

Title: A Call for Political Guidance on Gender Budgeting

Issue No 003 July 2021

WTWG-PFM Reform Process

Summary of Recommendations

1. Ministry of finance to instruct all the government spending agencies to use sex disaggregate data for Planning and Budgeting
2. Need for gender responsive reporting as the basis for monitoring public expenditures.
3. Simplify budget documents to guide citizen, investors, spending agencies and development partners to monitors, direct executions and aligned priorities so as to translate in to effective and efficient service delivery.

Highlights

It has been clearly stated that Budget is the instrument of governing a Country; a process of distributing burdens and rewards; a tool for making choices in socio economic development; punishing and rewarding others through fiscal allocations and appropriations according to the National priorities and policies set out by the government. Gender responsive Budgeting is an approach to budgeting that uses fiscal policies and administration to promote gender equality.

Since independence, South Sudan has been struggling with setting systems and establishing institutions. Now almost ten (10) years as an independent state, the country is yet to find the appropriate approach to handling different aspects of Public Finance Management (PFM). Access to information and specifically knowledge of critical national policies and regulations remain unknown to many ordinary citizens including some who could be considered as educated class who ordinarily would be more informed. This could be attributed to the high rate of illiteracy among South Sudanese.

The concept of Gender Responsive budgeting, transparency, accountability and public

participation in national budget processes is a key prerequisite and a global indicator for realization of effective Public Finance Management and Sustainable Development.

South Sudan National budget is a cyclical process that has its own calendar (financial Year), which starts on 1st July and ends on 30th June of every year. Since independence the country has never successfully passed the national budget within the required timeframe unlike other country in the region. The South Sudan Budget Calendar entails five key stages - Planning and preparation; Submission of the budget proposal before the Council of Ministers; presentation of the proposed budget before the legislature to seek its approval; Budget execution and implementation; Evaluation and audit.

During budget cycle, the role-play by the three arms of government-Executive Legislature and Judiciary are often required to ensure check and balance, transparency and accountability. Therefore, the needs to demonstrate Political Will and high level commitment in implementing gender budgeting as a principle at all stages of the budget process is vital.

Issues Analysis

A budget is a political instrument of governing a country; it is a process of distributing burdens and rewards; it is a tool for making choices: punishing others (reaping them off, and redistributing the loot to others). According to Wildavsky's *Budgeting and Governing* a budget is viewed holistically as a political instrument "when a process involves power, authority, culture, consensus, and conflict it captures a great deal of national political life." Since Budget is an attempt to allocate financial resources through political processes in order to provide common good, reaffirming gender sensitive statements by key political actors such as the Minister of Finance and Planning at the commencement, during and at the point of passing a national budget provides an opportunity to further engender national budget and services provision.

A conducive political and economic context that permit transparency, accessibility, inclusivity of citizen interaction directly with public authorizes throughout the budget cycle has been proved to be the most effective channel of realizing Public Finance Management Reform Process around the globe. For example, Touchton, Sugiyama, and Wampler (2017) studied shows that 5,550 Brazilian municipalities from 2006 to 2013 found a strong and positive relationship between the presence of participatory institutions and improvements in infant mortality therefore, participatory institutions, social programs, and local capacity reinforce one another to improve well-being.

Budgeting and gender budgeting as a total of planning and control mechanism, involves steps of setting short-term objectives, specifying programmes, and expressing them in budgetary form. The aims of such budget planning are plan, track and control spending i.e stay within pre-set limits and does not exceed the available funds, this enables the country to support funding requests for additional funding it may need by justifying its deficits and additional needs and its control mechanisms. Therefore committee in the parliament especially for Gender must examine the impact of existing provisions that have impact on women status and link the budget planning with gender responsive national policies.

Because of the theoretical and practical difficulties in determining the effect of fiscal policies and programs on women and men, and the traditionally weak voice of women in political discussions and government bureaucracies, women's developmental concerns are unlikely to be fully taken into account in national budgeting. Therefore Gender budgeting efforts are intended to commit national budget to weighing the benefits and costs of policies that would promote gender equality, girls' and women's development. However, the important question to answer is how key political actors can demonstrate Political Guidance/Will in the national budget that can be of benefit to women and men, boys and girls, persons with disability and all sectors of the society. Therefore, WTWG-PFM has the following recommendations to offer.

Policy Recommendations

1. **Ministry of finance to instruct all the government-spending agencies to use sex disaggregates data for planning and budgeting.** Since Budget is an attempt to allocate financial resources through political processes in order to provide common good, reaffirming gender sensitive statements by key political actors such as the Minister of Finance and Planning at the commencement, during and at the point of passing national budget will contribute towards realization of gender responsive budgeting.
2. **Need for gender responsive reporting as the basis for monitoring public expenditures.** public revenue is often generated by the country through means that does not discriminate based on gender, therefore utilization of such resources must ensure equality.
3. **Simplify budget documents to guide citizen,** investors, spending agencies and development Partners to monitors, direct executions and aligned priorities so as to translate in to effective and efficient service delivery.

About the Women Technical Working Group on PFM Reform Process (WTWG-PRFEP)

Women's Technical Working Group on Public Finance Management Reform Process (WTWF – PFM-RP) is made up of women from different walks of life brought together under the auspices of SSuDEMOP to identify and analyze various aspects of PFM related issues that affect women and provide recommendations to the relevant policy institutions including PFM - Oversight Committee (OC) and PFM - Technical Committee (TC). The group works alongside Citizen Working Group on Public Finance Management Reform Process (CWG-PFM-RP). It is important to note that work of the group is often aligned with the processes happening at the level of the PFM-OC and PFM-TC. The group was established to; enable women from different sectors and with different technical expertise to work together on PFM related issues of concern to women and the society, set the basis for a more robust and strategic women engagement in the PFM-RP and ultimately engender the PFM-RP in South Sudan.