

# Just Budgets South Africa




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## **Increasing Accountability and Aid Effectiveness through Gender Budget Analysis in South Africa**

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*Cover photo: IDASA*

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This publication is the result of One World Action's work on gender equality, women's rights and aid effectiveness. We would like to thank our partner **Idasa** for leading the 'Just Budgets' research project in South Africa. In particular we would like to thank **Mario Claasen** for conducting the research and writing the report and **Mandy Macdonald** for editing it.

# Principal acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ASGISA</b>	Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa
<b>AU-NEPAD</b>	African Union – New Partnership for Africa’s Development
<b>CASE</b>	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
<b>CBO</b>	community-based organisation
<b>CGE</b>	Commission on Gender Equality
<b>CIDA</b>	Canadian International Development Agency
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organisation
<b>DPSA</b>	Department of Public Service and Administration
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department of International Development
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>GBI</b>	gender budgeting initiative
<b>GBA</b>	gender budgeting analysis
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>GDD</b>	gender-disaggregated data
<b>GEM</b>	gender equality and mainstreaming
<b>Idasa</b>	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
<b>Idasa WBP</b>	Idasa Women’s Budget Project
<b>IDC</b>	International Development Cooperation Directorate, National Treasury
<b>JMCW</b>	Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women
<b>ODA</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>PIU</b>	project implementation unit
<b>PMU</b>	project management unit
<b>SARS</b>	South African Revenue Service
<b>SAMDI</b>	South African Management Development Institute
<b>SWAp</b>	sector-wide approach
<b>TAU</b>	Technical Assistance Unit, National Treasury
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>UNIFEM</b>	United Nations Development Fund for Women
<b>WBI</b>	Women’s Budget Initiative
<b>WNC</b>	Women’s National Coalition

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# Executive summary

This research is part of a broader research project entitled **Just Budgets: Increasing Accountability and Aid Effectiveness through Gender Budget Analysis**, conducted by One World Action and its partners in South Africa, Mozambique, Uganda and Tanzania. The project's overall objective is to examine the achievements, impacts and challenges of GBIs in the focus countries, explore how gender budget analysis and methodology could be applied to new aid modalities such as direct budget support and sector-wide approaches, particularly with a view to increasing donor accountability and aid effectiveness, and make recommendations for donors and Northern and Southern civil society to track the implementation of donor gender policy commitments.

**South Africa has had two major gender budgeting initiatives since 1994**, the Women's Budget Initiative and the Idasa-Women's Budget Project. Both of these initiatives, which took place in the 1990s, had various successes and challenges, but both are recognised internationally as one of the most successful GBIs. Unfortunately, with few exceptions, there has been little recent nationally-driven work on gender budgeting, because of factors such as organisational changes, overreliance on one or two persons to coordinate the work, lack of sustained commitment from some partners, and inability of some of those trained on GBA to mainstream this work through their organisations.

**Women and girls are still marginalised in South Africa**, which is still a strongly patriarchal society. Although women's rights are firmly enshrined in the Constitution of 1994 and there is an active national gender machinery led by the Commission on Gender Equality, South Africa has high levels of inequality. Unemployment, poverty and HIV/

AIDS affect women disproportionately compared to men, and these factors are also associated with high levels of violence perpetrated against women and girl children. The government has a policy commitment to changing this situation, needs to do more in practice. At the practical level GBA and GBIs are important tools for assisting government and its development partners to realise their stated commitments around gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment.

The South African government's **policy commitment to gender equality** is well established through the Constitution and legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act, the Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act, and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act. The key policy dealing specifically with gender equality is the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, which sets out the government's strategies for gender equality and outlines the various institutions that constitute the national gender machinery.

The **national gender machinery** has undergone several challenges and has been sharply criticised by both government and civil society. Financial and human underresourcing of the national Commission on Gender Equality has led to difficulties in the shaping of its identity, role and leadership. The Office of the Status of Women has undergone similar challenges. The gender focal points set up in government departments to monitor the mainstreaming of gender in their programmes and service delivery have also been underresourced and placed in non-strategic positions in departments, from where they cannot exert real powers.

Parliament's concern about these trends in these and other institutions concerned with the promotion of human rights led to the establishment of an ad-hoc committee to investigate the challenges of Chapter Nine institutions and make recommendations to Parliament and the Executive. One key recommendation was the inclusion of the CGE in the South African Human Rights Commission. This, however, could lead to gender equality being overshadowed by other competing human rights concerns potentially jeopardising the advancement of gender equality and women's rights.

In line with the government's policy, the **International Development Cooperation Directorate of the National Treasury strongly steers and coordinates the ODA environment.** Donors do not play a crucial role in South Africa's budget processes as the country has a strong revenue base and donor funding is only a very small percentage of the national budget. However they do exert influence at the departmental and provincial levels where they assist government bodies in the design and implementation of development interventions within the confines of what has been agreed upon at the national level between government and the specific donor.

**The government requires all international donors to align their country strategies and interventions to the national development frameworks.** As a result, donors' policies or frameworks for their cooperation with South Africa are very similar to each other, since they all have to be aligned with the government's development strategy frameworks. Through the alignment process, government and donors jointly negotiate and discuss the issues that are relevant to the stakeholders, the outcome being

a country strategy framework signed by both parties. This framework should mainstream gender equality.

It is cause for concern, however, that **neither the South African government nor all donors explicitly mention gender equality in their frameworks.** All donors define gender as a cross-cutting issue and say that it is mainstreamed throughout their programmes, but, except for CIDA, it is not clear how this is done in practice. The SA government's own implementation of gender mainstreaming in government departments was heavily criticised by the Public Service Commission in 2006, which has led to a new gender mainstreaming initiative by DPSA and SAMDI, the South African Management Development Institute.

All the donors interviewed stated that they **consult local CSOs** during the design of the country strategy framework, but it is not clear how these processes are conducted nor what feedback is given by CSOs and vice versa. The IDC has only informal engagements with CSOs on donor monitoring. It seems to be willing to share its processes with CSOs on ODA monitoring. As yet, however, **there is no national forum where government, donors and CSOs come together to discuss and share information.**

The IDC has also been the leading agency on the **implementation of the Paris Declaration** of 2005. It has completed research, but as yet the implementation of the five principles of the Declaration has been slow. The IDC and donors need to focus more on harmonisation, alignment and the managing of results. The IDC also needs to **engender the Declaration**, move away from the technical aspects of the Declaration and start to link it to their desired developmental outcomes.

UNIFEM Southern Africa has already started on the process of engendering the Declaration in other countries in the region and these lessons can be shared with South African counterparts.

The South African government plays an active and leading role in ODA and ensuring **monitoring of donors' commitments and programmes**, both governmental and non-governmental. **CSOs want to become more closely involved in monitoring** donor activities as well as the government's own development programmes from a gender perspective, and want to understand donors' processes and decisions, for instance the changing of their priorities towards CSOs, in particular as they impact on the work of women's and gender equality organisations.

## Conclusions

**Gender budget analysis can contribute** to our understanding of donor processes, policies and funding commitments, and can clarify and enrich the efforts of donors and governments to engendering the Paris Declaration.

## Recommendations

This report concludes by suggesting the following recommendations to civil society, donors and government:

- > All stakeholders of the WBI and the Idasa WBP should revive the national gender budgeting initiatives, bearing in mind and learning from the challenges of the previous two projects;
- > At a national level NGOs such as Idasa should play a leading role in coordinating civil society initiatives in monitoring donor and government development commitments on gender equality;
- > The National Treasury's IDC should set up a forum for civil society to engage with them on donor monitoring on gender issues, including the IDC's efforts to implement the Paris Declaration gender-sensitively;
- > Donors should strengthen their engagement with CSOs where donors are accountable also to CSOs and not just to their country governments and the SA government, on gender equality and mainstreaming;
- > A national consultative process should be held to discuss the results of the research and develop inputs, including gender-related points, for the inclusion in the next high forum level meeting on the Paris Declaration to be held in Ghana in 2008; as well as other upcoming international meetings such as the Doha Review Conference;
- > International NGOs based in Europe and North America should strengthen their advocacy and lobbying efforts with their home governments on their commitments around aid and the Declaration, and in particular on engendering the Declaration;
- > Donors should share lessons with each other on their initiatives around the gender-sensitive implementation of the Paris Declaration in Southern Africa. This lesson-sharing should also include an exploration of how to engender the Declaration in the region.
- > Donors and government officials need to begin viewing the Paris Declaration not just as a technical tool but as an

instrument to enhance development outcomes, thus enabling it to address gender equality and other social and human rights issues substantively.

- > Capacity building on GBA and the budget process, consolidated by follow-up and ongoing support, should be carried out together with the development of mechanisms for CSOs to mainstream new skills and knowledge in their organisations.
- > All government departments, not only those traditionally regarded as the 'gender sectors' (health, education, social welfare and social security), must systematically collect gender-disaggregated data and information to inform their analysis.
- > All elements of the national gender machinery at all levels must have adequate financial resources and staff competent in gender mainstreaming in decision-making positions, to enable them to function effectively and sustainably in line with constitutional provisions.

# 1 Introduction

*The budget reflects the choices that government has to make, and is the tool it uses to achieve its economic and development goals. The government has to balance a wide range of legitimate demands with limited resources at its disposal.*

—People's Guide to the Budget  
(Republic of South Africa, 1997: 2)

*Women do not want pity or paternalism. They want to have power over their own lives. They want to be able to make choices and decisions and be centrally involved in the process of changing their lives. This has to inform our approach to gender-responsive budgeting.*

—Pregs Govender  
(Govender, 2002: 113)

*There has been state-driven change around gender equality but that hasn't been coupled with social change ... that permeates everything else, governance, service delivery and violence.*

—Tamara Braam,  
Gender Adviser, CIDA Southern Africa

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## 1.1 Why gender budgeting?

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The three quotes above together illustrate the objectives of gender budgeting. Gender budgeting aims to empower women to have control over their own lives and make the necessary choices that are right for them. It is thus about agency. Through knowledge of public budgets and the processes and priorities by which they are shaped, women and men will be able to plan and budget for their livelihoods and for those in their care. Gender budgeting is a tool enabling both sexes to work towards

gender equality in the allocation and management of public funds.

Gender budgeting is a tool for governments and civil society, but the budget is also important for other actors – the international donors. They play a key role not just in funding but in the development of key programmes and ensuring their sustainability. Over the last decade or so, there has been contention over the effectiveness of aid in developing countries and in particular the role of donors in developing countries whose revenue contains a large proportion of donor contributions.

Gender-responsive budgeting or gender-sensitive budget analysis was first undertaken by the Australian federal government, and later the Australian state governments, from 1983/4 onward, to determine the impact of the budget on women and girls. In 1995, the Beijing Platform for Action raised global awareness of the need to design budgets so as to ensure equal access to public sector expenditures. Also in 1995, South Africa became the second country to undertake gender-responsive budgeting (GRB). Interest in GRB work and awareness of its value have grown tremendously, with other countries also taking initiatives – the Philippines, Mozambique, Barbados, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and the United Kingdom, among others.

There is no single best practice or model for implementing GRB initiatives (Budlender and Hewitt, 2002: 7). The countries that have undertaken GRB have done so for different reasons, have used different strategies, and have therefore achieved different results and impact. There are however, good GRB practices, on which we will reflect during our

discussion of the South African Women's Budget Initiative (section 4).

## 1.2 South Africa and international aid

South Africa is in a fortunate position compared to other countries in Africa for several reasons. It is regarded internationally as a middle-income country, with several key economic resources such as gold, diamonds and platinum and an expansion into other sectors such as finance and the built environment. Currently the population is almost 48 million and there is a small but steadily growing black middle class, giving South Africa a resource base from which the government can pool taxes. In the 2006/07 financial year the South African Revenue Service (SARS) collected enough taxes to provide a revenue surplus for the first time since the country's new democracy in 1994. The budget process is relatively open and transparent: it scored 85 per cent in the International Budget Project's Open Budget Initiative in 2006, which scores the quantity and quality of information provided to citizens in the seven key budget documents that all governments should make public during the course of the budget year (International Budget Project, 2006).

These factors place South Africa in a unique position to be relatively independent of international donor funding. Donor funding makes up only 2 per cent of the annual budget. This gives the South African government leverage in terms of policy setting and programme development. Donors do not play a key role in the budget process or policy setting in South Africa. This does

not mean that they play no role at all, but the government is strong enough to take the lead on policy setting and to require donors to align their country policies and programmes to the national policies and priorities of the current government. The government develops its Programme of Action in partnership with various national stakeholders and in consultation with international donors and other actors, but ultimately the Programme of Action is a South African initiative. The process of alignment is conducted through bilateral negotiations where government and donors agree on the terms of the aid, the programme, respective roles, and the funds allocated to the agreement. The South African National Treasury, specifically its International Donor Cooperation Directorate, plays a key role in steering this process and monitoring the flow of aid and the various agreements between government and donors. However, the process is not always smooth.

Even though donors play a minimal role in the policy setting environment, they do exert some influence in government departments at national and provincial levels. Representatives of both the National Treasury and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) interviewed for this report confirmed that donors do not play a major role in the national policy and budget processes but do play a more significant role in policy setting, development and overall planning processes in the nine South African provinces. This role is often through in-kind funding, where donors hire a consultant or expert to assist a certain government department in developing its plans and implementation processes.

The South African government fully supports the Paris Declaration, and the International Donor Cooperation Directorate (IDC) in the National Treasury is playing a key role in this. The IDC has carried out its own baseline study and monitoring on South Africa's progress in implementing the tenets of the Paris Declaration and is now engaged in evaluating progress. The IDC has also been able to have the United Nations and its agencies agree to the Programme of Action and adopt it as it is, instead of having a separate country strategy. South Africa is the African representative in the international high-level forum on the Declaration, and the IDC plays the key role. The IDC also meets twice a year with all of the 25 donors with whom it currently has an agreement, and also meets with the donors individually to discuss specific issues. Again, the South African government is taking the lead and driving the process, as required by the Paris Declaration, on the implementation of the five pillars and twelve indicators of the Declaration. This process is far from complete, but it is important to note that the South African government is proactive in this process.

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## 1.3 About this report

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This report is part of a four-country research project conducted by One World Action and a number of its partners in developing countries, entitled 'Just Budgets: Increasing accountability and aid effectiveness through gender budget analysis'. In 2007, One World Action asked the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) to become a partner in the project, which would cover gender budget initiatives in Mozambique, South

Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. The aim of the project was to explore how gender budget analysis could be applied to new aid modalities, such as direct budget support and sector-wide approaches (SWAs). Specifically the four-country research project aims to:

- > Examine the achievements and challenges of gender budgeting initiatives (GBIs) in each focus country;
- > Explore the impacts, if any, on budgetary allocations in each focus country;
- > Identify lessons for increasing CSO capacity to engage in local and national budget processes in order to track government's women's rights and gender equality commitments;
- > Explore how GBA methodology and practice could be applied to new aid modalities to increase donor accountability and aid effectiveness;
- > Provide recommendations for donors and Northern and Southern civil society to track the implementation of donor gender policy commitments.

This country report on South Africa is particularly interested in the links between donor aid effectiveness and the role that gender budgeting can play in holding donors accountable. Even though donors play a limited role in South Africa's policy-making processes, donors and national governments must be accountable to the citizens of their own and the recipient countries.

The report is in two parts: Part I looks at existing experiences of gender budgeting in South Africa in the national context, while Part II focuses on gender budgeting in the context of ODA and new aid modalities. First of all, we outline

the current challenges women and girls face in South Africa today and the legislative framework in South Africa for the promotion of equality between men and women. We then highlight the key successes and challenges of the Women's Budget Initiative and the Idasa Women's Budget Project, and draw some general lessons for CSOs about undertaking gender budget analysis, emerging from these two experiences and broader budget work. Three case studies provide illustrations of different issues.

Next, we explore donors' and the government's policies on official development assistance to determine to what extent the priorities of donors 'match' those of the government in this respect. We assess South Africa's progress in the implementation of the Paris Declaration tenets. The views of CSOs and their experiences of donor funding are explored, in particular as regards the implications for gender mainstreaming of decreases in donor funding to these organisations. We look at the links between gender budgeting initiatives and how GB can be used to hold donors – and in the South African case, government – accountable for their policy and financial commitments to promoting gender equality. Lastly, conclusions and recommendations are given.

## Research methods and limitations

The research for the present study used the following methods:

- > Desk research for overview of internal documentation and relevant academic materials;
- > Interviews with:
  - ▶ key activists and academics in GBIs and selected women's organisations

and gender-sensitive CSOs in South Africa;

- ▶ key government officials from the National Treasury and from provincial government departments in the Western Cape and Gauteng;
- ▶ MPs from the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement and Status of the Quality of Life of Women (JMCW);
- ▶ officials from DFID, the European Commission, USAID and CIDA.

The reader should be aware of some limitations to this study. Not all of the intended interviews with representatives of institutions were held, for a variety of (mostly logistical) reasons, and there were some problems related to interview transcription. Some of these problems have already been addressed, e.g. via a consultative workshop held in early 2008 with people already interviewed and other intended interviewees who had not been reached. Some of the extracts from interviews quoted below have been slightly edited in the interests of clarity.



## **Part I:**

# **Gender budgeting in South Africa's national context**

# 2 Women, girls and gender relations in the current South African context

## 2.1 Some facts and figures

South Africa's population is currently 47.9 million, approximately 24.3 million of whom (51%) are female. The representation of women and girls in Parliament has increased from 25% in 1994 to 32.8% in 2004. This puts South Africa ahead of several countries whose goal for the representation of women in the national legislature has been 30% (Republic of South Africa, 2007c). But women and girls are also the most vulnerable group in South African society. Although women's rights are firmly enshrined in the South African Constitution of 1994 and there is an active national gender machinery led by the Commission on Gender Equality, South Africa has high levels of inequality which have serious implications for sustainable democracy in the country.

Women's unemployment rates are persistently higher than those for men: female unemployment stood at 30.8% in March 2007 while that of males was 21.1% (Statistics South Africa, 2007). Women are thus not well represented in the economy. A study has shown that 83% of the informal economy worldwide consists of women, and of this proportion 61% are African women. The same study also indicates that men are 1.7 times more likely than women to be involved in entrepreneurship above the survival level (Republic of South Africa, 2007e: 22–3).

South African women are slightly worse off than men as regards literacy. UNICEF statistics show that the adult women's

literacy rate was 96% of that of adult men in the period 2000–2006, although the female rate exceeded the male rate for both enrolment and attendance at both primary and secondary school level (UNICEF, 2008).

Women are disproportionately represented among the estimated HIV-positive population (about 11% of total, or 5.3 million people). Gender-based violence (GBV) is also very common: rape, for instance, has shown an upward trend since 1994. Between April 1994 and March 1995, 44,751 rapes were reported to the police; by 2004–05 the figure had risen to 55,000. Since these statistics reflect only the number of rapes reported to the police, the true extent of sexual violence against women is unknown. The same is true of domestic violence, which is rampant in South Africa. A 1997 study conducted in three provinces in South Africa found that 27% of women in the Eastern Cape, 28% in Mpumalanga and 19% in the Northern Province (now Limpopo) had been physically abused in their lifetimes by a current or former partner (Vetten, 2007). Despite the government's efforts, South Africa remains a deeply patriarchal society.

## 2.2 Institutional mechanisms for equality

In 1994, the **Women's Charter for Effective Equality** paved the way for the inclusion of gender equality and institutions to monitor it in the South African Constitution. In addition, a

key priority of women elected to the 1994 parliament was to establish the **Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women** (JMCW).

During the first five years of democracy, the South African government set up the **Office on the Status of Women** (OSW) in the Office of the Deputy President. It moved to the Office of the President after the 1999 elections. It was mandated by Cabinet to establish mechanisms to promote gender equity in government and to define national gender policy for the state.

Another key element of the national gender machinery is the **Commission on Gender Equality** (CGE). The CGE was set up in accordance with Chapter 9 of the Constitution to be one of six independent statutory bodies established to support and strengthen constitutional democracy (Meintjes, 2007).

# 3 South Africa's legislative framework for the promotion of gender equality

As noted above, donors do not set policy priorities in South Africa but follow the priorities set by the government. This chapter reviews the important commitments the South African government makes towards women's rights, in order to clarify the context in which donors' priorities as regards gender equality are currently set.

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## 3.1 CEDAW

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Since 1994, the South African government has made several commitments to the realisation of women's rights. South Africa became a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in December 1995, and the principles of CEDAW are reflected in the South African Constitution.

States' obligations under CEDAW oblige them to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination, not just state-generated gender-based discrimination but also the discrimination that women face from private institutions and individuals (UNIFEM, 2007: 6–8).

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## 3.2 The South African Bill of Rights

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Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution contains the **Bill of Rights**, which applies to every citizen and is central to the nation's democracy (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The

Constitution commits the state, including the legislature, the judiciary, the executive and all other organs of state, to 'respect, promote and fulfil' the rights in the Bill of Rights. In some cases, it also binds private actors to this obligation.

All the rights stated in the Constitution, specifically the Bill of Rights, are implicitly women's rights. The Constitution binds the state to the creation of a 'non-sexist' society in which all rights are enjoyed equally irrespective of 'race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth' (Republic of South Africa, 1996: chapter 2, section 9). In addition to this, the Constitution also guarantees rights of particular relevance to women, including:

- > the right to equality and to be free from unfair discrimination from public and private actors;
- > the right to freedom and security of the person, including reproductive decision-making and freedom from violence;
- > the prohibition on hate speech based on gender, race, sexual orientation;
- > the internal limitations placed on the codification and/or enjoyment of cultural and religious rights. (Albertyn, 2004: 12–13)

### 3.3 The national gender machinery: policy and practice

A **National Policy Framework for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality** was developed in 2000. The National Policy Framework has the following vision and mission:

*The vision on which this Gender Policy Framework is based is that of a society in which women and men are able to realise their full potential and to participate as equal partners in creating a just and prosperous society for all. The vision is that of gender equality.*

*In support of this vision, the mission is to create an effective enabling framework to guide the process of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices which will serve to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres and structures of government, as well as in the workplace, the community and the family.*

—(Republic of South Africa, 2000, section 3.2)

The principles of the National Policy Framework are:

- > Equality between women and men;
- > Recognition of differences and inequalities among women;
- > Women’s rights are human rights;
- > Customary, cultural and religious practices are subject to the right to equality;

- > Public and private are not separable spheres of life;
- > Entitlement to the right of integrity and security of person;
- > Affirmative action programmes for women;
- > Economic empowerment for women;
- > Mainstreaming gender equality;
- > Partnerships between government and civil society.

The framework discusses how government intends to implement these principles with the various stakeholders, including the **national gender machinery**. This consists of several institutions in and outside of the State apparatus (Todes et al., 2006: 10):

- > **Government:** National Office on the Status of Women (OSW), provincial offices on the Status of Women, gender focal points in line departments and in some local government structures;
- > **Parliament:** Portfolio committees (including the parliamentary JMCW), Women’s Empowerment unit, Gender Caucus in Parliament (dysfunctional);
- > **Independent Bodies:** Commission on Gender Equality (CGE);
- > **Civil society:** Non-governmental organisations, women’s organisations, religious bodies, South African Local Government Association (SALGA).

Although the policy on national gender machinery is internationally considered ‘best practice’, its implementation is limited by underresourcing. In 1997, Pregs Govender MP noted (1997: 7):

*However, between the vision and the objective, between commitment*

*and concrete change, is reality with its plethora of compromises, trade-offs, and established power. We have seen structures which needed effective resourcing and authority being placed at unacceptably low levels in the hierarchy with little or no power to influence the budget and broader economic policy. The Commission for Gender Equality has a budget of R2 million. The Office on the Status of Women in the Deputy President's Office has effectively been reduced to a low-level gender desk with a director and one secretary. Most gender desks at departmental or provincial level have experienced similar problems.*

Ten years later, the same problem persists. In mid-2007, Debbie Budlender was requested by a new JMCW to conduct a gender budget analysis workshop. One of the exercises the MPs were engaged in was examining the budget of the Office of the Presidency, where the national Office on the Status of Women (OSW) is located. MPs had noticed that the OSW's budget allocation for 2007/08 was aggregated with that of the offices on the Rights of the Child and the Status of Disabled Persons. This made it difficult to assess the priority level of the OSW budget. MPs from the JMCW raised this point during the parliamentary debate on the President's Office budget vote and recommended that the OSW budget should be disaggregated and reported as a separate item in the FY 2008/09 budget. It remains to be seen if this will happen.

The case study overleaf illustrates what can happen when national gender machinery is underresourced. However it also illustrates the resourcefulness of the CGE.

### Case Study 1: The budget tribulations of the CGE

The twelve commissioners of the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) formally began work on 1 April 1997. The Commission's budget falls within that of the Department of Justice, which had allocated an amount of R1,959,000 to it for FY 1996/7. In 1997/8 the allocation was slightly higher, at R2,059,000. The Commission was informed that the 1996/7 amount, unspent because the Commission was not yet in existence, would be rolled over, but this did not happen.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) placed the CGE Commissioners in Category A2. This is the third highest of ten possible categories. The DPSA did not provide, and has not since provided, reasons why the CGE commissioners were not placed in Category S, the highest, like the members of the South African Human Rights Commission.

Even at this lower pay scale the 1997/8 CGE allocation did not cover the remuneration of commissioners, which amounted to R 2,410,510, over R351,000 more than the total budget for the Commission. The budget provided nothing at all towards the employment of the chief executive officer (CEO), the other staff provided for in the CGE Act, the establishment of an office, or any activities. The overall allocation, compared to that of other commissions, suggests that the CGE was considered to be far less important than the others. The 1997/8 allocation for the Human Rights Commission was R6,841,000, for the Youth Commission R6,950,000, for the Financial and Fiscal Commission R24,079,000, and for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission R50m.

For the first months of its existence the CGE operated without equipment and with two seconded secretaries. In August 1997, in desperation, the Commission appointed two secretaries. In September 1997 a computer, fax and printer were obtained on lease from Justice. A CEO had been designated, but has been unable to commence employment for lack of funds.

The CGE has been fortunate in receiving technical assistance from the Commonwealth Secretariat in the form of an advisor since August 1997. It has drawn up a plan of action and determined the costs of the different activities. It has received fairly firm assurances from several donors that they are prepared to fund many of these activities. But the donors are – understandably – not prepared to allocate funds from their budgets until the government demonstrates its seriousness and commitment by covering the basic running costs of the Commission.

There are certainly ways in which some of the costs of CGE and similar bodies could be cut. In particular, fewer commissioners and a greater proportion of part-timers would allow significant reductions. But it was not the CGE which set the numbers and working hours of commissioners, but a special committee whose recommendations were endorsed by Parliament. The CGE's proposed staffing structure, too, was endorsed both by Parliament and the DPSA.

The CGE's experience highlights serious contradictions in the decisions being taken by different bodies. In the end, unfortunately, resource decisions speak loudest as they underpin all others.

*(Source: Budlender, 1998: 16–17.)*

# 4 The South Africa Women's Budget Initiative

The South Africa Women's Budget Initiative (WBI) was born in a particular context, in March 1995, almost a year after the first democratic elections were held in South Africa. It started as a partnership between parliamentarians, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals. The parliamentarians were from the then Joint Standing Committee on Finance's Gender and Economic Policy Group, which was later replaced by the JMCW. The NGOs were the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE), represented by Debbie Budlender, the Law, Race and Gender Project from the University of Cape Town, and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa) (Hercules, 2006: 28). The initiative brought together the specialist skills and knowledge of researchers and the political influence of members of parliament (MPs) to play an oversight role in the newly established parliament. It was envisaged that the researchers could feed their information into the parliamentary forum where it would be used by MPs to advocate for gender equality. Unlike the Australian case, the South African GRB initiative was initiated by civil society groups and MPs and was not a government initiative (Budlender, 2002a: 138).

The initial goals of the Women's Budget Initiative were:

- > to develop an alternative set of values and principles which would begin to prioritise the socioeconomic needs of poor women;
- > to provide a critical tool to monitor spending;
- > to empower the Standing Committee to oversee government spending;
- > to empower government to take responsibility for drawing up gender-sensitive budgets;
- > to empower civil society to engage with issues from which it had hitherto been excluded. (Budlender 2002b: 83)

These goals reflected the excitement and the feeling that a window of opportunity had opened characteristic of that moment in South Africa's history. It was also typical of the time that the WBI saw its task as assisting the government and parliamentarians to fulfil their mandate, during the 'honeymoon' period of South Africa's democracy, rather than being overly critical of the government.

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## 4.1 Research strategies and publications

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The strategies employed by the WBI were research; skills development and capacity building for civil society, government officials and parliamentarians at national and provincial/state level; and, to a limited extent, advocacy.

As regards **research**, the WBI initially analysed a limited number of national ministries, public sector employment and taxation. The ministries were chosen to reflect both social and economic sectors but ultimately to show that gender issues were present in every ministry, not just the social-sector ministries. In its third year, the WBI was able to cover all 26 ministries in its analyses. It also expanded its focus to include customs and excise, local government, donor funding revenue and intergovernmental relations (Budlender, 2002a: 138).

Each year the WBI's research was published in a book, part of a Women's Budget series. After three years of research work across all departments and sectors, some individuals in the WBI felt that their research was far too academic and not accessible to ordinary women. The first response to this was the development in 1998 of a publication called *Money Matters: Women and the government budget*. This was followed in 2000 by *Money Matters: Women and local government budgets*. The *Money Matters* publications were a shorter version of the Women's Budget series, in simple English and illustrated with photographs. The target audience was persons with at least ten years of education whose first language was not English. Later on, the *Money Matters* material on customs and excise was translated into three indigenous languages and widely distributed through trade unions for whom customs and excise was an issue of concern.

However, this approach was apparently still not reaching a wide enough audience. The WBI therefore turned to **capacity building**, teaming up with the Gender Education and Training Network (GETNET) and other partners who were experts at materials development and adult education to produce a set of gender budget workshop materials. The topics were agreed upon amongst the team members and an experimental workshop was convened to test the materials and elicit feedback. The target audience was always civil society. The materials were designed to be used selectively, integrating particular sessions and exercises into workshops on gender, budgets, advocacy and even on particular sectors (Budlender et al., 2003: 154–6). Later, these materials were adapted for

government officials at the request of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The WBI's research outputs were used by several organisations in their **advocacy** campaigns. Some used the WBI research specifically or subcontracted WBI to do the research for them. Two instances where this occurred were the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV).

## Case Study 2: Gender Advocacy Programme

Gender-based violence is one of the key issues facing women and girls in South Africa today. In 1998 the new government introduced new legislation on domestic violence. NGOs and community activists started to engage with government on the proposed Act, specifically its implementation and funding. The GAP had been alerted to the work of the WBI and asked the Minister of Justice if a budget had been allocated for the implementation of the Act. The Minister affirmed this but was unable to state how the funds would be spent. GAP decided to mobilise other groups with an interest in this area of work, and requested CASE to give input on how government funds are allocated. A second workshop was held in 1999, facilitated by CASE, to discuss the budgetary implications of the new Domestic Violence Act. It brought together organisations and activists concerned with domestic violence. An outcome of the workshop was that GAP commissioned CASE to undertake research examining the implementation of the Act and the budgetary implications.

It was agreed to keep the research manageable, as several ministries had functions related to domestic violence. The research focused on the departments of Justice, Safety and Security, and Welfare. Since the new Act would be implemented primarily by the provinces, it was agreed to use the Western Cape as a case study.

The research was entitled Making the Act Work. It was distributed widely by GAP. The findings were the following:

- > There had been some planning on the part of government on how they intend to spend the funds allocated to the new Act;
- > Much of the funds was meant to be used to train government officials responsible for the new functions stated in the Act;
- > There was evidence of other activities and allocations by other departments, but overall, the research concluded that the plans and allocations would not fulfil all the requirements of the Act. (Budlender et al., 2003: 154–6; Goldman & Budlender, 1999)

The government's policy implementation approach at national, provincial and local levels has been to implement a new policy on an incremental basis. This approach was also taken with the Domestic Violence Act and is the main reason why sufficient plans and allocations were not made during the first implementation phase of the new Act.

### Case Study 3: Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation

In South Africa's parliamentary system, parliamentary committees develop strategic plans in line with their particular committee functions. In 2002, the JMCW focused its attention on gender-based violence, poverty and HIV/AIDS. The Committee commissioned CASE and GETNET to research the budget implications of the three areas. The two partners in turn brought on board the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR) to focus specifically on GBV. The CSVR was not a gender-specific organisation but had a gender unit that was well established and a reputable track record.

The CSVR work focused on a training programme on secondary victimisation of rape survivors and a South African Law Commission paper on the feasibility of a victims' compensation fund.

The training programme was carried out with police officers working in the South African Police Service's Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units. The training focused specifically at reducing secondary victimisation of rape survivors. During the training, CSVR was able to make the following observations:

- > Secondary victimisation of rape survivors stems from sexist stereotyping and prejudice towards rape survivors;
- > Under-resourcing of the Units played a role in the treatment of rape survivors

The CSVR and WBI explored this issue in their research.

The South African Law Commission proposed in a discussion paper that rape survivors who report the crime and cooperate with the criminal justice system be given an amount of R2,000 in compensation. CSVR decided to investigate this issue by focusing on three aspects of government financing towards GBV programmes:

- > A description and analysis of the nature, range and extent of government support for NGOs that provide services to women experiencing GBV;
- > An assessment of national and provincial budgetary allocations towards the development and implementation of policies and legislation;
- > A preliminary analysis of costs of GBV to the state, society and individuals.

CSVR distributed a national survey to 196 organisations that offered some form of service to women aged fifteen years and older who had experienced gender-based violence. Of these, 142 (72%) responded. CSVR was able to assess how much funding government departments provided to organisations and which departments gave the most support. It discovered that few organisations tendered for government work on GBV, but also that few government tenders focusing on GBV were advertised.

As follow-up, a training workshop was held for those organisations that had responded to the survey, focusing specifically on enhancing organisations' knowledge of government funding and tendering processes. CSVR developed the necessary materials, including a participant's manual for the workshop, which included relevant forms that would be needed to apply for government funding and tips on tendering and proposal writing.

CSVR's task in the research was to interview government employees about their budgets, programmes and expenditure on their GBV programmes. Not all responded, but CSVR was able to ascertain that most

government departments did not disaggregate their budgets in detail. To refine this and get more detail, CSVr conducted case studies at two courts to illustrate the human and material resources needed to implement the Domestic Violence Act (Vetten & Khan, 2002; Budlender et al., 2003: 160–3).

On the third objective of the research, it was difficult for CSVr to analyse the costs of GBV. CSVr opted to do several case studies of women's experiences over time. A limitation of this kind of qualitative research was that it did not produce statistically precise information: for instance, women who experience multiple abuses can not remember after a while how many times abuse has occurred. The case studies also revealed women's underutilisation of government services, possibly suggesting that women and their families are bearing the costs and that these services might be costing the government less than they should (Budlender et al., 2003: 163). To date there has not been any costing undertaken on GBV. There is still a need for this and it would greatly assist government and civil society (like service providers) to plan and cost their respective programmes properly.

## 4.2 Successes and challenges for the WBI

During the initial years of the WBI in the mid-1990s, women parliamentarians were closely involved in the work, in particular Pregs Govender, the former chairperson of the Joint Standing Committee on Finance: Gender and Economic Policy Group (GEP), who later became the chairperson of the JMCW. The value of the WBI lay in its combination of MPs and NGOs, which enabled them to contribute by:

- > mobilising for gender-sensitive budget analysis;
- > contributing to the government's analysis by producing relevant information and research;
- > conducting 'shadow' or 'parallel' analyses. (Elson, 1999, in Budlender, 2000: 11)

For parliamentarians, this convergence of MPs and NGOs around a common cause was a key milestone. The JMCW was able to use budget debates to raise public awareness by asking ministers for reports and holding hearings with civil society on

poverty, gender, macroeconomic policy and budgets.

A year after the WBI was established, the Finance Minister in his budget speech committed the government to developing gender-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive targets and indicators and a performance review mechanism (currently part of the Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review tabled annually in Parliament). He also committed his ministry to counting unpaid labour as a contribution to the national economy, and in 2001 Statistics South Africa produced the country's first study on unpaid labour.

In 1997, when it submitted its report to the JMCW, the Finance Ministry indicated its commitment to 'an integrated gender analysis into macroeconomic policy'. The report also stated:

*The Ministry of Finance is taking the proposal forward... the gender desk is developing the tools and capacity needed to incorporate some form of gender analysis into the budgetary process*

—(Govender, 2002: 117).

In FY 1998/99, the National Budget Review was presented to Parliament

and government again reaffirmed its commitment to 'integrate gender analysis into budgetary processes'. The Budget Review also indicated that the Department of Finance had included 'gender-disaggregated information where available and appropriate, to permit an informed analysis of the impact of the Budget on men and women' (Govender, 2002; Republic of South Africa, 1998: 5.4).

A good example of the results of this incorporation of GBA based on gender-disaggregated data into budgeting was a programme called Working for Water. On the evidence of such data, this programme decided that 60% of all wages should be paid to women, 67% should be paid in rural areas, and special emphasis should be placed on flexible working time for single parents. In the first quarter of 1998, of 42,000 jobs created, 55% went to women (Govender, 2002: 117).

One of the major challenges for the WBI was that the parliamentary support for the gender budgeting work depended heavily on one individual: Pregs Govender. When she left Parliament there was a vacuum. Even though the JMCW received, and still receives, training from CASE on gender-responsive budgeting, the quality and type of the debates raising issues of gender equality are no longer as robust and continuously driven as in the early years of Parliament.

This raises the broader problem of the need for Parliament to have budgetary amendment powers, which is currently not the case. The Constitution guarantees Parliament the right to amend Money Bills (Republic of South Africa, 1996: section 77). To realise this right, an Act of Parliament, detailing how this would operate in practice, would need to be developed. However, a number of

constraints on MPs – lack of time, lack of research capacity, lack of information (Kraftchik & Wehner, 1999), a tendency for members or Cabinet to introduce legislation in their own portfolios – hamper parliamentarians' ability to engage concretely with the budget process and raise critical issues.

At the time of writing the WBI is inactive, although some relevant work is being continued by CASE through Debbie Budlender with the JMCW and, more recently, the Western Cape Provincial Government.

# 5 The Idasa Women's Budget Project

As a partnership between parliamentarians and established NGOs, the WBI was always seen as the overarching gender budget research initiative in South Africa, even though there have been other initiatives both inside national and provincial government and by other civil society groups. During a strategic planning process in 2002/3, Idasa established its own Women's Budget Project and employed a full-time staff member in 2003 to focus specifically on gender analysis of budgets. The objectives of the Idasa WBP were:

- > to ensure that CSOs (particularly those working with poor women) recognise the importance of gender analysis of budgets as an instrument for holding government accountable;
- > to equip CSOs with skills to enable them to conduct gender analysis of budgets;
- > to use the research outputs from GBA to develop advocacy strategies for the realisation of women's rights in relation to government;
- > to equip relevant government officials with the skills to undertake GBA.

The activities that the Idasa WBP were to undertake included:

- > Networking broadly with organisations working on issues affecting women, specifically poor women;
- > Raising awareness of the WBP's work and its potential advocacy uses;
- > Developing appropriate training materials for CSOs and government officials;

- > Conducting training programmes dealing with GBA, with CSOs and government officials;
- > Advocating for gender equality through formal parliamentary submissions, and organisation-building activities (platforms, networks, etc) which contribute to the building of the women's movement.

The Idasa WBP was not just a research project but rather a consolidation of the experience of the first phase of the WBI. The project essentially focused on raising awareness on gender issues, skills development of CSOs and government officials, and the use of research outputs to develop advocacy strategies.

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## 5.1 Lessons from the Idasa WBP

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In 2006, Idasa commissioned Sonke Consulting to conduct an evaluation of the WBP. The key findings and recommendations of its report (Hercules, 2006: 7–8) were:

- > The project needs to develop a clearer feminist perspective and make it the centre of all its work. The Idasa WBP was never grounded in a theoretical framework of gender or feminism. This made it sometimes difficult to focus the work implemented, even though the project produced high levels of output.
- > It was assumed that the project implementation would cascade further down to the beneficiaries (where training or research had been conducted), but often this

has not worked. Idasa WBP acted as a facilitator of a project, whether research or capacity building, in partnership with one or more partners. Through this process, Idasa WBP transfers skills and knowledge, but it is up to the partner/s to take the project further and make it sustainable in their respective organisations.

- > The project was ambitious but understaffed, which diluted its emerging impact. A more focused capacity-building programme, with serious organisational buy-in from selected NGOs, should be implemented nationally, although partners should also commit to the incorporation of a long-term programme component in their own organisations.
- > The CSOs which acted as partners in the Idasa WBP were not taking enough initiative to drive the GBA and tended to wait on the WBP to drive processes and activities. This lack of initiative by CSOs is linked to the lack of ownership amongst partners and beneficiaries in the Idasa WBP.
- > The project's approach was to conduct research and have the research output become part of the advocacy campaign of another organisation. It was difficult to measure the impact of the strategy because the research and advocacy were carried out by two separate organisations.
- > The project should be expanded to a larger programme and focus on one department (e.g. the National Treasury) and implement an advocacy project in partnership with an organised alliance of CSOs as a pilot. The focus on one ministry might prove to be difficult, however, as gender equality is an issue that falls in the direct and indirect mandates of several ministries – Health, Education, Social Development, Justice, Safety and Security, Trade and Industry, etc. The Idasa WBP should be more strategic in terms of the areas it addresses.
- > The Idasa WBP should build partnerships not only in South Africa but also Southern Africa and the African continent as whole, in line with Idasa's refocused drive to deliver development programmes with a distinct African character;
- > A proper training management strategy and plan should be developed, with clear expected responsibilities for those trained, to which partners must make a commitment.
- > Financial management should become a project management responsibility, and weaknesses in financial reporting systems should be addressed.
- > The research component needs to be continued and expanded with more regular input from academics. A clear research agenda should be developed, grounded in the feminist theoretical framework developed by the Idasa WBP and its partners.
- > Idasa should continue to house the project but needs to provide it with greater support and leadership. Idasa also needs to step up its general capability around gender, and the former Budget Information Service (now Economic Governance Programme) should find a way to integrate women's issues into all its research and policy analysis.

A researcher interviewed in the course of the present research confirmed that women's organisations generally do not take up issues of gender budgeting because it is not part of their mandate. She noted that

*they [the organisations] are working on sex-specific [themes] and they thought [gender budgeting] was a hot topic for them because the budget would be critical. The reality is that they have to weigh up the growing knowledge on budgets against everything else that they have to do within their organisation. When they look at everything in the organisation, [the budget] is clearly low down on the agenda. I think that they prefer to have people with the information they need as opposed to doing it themselves.*

Debbie Budlender, a former researcher of the Idasa WBP, indicated that Idasa is neither an appropriate organisation to take up gender budgeting nor ready to do it, because it lacks leadership and support on gender work in general.

This also illustrates the problem that most organisations face: how to mainstream gender equality without its being seen either as irrelevant or as additional work. Idasa has taken this critique to heart, however, and has undertaken *Just Budgets* to assist the organisation to strengthen the gender focus in their work. Idasa has also undergone a process of restructuring, with the former Budget Information Service being replaced by the Economic Governance Programme (EGP). The latter has a broader mandate that includes issues of participatory budgeting, democratic economic policy-making processes, accountable trade and aid, and accountability among non-state actors.

# 6 Lessons on gender budgeting

In addition to the lessons learned by the WBI and the Idasa WBP, their experiences and broader budget work have thrown up lessons that are also relevant for other organisations:

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## 6.1 Commitment

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Commitment is central to ensuring that gender budgeting initiatives remain sustainable. Any organisation that wants to engage in gender budget work will need to be committed to it. Gender budget work might not be the central focus of the organisation's broader objectives, but an organisation will need to understand the benefits of engaging in gender budget work and how it can be used as a tool for the achievement of the organisation's broader objectives.

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## 6.2 Ownership and institutionalisation

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Commitment by itself, however, is not sufficient to make a GBI work; it is only one ingredient in ensuring that it is sustainable. An organisation needs to have ownership of the GBI and to institutionalise it. This means that when an organisation that has not previously engaged in gender budgeting starts to do so, it has to design (in partnership with the gender budgeting expert organisation/individual) a GBI that suits the organisation's needs. This ensures that the organisation has full ownership of the process and the initiative as it progresses; but it should be combined with a process of institutionalising gender budgeting in the organisation. Often organisations engage in gender budgeting in an ad-hoc

manner and do not ensure that it is fully integrated into the broader objectives of the organisation. An example is overreliance on one or two individuals to carry the GBI forward, as happened in the WBI. Skills and knowledge need to be spread throughout the organisation and filtered through the institutionalisation process. Institutionalisation of gender budget work also means resourcing this endeavour within the organisation adequately in order for it to become sustainable in the long term.

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## 6.3 Gender mainstreaming

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The process of gender mainstreaming is particularly difficult for organisations that are not specifically gender focused. It is essential that the organisation, before engaging with gender budget analysis, demonstrates the necessary leadership and support to ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the organisation and its programmes and is not the responsibility of one or two people.

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## 6.4 Partnerships

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Alliances and partnerships with organisations specialising in areas such as GBV or women's rights advocacy are essential for support and guidance. Partnerships allow the various actors to bring their unique skills and expertise to a cross-cutting issue such as gender equality and contribute to sustainability.

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## 6.5 Research and advocacy

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Academic research needs to be adapted to the target audience, but must remain substantive and credible. Research should also attempt to be participatory and involve the intended beneficiaries. Lastly, research should be strongly linked to advocacy. This can be done by an organisation's developing either its own advocacy strategy or – more beneficially – a strategy through partnerships with other like-minded organisations.

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## 6.6 Sustainability

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Sustainability is not just financial but also organisational/institutional. If all the issues mentioned above are taken on board, an organisation will be able to create a sustainable programme of action for its gender budgeting initiative. This also requires a monitoring and evaluation strategy capable of measuring work done against the initial objectives of a programme.



## **Part II:**

**Gender budgeting,  
ODA and the aid effectiveness agenda**

# 7 The landscape of official development assistance in South Africa

The South African government defines official development assistance (ODA) as

*Official resource flows from the international donor community to South Africa in the form of grants, technical co-operation and financial co-operation, where the South African Government is held at least partially responsible or accountable for the management of such resources.*

It is interesting to compare this definition with that of the OECD:

*[resource] flows to developing countries and multilateral institutions provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies, each transaction of which meets the following test: (a) it is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective, and (b) it is concessional in character and contains a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent)*

—(Smith et al., 2006).

The most striking difference between the two definitions is that, in the South African definition, the government explicitly accepts partial (or mutual) accountability for development assistance management. This is further illustrated in the government's ODA policy, discussed below.

## 7.1 Ownership and alignment

Some of the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005 are certainly not new to South Africa. Two of these are **ownership** and **alignment**. The Declaration defines ownership as 'partner countries exercis[ing] effective leadership over their development policies, strategies and coordinat[ing] development actions', and alignment as 'donors bas[ing] their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures' (OECD/DAC, 2005: 3–4). South Africa's ODA policy, contained in the *Policy Framework and Procedural Guidelines for the Management of Official Development Assistance* refers to both these concepts:

*ODA to South Africa should essentially be a South-African-driven partnership for sustainable development between the donor community and South Africa.*

*South Africa accepts full ownership of donor-supported interventions, both at a macro- and sectoral level, and in all spheres of government. This is the only way to ensure that such interventions are aligned to South Africa's reconstruction and development priorities to the fullest extent possible.*

*Ownership begets responsibility. South Africa accepts full responsibility for meeting, and even exceeding, the governance, policy and capacity requirements that would enable it*

*(together with its partners) to achieve sustainable development.*

*With specific reference to ODA, South Africa, in partnership with the international donor community, is responsible for establishing and maintaining an effective and efficient ODA management system....*

*Maximum alignment of ODA to the MTEF and the annual budget is essential to ensure that ODA is utilised in support of core government development priorities, that ODA-supported interventions are South African driven, and that ODA-supported interventions are sustainable.*

—(Republic of South Africa, 2003: 10–11)

The South African government also asserts that it is the owner of development initiatives in partnership with donor agencies, and insists that all donors align their interventions to the country's development plans and annual budget. These processes are in line with the Paris Declaration's requirements for the relationship between recipient countries and donors.

## 7.2 The government's ODA policy

The government's policy on ODA was revised in 2006 to take account of the Paris Declaration and its implications for South Africa. The new policy lists the key South African principles for ODA, which are all in line with the principles of the Paris Declaration. They include:

1. ODA must be aligned to overall national strategic policies: this means that any ODA intervention must be designed to be in support of overall policies such as the government's Programme of Action and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA).
2. ODA interventions must be on plan. They should be described and integrated into a specific government planning framework such as municipal Integrated Development Plans, Provincial Government Development Strategies (PGDS) or line department action or business plans.
3. The conceptualisation and design of ODA shall be a government responsibility. This means that the implementing government entity should draft the Terms of Reference or the intervention plan, instead of it being done by the donor or other outside stakeholders.
4. The institutional and financial sustainability of the ODA intervention must be planned for at the design phase to avoid situations where ODA-sponsored activities fall apart after the expiry of the funding due to a lack of domestic support.
5. The choice of aid modality such as project, programme or sector budget support should be carefully considered and tailored to meet the developmental and organisational context rather than donor preferences.
6. The South African government has a strong preference for the use of government systems and procedures for the management of ODA. This is essential in building government capacity, ensuring proper government ownership and reducing the confusion and high transaction costs that result from using different systems and procedures.

7. The management of any ODA intervention must be institutionalised within a government department or unit as the formal owner and driver of the intervention. (Republic of South Africa, 2007b)

It is official policy of the South African government not to accept any aid that is not aligned to the policy priorities of the country. A long process of negotiation, buy-in and consultation between a donor and the government takes place before any funding agreement is signed. South Africa has long experience of engaging with donors in aligning priorities and building mutual accountability.

The government is able to exercise the necessary leadership to ensure that aid and development programmes in South Africa are effective and appropriate because of South Africa's low dependence on ODA. The total of ODA contributions to South Africa comprises only approximately 2% of the annual budget (Republic of South Africa, 2007b: 12). This ODA comes in the form of grants and technical assistance, including training and capacity building. Thus the donors have little or no influence over the national budget process. Interviewees for this research from the National Treasury confirmed that donors do not drive the government's agenda, but admitted that there are 'definite instances with departments and provinces where they have a stronger influence, but it will never go outside of the priorities we have jointly'. The National Treasury representatives also emphasised that a large proportion of ODA in South Africa is in the form of technical assistance: because South Africa is a middle-income country, the assistance it requires and receives is highly specialised and focused on programmatic issues.

## 7.3 The need for gender-disaggregated information

For any institution or government to address gender equality, gender-disaggregated information is critical. Disaggregated information on the demographics of the population is essential for the proper planning and implementation of policies and programmes. Governments need to collect two basic types of gender-disaggregated information:

- > information that tells government who their beneficiaries are in terms of service delivery (this requires not only a gender breakdown but also socioeconomic and geographic breakdowns);
- > Information on the impact of service delivery on those intended beneficiaries.

Interviewees from the National Treasury for this report were asked if they collected gender-disaggregated data, and for what purpose, in the context of budget allocations and expenditure. They replied that information is collected but tends to be programme- or department-specific. For instance, the social security programme, operated by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), collects gender-disaggregated data of the beneficiaries of the various social grants in addition to other demographic data; this type of information is used for planning purposes by SASSA and the National Treasury and for monitoring the outputs of this programme.

The National Treasury also recognised that it is easier to collect GDD in certain

sectors than in others. Health, education, social welfare and social security are traditionally the 'gender' sectors, where it is claimed to be far easier to gather gender-disaggregated information than in other sectors such as the economy or commerce. It seems clear that currently no thought is given to collecting data outside of the traditional 'gender' sectors and there is little understanding that all programmes of government have gender implications and therefore require gender-disaggregated data. The Treasury interviewees also admitted that although gender is part of their work, there is no reflection on, or assessment of, the gender implications of their work, and in particular no recognition that gender mainstreaming is an iterative process requiring human, time and financial resources.

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## 7.4 Tracking aid funds

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As regards the monitoring of aid flows, the National Treasury can only track aid that flows through governmental systems and funds, not aid that flows to other sources such as NGOs, or funds that remain with the donor. The Treasury interviewees indicated four systems for tracking aid flows:

- > OECD donors report on how much they spend in each country where they operate, which would include funding to civil society;
- > The funding agreement between the National Treasury and specific donors states the amount of funds for that specific agreement;
- > In project level-monitoring, the funds are dispersed by the donor in different stages of the project. This system is sometimes problematic for National

Treasury as they are dependent on the project officer in the donor institution for updates and information;

- > Government departments submit quarterly progress reports detailing how much funds they are receiving from donors (including contributions in kind), how much has been spent and how much is still available.

In addition to this, the National Treasury is reviewing its international donors' website so that it can be used as a monitoring and evaluation tool. This will be done in conjunction with the overall government monitoring and evaluation system.

These efforts by the National Treasury are laudable, but they do not entail monitoring the outcome and impact of aid flows on South Africa's development or how aid funds and programmes have assisted South Africa's citizens. In particular, they do not monitor these outcomes and impacts with regard to women or gender equality. This is a critical area that should be addressed jointly by the Treasury, the donors, and CSOs, irrespective of their focus area.

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## 7.5 The role of civil society

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The government's national Programme of Action outlines the objectives and strategies for the development of South Africa. In the process of developing the Programme of Action, the government engages with various civil society stakeholders such as trade unions, business lobby groups, and NGOs including women's organisations. According to the interviewees from the National Treasury, civil society is not involved in meetings between the government and international donors;

the Treasury's engagement with civil society groups is informal and does not include donors. It seems that, because it engages with civil society and other actors during the development of the Programme of Action, the government does not deem it necessary to include civil society in processes with the donors. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was reportedly the only donor agency to consult civil society groups operating in Canada and South Africa when negotiating the joint aid agreement between the two countries. Apart from CIDA's efforts, donors and the South African government have created no space for meaningful consultation or participation of civil society in these engagements. The meetings are held behind closed doors with no mechanisms to ensure accountability to the citizens whom the parties purport to serve. This is the case even under the revised ODA policy and even though that policy states that the government is accountable for ODA interventions. Civil society should use this contradiction as an entry point to start engaging with government and international donors.

All the CSOs interviewed said that they supported the idea that civil society should engage in dialogue with the South African government and international donors. One interviewee admitted that CSOs have not been sufficiently engaged in this process in general, perhaps because donor support is such a small portion of the South African budget and CSOs themselves would rather prefer to concentrate their energies and resources on other more critical areas. It is clear, however, that CSOs and specifically women's organisations need to engage in dialogue with international donors and the South African government and hold both

these stakeholders accountable for their actions and commitments.

# 8 ODA priority areas for South Africa

The top five donors to South Africa (not in order of size of allocations) have been the European Community (EC), Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States and Denmark. Donor funds since 1994 have benefited the following institutions (amounts committed in brackets):

- > Development Bank of Southern Africa (R3,728,272,986)
- > National Department of Health (R2,563,643,753)
- > National Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (R2,383,978,023)
- > National Department of Education (R2,038,535,781)
- > National Department of Trade and Industry (R1,231,686,431)
- > National Department of Treasury (R1,155,197,218)
- > National Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (R1,110,797,399)

—(Smith et al., 2006)

Considering the socioeconomic situation in South Africa, it is hardly surprising that these departments are the top seven recipients of donor funding through the government system. Health, education, combating crime, access to water, the development of trade and the strengthening of the state's good governance initiatives are the country's key development priorities. There is a clear match between the South African government's priorities and the sectors where most of the international funding is being invested. This may be an indication of the alignment of priorities between donors and the South African government.

## Government priorities as expressed in the Programme of Action:

### *Economic cluster:*

- (1) Ensuring alignment and supporting macroeconomic approaches;
- (2) building a competitive and labour-absorbing economy through industrial policy;
- (3) massively increasing public investment;
- (4) equity and development;
- (5) ensuring priority skills for the economy.

### *Social cluster:*

- (1) Comprehensive social security;
- (2) promotion of national identity and social cohesion;
- (3) comprehensive health care;
- (4) meeting the increasing challenge of housing and human settlement;
- (5) food security and nutrition;
- (6) second (informal) economy interventions;
- (7) education – broadening access and improving quality;
- (8) cross-cutting priorities;

### *Justice, Crime Prevention & Security cluster:*

- (1) crime prevention and public safety;
- (2) combating organised crime syndicates;
- (3) improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice system;
- (4) upholding national security;

(5) matters outstanding from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;

(6) large public events, e.g. the 2010 World Soccer Cup;

***Governance & Administration cluster:***

(1) good governance;

(2) capacity of the state;

(3) macro-organisation of the state;

(4) transversal systems.

*(Republic of South Africa, 2007a)*

# 9 Priority areas and attention to gender by major donors

During this research interviews were conducted with four of the major donor institutions in the South African development assistance landscape: the European Community (EC), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). In each case the agency's focus on gender equality and mainstreaming was raised.

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## 9.1 The European Community

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The European Community's *Country Strategy and Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2003–2005* lists the following as its priority areas:

- > Equitable access to, and sustainable provision of, social services;
- > Equitable and sustainable economic growth;
- > Deepening democracy;
- > Regional integration and cooperation. (EU–SA, [2003])

According to the European Commission representative interviewed, these priority areas will be broadly continued in the 2007–2013 EU–SA *Country Strategy*, whose priority areas include employment creation, focusing specifically on the 'second or informal economy'; improvements to service delivery; improving support to governance; and the regional integration and cooperation process. The interviewee said that gender equality and mainstreaming are

considered a cross-cutting issue in all these programmes, but that he was not the correct person to speak to on gender issues as this was not his portfolio and he was more able to answer questions related to aid effectiveness. This remark suggests strongly that gender equality is not, in fact, being mainstreamed *in practice* in the aid effectiveness agenda.

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## 9.2 UK Department for International Development (DFID)

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DFID Southern Africa has developed a Southern African Regional Plan rather than individual country plans for each of the countries in the region. The Regional Plan, however, acknowledges South Africa's position and role in the region as regards development, and therefore recommends that 'UK engagement in regional approaches must be developed in strong partnership with South Africa. The approach must take account of South Africa's own ambitions for promoting responsible leadership, good governance, peace and security, regional integration and growth and human development' (DFID, 2006: 14). The DFID Regional Plan identifies the following areas of engagement and some of the interventions:

- > **Growth, jobs and equity:** collaborate with UK- and South Africa-based supermarket chains to help regional suppliers meet their standards;
- > **Regional transport infrastructure:** support project preparation by initiating diagnostic and scoping

studies to engage investors and in particular public/private partnerships;

- > **Resilient livelihoods;**
- > **Food security:** support to vulnerability assessment and analysis;
- > **Water:** support institutional development and management of transboundary river basin authorities;
- > **Climate change;**
- > **Infectious diseases:** strengthen prevention and control measures of the WHO regional disease control division, including epidemic forecasting and disease surveillance;
- > **Peace and security:** strengthen SADC's core capacity, especially the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security and the corresponding new Department at the SADC secretariat.

During the interview, the DFID representative indicated that the Department is currently conceptualising its approach to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, which is not currently reflected in their Regional Plan. They are establishing/ consolidating their internally focused gender work before addressing GEM in their programmatic work. Despite this DFID, as a whole, does have an existing gender equality and gender mainstreaming policy. The DFID Southern Africa office has to develop its own strategy to suit the Regional Plan.

On the issue of aid effectiveness, the Regional Plan states, 'DFID will use its regional programme to promote aid effectiveness and harmonisation of regional programmes in Southern Africa. This will include ensuring they are aligned with the priorities identified by the AU-NEPAD' (DFID, 2006: 15). This is a clear

affirmation of the DFID's commitment to implementing the tenets of the Paris Declaration.

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### 9.3 United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

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USAID has proposed five broad core operational goals in its foreign aid plan:

- > Promoting transformational development;
- > Strengthening fragile states;
- > Providing humanitarian relief;
- > Supporting US geostrategic interests;
- > Mitigating global and transnational ills. (USAID, 2004)

The USAID representatives, like their EU counterparts, indicated that gender equality and mainstreaming is a cross-cutting area in all their programmes, but that they also have some interventions specifically targeting women.

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### 9.4 Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

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CIDA plays a key role in the South African ODA environment. CIDA's *Policy statement on strengthening aid effectiveness* states the following as their social development priorities:

*CIDA will meet its commitment for increased resources to the four Social Development Priorities – health and*

*nutrition, HIV/AIDS, basic education and child protection, with gender equality as a cross-cutting theme – with the objectives of at least doubling its overall investments in these areas over a five-year period.*

—(CIDA, 2002)

In addition to these social development priorities, CIDA has also committed itself to supporting South Africa's economic growth:

*CIDA will develop a policy framework to guide its programming in agriculture and rural development and will strengthen its investments in this sector... CIDA will revise and complete the policy framework for its private sector development programming to set out clear directions for its activities in this area while also ensuring that it is designed first and foremost to meet the needs and priorities of developing countries.*

—(CIDA, 2002)

CIDA has been known internationally as a leader in the promotion of gender equality for more than two decades. It developed its first policy in 1976, when no other international development agency had such a policy, and has subsequently revised it twice. The objectives of the 1999 CIDA gender policy are:

- > To advance women's equal participation with men as decision-makers in shaping the sustainable development of their societies;
- > To support women and girls in the realisation of their full human rights;
- > To reduce gender inequalities in access to and control over the resources and benefits of development. (CIDA, 1999)

CIDA's gender mainstreaming strategy is built around three key pillars:

- > **Human rights approach to gender equality:** creating awareness that gender equality is a human rights issue
- > **Participatory approach:** women should have equal access to participate in decision-making processes and not just as stakeholders
- > **Budgeting:** budgets should reflect direct line items that address gender equality in order to match the policy commitments made around gender equality

CIDA representatives indicated that through their work with partners, both government and civil society, they attempt to make the partners aware of their gender policy and gender mainstreaming strategy by giving technical assistance to partners to mainstream gender in their institutions and programmes. They affirmed that sometimes partners are sensitive and genuinely want to do more on gender equality, but at times partners do not understand the issue and how to implement GM. CIDA gives technical assistance to such partners and has a gender adviser who assists both government and civil society partners to ensure that their interventions are gender-sensitive and gender-mainstreamed.

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## 9.5 Gender mainstreaming in donor programmes

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All the donors described above define gender as a cross-cutting area, but how it is mainstreamed through the programmes is difficult to assess except in the case of CIDA, whose commitment to gender

equality is expressed in an explicit gender mainstreaming strategy and the provision of a technical assistant on gender to work with partners on mainstreaming throughout the programme. As we have seen, the South African National Treasury similarly admits that, despite the good intentions contained in policy statements, little conscious reflection on the gender implications in their programmes takes place. This is problematic, as it suggests that gender is in fact not mainstreamed but instead is an ad-hoc effort with no monitoring of the different impacts of programmes on women and men.

It is clear that donors operating in South Africa need to make gender mainstreaming more explicit in their bilateral and multilateral programmes and interventions. Gender equality should be included at the start of the policy design process and mainstreamed throughout the whole policy environment and the various phases of the project cycle. Also, not only as guidance for those designing policies and programmes but also to enable both donors and civil society to monitor donors' initiatives around gender equality, there need to be clear frameworks explaining how donors intend to mainstream gender in their programmes and how the impact of their programmes will be measured in terms of gender equality.

As an example of good practice, CIDA has signed an agreement and jointly developed a programme with the South African National Treasury to begin gender mainstreaming within the Treasury itself. This programme will first run as a pilot with the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU) of the International Development Cooperation Directorate of the National Treasury. After an assessment of the programme within the TAU it will be expanded to the whole of the Treasury.

### Gender mainstreaming in SAMDI

The South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI), which provides customer-driven training and organisational development interventions leading to improved public service transformation and service delivery (SAMDI, 2007: 11), was interviewed. In response to criticism expressed in the 2006 Public Service Commission report, SAMDI has developed a new gender programme. Its previous programme had been focused on gender awareness rather than gender mainstreaming, but the new Gender Mainstreaming Programme (GMP), being developed together with DPSA in response to the 2006 critique by the Public Service Commission and scheduled to commence piloting in 2008, focuses more specifically on gender mainstreaming. It has three sub-programmes:

- > a training programme on gender mainstreaming, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and including a module on gender budgeting;
- > professional development of women managers: the candidates have completed the first phases of the Advanced Management Development Programme for Women Managers and are funded by a bilateral agreement with the Flemish government;
- > a trilateral agreement between SAMDI, the Flemish government and the International Labour Organization to fund an online training programme consisting of courses on gender-sensitive service delivery. (SAMDI, 2007: 15)

It is hoped that SAMDI's new programme will assist the government institutions in realising gender equality and mainstreaming in the public service through service delivery.

## 9.6 UNIFEM Southern Africa

UNIFEM Southern Africa was also interviewed for the purposes of this research. Unlike the donors discussed above, UNIFEM Southern Africa does not consider itself as a donor per se, but rather as a strategic partner that provides support through technical assistance and some financial assistance, and through brokering resources, i.e. sourcing assistance from other institutions to assist partners in the region. UNIFEM Southern Africa is included in this research as it is considered a strategic partner in the promotion of gender equality. It has done – and continues to do – considerable work on gender budgeting initiatives in the region.

The key focus of UNIFEM Southern Africa is the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, with a strong emphasis on women's rights in the region. This focus is informed by the global UNIFEM strategy, from which the Southern African office may not deviate.

In addition to this global strategy, UNIFEM has a regional Multi-year Funding Framework. In the period 2004–2007 it has worked on four thematic areas:

- > Peace and security
- > Economic empowerment
- > HIV/AIDS
- > Violence against women

The Multi-year Funding Framework focuses mainly on Angola, Swaziland, Zambia and Mozambique, with some lesser work being conducted in South Africa. UNIFEM Southern Africa

collaborated with GETNET and CASE in gender budgeting training in the region, for instance through the production of *Money Matters: Workshop materials on gender and government budgets*. This partnership resulted in continued work in Zimbabwe (with the Women's Resource Centre), Mozambique (with Mozambican Debt Group) and Zambia (with NGOCC). The UNIFEM interviewee reported that the agency intends to scale up its gender budgeting work in Mozambique with partners and work more closely with the national gender machinery, with GBV and HIV/AIDS as pilot areas.

Since the Paris Declaration, UNIFEM Southern Africa has worked hard to ensure that the Declaration receives priority in the region, creating awareness amongst partners through capacity building. UNIFEM Southern Africa's main focus with the Paris Declaration has been to ensure that it becomes engendered, specifically in the implementation processes. Capacity building was conducted in South Africa, but UNIFEM has done much more such work in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia, using its pilot interventions in these countries to elicit lessons learned for other countries in the region. In South Africa, UNIFEM Southern Africa has partnered the National Treasury on the new aid modalities, assisting in finding ways to implement the new modalities and piloting a results-based management project. But its work with partners in South Africa has not yet moved towards implementation of the five principles of the Declaration: apart from the partnership with National Treasury, it has concentrated more on awareness raising and capacity building.

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## 9.7 NORAD's evaluation of gender in development cooperation

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The challenges related to gender equality and mainstreaming described above are faced by many other institutions. In 2006, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) subcontracted a consultant to undertake a lessons review of evaluations of women and gender equality in development cooperation (Aasen, 2006). This involved examining evaluations done by DFID, EU, the ILO, NORAD, OECD/DAC, SIDA, UNDP and the World Bank. Overall, the review identified significant weaknesses in the institutionalisation of activities, a lack of resources and deficient reporting of results in the field. As regards institutionalisation, the empowerment of women and gender equality has been given low priority and consequently resources to implement policies and strategies have been insufficient. The focus has also shifted as the development priorities change, resulting in unsystematic reporting of results. Decentralisation of resources to embassies or country offices, and the new aid modalities, have diverted attention away from women's empowerment and gender equality issues and posed new challenges for activities related to them. Competing agendas have arisen, and gender equality is 'put on the back burner'. This has resulted in a decline in interest and support for national gender machineries in developing countries and threats of reduction in support for women's organisations.

# 10 New aid modalities – an opportunity for gender advocates

Some of the evaluations reviewed by NORAD, however, considered that new aid modalities could be beneficial to the empowerment of women and gender equality and could present new opportunities for work on gender equality and mainstreaming. For instance, budget support and harmonisation of development cooperation provide opportunities to lift gender equality into central policy and into the finance and planning and sector ministries (Aasen, 2006: 12).

## 10.1 Advantages of the new aid modalities

Donors appear to like new aid modalities. A government official interviewed for this research had been told by a donor that they prefer the new aid modalities, as they give them an easier entry into the policy-development and priority-setting processes of government than modalities such as programme budget support, currently used in South Africa, in which they are not able to influence the policy-making process. As noted above, however, the South African government has effectively taken ownership of this process and demands that donors align their policies to those of the South African government.

The government's revised policy on ODA clearly states its preferences for the types of aid modality applicable and necessary to the South African context. Three aid modalities are applicable: Project support,

SWAp/Programme support and Basket funding. **Project support** is not applicable in a context where donor funding constitutes a large share of the country's public budget, as the resulting multiple projects are difficult to monitor. However, in South Africa, where donor funding is a minimal proportion of our public budget, project support is advisable as there are not too many projects. The **SWAp/Programme** support modality is relevant if there is a need for overall coordination where multiple donors want to fund a programme in a given sector, such as HIV/AIDS. Through this modality, donors can pool their resources together with one or two government agencies implementing and coordinating this programme. **Basket funding** is also advantageous in the South African context as it allows a number of donors to support a common objective jointly and allows the government to simplify and merge the ODA of different donors into one manageable structure (Republic of South Africa, 2007b: 17–18).

A major advantage of these three modalities is that they allow the South African government to monitor and evaluate donor projects, as the government agencies will be the key coordinating agency in this regard. They are also beneficial for CSOs keen on monitoring donors' and government's achievement of their policy commitments. They make it easier to track policy commitments, actual disbursements of funds from donors, and programme status. This is valuable information which is currently not available uniformly for all known donor programmes. But the

value, credibility and usefulness of this information depends on donors and government making it accessible to the public. Currently the Treasury's IDC Directorate has a public website detailing its various donor agencies, but the information there is not always correct and is sometimes contradictory, failing to distinguish, for instance, between aid commitments and disbursements. Information sharing and regular updates are crucial, and CSOs can play a key role in ensuring that both donors and government publish credible, reliable and timely information.

The South African government is in the early stages of adopting the new aid modalities and restructuring its donor systems and operations, so the National Treasury officials interviewed could not say what impact these modalities will have on gender equality. But CSOs should make use of these opportunities to start encouraging both government and donors to think through the gender implications of their policy options critically. The new aid modalities and processes of restructuring of the ODA environment in South Africa present a golden opportunity for civil society to claim a space for its own engagement with these actors and ultimately to develop mechanisms to hold them accountable. In the current ODA environment, this is not possible: very few organisations engage with donors, because the proportion of international funding in the public budget is so small, but rather make government their primary advocacy target. The new processes currently under way also provide an impetus for gender activists to advocate that gender equality remains central to the development agenda of both government and donors. We have seen above that already gender equality and

women's empowerment are being lumped together institutionally with other human rights issues. This will make it difficult for civil society to monitor the efforts and resources committed to the various groups' programmes by the government and donors, and will seriously weaken CSOs' watchdog role in the protection of South Africa's new democracy.

## 10.2 Gender budgeting for donor accountability

The role of gender budget initiatives is of the utmost importance for promoting sustainable democracy. Gender budget analysis in the South African context has only once been applied to the donor community; the focus of most GBA work has been on government programmes and budgets. There are two key contributions that GBA can make towards increasing donor accountability in South Africa:

- > GBA exposes the policy assumptions and choices made in the design of a policy and a programme from a critical gender perspective. This gendered perspective makes policy-makers and implementers aware that their policies and programmes have gendered implications for both women and men. This awareness can lead to the necessary recourse of adjusting the policy and programme to ensure that the gender equality implications are addressed.
- > GBA reveals the processes involved in the design and implementation of the policy and programme. It can reveal whether the processes were participatory or transparent and whether accountability mechanisms

have been created in the policy and programme at all levels.

All the representatives of donors and CSOs interviewed agreed that gender budgeting initiatives are key for the promotion of gender equality and that CSOs should play a role in monitoring development initiatives by both donors and government. Since very few CSOs currently engage in such monitoring, GBIs become even more valuable as a first step in describing and analysing donors' financial and policy commitments to gender equality in South Africa. Before a GBI on donors' commitment to gender equality is undertaken, the lessons outlined above (chapters 4–5) for the WBI and the Idasa WBP should serve as a reminder for the partners of the potential risks and challenges in conducting a GBA. The GBA should also be grounded in the current features of the international aid environment, such the Paris Declaration and countries' progress in implementing its principles.

# 11 South Africa's progress in implementing the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness

In view of the changes in the management of aid brought about by the Paris Declaration, the National Treasury felt it necessary to undertake a baseline study on the harmonisation and alignment of aid modalities for effectiveness in South Africa. Completed in 2006, this provided more accurate benchmarks, realistic and achievable targets for the next five years, and the means to monitor progress towards achieving these targets. The key findings (Smith et al., 2006) are discussed below under the five principles of the Paris Declaration.

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## 11.1 Ownership

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The government of South Africa is taking the lead in the development of country strategy papers and cluster plans, and the National Treasury is commended for the good coordination of ODA through the International Development Cooperation (IDC) Directorate.

Even though the IDC is taking the lead on ODA, very few national and provincial departments are demonstrating ownership of the aid agenda, often relying heavily on donors to guide the development initiative. This issue is particularly prevalent at provincial government level, bearing out the view expressed by the National Treasury and USAID, that donors do not have strong influence on national-level processes, but do exert influence and guidance at provincial level in the design and implementation of ODA interventions.

Donors felt that ODA coordination units at the department level were not given sufficient levels of authority and decision-making power to effectively manage the development activities under their sector. This is exacerbated further by high staff turnover in many departments.

Although South Africa has a strong commitment to national ownership of its development process, there is still a need to strengthen capacity for the management of aid coordination and related systems, especially at department and provincial levels.

Lastly, it was also noted that donor countries' policies can sometimes inhibit efforts to assert national ownership over ODA. However, the overall opinion was that the IDC plays a key role in the national ownership over ODA.

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## 11.2 Alignment

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The largest donors, such as the EU and USAID, tend to use their own financial and fiscal systems when administering ODA. This contradicts the principle of alignment as stated in the Paris Declaration and inhibits progress towards alignment. This is an issue that should be negotiated between the OECD/DAC and the IDC.

Related to the above challenge, donors acknowledged that procedures and regulations at their respective headquarters are not always aligned with those of South Africa, and this can cause delays in disbursements. In turn, this delay in disbursement of funds hampers

government departments' efforts to implement their programmes.

Donors argue that South Africa prefers to outsource certain functions because of limited internal capacity in certain departments. The concern here is that departments are not always in a position to follow up effectively the agreements that they have signed. Moreover, the use of PIUs/PMUs is prevalent, with mixed results.

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## 11.3 Harmonisation

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Although, as noted above, South Africa is in a strong position to negotiate and lead on donors accepting its ODA objectives, thus ensuring relatively close alignment between donor and national priorities, government departments interviewed for this research indicated that reporting requirements to donors are nonetheless onerous and time-consuming. According to one official, these requirements represented 'five per cent of our budget, but ninety per cent of our time'. Reporting mechanisms need to be streamlined and standardised, and this should be the key task of the monitoring and evaluation system.

Donors prefer to use project-based rather than programme-based approaches to aid. The revised ODA policy of South Africa indicates a preference for programme and basket funding modalities, but also for project modalities, although the latter should not be adopted if there are too many projects occurring simultaneously.

Coordination capacities at national, provincial and local government levels are uneven and there is scope for strengthening both the capacity and

competency of donor coordination units and their staff at all levels. The Paris Declaration requires donors and governments to move towards joint programming for implementation, joint country analyses and joint missions. The IDC should be taking the lead on this matter and making optimal use of the National ODA Forum to ensure that donors are harmonising their programmes.

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## 11.4 Managing for results

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Many departments say they are struggling to ensure that ODA is linked to strategic priorities. There appears also to be a general trend towards using aid to ensure outputs but not outcomes: i.e., aid is activity-driven rather than results-driven. The National ODA Forum needs to encourage a gradual shift towards a results-based approach which should be integrated into the monitoring and evaluation system.

Certain departments also have a weak capacity to seek ODA, manage it once they have received it, and subsequently report on its impact. An appropriate remedy to this situation would be a coherent monitoring and evaluation framework at departmental level, but unfortunately this is not in place yet. However the Office of the Presidency is developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for the whole government system.

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## 11.5 Mutual accountability

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The South African parliamentary standing committees have played a significant role in monitoring donors and government.

The annual consultation mechanism and the National ODA Forum are also important vehicles for tracking mutual progress in implementing partnership commitments. In this context, donors have observed that the National Treasury plays a strong role in coordinating donor activity and that this has led to better transparency and accountability for both partners.

## 11.6 Refocusing the Paris Declaration on development and gender equality

In accordance with the Paris Declaration, which also outlines monitoring indicators, the OECD has conducted a survey monitoring countries' progress in implementing the Declaration (OECD, 2006: 345–55). The report reinforces the findings of the National Treasury's 2006 baseline study. Ownership and alignment are quite strong, though there is room for improvement. The report is positive about South Africa's country systems and believes the country has the capacity to coordinate aid flows effectively. However, some donors, such as the EU, remain unable to use the country systems. On harmonisation, progress is reported as modest, as the use of common procedures between donors and the government is limited. The issue of managing results, as noted above, is a major obstacle owing to the lack of a country-level monitoring and evaluation systems.

The primary focus of the Paris Declaration since it was drafted has been on the technical arrangements for improving aid effectiveness rather than on improving

development outcomes in developing countries (Gaynor, 2006). This view was shared by the CIDA interviewees, who believed that the Paris Declaration is a technical instrument rather than a developmental one. They felt strongly that the Declaration needs to start focusing on how to make an impact on gender equality and other development outcomes. The UNIFEM representative pointed out that the Paris Declaration is not gender-sensitive at all and that aid effectiveness will not be achieved unless the gender implications of the Declaration's processes are addressed.

Since 2005, several instruments have been developed and research commissioned to explain how the Paris Declaration can be implemented for aid effectiveness, but now there is a need for the focus to shift towards the linkages between aid effectiveness and improved development outcomes. This is a new area of research, necessary to ensure that aid effectiveness contributes to the socioeconomic changes needed in developing countries. South Africa's IDC can play a key role in this regard and develop good practice lessons for other African countries.

# 12 Possible areas for CSO monitoring of donors

People working in the development sector in South Africa have seen major shifts in the pattern of aid funding. USAID, for example, noted that ten years ago it had a far larger selection of operational programmes than it has currently in South Africa. South Africa is considered a less of a priority country by donors, although they do hold the view that South Africa is key to the development of the rest of the region and Africa as a whole, and plays a crucial role in regional integration and peace and security. The impact of the 'low' priority of South Africa for development aid has had negative impacts on CSOs, in particular women's organisations. A number of relevant CSOs were interviewed for this report.

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## 12.1 The decrease in donor funds to CSOs

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The CGE interviewee for this report, when asked whether her institution had experienced a decrease, stagnation or increase in donor funding, referred also to other gender or women's organisations:

*We are seeing a major crisis in gender organisations. One of the biggest and most established, GETNET [see case study 2 above], effectively no longer operates as an NGO. It only makes certain provisions to the government, and that's a huge loss. There are two more [women's organisations] whom I will not name [as] they are under major funding crises at the moment.*

This interviewee also lamented the loss of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) in South Africa. SIDA was regarded as a major funder to gender

programmes of both government and civil society. When asked the impact of this loss of funding on CSOs, the interviewee said:

*As I said, they are starting to go belly-up, one after the other – which brings me back to the question: what do we do? The national gender policy framework specifically states that there must be strong civil society participation; that comes out of our particular history, our struggle history... [but] there is no strong civil society.*

Another interviewee, a director of the longstanding CSO **Black Sash** – which is not specifically a women's organisation but roughly 60% of whose clients are poor women – shared these concerns. When asked about Black Sash's current funding situation, she replied:

*For the most part... we get an increase from some of our funders... They [the funders] are moving into other parts of Africa, and they are minimising their roles here, or else they're being very strategic...*

Again, there seems to be an exodus of funders to other parts of Africa that they consider more strategic. This interviewee admitted that they had experienced some funding difficulties in the previous year and described the implications thus:

*Well, practical implications last year – tight, tight budgets, tight, tight belts. Very concerned about whether we would have to tap into our reserves. And what it's meant has been being far more strategic about what you are going to engage in. So you can't tackle, for example, all the gender issues. Tackle an area that you're*

*good at and where you can make an excellent impact, and then add on another area – in our case we added credit because we wanted to deal with business and move along that line.*

Another interviewee was the director of the **Rural Women's Movement**, an organisation focusing specifically on women's access to land and protection of their land rights. Asked about the current funding situation in her organisation, she replied that it had lost many major donor partners, such as the Ford Foundation, the reasons given being that they were 'shifting and reprioritising with restructuring'. The impact of this reduction in funds for the Rural Women's Movement has been detrimental:

*The staff is moving away, people whose capacity we have built are now going to government. We are losing important people, which is a loss to the sustained posts within our organisation – we cannot even complete our projects. And in most of the cases, when we go to communities that we have worked with before, they are not even trusting us because... just as they are starting to adapt to you, you pull out as there are no resources.*

For this organisation, which works with a very specific constituency, the consequences of curtailing its work are devastating: the constituency no longer trusts the organisation, since the programmes are not sustainable.

These responses show that women's organisations and CSOs in general are finding it difficult to continue to operate in the current environment, in which donors are no longer prioritising South Africa. It is not clear whether the reduction in funding is due to the new aid modalities, but the interviewees do make it clear that

donors' reprioritisation, which is arguably influenced by the new modalities, has contributed to this situation.

## 12.2 Holding donors accountable

We also asked interviewees from both civil society and government if they thought South African civil society groups should monitor donor activities in order to hold them accountable for meeting their commitments. All the interviewees agreed on this, but from different standpoints. According to the CGE interviewee:

*We would firstly want to see evidence of the process, then we monitor that process for gender equality according to a certain set of indicators, and there would be a number of those indicators: there would be gender budgeting, as [for example] when you are a donor, what percentage of your funding goes to women's and women's organisations, exactly those questions, what percentage goes to your gender work, and that would be an indicator of how serious [you were] about gender equality.*

Another interviewee foresaw some difficulties:

*Yes, I think we should. I think we should hold the donors accountable for all their actions, in terms of their delivery; this is a point I've made to donors a lot. Now donors often want us to answer for how we've delivered on a programme, but they often bring their actual donation to the table six months, eight months into a programme... Now, how are small, particularly small organisations able to [cope with] that? They talk*

*about us developing a civil society, but they don't want to support things like operational costs.*

For these organisations, monitoring donors and holding them accountable is of high priority, but how this should be done is not clear to them. One interviewee indicated that developing indicators to hold donors accountable is the best strategy. As we have seen, the IDC is already engaging with donors, but civil society is not involved. The National Treasury did clarify that it engages informally with civil society on donor coordination, but this engagement has limited feedback to broader civil society groupings and is not a formalised process. This type of process is not useful or sufficient to civil society, as it still cannot hold donors accountable.

The interviewees also felt that a separate forum should be established that brings together representatives of civil society, national government and donor agencies. However, some organisation or institution would need to take the lead and mobilise others to become involved. There is a risk that donor monitoring might be perceived, as gender mainstreaming is, as just another addition to their workload. A good 'buy-in' strategy needs to be developed to ensure that organisations see the importance and relevance of donor monitoring to their existing work.

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## 12.3 Donors' engagement with CSOs in South Africa

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All the donors interviewed indicated that they have well-established relations with civil society groups and hold regular meetings with them on the programmes and interventions in which

they are partners. The CIDA and European Commission interviewees said that in their processes of designing a country strategy framework for South Africa, they consult civil society groups on the issues that need to be reflected in such a framework. But these processes do not seem to provide the space for CSOs to hold donors accountable for their commitments. Added to the informality of the relations between the National Treasury's IDC and CSOs on aid, these responses confirm that CSOs have little or no substantive accountability mechanisms at their disposal to apply to these actors.

The engagement between donors and the government is far more formalised, and thus there are mutual accountability mechanisms in place. But this kind of transparency does not exist in their relations with civil society. It is not that donors and the government are being deliberately secretive about these processes; it is also true that very few CSOs have demanded this transparency. As stated before, CSOs focus their attention rather on government, which is the conduit of developmental change in this country. Yet CSOs need to become aware that donors play a crucial role in the development of South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa, and the policy priorities donors set will impact on CSOs in South Africa and across the region. The fact that the IDC and donors are already engaged in dialogue provides an opportunity for civil society to start demanding to be part of this dialogue, so as to monitor these processes, hold these actors accountable, and be able to report to their own constituents on what is occurring in these processes and the role and influence they can exert internally or externally.

Civil society has been engaged in some lobbying to monitor the actions of donors in South Africa and the region. A good example is **African Monitor**, an independent African body which acts as a catalyst to monitor development funding commitments, delivery and impact on the grass roots, and to bring strong additional African voices to the development agenda. It has started to monitor the delivery of commitments by donors and African governments. It also wants to assess and monitor programme effectiveness at grassroots level in order to advocate for accelerated delivery and programme effectiveness based on evidence from the ground.

CSOs need to start engaging with donors on the donors' own processes and policies. First, CSOs need to find information like that provided by African Monitor. Even though African Monitor's work is in the early stages, the information generated thus far gives CSOs a better understanding of the major challenges and opportunities in the aid development environment. Second, information is meant to be shared between partners. This information could also include experiences and lessons learnt by CSOs that have already started to engage with donors and their policies and programmes. Third, through this information exchange partners can jointly develop strategies of advocacy and lobbying to improve both the broader development outcomes and the processes involved in reaching those outcomes.

### The work of African Monitor

In November 2007, African Monitor launched three key pieces of work:

- > The *Development Support Monitor (DSM)*, which catalogues commitments made by donors and African governments to support development in the continent since 2005. The DSM highlights the progress made by donors on their commitments in various areas such as scaling up ODA, accelerating debt relief, investment, health and education. It also examines African governments' commitments as regards resource allocations for poverty alleviation, education, health, infrastructure, gender equality, aid harmonisation and alignment, and governance. (African Monitor, 2007a)
- > The *Grassroots Focus Index*, which measures the extent to which African governments and development partners prioritise the grass roots in policy, planning, programmes and budget allocations, as well as effectively channelling resources to the grass roots. (African Monitor, 2007b)
- > A *four-country pilot study* investigating the real situation regarding commitments, resource flows and the development support delivery process in Africa at the grassroots level. The study comprehensively tracks donor commitments (aid and debt relief), flows and development support in Chad, Rwanda, Mozambique and Ghana. (African Monitor, 2007c)

These initiatives by African Monitor are ground-breaking examples of aid monitoring carried out not by Northern international NGOs but by Africans themselves. South African and other African civil society groups need to make use of African Monitor's outputs and platform to raise issues concerning their own countries' development progress.

## 12.4 Gender budgeting – an essential accountability mechanism

By this and other means, CSOs need to build their own capacities, and those of their partners, to understand donor policies and processes and critically assess them and their implications for the development of South Africa. CSOs interviewed for this research agreed that gender budget analysis is a critical mechanism for holding donors accountable, but also recognised that their own capacities to take up such work are inadequate because of insufficient financial and human resources. There is therefore a real need to revive the WBI in South Africa at a national level to ensure that GBA is coherently utilised to hold government and donors accountable for their commitments to gender equality. Idasa and CASE have the requisite institutional memory and experience in GBA and could again play a key role leading the WBI, together with partners such as the parliamentary JMCW and African Monitor. It goes without saying that any such initiative would require the commitment of a critical mass of NGOs and other CSOs for impact and sustainability.

South Africa's budget process is recognised internationally as transparent and participatory, offering ready access to information (International Budget Project, 2006). But the skills of NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) to engage with the budget process vary greatly. Idasa's former Budget Information Service (BIS) has conducted several CSO capacity-building initiatives to enhance

the skills of CSOs to engage in the budget processes at national, provincial and local government levels. There is always a danger that NGOs and CBOs might use their enhanced knowledge and skills for a particular campaign but will not use them again or mainstream what they have learnt throughout their programmes. Capacity building on GBA and the budget process therefore needs to be coupled with mechanisms for CSOs to mainstream new skills and knowledge throughout the organisation to ensure that it becomes sustainable. This form of capacity building should not be conducted as a one-off exercise but should be consolidated by follow-up and ongoing support.

For example, Idasa's Economic Governance Programme is currently planning to develop a macroeconomics course for civil society and government officials that will build on the knowledge of the BIS concerning budget analysis, gender budgeting and rights-based budgeting. Additional thematic areas to be included will be trade and aid and non-state actors (e.g. IFIs) in the African context.

Building the capacities of CSOs to understand the budget process and donors' processes is important, but CSOs also need to be aware of, and become involved in, the development of country strategy plans by donors and the government. This is an opportunity for CSOs to ensure that their own views on the country's development are raised with donors and vice versa. The South African government, and in particular IDC officials, do encourage donors to also have consultations with South African CSOs during the development of the country strategy plan. Both the European Commission and CIDA representatives said that they actively consult local CSOs.

This process of consultation should be reciprocal and participatory at all levels and information fed back to the CSOs, who in turn need to share the information with their partners and national platforms. The consultation process should not become a checklist for donors but should give all parties the opportunity for meaningful dialogue on local and regional development that should ultimately inform country strategies and plans.

Just as the capacities of CSOs in South Africa on gender equality and mainstreaming need to be enhanced, so too do the capacities of donors and government officials. Firstly, donors and government officials working in the IDC need to be capacitated on how to engender the Paris Declaration. The IDC officials already have taken the lead around monitoring of donor operations and are becoming proactively involved in the implementation processes of the Declaration. This leadership should be further strengthened as regards gender mainstreaming through donors' assistance in the implementation of the Declaration. Donors and government officials need to shift from their current view of the Declaration as a technical tool to viewing it as an instrument to enhance development outcomes, following UNIFEM's lead. Donors operating in South Africa and National Treasury officials in the IDC can certainly benefit from the initiatives of UNIFEM and the sharing of lessons could be valuable for the South African and African contexts. The National Donor Forum hosted by the Treasury's IDC could be the platform where UNIFEM and other international donors operating in the region could share experiences and lessons in engendering the Paris Declaration. This in turn can contribute to donors' and government's broader

initiatives on gender equality and other developmental outcomes.

GBIs in South Africa have been successful in creating awareness of the gender implications of government programmes (not just the social sector programmes), and involving women parliamentarians through capacity building and information sharing so that MPs can raise women's issues through parliamentary platforms and debates. These outcomes could also be beneficial in strengthening CSOs and other stakeholders' understanding of donor and government operations in development programmes. In the South African context, with the shift from project funding to basket and programme funding modalities, GBI and GBA become important mechanisms at the disposal of CSOs to enable them to understand better the gendered implications of these modalities. Key questions for consideration by CSOs, donors and government would be:

- > Are the new aid modalities gender-sensitive?
- > If not, how can gender-sensitive mechanisms be included into the modalities?
- > How can monitoring and impact mechanisms be included in the new modalities?
- > How can accountability mechanisms be strengthened in the new modalities?

GBI and GBA can play a key role in answering these questions.

# 13 Recommendations

Gender budgeting analysis has contributed to our understanding of the South African government's programmes and how the government advances gender equality and women's empowerment. GBI and GBA can also play a crucial role in understanding donor processes and in monitoring their commitments in terms of gender equality. Through this CSOs can hold donors and government accountable for the policy and funding commitments to gender equality.

- > The former partners of the WBI should revive the gender budgeting initiative, taking into account the past challenges of the WBI and the Idasa WBP to ensure that the next initiative becomes sustainable. A strong partner should be the parliamentary JMCW, and a committed and strong women's organisation should be involved as well.
- > Organisations such as Idasa and African Monitor should play a leading role in building the knowledge of national CSOs on donor processes and coordinating civil society initiatives in monitor donor and government development commitments on gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in the Paris Declaration implementation processes.
- > On the government side, the IDC should formalise its current informal consultation process with CSOs and set up a platform or forum in which to engage in dialogue with CSOs about monitoring donors on gender issues. Such a platform should incorporate accountability mechanisms for both CSOs and IDC.
- > Donors also should strengthen their engagement with South African CSOs on their joint programmes in such a way as to ensure that donors are accountable to CSOs, not just to their own governments and the South African government, on gender equality and mainstreaming. It would be worthwhile for some CSOs, including women's organisations, to be included in the National Donor Forum hosted by the IDC. This would give CSOs first-hand experience of the processes, but it must be ensured that the CSO representatives also feed back information to other CSOs and platforms.
- > A national consultative meeting needs to be held to discuss the findings of this research and to form strategies between donors, the IDC and CSOs on engendering the Paris Declaration. These can then be fed into the process of assessment and update of the Declaration.
- > International NGOs based in Europe and North America should further and strengthen their engagement with international donors on gender-related issues. This should be combined with partnerships with CSOs based in developing countries to ensure that information is shared and that joint advocacy campaigns are developed that target donors operating in developing countries and at donors' headquarters in the North.
- > The sharing of lessons between donors (with involvement from government and CSOs) on their regional and international initiatives towards engendering the Paris Declaration should be increased. UNIFEM Southern Africa's efforts to engender the Declaration in other countries is a useful model. This will enhance efforts to ensure that the Declaration becomes increasingly focused on the

development outcomes of aid and not just its technicalities. This sharing of lessons could also lead to capacity building to enable interested donors and government officials to undertake similar initiatives in South Africa.

- > There is a need for the focus of the Paris Declaration to shift towards the linkages between aid effectiveness and improved development outcomes. Donors and government officials need to shift from their current view of the Paris Declaration as a technical tool to viewing it as an instrument to enhance development outcomes. This would enable gender equality as well as other social and human rights issues to be addressed substantively in the Declaration.
- > Capacity building on GBA and the budget process should be carried out and should be coupled with the development of mechanisms for CSOs to mainstream new skills and knowledge throughout the organisation to ensure that it becomes sustainable. This form of capacity building should not be conducted as a one-off exercise but should be consolidated by follow-up and ongoing support.
- > All government departments, not only those traditionally regarded as the 'gender sectors' (health, education, social welfare and social security), should systematically collect gender-disaggregated data and information to inform their analysis, in recognition that all programmes of government have gender implications and therefore require gender-disaggregated data.
- > All elements of the national gender machinery – the CGE, the OSW and others specified in the National Policy Framework for Women's

Empowerment and Gender Equality – at national and provincial levels, should have adequate financial and human resources to enable them to function effectively and sustainably in the exercise of their constitutional commitments. This includes having staff competent to work on gender mainstreaming in senior, decision-making positions.

### List of interviews conducted

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