

## BUDGET VOTE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

I S MFUNDISI

UCDP

This is one department that seeks to ensure that all South Africans, in accordance with the dictates of the constitution, are equal.

The UCDP welcomes the strides made to bring it to even keel after it floundered on the rough seas immediately after establishment, but I hope that it brought to light that talkers are not good doers.

While some women are leading a high life as executives in the corporate world, there are others in the country side that cry out for help as they are left to suffer from hunger, neglect and ill treatment invariably disguised as culture.

The UCDP holds the view that non discrimination and non sexism should not only be preached but also practised. No woman should be coerced into a matrimonial relationship or any relationship for that matter without her consent; we hope the ministry will agitate for the tightening of legislation on this matter so that equal should be equal and some should not be made to be less equal.

Women's issues should not be perceived to be partisan and divisive. To mind comes the funeral of the slain police woman Rasuge. One would have expected women formations across the political landscape to have been advised to attend in their party colours to make a statement to the people out there that on issues such as the callous death she suffered women are together and not have women in the ruling party parading as if they are the only ones who care.

We note and accept that women have been deployed to participate at operational levels in UN and AU peace-keeping missions of the SANDF. We also note the concerted efforts mounted by South Africa to consider gender balance when nominating teams to assist with mediation and /or reconstruction and development in conflict-ridden countries

The UCDP condemns in the strongest possible terms the Ganyesa madness of yesterday that resulted in the death of a woman in labour because protesters had barricaded the road and the ambulance could not get through to take the

woman to a clinic. Discontent about a road should not result in the deaths of two innocent souls. We hope this will be followed up and those responsible be brought to book.

The UCDP calls on the Minister to ensure that Article 3 of the African Union Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality which focuses on the prohibition of recruitment of child soldiers and abuse of girl children as wives and sex slaves in violation of their rights as enshrined in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children is carried out to the letter.

The “Ukuthwala” practice should be abolished as it deprives young girls of their youthfulness. That it is tradition is neither here nor there. People cannot eat their cake and still have it. If people accepted democracy with its concomitant appendages they cannot go back and cling to culture and tradition when it suits them.

We respect the slogan of people living with disability which rings: “Nothing for us without us”. We hope more and more opportunities will be given to these people some of whom are brainy and talented and are an asset to this country.

The likes of Pistorius, Steve Kekana and some honourable members in this house who are Sponono debaters are just simple examples that come to mind.

The UCDP supports the budget vote

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