



PRESS STATEMENT:

GHANA CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS PLATFORM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS OBSERVATIONS ON THE 2019 BUDGET STATEMENT

The Ghana Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Platform on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would like to commend government for taking the bold initiative to align the 2019 budget statement to the SDGs. The 2019 budget has specifically linked policy and programme interventions to the 17 SDGs and has also outlined how the various sectoral interventions will contribute to the achievement of the goals.

According to the Minister for Finance: *‘Ghana is the second country (after Mexico) to fully integrate the SDGs framework in the budget to track progress on the SDGs and ensure budget allocations.’*

It is worthy to note that the Ministry of Finance plans to continue producing, on an annual basis, an SDGs budget report to show how the country is tracking the financing of the SDGs. The first report was produced in 2018, and provides a methodology and framework that can help to ensure Ghana’s financial priorities are aligned with essential SDG targets in future budgets.

While we commend government for the innovative approach of integrating the SDGs into the 2019 national budget, we, however, note the following:

- 1. The lack of a policy direction in the 2019 budget statement to enforce inclusivity in compliance with the principle of *leaving no one behind*:**

Even though the 2019 budget statement clearly presents government’s commitment to the SDGs, the budget fails to specifically outline government’s vision for promoting inclusive development, especially for those at risk of marginalisation. The basic principle underlying the implementation of the SDGs is the commitment to leave no one behind. This commitment entails that no goal is considered met unless it benefits all, including **women, children, youth, the elderly and persons with disabilities** who represent the most impoverished, excluded, disadvantaged and discriminated, and are often marginalised in Ghana.

We would like to urge government to develop, as part of its commitment to the SDGs, an ‘inclusivity objective’ that clearly itemizes governments’ vision for *‘leaving no one behind.’*

- 2. Absence of clear timelines for implementation of some programme interventions:**

Some sectoral policies and programme interventions in the 2019 budget aligned to the SDGs have no clear timelines. The CSOs Platform has identified more than 20 of such interventions without clear timelines. For example, on paragraph 738, the budget indicates that *‘The Ministry of Sanitation and Water Resources through the Community Water and Sanitation Agency will construct nine water systems each in the Northern and*



Central Regions, five in Brong-Ahafo Region and two in the Upper West Region. In addition, the Agency will drill 250 boreholes in the Brong-Ahafo Region and 750 nationwide. Furthermore, the Ministry will construct 12 fully reticulated small town pipe systems and six limited mechanized systems in the Volta Region.'

The absence of timelines poses a great challenge to monitoring progress toward attainment of the SDGs targets, which are time bound. It also raises concerns in regard to consistency; while some interventions clearly indicate that they will be implemented in 2019, others do not.

3. **Failure of the 2019 budget to adequately address specific SDGs targets:**

We have also observed that sector specific interventions in the budget do not adequately address the SDGs targets. For example, we note that in the health sector, the budget pays little attention to specific issues of maternal mortality, sexual and reproductive health services, malaria, HIV/AIDs, and non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

According to the SDGs baseline report, the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has been falling, but still remains high. Between 1995 and 2015, the MMR fell from 532 to 319 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births. The 2019 budget does not specify how government aims to address the high maternal mortality rate to achieve the SDG 3 target of less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births. Additionally, the budget does not address the human resource needs of the sector as per SDG 3c, which *'enjoins government to substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce...'*

We would like to urge government to specifically show in subsequent budgets the progress markers and benchmarks toward meeting the various targets of the SDGs.

We would like to urge government to take another look at the inputs made by the CSO Platform, in particular reference to SDGs 3, 6 and 16, as well as inputs from the youth, which were not captured.

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