

52nd Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic
Development of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

**Side event: "Gender responsive budgeting:
a strategic instrument for economic transformation and
inclusive development in Africa"**

Marrakech, 23 March 2019

Concept Note: Summary

1. Background of the side event

Since its independence, the Kingdom of Morocco has asserted its African identity by placing the continent at the core of its strategic choices. This African vocation has taken on new significance under the reign and enlightened vision of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist Him. It is now embedded in a long-term strategic vision which emphasizes interdependence between African and Moroccan socio-economic growth, in a context of sustained African economic growth.

Africa is currently the second most economically vibrant region with an average GDP growth rate of 5.4% over the last twenty years. By 2050, the African economy will grow tenfold, and a quarter of the world's population will be African.

This raises the question of sustainability of this growth and its impact on human development. For the African model to be sustainable, economic growth must be based on stable and non-volatile economic sectors, a high level of investment and growing domestic demand. This requires the reduction of social and gender inequalities which constrain domestic demand growth and countries' attractiveness, thereby curtailing investment levels. Reducing gender inequalities would increase Sub-Saharan Africa's GDP by 27% by 2025 and would, in the case of Morocco and for unequal access to employment alone, improve per capita income by 46%.

In light of this, African governments have committed to eliminating gender inequalities by ratifying international and continental conventions and implementing domestic legal, political and social reforms.

Despite this commitment, and significant achievements, gender inequalities persist in Africa. Thus, African women score on average 13 points less than men in human development.

More specifically, African women and girls still do not have equal access to basic services: education and health, and employment. The female literacy rate does not exceed 50% in more than 12 sub-Saharan African countries and the average length of schooling for women in Central Africa, for example, does not exceed 4 years¹. The maternal mortality rate is 477 maternal deaths per 100,000 population in sub-Saharan Africa² for a WHO target of less than 70 maternal deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. Lastly, women's access to the formal labor market remains low: 80% of women in sub-Saharan Africa work in

¹ UNESCO Statistics, 2017.

² Sub-Saharan Africa: A Survey of Gender Budgeting Efforts, IMF, 2016.

precarious jobs³. Moreover, 54% of them do not have access to the labor market, including informal ones⁴.

It is therefore essential to put in place effective African public policies to combat inequalities, in particular gender inequalities. These policies must ensure that citizens, especially the most vulnerable, are the primary beneficiaries of economic growth. If they are to be feasible and impactful, sufficient and traceable financial resources must be allocated to these public policies in a context where the efficient implementation of effective public policies to combat inequalities, in particular gender inequalities, is recurrently hampered by a lack of financial resources granted or available and by difficulties in tracing budgets and expenditure.

The implementation of Performance-Based and Gender Responsive Budgeting (PBB) helps overcome these obstacles. As such, it is a key instrument for ensuring the sustainability of the African socio-economic development model.

Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a performance-based budgeting approach that is consistent with the financial principles of efficiency, effectiveness and equity. It aims to combat gender inequalities and discrimination against women through clear public strategies and policies with clear performance indicators and traceable annual budgets. African countries have been among pioneers in the GRB implementation. Indeed, more than 15 African Union member countries have been applying GRB principles in various forms for nearly 20 years.

In Morocco, the commitment to GRB is part of the Kingdom's broader commitment to achieving gender equality and has been successfully championed by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, in partnership with UN Women, since 2012. A number of accomplishments have been made, including the adoption of an Organic Law on the Finance Act in 2015 requiring, from 2018 onwards, that gender be integrated in the definition of objectives and performance indicators related to budget programs, and the creation by the Ministry of the Economy and Finance of a dedicated public body: the Center for Excellence in Gender Responsive Budgeting (CE-BSG). This Center has enabled tangible achievements both in strengthening the implementation of GRB in 28 ministerial departments and in raising the Kingdom's profile in Africa and internationally.

The convening of a side-event on "Gender responsive budgeting: a strategic instrument for achieving economic transformation and inclusive development in Africa" as part of the 52nd Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), is part of the African countries' efforts to ensure that their socio-economic development model is sustainable through the implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting. It draws on African good practices in GRB, particularly those initiated by Morocco over the past 15 years.

2. Overarching objective of the side event

The overarching objective of the side event is to conduct an in-depth, pragmatic reflection on gender budgeting as a strategic instrument for promoting gender equality in the current African development context.

³ Report of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on the State of World Population in 2017.

⁴ ILO, 2016.

3. Detailed program of the side event

3.1. Fundamental principles of gender responsive budgeting

The promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls is a fundamental right enshrined in key regional and international normative frameworks. Several African countries have performed very well on world rankings. These include Rwanda and South Africa, which are respectively ranked 5th and 15th on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index in 2016. Morocco and Tunisia are pioneers in devising and implementing laws and public strategies to further gender equality.

A common feature of these countries is that they have integrated gender inequality reduction as a key objective of their socio-economic planning and public budgeting. An analysis of Moroccan, Tunisian, Rwandan, and South African strategies to combat inequality provides an opportunity to outline a successful African model to address gender inequalities.

These strategies include the following essential factors: (i) inclusion of gender equality as a priority in the process of political transition; (ii) promotion of women's political representation as a prerequisite for combating inequality; (iii) integration of the so-called gender mainstreaming methodological approach into national planning and budgeting.

Morocco, for example, initiated the implementation of GRB on a national scale in 2002 under the leadership of the Ministry of Economy and Finance and with the support of UN Women. Fifteen years after the launch of GRB in Morocco, and thanks to legal reform, strong institutional support and the creation of a dedicated public body, 28 ministerial departments have adopted gender responsive objectives and indicators in their programs aimed at combating gender inequalities.

A review of various African experiences with GRB points to two models. The so-called "institutional" model, illustrated by the Moroccan and Rwandan experiences and the so-called "consultation" model, illustrated by the South African and Tanzanian experiences.

The "institutional" model, illustrated by the Moroccan and Rwandan success stories, is characterized by the following features: (i) political support for GRB by a national institution with expertise and resources; (ii) the adoption of an explicit legal framework for GRB mainstreaming; (iii) gradual involvement of all ministries and territorial authorities in the widespread implementation of GRB. This model is currently the one that has achieved the most tangible results in Africa. It is also the one that poses the most governance and coordination challenges and issues to be detailed during the session. The "consultation" model, illustrated by the South African and Tanzanian or Ugandan experiences, includes the following common points: (i) parliamentary and civil society support; (ii) the development of a pool of experts and data; (iii) effective implementation and tangible impact in some sectors. This "concertation" model poses different challenges: operational, political and governance.

Once these two models have been outlined, it is necessary to analyze to what extent these two major GRB models can be replicated in Africa and thereby identify prerequisites for the widespread implementation of GRB across the continent. Its impact on socio-economic development should also be assessed.

The side event is organized to assess budget gender mainstreaming experiences and their impacts in driving gender responsive and inclusive development policies.

3.2. Specific objectives of the side session

- Analyze GRB experiences in Africa in order to gauge results, successes, challenges and opportunities;
- Explore opportunities to adopt GRB as an innovative public funding model for achieving development priorities in Africa;
- Launch an African exchange platform for the production of knowledge, decision support tools and innovation in GRB and to combat inequalities across Africa.

3.3. Side event agenda

- Achievements, impact and challenges of GRB implementation in Morocco – Mr. Ahmed Berrada, National Director of the Center of Excellence for Gender Responsive Budgeting, Deputy Director of the Budget, Ministry of the Economy and Finance of the Kingdom of Morocco;
- GRB and National Inequality Reduction Strategy - Representative of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of Rwanda;
- Role and impact of African civil society: is institution-building a necessity? - Representative of the Ministry of Planning and Finance of the Republic of Tanzania;
- Theme to be defined for the representative of the Ministry of Finance of Tunisia;
- Challenges and prerequisites for the widespread implementation of GRB in Africa –Ms. Zohra Khan, Governance Policy Advisor, UN Women.

4. Target participants

The side event will be attended by 300 high-level participants, including officials from the Ministries of Finance, Economy, Planning, Trade and Industry, representatives of civil society and the private sector, Central Bank Governors and representatives of United Nations organizations.

5. Date and venue

The side event will be held on **23 March 2019** from 9 to 11 a.m. at the **Palmeraie Golf Palace Hotel** in **Marrakech**, Kingdom of Morocco, on the sidelines of the 52nd Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

6. Contact persons

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