



PARLIAMENT
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2026 BUDGET

SOCIAL EQUITY CLUSTER

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 BUDGET: SOCIAL EQUITY CLUSTER

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 BUDGET: SOCIAL EQUITY CLUSTER

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1. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2026 BUDGET

For 2026/27, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD) receives an overall budget allocation of R2.24 billion, of which R1.84 billion will be transferred to the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and R111.3 million to the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE). This will leave the Department itself with approximately R288 million for its own operations for 2026/27. Overall allocations are expected to decrease in 2027/28, primarily because of the cessation of allocations to the NYDA for the implementation of the Presidential Employment Initiative – the last allocation will be made during this financial year.

Of the overall budget of R1.2 trillion, a total of **R2.24 billion (0.2%)*** is allocated to the Department for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities. * Excludes direct charges against National Revenue Fund (NRF).

While the allocation to the DWYPD is a dedicated budget for priorities relating to women, youth and persons with disabilities, a number of other departments also have budgets that have an impact on these groups.

The Budget Review notes that in 2026/27, just over R446 billion is allocated to the Social Development function, R283 billion to the Economic Development function, R274 billion to the Peace and Security function and R527 billion to the Learning and Culture function. All these allocations have a direct impact on the lives of women, youth and persons with disabilities. For example, the R54.3 billion spending on the National Student Financial Aid Scheme provides for bursaries for young people to access post-school education, while the extension of the social relief of distress grant and increases to the disability and child support grants provides relief and support for many vulnerable persons. The R551 million allocation to support micro, small and medium enterprise hubs and R134 million to assist 9000 informal traders¹ stands to also benefit businesses initiated by women, youth and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the peace and security function is allocated R848.2 billion over the medium term to combat crime and ensure territorial integrity – this is important to ensure safer communities and fight gender-based violence and femicide.

The 2026 Budget Speech made no specific mention of funding for empowerment and transformative measures for women, youth and persons with disabilities as highlighted in the 2026 State of the Nation Address.

The Cluster considers the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, including the Commission for Gender Equality and the National Youth Development Agency, which receive transfer payments via the Department. An overview of priorities and allocations for the Presidency is also provided. Table 1 shows the 2025/26 main and adjusted appropriations², the 2026/27 main appropriation³ and percentage increases for each Vote as well as the share of total appropriated funds.

Table 1: Departments within the Social Equity Cluster

Vote	Department R million	2025/26 Main Appropriation	2025/26 Adjusted Appropriation	2026 /27 Appropriation	2025/26- 2026/27 ⁴ Percentage Increase/ Decrease	2026/27 Percentage Share of Total Appropriated Funds per Vote
20	Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities	1 020.7	1 361.7	2 243.1	64.7%	0.2%
1	The Presidency	739.1	754.8	808.3	7.1%	0.1%

¹ Budget Review 2026, page 54

² An adjusted appropriation is a modification to a government's main budget, increasing or decreasing funds during a financial year through an [Adjustments Appropriation Bill](#).

³ ENE, 2026

⁴ Based on the adjusted allocations

2. VOTE 20: DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The DWYPD receives R2.24 billion in 2026/27 which is an increase of 64.7% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R1.36 billion, decreasing to R928.9 million in 2027/28 and increasing slightly to R958.6 million in 2028/29.

The DWYPD disburses transfers to the Commission for Gender Equality and the National Youth Development Agency amounting to R348.7 million and R2.9 billion over the MTEF. This leaves the Department with an operational budget of R288 million for 2026/27. This is approximately R48 million (or 20%) more than in 2025/26 when the Department had an operational budget of R239,8 million.

The Vote has five Programmes:

- Administration
- Advocacy and Mainstreaming for the Rights of Women
- Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Coordination
- Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Rights of Youth

2.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS⁵

DWYPD will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Strengthening the coordination of the national response to gender-based violence
- Advancing responsive planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation within Government
- Supporting the empowerment and protecting the rights of women, young people and people with disabilities

2.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The 2026 SONA outlined the following areas pertaining to women, youth and persons with disabilities:

- Youth Unemployment
- Economic Empowerment
- Addressing Gender-based Violence and Femicide (GBVF)
- Improved/extended Social Protection
- Increase employment equity targets of persons with disabilities in the public service to 7% by 2030 and to mandate a 7% preferential procurement target across all Government departments and public entities.

Table 2: SONA⁶ and MTEF priorities for Vote 20 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ⁷
<p>President Ramaphosa highlighted the 2025 classification of GBVF as a national disaster, noting that this allows for better coordinated responses and more impactful interventions to address GBVF.</p> <p>During SONA replies, the President referred to the National</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the coordination of the national response to gender-based violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department is allocated an additional allocation of R135.8 million over the medium term for the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, which is expected to become operational during 2026/27.

⁵ ENE, 2026

⁶ SONA, 2026

⁷ Figures from the ENE

<p>Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide, stating that he awaits the finalisation of the appointments of the Council by Parliament.</p>		<p>This is broken down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026/27: R46.6 million • 2027/28: R48 million • 2028/29: R49.2 million
<p>Survivor-centred support will be improved by ensuring access to shelters, one-stop service centres, mobile and rural outreach and the placement of social workers in police stations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the coordination of the national response to gender-based violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R52.7 million has been allocated over the medium term in the Advocacy and Mainstreaming for the Rights of Women programme. A portion of this budget is allocated to a partnership with the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the Department of Cooperative Governance and the Department of Traditional Affairs. The Department will further support the establishment and capacity-building of gender-based violence and femicide rapid response teams at the district and municipal levels.
<p>The promotion of economic empowerment of women through training, financial support and preferential procurement for women.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Championing the economic empowerment of women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department plans to host 4 seminars per year over the MTEF to promote the economic empowerment, participation and ownership of its constituents in sectors such as agriculture, trade and the green economy. To support these interventions, R27.1 million is allocated over the medium term in the Economic Empowerment of Women subprogramme in the Advocacy and Mainstreaming for the Rights of Women programme.

2.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

Parliament and its relevant committees must consider the following issues:

- Monitor the progress and input made by the National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide once it has been established. More specifically, the focus should be on the value and impact the Council has on addressing matters related to gender-based violence.
- Monitor the partnership between the Department and SALGA, as it relates to supporting the establishment and capacity-building of gender-based violence and femicide rapid response teams at the district and municipal levels. The relevant committees should enquire how much of the Advocacy and Mainstreaming for the Rights of Women programme's budget is set aside for this partnership.
- There has been no notable changes in the budget allocations for the two programmes on youth and persons with disabilities. However, youth related budget allocation, as it relates to job

creation, can be seen in the budget for the National Youth Development Agency (outlined in Section 4). Other budget allocations for persons with disabilities, may be seen across Departments such as Social Development and Education.

- The Department for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities has an operational budget of R18.9 million allocated to the Programme on Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Parliament should focus on how this budget can make a meaningful impact on the rights of persons with disabilities in the country.
- Parliament could also monitor the implementation of programmes and initiatives aimed at the economic empowerment of women, as well as related expenditure.

3. ENTITIES

3.1 COMMISSION FOR GENDER EQUALITY (CGE)

The CGE receives R111.3 million in 2026/27 which is an increase of 14.1% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R97.5 million, increasing to R116.3 million in 2027/28 and R121.1 million in 2028/29. The entity has four Programmes or strategic outcomes:

- Administration
- Gender Equity Legislation
- Gender Rights
- Monitoring and Evaluation

3.1.1 MTEF FOCUS AREAS⁸

The CGE will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Promotion and attainment of gender equality through activities that advance legislation, policies, investigations, monitoring and advocacy.
- Conduct research on gender-based violence and gender inequality and monitor the institutionalisation of gender lenses into policy to eliminate and prevent harassment and discrimination in the workplace.
- Investigate complaints and sanction appropriate remedies on issues that undermine the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- Conduct advocacy and education initiatives through stakeholder engagements and outreach programmes to raise awareness on gender equality.

3.1.2 ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The Commission's MTEF priorities align with SONA 2026 priorities related to gender-based violence and femicide, in particular:

- Mobilising all sectors of society through communication and social mobilisation to challenge harmful attitudes and practices.
- The classification of gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster, allowing for better coordination of responses and intervention efforts.

Table 3: SONA⁹ and MTEF priorities for Vote 20 entity and funds allocated to the priorities

⁸ ENE, 2026

⁹ SONA, 2026

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ¹⁰
NSP on GBVF: Mobilising all sectors of society through communication and social mobilisation to challenge harmful attitudes and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct advocacy and education initiatives through stakeholder engagements and outreach programmes to raise awareness on gender equality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R35.6 million is allocated to the Gender Rights programme/objective for 2026/27.
The classification of gender-based violence and femicide as a national disaster, allowing for better coordination of responses and intervention efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting research on gender-based violence and gender inequality and monitoring the institutionalisation of gender lenses into policy to eliminate and prevent harassment and discrimination in the workplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R10 million has been allocated for the Monitoring and evaluation programme/objective for 2026/27 and a total of R31.4 million across the MTEF.

3.1.3 CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by the Parliament and its relevant committees:

In the report of the Minister of Finance to Parliament, in the 2026 Budget Review, the following is noted:

“The Budget Review and Recommendations Report (BRRR) of the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities requested the National Treasury *reassess and reconsider the funding allocation to the Department as well as the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) to optimally implement their respective mandates*”.¹¹

In response to the above, additional funding has been allocated to the Department to operationalise the National Council on Gender-based Violence and Femicide, however no additional funding has been granted to the CGE. The impact of this on the Commission’s implementation of its mandate must be monitored.

3.2 NATIONAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (NYDA)

The NYDA receives a transfer payment from the Department amounting to R1.84 billion in 2026/27 which is an increase of 79.9% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R1.02 billion, decreasing to R513.5 million in 2027/28 and increasing to R529.5 million in 2028/29. However, according to the 2026 ENE, the NYDA receives a total allocation of R1.94 billion for 2026/27.¹²

The Vote has five Programmes:

- Administration
- Economic development through youth entrepreneurship
- Decent and sustainable employment through jobs programme
- Integrated youth development
- National Youth Service

¹⁰ Figures from the ENE

¹¹ NT, 2026, Budget Review

¹² Tables 20.3 and 20.21 in ENE 2026 Vote 20.

3.2.1 MTEF FOCUS AREAS¹³

The NYDA will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Providing a comprehensive suite of interventions that lead to decent employment, skills development, education and entrepreneurship for young people between the ages of 14 and 35.
- Fostering a mainstreamed, evidence-based, integrated and results-oriented approach to youth development through monitoring and evaluation services, lobbying and advocacy to bring on board key stakeholders to implement development programmes.

3.2.2 ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The 2026 SONA outlined the following areas pertaining to NYDA:

- Youth unemployment remains a national concern, with many young South Africans struggling to find their first job. The President noted that the Presidential Employment Stimulus has already created over 2.5 million opportunities, mainly for women and youth.

The President addressed several matters related to youth, specifically related to skills and job creation. This included reference to the Expanded Public Works Programme and the National Skills Fund. While this has an impact on the lives of young people, it does not directly affect the budget allocated to the NYDA.

Table 4: SONA¹⁴ and MTEF priorities for Vote 20 entity and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ¹⁵
Youth unemployment remains a national concern. The Presidential Employment Stimulus has created over 2.5 million opportunities, mainly for women and youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing a comprehensive suite of interventions that lead to decent employment, skills development, education and entrepreneurship for young people between the ages of 14 and 35.	The NYDA will receive an additional R1.4 billion in 2026/27 for the Presidential youth employment initiative (which is part of the Presidential Employment Stimulus). This will lead to an increase in the number of young people securing paid service opportunities per year, from 40 000 in 2025/26 to 100 000 in 2026/27.

3.2.3 CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by Parliament and its relevant committees:

- During the 2024/25, the NYDA experienced challenges related to its budget. Some challenges include R69.7 million deficit and negative net assets noted in the NYDA's 2024/25 Annual Report. With a R1.4 billion allocation for the Presidential youth employment initiative, the Committee must closely monitor the entity's financial management.
- During the 2026 SONA, the President highlighted the need to prepare young people for the future, noting that Government is driving a 'skills revolution'. He noted that an overhaul of the skills development system will take place to implement a dual training mode that integrates education with practical workplace experience. While the achievement of this commitment does not rest entirely with the NYDA alone, it does affect youth and their access to sustainable job opportunities, thus the NYDA has a role to play. Parliament and its relevant committees should monitor the progress of the skills development system and its impact on job creation for young people.

¹³ ENE, 2026

¹⁴ SONA, 2026

¹⁵ Figures from the ENE

- Parliament should seek clarity on the differing amounts in terms of their budget allocation listed in the 2026 ENE.

4. VOTE 1: THE PRESIDENCY

The Presidency receives R808.3 million in 2026/27 which is an increase of 7.1% compared to the 2025/26 adjusted budget of R754.8 million, increasing to R871.6 million in 2027/28 and R895.9 million in 2028/29. This excludes the salaries for the President and Deputy President which are received as direct charges against the National Revenue Fund.

The Vote has three Programmes:

- Administration
- Executive Support
- Policy and Research Services

4.1. MTEF FOCUS AREAS¹⁶

The Presidency will focus on the following areas over the MTEF:

- Unlocking economic growth
- Enhancing government coordination and efficiency
- Strengthening institutional effectiveness
- Strengthening international engagements to advance South Africa's socio-economic priorities

4.2. ALIGNMENT TO THE 2026 SONA FOCUS AREAS AND MTEF PRIORITIES

The 2026 SONA outlined the following areas that will continue to be prioritised by the Presidency:

- Continuation of Operation Vulindlela, with a focus on transforming the economy, fixing infrastructure and making the electricity/energy, water and logistics sectors more efficient.
- The establishment of a dedicated team in the Presidency to ensure the implementation of a new criminal justice reform initiative that will combat organised crime, corruption and illicit firearms trade.
- Promoting peace, integration and economic development in the SADC region as chair of the SADC for the next 2 years.
- Professionalisation of the public service to build an ethical, capable and developmental state.

Table 5: SONA¹⁷ and MTEF priorities for Vote 1 and funds allocated to the priorities

SONA PRIORITIES	MTEF PRIORITIES	ALLOCATED BUDGET ¹⁸
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of Operation Vulindlela and its components/initiatives • South Africa will continue to pursue multilateral interests at the continental level through its chairing of the South African Development Community (SADC) and its position in the African Union (AU) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking economic growth • Strengthening international engagements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R373.5 million is made available over the medium term under Support services to the President; • R243 million is made available over the medium term under Support services to the Deputy President.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalisation of the public service to build an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully operationalising the Director-General in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expenditure will occur in the Management sub-

¹⁶ ENE, 2026

¹⁷ SONA, 2026

¹⁸ Figures from the ENE

ethical, capable and developmental state	Presidency's role as the head of public administration	programme in the Administration programme – R473.5 million has been allocated to the sub-programme for 2026/27.
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4.3. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR OVERSIGHT

The following issues must be considered by Parliament in relation to priorities under Vote 1:

- Monitor the implementation and expenditure related to Operation Vulindlela's economic reform programme and other related activities/initiatives.
- Monitor the oversight role played by the Presidency in the fight against gender-based violence and femicide through the implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF.
- Receive feedback on participation, decisions and recommendations from bilateral and multi-lateral forums.

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