Progress Report on Implementation of the 8-Principle Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality within the Public Service

Department of Public Service and Administration 2nd Gender Indaba
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Introduction

• The presentation will discuss the DSD’s approach and indeed progress in relation to the principle action plan.

• I will, however frame the discussion within the concept of a department that seeks to be ‘gender responsive’.

• The concluding remarks will raise some issues around the constraints within the current approach that limits our abilities to be gender responsive.
Gender Responsiveness

- The DSD convened a number of gender training sessions with senior managers as we developed our gender policies including our approaches to mainstreaming.
- At these sessions, we felt that we needed to frame our approaches to promoting gender equality within a gender responsive framework.
- This approach suggests that we actively need to assess the extent to which our work and services transform society to promote positive gender outcomes.
- To this extent, our public policies, strategies, and services need to be the focus of all efforts to transform gender relations in society. Our efforts to transform the institution we work in, is to ensure that we have women and men that have the necessary skills and attitudes to be a gender responsive organization in form and content.
- In each of the eight principles, I will therefore seek to outline the extent to which we are gender responsive in our public policies as well as it relates to the internal institutional transformation agenda.
Transformation for Non-Sexism

Aim: Promoting and protecting human dignity and human rights of women, including the rights of women with disabilities

- Formally, A Sexual Harassment Policy has been developed and is being implemented. A Disability Policy that also seeks to protect women with disabilities has been developed and launched.
- On the substantive level, the department has been engaging senior managers in anti-sexism training and discourse as part of its processes to develop gender and gender mainstreaming policies.
- Senior management and the political leadership in the department has demonstrated a tough stance on issues of sexual harassment and has actively engaged staff on issues of sexual harassment and exploitation.
Establishing a Policy Environment

Aim: The full implementation of national policies and implementation guidelines on women’s empowerment and gender equality through the development of departmental and sector specific guidelines and standard operating procedures.

• A National Department of Social Development Women’s Empowerment and Gender Policy is at advance stages of approval.
• A Women’s Strategy has been developed.
Meeting Equity Targets

• The next slide illustrates women representivity in various employment categories in the DSD.
• The staff compliment of DSD is made up of 65% of women
  – 47 % of Senior Mangers are women; and
  – 67% of Professional are women.
• 2.8% of the Workforce constitute employees with disabilities, of which one is a woman in a Director position.
• We are exploring developing a Retention Strategy for Women which will be guided by DPSA frameworks.
Meeting Equity Targets

**Aim:** Ensuring women’s full participation in decision-making through the employment of 50% women at all levels of the SMS.

- There are 47% women in decision making position
- We are exploring developing a Retention Strategy for Women which will be guided by the DPSA documents.
- Trainings on Mentoring and Coaching are in the pipelines for women in Middle Management
Meeting Equity Targets

Total establishment: 688
No of females: 387 (65%)

- Elementary Occupations (75%)
- Clerks (71%)
- Technicians & Associate Professions (64%)
- Professionals (67%)
- Senior Management Service (47%)
Meeting Equity Targets

- The Department is actively recruiting more male Social Workers.
- This is not just about getting an appropriate gender balance but also part of efforts to conscientise society and men that the “caring” professions are not “women's” work. The DSD has been actively engaged in discussions around balancing the notions of the ‘burden of care” which includes child care etc and is traditionally seen as women’s work and the “duty to provide (financially for a family)” which is traditionally seen as the domain and responsibilities of men.
  - Nordic countries that provide some balance in this arena, primarily through making both parents responsible for childcare, has resulted in positive changes to masculinities and also facilitate sustained participation of women in the work place.
- Macro change initiatives like these are more likely to facilitate equitable and positive gender outcomes then pure numbers based equity targets.
Creating and Enabling Environment

• There is a Gender Directorate in place within the department.
• Located within the Chief Directorate responsible for strategy development, it is well located to assist in shaping the key policies and strategies that will impact on women and children in society.
• Influencing our impact on gender relations and positive gender outcomes in society is an important role for the gender machinery in the department and government as a whole.
• We should reflect on this aspect of fostering gender equality in the delivery of public services as well as our attempts to do so within the public service.
Gender Mainstreaming

Aim: Incorporating Gender Perspectives into all work of the Department

• The last point in respect of delivering gender outcomes is my starting point in relation to the aim around gender mainstreaming:
  – The DSD has been very active in ensuring that its policies and their outcomes impact positively on gender equality.
  – Our intentions and proposal around the extension of the Child Support Grant is done on the basis that research has indicated its positive impact on poor children, women and families.
  – The same applies to equalizing access to the state old age pension between men and women. By ensuring that men aged 60 also access the SOAP, we are reducing the financial burden that older women had to carry in households and affecting an overall decrease in poverty levels within households.
Gender Mainstreaming

Through our work in Population and Development we have sought to promote gender equality issues and principles at national and international forums. This includes working with the Department of Local Government and Traditional Affairs around ensuring that gender issues are ‘mainstreamed’ into IDPs.

- The real mainstreaming of gender equality outcomes into our policies and strategies are of vital importance and needs to be subject of broader government scrutiny.
Gender Mainstreaming

• In addition we have done the following:
  – Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines have been developed and approved.
  – Senior Managers have been trained in Gender Mainstreaming and the training is being cascaded to other levels of the Department.
  – Other areas of training that contribute to Gender Mainstreaming are Gender Budgeting and Gender Auditing
Empowerment

Aim: Capacity Development for women’s advancement and gender equality:

- The issue of empowerment is closely interrelated with both the aims around an enabling environment and meeting equity targets. I would like to focus on some of the constraints to real empowerment in the public sector.
- Senior managers in the DSD have looked at some of the following issues that we believe are critical for women’s advancement in the workplace and indeed an environment enabling for women in general:
  - A flexible working environment. We live in a country where women often have to balance being senior managers and being a parent, often as a single parent. We are exploring ways of promoting a more flexible working environment wherein the choice does not have to be prohibitive. That is, where parents and that includes men can meet their responsibilities to their families and particularly children and still deliver on their work responsibilities.
Empowerment

- There are some areas that are within our control. This includes the scheduling of meetings so that parents are not too compromised in terms of their responsibilities to their children (dropping off at schools in the mornings and ensuring that we limit the number of meetings that take place after hours or on week-ends).

- But generally, the employment rules in the public sector does not overtly facilitate a structured approach to a flexible and facilitative workplace. We cannot, for example provide for adequate child care for parents who have limited child care support. By not being able to pay for plane tickets etc. for children or pay for child care at outside meeting venues we do place a significant strain on parents (especially single parents) who may need to travel as part of their jobs. This does impact on their performance and relations within the workplace.
Empowerment

- The same issue prevails in relation to structured child care at the workplace. There are financial and legal impediments to providing child care facilities at our offices. We need guidance from DPSA and Public Works on how to do this so that we can indeed have a more empowering and facilitative work environment.

- A similar impediment is in relation to succession planning. Generally within a talent management framework a manager would be able to identify a woman with potential and develop this person through training and mentoring to take over a specific senior management position. Even the training is at times regarded as unfair in an environment wherein succession planning is actively discouraged.
Empowerment

– In many instances, empowerment is therefore dependent on ‘enlightened’ and flexible managers and through guidance of employment equity principles.

– We do, however try to ensure that women have access to training opportunities and that our senior management core is more representative at all levels.
Providing Adequate Resources

- **Aim:** ensuring adequate human, physical and financial resources for advancing gender equality
  - The points I raised about facilitating positive gender outcomes through policies and service delivery clearly resonates with the issues of budgeting.
  - Much of our Social Security budget and by implication the majority of the Department’s is focused on promoting positive gender outcomes through its impact on women and children.
  - We hope to do more, particularly in the area of preventing gender based violence. We have made bids to Treasury so that we could make more resources available to the gender based violence sector. We believe that if this component of civil society is adequately resourced we would be making a significant impact on reducing the incidence of violence against women and children, as well as promoting a more progressive discourse on masculinities.
Aim: ensuring full responsibility, ownership and reporting on advancing gender equality within the public service.

- We have a comprehensive approach to monitoring and evaluation.
  - We have developed a set of non-financial data that seeks to guide us on how we impact, through our services on issues that advance positive gender outcomes.
  - We will be doing an impact study on the impact of CSG on children.
  - We are also tracking on a continuous basis the services that we provide to maternal orphans.
Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation

- We also monitor through our HR units the extent to which we promote gender equity in our department.
- We have done a department wide Climate Survey that incorporated our progress and lack thereof in relation to advancing gender equality in the department. The findings of this study have highlighted areas around which we need to focus on our internal strategies to promote gender equality.
Concluding Remarks

- I have focused on both our external programmatic impact on promoting gender equality and our internal measures.
- This is because as a department our senior managers have engaged with the 8 principles in our gender training and believe that they provide guidance to promoting better gender outcomes in the workplace. We did, however, in discussions with colleagues from the DPSA and the Presidency identify some of the limitations of current approaches to mainstreaming that is often silent on positive gender outcomes on society through the development of appropriate public policy and service delivery.
- This and other forums like these need to discuss the interrelationship between organisational transformation towards gender responsiveness, equality and progressive gender outcomes through public services. The gender machinery in government needs to be in the forefront of these discussions. This includes a review on approaches that seem to privilege narrow ‘mainstreaming frameworks’ that are too internally focused.