### Address by (MP) Cde Nonhlanhla Ncube-Ndaba on the Budget Vote Debate for the Department for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities

9 July 2019

The ANC remains committed to the vision of a united, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa as enshrined in the Freedom Charter. The advancement of gender equality is an ideal that transcends our policies and should, thus, assist us towards the realisation of a National Democratic Society.

Working off the backdrop of Apartheid as well as the gap that was unintentionally created after the democratic breakthrough, the first two decades of democracy can be characterised by major advancements made by this Government, some of which include:

* The establishment of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist political order;
* The introduction of democratic rights for all citizens and the establishment of vibrant institutions;
* A Constitution that forms the underlying foundation for women’s development, gender equality and a non-sexist society, and given effect through policies, legislation and institutions to give effect to this vision.

Our Strategy and Tactics Document of 2017 correctly outlines the following: “Precisely because patriarchal oppression was embedded in the economic, social, religious, cultural, family and other relations in all communities, its eradication cannot be an assumed consequence of democracy. All manifestations and consequences of patriarchy – from the feminisation of poverty, physical and psychological abuse, undermining of self-confidence, to open and hidden forms of exclusion from positions of authority and power – need consciously to be eliminated. Critical in this regard is the creation of the material and cultural conditions that would allow the abilities of women to flourish and enrich the life of the nation”.

**Alignment of Budget in Addressing Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities**

Gender equality in any society is a basic human right and the implementation of these rights are a priority to the ANC. Whilst a pronounced effort has been demonstrated and noteworthy advances towards gender equality have been made in post 1994 South Africa, women still face barriers with regard to employment and income, and challenges remain in all areas where women reside, but is more pronounced in rural areas. It is not sufficient to be gender conscious with regards to policy nor is the inclusion of women in formal institutions satisfactory, especially since this has not led to the desired redistribution of resources of the economy and land in fundamental ways. Which is why the Budget plays a pivotal role in ensuring that policy positions are able to find expression, through the efficient allocation of resources.

According to the Estimates of National Expenditure for 2019, the Department of Women receives a budgetary allocation of R244.4 million for 2019/20 of which, R85.177 million is transferred to the Commission for Gender Equality. This allocation will reflect, among other things, detailed conversations and recommendations that arose from the strategic planning sessions undertaken by the Commissioners, and the findings of the HSRC 20 Year Review, which will lead to the following significant differences in the approach to implementation:

* The Strategic Plan of CGE is based on a “catalyst” model, rather than an implementer model, and presupposes a fair degree of centralisation;
* There is reliance on the establishment of strategic partnerships to ensure delivery of programmes; and
* Stronger cooperation and coordination across departments within the CGE itself.

The National Treasury released its Final Response Document on Rates and Monetary Amounts and Amendment of Revenue Laws Bill 2018 (Based on hearings by the Standing Committee on Finance in Parliament). The VAT Panel recommended that among other items, sanitary products, school uniforms and nappies (for babies & adults) should be added to the list of zero rated items.Whilst we have not yet achieved supplying free sanitary products to girls and women who cannot afford, the announcement by Treasury is a milestone insofar as having a gender-responsive budget is concerned.

Furthermore, February 28th marked the National Sanitary Dignity Launch. This launch was an advocacy and awareness initiative which was a result of resource mobilisation leading to the programme becoming a funded mandate. The R157 million allocated by National Treasury for the 2019/20 financial year is intended to augment provincial allocations for the national roll out. Another achievement in ensuring sanitary dignity for all was the announcement of the personal health care allowance of R275 for students supported by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

As former Minister of Women in the Presidency outlined in the same month, on the occasion of the National Sanitary Dignity Launch: “There is a very important matter of the economic value chain of the sanitary dignity programme, that is, the local economic development aspect wherein women who own and run manufacturing enterprises can be encouraged, as well as women owned cooperatives to occupy the space. This is already taking place in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and Western Cape. There are opportunities in manufacturing, storage, distribution and waste management”.

We thus call on the newly reconfigured Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities to ensure that the it begins the process of engaging the relevant Departments and stakeholders in ensuring that women, youth and people with disabilities find expression in the economic value chain of projects of this nature.

**Youth and Development**

While the current Budget Vote 13 does not include a budget for youth, it is expected that the Department for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities will soon receive the “youth” budget initially allocated to the Department for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. This reconfiguration will be reflected in the October MTBPS process, and ultimately find expression in the 2020 Budget. Among other things, will be the inclusion of budgets for National Youth Development programme which facilitates the development and implementation of national youth strategies and policies, as well as the National Youth Development Agency.

We implore the National Youth Development Agency, working with the Department for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, to speed up the amendment of the National Youth Development Agency Act of 2008. Furthermore, the NYDA should ensure provincial youth desks and other youth organisations are consulted in the process of amending this Act. And lastly, we urge that all board vacancies at the NYDA should be filled as a matter of urgency.

The majority of young people in South Africans like their 1976 counterparts are finding it difficult to enter the labour market or start their own businesses because of skills, marketing, access to finance and education challenges emanating from the legacy of Apartheid. The current government has developed policies, introduced programmes and has partnered with various private companies to help ensure that young people are not economically discriminated against but are able to enjoy the economic fruits of democracy. Parliament is strategically placed to monitor and oversee the implementation of policies and programmes related to this stratum in society.

**Conclusion**

Human rights; redress and transformation; inclusivity and social justice are only but a few principles that underpin the ANC’s Social Transformation efforts. In addressing the past and the imbalances that were created by the Apartheid regime, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities should be used as a vehicle for the realisation of the ANC’s Transformation efforts. This will allow a form of opening up of industries and departments, which would allow women, youth and persons with disabilities a sense of achievement and advancement in the world of work in the country no matter how male dominated a particular environment may be. With the help of the ANC-led Government and the private sector, it is with gender-responsive budgets and programmes that vulnerable groups in society will be able to infiltrate and create a redistribution of resources.

Strategy and Tactics of the ANC (2012).

Strategy and Tactics of the ANC (2017).

National Treasury: Estimates of National Expenditure, pg. 252 (2019).

National Treasury: Final Response Document on Rates and Monetary Amounts and Amendment of Revenue Laws Bill, 2018 (Based on hearings by the Standing Committee on Finance in Parliament), pg. 7 (2019).

<http://www.women.gov.za/images/MEDIASTATEMENTS/Minister-Speaking-Notes-Sanitary-Dignity-Launch-V2.pdf>