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ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE DEPARTMENT ON WOMEN CHILDREN AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES 2013 - 2014¹

1. Introduction

The Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities is established in accordance with the Presidential Proclamation of May and June 2009. The stated mandate of the Department includes:

- To ensure equity and access to development opportunities for the vulnerable groups of society;
- To monitor other Government Departments to ensure the mainstreaming of gender, children's rights and disability considerations into all programmes of Government and other sectors;
- To monitor the extent to which the social and economic circumstances of women, children and people with disabilities are significantly improved;
- To integrate gender equality and equity measures into Government's programmes of action to ensure that women, children and people with disabilities can access developmental opportunities.²

The Department is guided by the following values:

- Commitment to serve and promote the well-being of women, children and people with disabilities;
- Collectivism to promote a culture of social cohesion and advocate collective effort in activities;
- Equity to exercise fair discrimination or impartiality; and accountability to account for all actions in delivering on the Department's mandate.

This paper aims to analyse the strategic plan of the Department of Women Children and People with Disabilities, in line with its mandate, and its reported activities for 2011/2012.

¹ Department Women Children and People with Disabilities 2013 - 2014 Strategic Plan

² Department Women Children and People with Disabilities 2013 – 2014 Annual Performance Plan



2. Situational Analysis ³

Challenges to service delivery faced by the Department in the last three years have included lack of capacity, inadequate institutional systems and processes and inefficient financial controls. To improve the management of resources the Department has instituted a turn-around strategy, and to improve performance on service delivery targets. The Department has also committed to developing a new business model to better deal with service delivery demands. The current strategic plan has been developed to take into consideration the five year national priorities of Government, the National Development Plan, the Minister's Performance Agreement, and the 12 National Outcomes of Government.

Questions for Consideration

- How does the strategic plan take into account Government's five year National Priorities?
- Which aspects of the National Development Plan are reflected in the strategic plan of the DWCPD?
- What has been the outcome of the Minister's Performance Assessment with the President, based on the Performance Agreement signed by the Minister?
- How do the DWCPD's plans respond to the 12 National Outcomes of Government?

Performance Environment

The strategic plan states that the Department needs to assist in strengthening institutional mechanisms within other Departments in order to contribute to the advancement of women, children and people with disabilities. In addition, the mainstreaming of issues concerning women, children and people with disabilities should be instituted, as should the monitoring of compliance by Government on international obligations and national priorities. The SADC Gender Protocol is listed as an important instrument whose implementation must be monitored. The Department is also responsible for the coordination and submission of country reports on Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and other regional instruments. Also under development will be the following key documents:

- National Plan of Action for Children;
- National Disability Policy;
- Integrated M & E Framework;
- Domestication of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

³ DWCPD 2013 – 2014 Strategic Plan pg 16 – 21 "Situational Analysis"



In addressing the high incidence of violence against women, children and people with disabilities, the Department established the National Council Against Gender Based Violence (Hereafter “the Council”). The Council’s role includes advising Government on policy and programmes, strengthening national and international partnerships, and ensuring the implementation of the 365 days National Action Plan to address violence against women, children and people with disabilities.

A key priority identified by the Department is the monitoring of the equal access to education by children, with particular attention to access to education by children with disabilities. Increasing access to employment opportunities for women and people with disabilities is also identified as being a priority.

Questions for Consideration

- What is the status of key documents being developed by the Department?
- Which country reports are planned for the year 2013 – 2014?
- What have been the activities of the National Council Against Gender-based Violence?
 - Have these activities been budgeted for and how much has been budgeted for?
- What campaign/ programme/ initiative has the Department planned for the promotion of access to education by all children, especially children with disabilities?
- What campaign/ programme/ initiative has the Department planned for the promotion of access to employment opportunities by women, and especially those with disabilities?

Organisational Environment

The changing demands placed on the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, is listed as the reason for the revision of the organisational structure. However it is not clear as to the difference between “overseeing the implementation of supporting programmes” (DWCPD Strategic Plan; page 18), and “promoting, facilitating, coordinating and monitoring the realisation of rights...” (DWCPD Strategic Plan; page 18). The changes made have included the creation of a Secretariat for the National Council Against Gender Based Violence as well as positions within the risk management function. The Department is also in the process of implementing a Turnaround Strategy, which has resulted in a realignment of the strategic objectives articulated in the strategic plan.

The Department has a 15% vacancy rate, with 29% of posts remaining unfunded. It has been determined that posts will be prioritised and filled as funding becomes available. However, the organisational structure submitted by the Department only goes as far as the different branches created for women, children, people with disabilities and corporate management.



Questions for Consideration

- The Strategic Plan suggests that the change in organisational structure is as a result of a change in mandate and demands on the Department – however it is not clear that the mandate has changed at all. Could the DWCPD please clarify this consideration?
- There is no detail of the organisational structure of the department beyond the Branch level. What is the structure of the department beyond this level?
 - Which of the vacant posts are priorities to fill for 2013 - 2014?
 - How does the department plan to fill these posts?
 - What will be done about the contested appointments made as per the findings of the Fluxman report?

3. Strategic Map and Strategic Approach

The Strategic Plan 2013 – 2014 is premised on the pillars of an outcome-based approach and results driven process, a rights-based approach, and an empowerment approach. Based on this, the following strategic outcome orientated goals and goal statements were highlighted:

Strategic Outcome Orientated Goal	Goal Statement
The rights of women, children and people with disabilities realised	The rights of women, children and people with disabilities fully integrated in legislation and national policies. Progress of trends in the status of women, children and people with disabilities monitored and reported periodically as per national, regional, continental and international requirements, through the progressive development and maintenance of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Continental and international commitments integrated into national planning and service delivery initiatives through coordination of strategic and catalytic cross-cutting projects.
Empowerment of women, children and people with disabilities, facilitated for equitable access to public and private sector programmes and services	All women, children and people with disabilities reach their full potential and have equal and universal access to social, training, economic and political opportunities removing attitudinal, physical and communication barriers preventing full participation and beneficitation.
An effective and efficient Department	Internal processes and procedures, implemented to maintain an unqualified audit.
Reported incidents of gender based violence reduced	Violence against women and children is prevented, reported and reduced.



Questions for Consideration

- The “reported incidents of gender based violence reduced” is a problematic goal – why is the goal not rather, to increase the country’s conviction rate in cases of gender based violence, and those against people with disabilities?

4. Programme 1: Administration

While there seemed to be a comprehensive process involved in drafting the strategic goals, the alignment between these strategic outcomes and strategic objectives under each programme is not always clear. The administration programme is divided into sub-programmes: Management, Corporate Management, and Office Accommodation. The objective statement for sub-programme Management reads: “The 365 days action plan.” The baseline is the fact that the National Council Against Gender based Violence has been established, and this sub-programme is linked to Outcome 3. It is not clear whether this refers to outcome orientated goal 3 of the strategic framework.

According to the Annual Performance Plan (APP), the 2013 – 2014 targets for the National Council Against Gender Based Violence includes the finalisation and approval of the Council’s strategy, terms of reference and action plan (including a calendar). A revision of the 365 days action plan is to be initiated, and the monitoring system approved. The CEO for the Council is also supposed to be appointed. At the end of the current financial year, a Council plenary will be held. A budget of R3 million has been allocated for these activities, as it is envisioned that the Council will only start coordinating the 365 day plan of action programmes in the 2014 -2015 financial year. It is not clear what the budgetary assumptions are from which this figure was arrived at. In addition, the Department reports 100% target with regards to the Council for the year 2013/14, it is assumed that this percentage is to be read together with the APP, and is meant to indicate reaching the targets set by 100%.

The Strategic Plan includes targets for “mandatory policies and procedures relating to Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and reasonable accommodation”. By 31 March 2014 the Department aims to have OHS procedures approved, but they also aim to have a reasonable accommodation policy approved by May 2013. It is not clear what the difference is between these two policies. The budgetary allocation for the Ministry is totalled at R21 182 million for 2013/14 however the activities and targets for the Minister’s office are not articulated.



Questions for Consideration

- What are the delivery mandates of the Ministry, aligned with a budgetary allocation of R21 182 million?
- What are the budgetary/ financial assumptions that were used in the allocation of budget to listed programmes?
- The Department has allocated R5 million to event coordination for special days in the calendar for all three sectors (women, children and people with disabilities), including the National Disability Awards – is this budget allocation sufficient? What are the financial assumptions used to arrive at this allocation?
- The Department allocated R950 000 to 3 evidence based research projects – will these be conducted internally? If not, is the budget allocation sufficient?
 - What is the aim of the research and has work been done to establish whether this information already is available?
- What will the R700 000 allocated for producing the Annual Report, Strategic Report and Annual Performance Plan be spent on? What are the financial assumptions used here?
 - Is this amount really necessary and why can it not be reduced?
- How does the Department plan to deal with the issue of unfunded posts? What is status of intervention on this issue?

5. Programme 2: Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE)

The sub-programmes that fall under the WEGE programme include advocacy and mainstreaming, institutional support and capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation.

The sub-programme on advocacy and mainstreaming makes mention of programmes on activism against gender based violence – there is however no link made to the NCGBV and where these campaigns are located in relation to the Council.

Under the sub-programme on monitoring, there is no mention of the Commission for the Status of Women as a platform the Department will report on regularly.

Those programmes mentioned under monitoring and evaluation, seem to link directly with advocacy campaigns mentioned under sub-programme advocacy and mainstreaming. The omission of this link presents a disjointed programme by the Department, and needs to be addressed. While the Department's APP reflects an increase in advocacy and mainstreaming programmes over the medium term, the Strategic Plan does not. Also, while the APP reflects more planned programmes, it also reflects only R5 million worth of budgetary allocation, while the strategic plan has the Department spending R8.7 million on the advocacy and mainstreaming programme. There needs to be better alignment of Department targets and planned outputs between documents.



Questions for Consideration

- What activities will the Department undertake under its advocacy and mainstreaming sub-programme? What is the nature of the Department's involvement in these campaigns?
- What will the R6 million allocated under the monitoring and evaluation sub-programme be spent on?
- Which programmes have been identified targeting the increase of access to land and basic services to women?
- What has been the assessment of the efficacy of the WEGE initiatives in the previous financial year?

6. Programme 3: Children's Rights and Responsibilities

The programme focusing on children's rights includes the sub-programmes on advocacy and mainstreaming, institutional support and capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation. From the indicators and targets set, it is clear that there is no linkage between advocacy campaigns and monitoring and evaluation. There is also a lack of alignment between Strategic Plan targets and those reported in the APP. Also, the institutional support and capacity building sub-programme is not clear what the activities involved will be, and whether other Departments will be implementing programmes, and what role the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities will play.

Questions for Consideration

- There is a downward trend for budgetary allocations made for all programmes on children's rights in the financial year 2013/14 – what is the reason for this decreased investment?
- The Department is reporting under the sub-programme monitoring and evaluation, without an M & E Framework in place. What are the guiding principles of the monitoring and evaluation activities currently being undertaken by the Department?
- To what extent has the Department successfully implemented activities under this programme in the past?



7. Programme 4: Rights of People with Disabilities

This programme highlights a worrying trend reflected in many programmes targeting people with disabilities. All the programmes mentioned are those already mentioned in the previous two programmes for women and children. While there must be integration in the Department's work, the inclusion of people with disabilities in programmes without illustrating how these programmes are different (especially given separate budget allocations), is inadequate. There is also the previously identified problem of misalignment between targets set in the strategic plan and the annual performance plan.

There needs to be a more concerted attempt to service this sector, as the decreased budgetary allocation (-R1.8 million), and the low number of vacancies filled (56% are filled), show a decline in focus.

Questions for Consideration

- How are the activities mentioned under this programme, different from the activities mentioned in the programmes targeting women and children?
- What specific activities are the budgetary allocations aimed at?
- What has been the efficacy of programme in the past?
- Why has the budget allocation decreased for programmes on advocacy and mainstreaming as well as institutional support and capacity development?

8. Conclusion

A positive aspect of the Strategic Plan 2013 -2014 of the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities is the inclusion of a risk management analysis to each of its programmes. This highlights areas that the Department must improve and potential mitigation of these risks. However, there is no indication of how mitigation strategies will be executed. The impression is given that the Department is aware of the risks, however, with little indication of timeframes for action towards mitigation.

The Department has no long-term infrastructure plans, despite the fact that there are serious issues with accommodation of its staff. Plans to purchase furniture and office equipment "as and when the human capacity increases" is inadequate. There must be a more concrete focus on building capacity alongside plans for expansion and for addressing issues of accessibility by staff members with disabilities.

While budgetary allocations by Treasury determine the extent to which the Department can implement its mandate, strong programmatic content is necessary to motivate for more budget. The Department has not been successful in its most critical advocacy campaign, one to increase its budget to better serve its constituents.



Overall the Department has not adequately addressed the needs of the vulnerable sectors it serves. There is a need to strengthen research capacity and to finalise its monitoring and evaluation framework to identify areas for critical focus. Reporting on indicators and targets need to be aligned within and across documents, and duplications should be avoided.

It is not clear how the turnaround strategy plans to deal with these issues – it is hoped that its implementation will lead to focused implementation of programmes relevant to women, children and people with disabilities, and to a more efficient Department.

9. Bibliography

Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities. 2013. **Strategic Plan 2013 - 2014**. South African Government: Pretoria.

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