

Centre for Child Law calls for a more child friendly budget in 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Centre for Child Law (the Centre), calls for a child-friendly budget as a matter of urgency as children's rights, wellbeing and safety are at risk of further erosion in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Centre urges government to promote the prioritization of child related issues in both the national and provincial budgets.

Calls from civil society, for human rights based budgeting are not new, in 2018 the Centre for Child Law joined and [endorsed](#) a multitude of voices from the social justice sector who raised concerns on the deficiencies of the country's budgetary policies towards vulnerable members of society including children. This call remains urgent in light of the Minister of Finance, Mr. Tito Mboweni's tabled [MTBPS 2020](#) which was underwhelming when it came to children's issues.

On 11th of February 2021, President Cyril Ramaphosa signalled the opening of the parliamentary year by delivering the [State of the Nation Address \(SONA\)](#). In his speech, President Ramaphosa highlighted the following overriding priorities for 2021:

- Defeating the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Accelerating economic recovery;
- Implementing economic reforms to create sustainable jobs and drive inclusive growth; as well as
- fighting corruption and strengthening the State.

The SONA gave us an indication of government's priorities for the year ahead and soon to follow will be the Minister of Finance's budget speech which will set out government's planned spending for the new financial year. The Centre notes and accepts the importance of the priorities highlighted by the President and more importantly we note and appreciate that children stand to benefit when these priority issues are addressed. However, the Centre is concerned by the glaring omission of child rights issues in the SONA given how children were and continue to be adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As we all await for the 2021 budget to be announced, the Centre for Child Law took the initiative to highlight certain child rights issues for National Treasury and government in



general to keep in mind when they allocate and discuss funding priorities for the 2021 budget. The Centre's [advocacy brief](#) looks at what the Minister stated in the 2020 MTBPS and ends with what we hope to see in the 2021 national budget scheduled to be announced this week on the 24th of February 2021. The advocacy brief touches on issues pertaining to National Treasury's reprioritisations and how these have or *have the potential to* adversely affect the delivery of children's socio-economic rights. We also express concern over growth in the government wage bill which is largely driven by salary increases and not an increase in the number of staff. We hope that this, and many other budgetary concerns, will be rectified in the 2021 budget.

The Centre for Child Law strongly urges and encourages National Treasury, Parliament as well as Provinces to make the 2021 national and provincial budgets more child friendly. This includes generous funding for children's welfare, for example, prioritising funding for the education needs of children with disabilities; provisioning for scholar transport; PPE for all schools etc. Other pertinent issues to be considered in the development of child friendly budgets include reconsidering reprioritisations that negatively impact school infrastructure spending; reducing the public wage bill as well as reducing wasteful expenditure which often reduces funding for programmes that benefit children.

Please read our advocacy brief [HERE](#)

Ends.

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