**REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES ON THE STRATEGIC PLAN, ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN AND BUDGET OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES; DATED 3 JUNE 2020**

The Select Committee on Health and Social Services (hereinafter, the Committee), having considered Budget Vote 20, the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 and Annual Performance Plan (APP)for 2020/2021 of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, together with the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with disabilities, reports as follows:

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Section 5(2) of the Constitution of South Africa (No. 108 of 1996) and section 27(4) of the Public Finance Management Act (No.1 of 1999) sets out the role of Parliamentary committees in overseeing the performance of government departments and entities.

This report provides a summary of the presentation received from the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the Department) on the Strategic Plan 2020-2025, Annual Performance Plan 2020/21 and its Budget for 2020/21.The report details the deliberations, observations and recommendations made by the Committee relating to Budget Vote 20.

In performing the constitutional oversight mandate, the SelectCommittee on Health and Social Services together with the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with disabilities,engaged with the Department on 05 May 2020.

1. **OVERVIEW OF KEY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES**

The Department was established following the 2019 national elections and receives its first standalone budget allocation in 2020. On 29 May 2019, the President announced the National Executive and their respective portfolios of the sixth Administration. The announcement set the basis for the reconfiguring of government departments: merging of departments, name changes and transfer of certain functions.

**2.1 Mandate, Vision and Mission of the Department**

The mandate of the Department is to lead on socio-economic transformation and implementation of the empowerment and participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities (WYPD) through mainstreaming, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

The mission of the Department is to provide strategic leadership, coordination and oversight to government departments and the country, in mainstreaming empowerment programmes on WYPD. Its vision is to have a transformed, inclusive society free from all forms of discrimination and capable of self-actualization.

The Department derives its priorities from the National Development Plan (NDP), 2020-2025 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and State of the Nation Address (SoNA). The Department responds to the following priorities:

**2.2 Strategic focus of the Department**

The key focus areas of the Department in terms of its Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan (APP) entail promotion of strategic leadership; good governance; and the effective, efficient and economical use of public resources for the empowerment of WYPD.

*MTSF Priority 1: A capable, ethical and developmental State* – In response, the Department plans to do the following:

* Coordinate gender-responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluation and gender auditing.
* Provide policy support and research on government priorities
* Monitor progress in relation to cross-cutting areas on WYPD and proposing corrective interventions.
* Improve alignment between MTSF priorities on WYPD and institutional plans strategic plans.
* Facilitate evaluations in relevant areas.
* Conduct advocacy and outreach.

*MTSF Priority 2: Economic transformation and job creation* – In response the Department plans to:

* Ensure mainstreaming of women’s participation in the economy, with specific attention given to accessing of financial and non-financial resources, and opportunities for women and girls.
* Form partnerships with the private sector across various industries for roll-out of meaningful women empowerment programmes
* Align various government interventions to support enterprise and entrepreneurship development amongst women.
* Participates in women empowerment through the public procurement programme which seeks to drive the 40% procurement target for awarding women state-related tenders.

*MTSF Priority 3: Education, skills and health* **-**  This relates to ensuring that allwomen and girls, youth and persons with disabilities enjoy good quality health care and better life opportunities and educational outcomes

*MTSF Priority 4: Consolidating the Social Wage through reliable and quality basic services* - The Department intends to work with the Departments of Social Development and Health to co-develop and ensure implementation of a core package of essential psychosocial support and norms and standards for substance abuse, violence against women and children. Through the core package the Department will ensure that 90% of victims of gender-based violence and Femicide (GBVF) have access by 2024. Further, the Department plans to develop different interventions (such as a monitoring framework) to reduce GBVF among WYPD.

*MTSF Priority 5: Spatial integration, human settlements and local government* **-** The Department intends to lobby and support other department’s infrastructure and neighbourhood development grants and tax rebates and new structures to incorporate universal design norms and standards. This will include retrofitting existing buildings, transport and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems and infrastructure to ensure universal design. Further, the Department plans to monitor compliance with the universal design, norms and standards; and develop Frameworks on Disability Rights Awareness Campaigns.

*MTSF Priority 6: Social cohesion and safe communities* - This relates to ensuring that all WYPD are and feel safe and enjoy freedom and a better life.

*MTSF Priority 7: A better Africa and world* – The Department plans to advance and comply with gender, youth and disability obligations.

1. **THE DEPARTMENT’S FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY**

There has always been much contestation about what the Department is meant to be doing which is clarified in the Strategic Plan as follows:

“Whereas the initial intention was that the Department would oversee the implementation of supporting programmes, the Department’s mandate has subsequently been clarified that its *strategic posture is not as a service delivery institution,* and that it is rather engaged in the *advocacy and mainstreaming, institutional support and capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation* of considerations related to the equality and empowerment of WYPD.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

The Department has five programmes:

* Programme 1: Administration, with three sub-programmes namely - Departmental Management, Corporate Services, and Financial Management. The purpose of the programme is to provide effective leadership, management and support services to the Department.
* Programme 2: Social Transformation and Economic Empowerment, with five sub-programmes which are Social Transformation and Economic Empowerment;Social Empowerment and Transformation;Governance Transformation, Justice and Security;Economic Empowerment and Participation; and the Commission for Gender Equality. The purpose of the programme is to manage policies and programmes that mainstream the social transformation and economic empowerment of women in South Africa.
* Programme 3: Policy, Stakeholder Coordination and Knowledge Management, with five sub-programmes which are Policy Coordination and Knowledge Management; Research, Policy and Knowledge Management; Stakeholder Coordination and Outreach; International Relations; and Monitoring and Evaluation. The purpose of the programme is to ensure policy and stakeholder coordination; and knowledge management for the transformation of women in South Africa.
* Programme 4: Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which entails the Rights of Persons with Disabilities sub-programme. The purpose of Programme 4 is to oversee the implementation of programmes pertaining to the rights of persons with disabilities.
* Programme 5: National Youth Development, with two sub-programmes which are Management, and Youth Development. The purpose of the programme is to promote development and empowerment of young people by reviewing the legislative framework and other interventions to advance youth rights over the medium-term.

1. **BUDGET ANALYSIS**

Over the medium-term the Department intends to focus on the following:

* Reducing GBVF; and strengthening the national gender machinery;
* Making interventions for economic empowerment;
* Engaging in responsive government‐wide planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation;
* Ensuring compliance with international commitments;
* Promoting the rights of people with disabilities; and
* Supporting the development of young people.

**4.1Analysis of the Department’s budget for 2020/21**

The Department’s budget structure has changed to align with the reconfigured Department following the incorporation of the National Youth Development Programme from the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities sub-programme from the Department of Social Development.

The expenditure of the Department is expected to increase from R737.5 million to in 2019/20 to R853 million in 2022/23.The major areas of spending are transfers and subsidies followed by compensation of employees. The allocation for compensation of employees constitute 15.68% of the total budget over the 2020 MTEF period. The increase in the compensation of employees’ budget is due to the annual inflationary adjustment increases aligned to National Treasury budget guidelines. The allocation is earmarked for funded posts in the establishment of the Department.

The Department receives an annual appropriation of R778.5 million[[2]](#footnote-3). This is a 5.5% increase from the adjusted allocation of R737.9 million in the 2019/20 financial year. It is worth noting that the Department’s budget includes an allocation which is earmarked for transfers to the two entities, namely: The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).During the 2020/21 financial year, the Department will transfer R89.9 million to the CGE. In 2019/20, the allocation was R85.9 million and is expected to increase to R98.7 million in 2022/23. The NYDA will receive R478.7 million, which is an increase from the allocation of R515.8 million in 2019/20. The NYDA allocation will increase to R591.2 million in 2022/23.

This means that the Department is left with an actual operating budget of R209.7 million to undertake its programmes and meet its targets for 2020/21. Of this allocation, a significant portion of goods and services budget is allocated to consultants, property payments and travel and subsistence. The allocation on payments for capital assets is set aside for procurement of laptops, office furniture and computer equipment.

Table 1 provides a visual representation of the overall budget allocation, as well as allocations per programme. Post allocations as per the ENE have also been included.

**Table 1: Budgetallocation by programme for the 2020/21 financial year**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Programmes** | **2019/20 Adjusted Appropriation** | **2020/21 Budget** | **2020/21 increase/ (decrease)** | **2021/22 Estimates** | **2021/22 increase/ (decrease)** | **2022/23**  **Estimates** | **2022/23**  **increase/**  **(decrease)** |
| **R’000** | **R’000** | **%** | **R’000** | **%** | **R’000** | **%** |
| Programme 1: Administration | 93 343 | 93 319 | (0.02%) | 98 632 | 5.69% | 101 825 | 3.24% |
| Programme 2: Social Transformation & Economic Empowerment | 112 923 | 124 769 | 10.49% | 132 409 | 6.12% | 137 366 | 3.74% |
| Programme 3: Policy Stakeholder, Coordination & Knowledge Management | 43 504 | 49 156 | 12.99% | 51 591 | 4.95% | 54 572 | 5.78% |
| Programme 4: Rights to Persons with Disabilities | 18 752 | 19 945 | 6.36% | 21 522 | 7.91% | 22 450 | 4.31% |
| Programme 5: National Youth Development | 469 465 | 491 301 | 4.65% | 517 306 | 5.29% | 536 822 | 3.77% |
| **Total payments and estimates:** | **737 987** | **778 490** | 5.49% | **821 460** | 5.52% | **853 035** | 3.84% |

For the MTEF period, the Department receives an additional allocation amounting to R15 million, for the establishment of a National Council on GBVF. This allocation falls under the Social Transformation and Economic Empowerment programme.

*\*\*The budget analysis per programme will be included in the Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with disabilities budget vote report.*

1. **COMMITTEE FINDINGS, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**5.1 Findings and Observations**

* *Mandate –* 
  + The Committees were concerned by the Department’s reference to its oversight role in the mandate requested clarity in this regard.
  + The Committees also requested the Department to clarify the difference between the current Department compared to the previous Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities and the Department of Women in the Presidency.
  + The Committees were concerned that the Department’s monitoring and evaluation role was not clear in the APP and the Strategic Plan for 2020/21 *vis-à-vis* the emphasis placed on advocacy.
  + The Committees also enquired about the manner in which the Department fulfilled its advocacy role.
* *Department’s response to impact of Covid-19 pandemic -* 
  + The Committees enquired as to what assistance has been provided to informal traders and how many cooperatives have benefitted from Government’s relief packages in amidst the impact of Covid-19.
* The Committees were concerned that the community in rural areas such as in North West province do not have access to water during this Covid-19 period and that mine workers do not have personal protective equipment (PPE) in rural areas.
* The Committees were concerned that communitiesin rural areas such as in North West province were not receiving food parcels.
* Particular concerns were raised about living conditions of foreign nationals at the Strandfontein shelter, homeless people in Cape Town and; persons living on the farms in the Boland Region.
* The Committees noted that the Department is part of the National Command Centre, and raised questions about the role the National Command Centreplays in ensuring WYPD are not left behind in interventions that the Government has put in place since the outbreak of the pandemic. Role clarity was required.
* Concern was raised about the Department’s working arrangements during the Covid-19 period, as well the readiness of provinces to deal with Covid-19 relates issues.
* *Human Resources -*
* The Committees wanted to know how many strategic vacancies in the Department and when will these vacancies be filled if these are vacant. Further, the Committee was concerned that the Department has increased the use of consultants.
* Tracking system: The Committees applauded the gender analysis that was developed, which is a tracking system during Covid-19,
* *Substance abuse and HIV/AIDS -*
* The Committees queried what the role of the Department was in dealing with substance abuse as well as HIV/AIDS amongst youth in rural areas.
* *Law Reform -*
* The Committees raised concern about the amount of time it was taking to draft legislation on WYPDand develop legislation on a Disability Rights Bill.
* *Co-ordination: Women, Youth, Disability -*
* The Committees questioned how the Department has ensured co-ordination and collaboration between the women, disability and youth programmes. The Committee also wanted to know how the Department has advocated for inclusion of youth and persons with disabilities issues in other Departments.
* *Reprioritisation -*
* The Committees queried how the Department will be re-prioritising the allocation of human and financial resources under the stakeholder and research programme. The Committees also questioned what has been prioritised in each programme.
* *Youth Development -*
* The Committees questioned what the Department was doing with regards to youth development in terms of its programmes.
* *Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF)-*
* The Committee noted with concern the reports that the incidence of GBVF has increased amidst the lockdown and impact of Covid-19.
* The Committee noted that R5 million has been allocated to establish the National Council against gender-based violence and enquired as to what the funds will be used for. The Committee questioned what the role of the Department will be in the Council, what criteria has been used to establish the Council and select members to serve on the Council and how is the Council going to account.
* The Committee acknowledged the development of the National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide, the Emergency Response Plan and the National Council on GBVF but was concerned that the Department has not reported on these issues to Parliament.
* *NYDA -*
* The Committee noted that the term of office of the Board Members on the National Youth Development Board has ended and enquired about the steps taken by the Department to deal with the matter.
* *Sanitary Dignity Programme -*
* The Committee wanted to know how does the Department monitor and evaluate the Sanitary Dignity Programme allocation as outlined in the abridged ENE (2020) of R209 million within provinces and what the impact has been on the programme since the lockdown.
* *Disability rights -*
* The Committee questioned what the tangible outcomes and recommendations from the Disability Rights Programme are.

**5.2 Recommendations**

*National Command Centre*: The Departmentshould monitor that WYPD access interventions made by Government especially in the Western Cape Province which is now the epicentre of Covid-19. Further, the Department should ensure that issues for WYPD are mainstreamed into the work of various government departments.

*Strandfontein Shelter*: The Department should intervene and provide support to the homeless, foreign nationals and farm workers.

*Economic Stimulus Package:* The Committees indicated that youth are mostly affected by unemployment, thus the Department should assess whether they have been able to benefit from the social relief package that was announced by Government. Further, the economic stimulus package should be monitored and evaluated to determine the extent to which women and persons with disabilities are benefiting.

*GBVF***:** The Department should provide (updated) statistics on cases of gender-based violence and femicide since the lockdown was implemented. Further,the Department should provide a detailed report of its interventions in this regard.

*Tracking system:* The Department’s tracking system during the pandemic should not only focus on women, but also apply to youth and persons with disabilities.

*Education sector:* The Department should develop programmes to assist learners and students with special needs that are in higher and basic education institutions, during this period.

*Donation of sanitary products***:** The Department should provide the Committees with a detailedreport on provinces which received sanitary products, and the Sanitary Dignity Programme.

1. **CONCLUSION**

The Committees commended the work of the Department and its support of programmes related to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the Committees emphasized that the Department should be more visible, strengthen its monitoring systems, and minimize the use of Consultants.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Department should respond to the Committees’ recommendations in three months, from the day the report is adopted in the House.

**Report to be considered.**

1. Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities(2020) Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025, p. 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. National Treasury (2020). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)