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16 February 2026

Hon Minister Enoch Godongwana, MP

Minister of Finance

By e-mail: mary.marumo@treasury.gov.za

Policy Brief: Input to the National Budget Speech 2026

Introduction

The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) and Law Faculty Trust Chair in Social Justice at Stellenbosch University (SU) cherish the opportunity to comment on the National Budget Speech 2026. It is a commendable step that is aligned to the constitutional ideal of transitioning our country into a society that is founded on democratic values in addition to social justice and fundamental human rights.

This CSJ's submission is rooted in SU's commitment towards academic scholarship and excellence for the good of society, a key result area of which is social justice. This is mindful that social justice progress requires greater constitutional governance undergirded by the transformative ethos of the Constitution, which turns 30 this year.

Transformative Constitutional Governance Grounding

As indicated by the Constitutional Court in *Minister of Finance v van Heerden*¹ striving for a society based on social justice is crucial. In *S v Makwanyane*,² the Constitutional Court affirmed ubuntu as part of the foundational value system of the society sought to be established further positing social justice, which incorporates, fairness, equality and human solidarity, as a dimension of ubuntu. In these and other cases the courts have emphasized the need to mainstream constitutional objectives, particularly regarding achieving equality and improving the quality of life of all citizens while freeing the potential of all, through all governance action.

¹ 2004 (6) sa 121 (cc) para 24

² 1995 (3) sa 391(cc) para 237

Broad Recommendations for the Budget

The CSJ recommends a budget that transcends job-creation and social support but fosters substantive equality in all aspects of life and the economy while freeing the potential of all persons and improving the quality of life of all citizens.

Also recommended is a disaggregated data enabled anticipatory impact assessment of the budget to detect and avoid "stray bullets" whose systemic impact is likely to undermine progress towards substantive equality in all economic and social aspects of society at all levels, possibly using the Social Justice Impact assessment Matrix (SIAM).

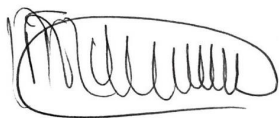
The budget should foster substantive equality, undergirded by human solidarity and capabilities, particularly for the historically deprived, mindful of socio-economic status disadvantages that transcend race, gender and disability.

Specific Recommendation on the SRD Grant

Make good on President Ramaphosa's promise to retain the SRD grant converted into a permanent Basic Income Grant (BIG) and:

1. Delink the BIG from the SRD's COVID-19 restrictions redress foundations and locate it in social protection under section 27 of the Constitution.
2. Increase amount to at least R500 not linked to employment seeking but availability for employment when invited, mindful of social wellbeing.
3. Invest in rebuilding the rural subsistence systems and economies plus same for townships so more people have decent work and access to economic and wealth creation opportunities close to home.
4. Invest in education opportunities for digital world, including adult basic education in terms of section 29 of the Constitution.

Best wishes



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