

## **Gender Analysis of the 2005 Budget-A synopsis**

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### **Introduction**

It has become necessary to deepen the gender analysis of the Government Economic Policy and Annual Budget principally because several years of implementing gender-neutral policies has not led to any significant reduction in the disparity gaps between men and women in Ghana. Access to productive resources and participation in public life have been constrained by limited opportunities and negative cultural practices. Policies have not been able to leverage the deprivations of women in particular because of the male-value driven nature of the policy formulation processes. Absence of gender-sensitive policies means non-discriminatory allocation of resources. In situations where women lack of decision-making powers, their access to development resources thus become further weakened. These considerations form the basis of a gender review of the 2005 budget. A summary of the findings given along the following lines

- a) Analysis of the broad Economic Policy which drives the Budget
- b) Sector Expenditure Analysis-to determine gender-sensitivity
- c) Gender analysis of revenue projections
- d) The Budget as an instrument for promoting Economic and Social Rights
- e) Concluding Remarks

### **The Broad Economic Policies**

The overview of the government's economic policy and budget as indicated in the 2005 Budget makes no reference to gender considerations. There appears to be the same assumption as years past that gender-neutral policies will respond to the needs of the different social groups. This has not happened in previous years and is not likely to happen this year.

The closest reference to intended differential policy incidence is contained in paragraph 29, which indicates that the National Health Insurance Scheme will give affordable access to healthcare particularly the poor and vulnerable. Women are assumed under the poor and vulnerable. This is a broad category for women and children as defined in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).

The second inferred reference relates to support for cocoa and shea nut production in paragraph 39. Again given that women predominate in wild shea nut picking, support to that activity may be deemed as support to this social group.

### **Sector Expenditure Analysis**

This section looks at allocations for the sectors that have direct relationship with the activities of women, especially. It examines allocations for water and sanitation, small scale agriculture, informal sector, education and health.

For Rural water the budget proposes to construct 1,900 new boreholes, rehabilitate 50 existing boreholes, construct 40 new hand dug wells, construct 30 community pipe systems and 40 small town pipe systems as well as 6000 new household places of convenience and 500 institutional places of convenience. All these are aimed at meeting the Millennium Development Goals target of accelerating delivery of sustainable safe water and improved sanitary facilities to rural communities and small towns. The underlying assumption is that it will bring relief to those who use these facilities most-women.

The thrust of the agricultural sector is to improve productivity, profitability, reduce drudgery associated with agriculture through the implementation of policies and interventions. No specific reference is made to supporting women agricultural producers. The policies and interventions are rather expected to attract the youth into farming. Under crop development, 5 new cassava varieties will be multiplied over 80 hectares in 6 primary sites. For Livestock development, Irrigation development, special programmes for Food Security, Agricultural financing, there is no direct reference to supporting the women's groups. We assume that the C20 billion that will be disbursed to at least 500 farmer groups for production, storage, processing and marketing in 8 project districts will reach women's groups as well. While sufficient attention is paid to cocoa in allocations, no allocation is available for shea nut production (which is a policy priority). Government only intends to consider the possibility of the making the Ghana Cocoa Board purchase sheanut as it used to do in the past. Prior to that a Committee will be set up to study the issue and make recommendations.

The Ministry of Education will continue implementation of the Education Sector Programme this year. It is focused at achieving targets for Universal Primary Completion by 2015 and Gender Parity by the current year. These are the drivers for this year's budget. In this direction, school fees and levies for pupils in all public primary schools will be abolished. In lieu of the fees and levies, capitation grants will be paid to all primary school in the country. The school capitation grant introduced and paid for by the government will provide for expanded services as identified in the school Performance Improvement Plan through the provision of C25,000/boy child and C35,000/girl child. This reduces one of the major obstacles to girls' access to education

in Ghana-direct costs. The school feeding programme is laudable (para 506) Special budgetary provisions are needed to meet the other indirect costs of education for girls.

Under Health, the Ministry's budget is to aim at improving access, affordability and efficiency of health delivery. Among the programmes lined up for support under Service Delivery this year, direct references are made to gender concerns in the programmes dealing with Reproductive and Child health and under the High Impact Rapid Delivery programme to reduce Under five and Maternal Mortality and malnutrition. The latter will be evaluated for its scale up possibilities. Since this year also marks the beginning of the implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme, the barriers created high treatment costs will be reduced. The exemption scheme, if implemented properly will improve women's access to health services. The objective of increasing per capita allocation to the most deprived areas is also appropriate. As is the implementation of the CHPS programme in deprived communities

The Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment does not have any programme targeted at the welfare of women, even though it has a department dedicated to social welfare. That responsibility appears to have been ceded to the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. MOWAC has assumed the mandate to enhance the socio-economic status of women and children in the country. The programmes lined up for funding as indicated in paragraph 595 are not far reaching. The Ministry will need to develop a comprehensive programme that will cover both the basic and strategic needs of women. Under Governance, no specific programmes are proposed to increase participation of women in public life. Without clearly state policies on affirmative action, the disparity gap among women and men will remain unbridgeable.

The decomposition of the discretionary expenditure by gender is difficult to undertake due to the aggregate nature of the allocations. The proportion of direct allocation to MOWAC of Total Discretionary Expenditure has dropped from 0.8 per cent to 0.14 per cent. This is far less than the threshold of 5 per cent budget gender-sensitivity index the budgets are international measured with.

### **Gender Analysis and Revenue Projections**

The personal tax reliefs proposed in the budget are intended to cushion the impact of higher petroleum prices on persons with relatively low income levels. This is welcome but it is inaccessible to the majority of women who work principally in the informal sector. Government plans to enhance domestic revenue mobilisation 'without creating excessive tax burden and/or income inequalities'. This is will help increase government's ability to target the poor in the provision of social services. Indirect taxes such as those on petrol, even though targeted at high income earners, will indirectly impact women's economic activities negatively. The incidence of regressive tax forms on the poor will need to be mitigated with more subsidies.

### **The Budget as an Instrument of Women's Rights Assertion**

Public funds are publicly generated and citizens have a claim on these resources. Inequity in the allocation of resources as is present, represents a denial of the rights of the sections of the population. Women make up the bulk of the poor. Resource allocation should be so made as to respond to the special needs of the different social groups. Gender responsive budgets are the best way of reducing the disparities that exist between men and women. Policy makers bear obligations and are challenged to achieve rights-positive outcomes in the raising and spending of public funds.

**Concluding word.**

The 2005 budget has made efforts to respond to the needs of women by allocating resources in a non-discriminatory manner. This may not result in removing the inequities in access to development resources and therefore may not achieve the level of development effectiveness that a gender-aware budget would ordinarily do. It will therefore be useful to gender-disaggregate subsequent budgets in future to allow for proper targeting. That appears to be the only way we can realise the development potential of both women and men.