 2014 and that the department of health will accelerate and intensify progress in the pilot districts. In relation to plans for 2013, the president announced that at the start of the next financial year, 600 private medical practitioners will be contracted to provide medical services at 533 clinics within villages and townships in the 10 pilot districts.</p>
	<p>The main generators of crime. In this regard the president stated that: "the operations focussing on illegal firearms, stolen and robbed vehicles, liquor and drugs which are regarded as main generators of crime have assisted in crime reduction."</p>

- ⇒ **Areas for monitoring and evaluation and oversight**
- ⇒ *The establishment of a national task team to strengthen the implementation of maths, science and technology subjects areas*
  - ⇒ *The establishment of the presidential remuneration commission*
  - ⇒ *SAPS Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units*
  - ⇒ *Mandate of the Social Cohesion Advocates*
  - ⇒ *The impact of the National Development Plan*
  - ⇒ *Life expectancy in South Africa*
  - ⇒ *The implementation of the National Health Insurance*