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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**GENDER BUDGETING IN AFRICA – SOUTH AFRICA,
RWANDA AND UGANDA AS EMERGING BEST
PRACTICE COUNTRIES**

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I. INTRODUCTION

As part of its intervention in capacity building, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) builds capacity to strengthen the implementation of gender equality and women empowerment programs in Africa. One aspect of the Foundation's support is in engendering national budgets. This issue of Findings and Recommendations presents some guideposts from a study conducted by ACBF Knowledge Management Department. Led by the Chair of ACBF Technical Advisory Panel and Network on Professionalization of the Voices of Civil Society and the Private Sector (VOICENET), Dr. Gloria Braxton, the study examines the practice of gender budgeting in Africa, identifies emerging best-practice countries and recommends steps for developing necessary capacity for engendering national budgets on the Continent.

Since the 1990s, gender budgeting has gained growing impetus as a tool for development management. The concept is defined variously. The most widely used definition of gender budgeting however incorporates the need for developing sensitivity in those processes and tools aimed at facilitating an assessment of the gendered impact of government policies and programs. This is not to imply that there are separate budgets for women and men. It simply points to the need to analyze government's mainstream budget according to its impact on women and men, and on different groups, with particular attention being paid to gender relations. Hence, an engendered budget is an effective tool for advancing gender issues and a benchmark against which government may be held accountable for their performances in achieving gender equality in all sectors of society.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to assess the degree of gender-responsiveness of national budgets and the extent to which gender budgeting is a tool for poverty reduction. The study is based on the extent to which governments adhere to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the most comprehensive international instrument that spells out governments' gender obligations. The study responds to the following questions, among others: *Is the government doing what it said it would do when it acceded to CEDAW? To what extent has its accession promoted gender budgeting? Was any plan to launch and guide gender budgeting developed? Was the plan implemented? Were barriers encountered? How were the barriers overcome? What were the lessons learned? Were the constraints and accomplishments documented? Did the plan, activities, and experiences match the stated goals, objectives and activities involved in gender budgeting? Did the government achieve the intended results? Did the policies and programs developed and implemented through gender budgeting lead to enhanced opportunities for women, increased understanding of women's role in society, improved economic growth, and enhanced relations between government and civil society?*

III. ISSUES EXAMINED

The study examines experiences in three countries, namely, Rwanda, South Africa, and Uganda. It assesses the level of gender mainstreaming in policies, programs, and practices, and identifies enabling and innovative approaches and mechanisms for gender responsive budgeting in the countries. The study also identifies legal issues related to gender budgeting by examining constitutional and other governmental policy documents for inclusiveness of gender equality measures and assessed those measures for implementation at the executive, legislative, and judicial levels. Also identified are mechanisms for coalition building. Based on its assessment, the study put forward recommendations for the institutionalization of gender budgeting at country and regional levels. Lastly, the study provides country-level information on skills and knowledge gaps for building capacity to analyze and strengthen gender budgeting practice on the Continent.

IV. MAIN FINDINGS

Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda represent emerging best practice countries where major initiatives are being implemented to institutionalize gender budgeting. Government policies in these countries have increasingly become non-discriminatory and have sought to achieve substantive equality between women and men. In all three countries, there exist formal legal frameworks for gender budgeting, as each national Constitution makes explicit provisions for gender equality. Also, each has national legislative acts and programs aimed at ensuring equality in families, communities, markets and businesses, as well as in the public sector and throughout the operations of the State. In so doing, each has in fact made encouraging progress to live up to the obligations of CEDAW by enforcing special measures and attempting to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct, two of CEDAW's primary principles.

While the three countries are encouraging best practice cases, they also have spots of shortcomings, which need smoothening. For instance, CEDAW obligations are not explicitly linked to gender budgeting policies in the three countries. Also, lack of financial and human resources hamstring program development and implementation. One of the major achievements of the gender budgeting initiatives has been to make gender concerns visible in government expenditures and revenues. In the specific case of Rwanda, gender budgeting became an integral part of a broader strategy by the government to reduce gender inequality through the development process. In Uganda, the aim has been to introduce specific budget lines in the national budget that focus on reducing poverty. In the case of South Africa, the aim has been to mainstream gender throughout government ministries and departments although this has met with little success. Also worthy of note is the observation by the study that none of the three countries has been able to effectively plan for the funding of the implementation of gender sensitive policies and programs, a shortcoming that renders very challenging an assessment of the extent to which gender equality outcomes have been achieved.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CAPACITY BUILDING IMPLICATIONS

The study makes the following recommendations:

- Non-availability of gender-disaggregated data is by far the greatest impediment to undertaking gender budgeting analyses in an objective manner. Gender-disaggregated data provides the means for verifying and measuring the extent to which education, employment, taxation, tariffs, and labor relations, among numerous other policies, social services and programs impact on women due to their different location and priorities in the family and society. Ambiguous information on the differences between men and women stymies formulation and utilization of gender approaches that promote active participation by women in decision-making processes, especially in the rural areas. In this regard, capacity-building interventions should place considerable emphasis on training gender analysts to collect and disaggregate data and to strengthen government's commitment to a policy of promoting disaggregation of data by gender.
- An action plan with timeframes for each of CEDAW's articles is necessary, and special measures must be put in place to ensure the realization of every right enshrined in CEDAW. The Target Action Plan has to take into account the present obstacles to the full enjoyment of rights. The state has to ensure that all backward linkages are taken into consideration.
- Every government department must be encouraged to gather gender-disaggregated data on an ongoing basis. There must be a mechanism, which allows women to report obstacles. The collection of data must be systematized so that transgressions can be penalized. In this regard, capacity-building interventions should stress the development of Action Plans that are specific to the sector or problem to be resolved and aligned with CEDAW obligations.
- Effective gender budgeting requires clarification of roles and responsibilities of actors at national and provincial levels of government on fiscal matters, in order to identify exactly who is responsible for what. It also needs the development of an effective information dissemination strategy and training materials to guide and help transfer knowledge of the budgeting process. The training materials will need to vary across countries since gender budgeting processes differ from country to country. The materials will also need to be specifically tailored to the needs of different stakeholders - government officials, parliamentarians and civil society activists, among others.



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