



INFLUENCING FOR CHANGE: INTEGRATING WOMEN'S VOICE IN INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC FORUM ON THE NATIONAL BUDGET

**THEME: PROMOTING INCLUSIVE AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGET PRIORITIES
THROUGH CITIZENS' ENGAGEMENT**

CONCEPT NOTE

INTRODUCTION

Ghana has made important commitments towards promoting gender equality and advancing the rights of women and girls through national policies, legislative frameworks, and international commitments. These include the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the African Union Agenda 2063. Over the years, progress has been made in areas such as girls' education, women's participation in economic activities, and the establishment of institutional mechanisms to promote gender equality. However, significant structural barriers continue to constrain women's full participation and enjoyment of their rights.

Women and girls continue to experience inequalities in access to economic opportunities, productive resources, social protection, decision-making spaces, and essential services. These inequalities are further reinforced by persistent challenges such as limited access to finance, unequal participation in the labour market, the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, and insufficient investments in systems that support women's empowerment and wellbeing.

As part of its continued commitment to advancing women's rights in Ghana, the Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) is partnering with Plan International Ghana to implement the Renewed Women's Voice and Leadership (RWVL) Project. The project is being funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

The RWVL Project seeks to strengthen the organisational sustainability, influence and collective power of Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), Youth-Led Organisations (YLOs) and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in Ghana particularly those representing marginalised groups.

NETRIGHT has over the years championed advocacy for gender-responsive policies, programmes, and budgets that promote women's economic justice, equality, and empowerment. Through research, policy engagement, capacity strengthening, and movement building, NETRIGHT has contributed to strengthening conversations around gender-responsive budgeting and the need for greater accountability in public finance and resource allocation.



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BACKGROUND

Despite Ghana's progress in promoting gender equality, women continue to face persistent inequalities across social, economic, and political spheres. Women remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making spaces, including Parliament and local governance structures. They also continue to experience unequal access to productive resources, decent employment opportunities, financial services, and social protection mechanisms.

Women's economic participation is also shaped by the unequal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work. The heavy responsibility of unpaid care often limits women's ability to engage in paid employment, entrepreneurship, education, and public leadership. Addressing these inequalities requires deliberate investments and policy measures that recognise and respond to women's lived realities.

NETRIGHT has undertaken extensive work on gender-responsive budgeting and budget advocacy, recognising the importance of ensuring that national resources contribute to reducing gender inequalities. Through its budget analysis initiatives, NETRIGHT has reviewed national budget statements from a gender and social inclusion perspective, examining government priorities, allocations, and interventions across key sectors.

Although the 2026 National Budget demonstrates government's commitment to inclusive growth and women's economic empowerment, significant gaps remain in translating these commitments into targeted interventions for women and other structurally excluded groups. For instance, while the Feed Ghana Programme outlines several interventions to modernise agriculture, it does not include gender-specific targets for women farmers or provide sufficient gender-disaggregated data to assess whether women are benefiting equitably from these interventions.

NETRIGHT's 2026 national budget analysis emphasises the importance of moving beyond broad commitments to gender equality towards concrete budget allocations, measurable interventions, and accountability mechanisms that respond to the priorities of women and other marginalised groups. The analysis also reinforces the importance of citizen engagement in budget processes. When women, communities, and civil society actors are able to articulate their priorities and influence policy discussions, national budgets are more likely to respond to the needs of diverse groups within society.

The public forum on the 2027 National Budget will build on NETRIGHT's existing advocacy efforts by creating a space for citizens and stakeholders to identify priority areas that require attention in the 2027 national budget. The forum will contribute to generating evidence-based recommendations to support NETRIGHT's engagement with policymakers and relevant actors during the budget preparation process.

RATIONALE

Meaningful citizen participation is central to accountable and democratic governance. However, women and marginalised groups often have limited opportunities to directly influence national policy and budget decisions, despite being significantly affected by government choices on resource allocation and public investment.

The preparation of the 2027 National Budget presents an opportunity to strengthen citizen engagement and advocate for investments that address gender inequalities and promote women's empowerment.

The forum will provide a platform for citizens, particularly women and marginalised groups, to share their priorities, concerns, and expectations regarding government revenue, spending and investments. It will provide an opportunity to ensure that citizens' voices inform budget advocacy efforts and contribute to shaping a national budget that is more responsive to the needs and realities of women, girls, and vulnerable populations.

The outcomes of the forum will inform NETRIGHT's advocacy and policy engagement efforts, ensuring that citizens' priorities are reflected in national budget preparation processes.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the forum is to create a platform for citizens particularly women and socially excluded groups and other critical stakeholders to influence the 2027 National Budget through a gender-responsive and inclusive approach.

The specific objectives are to:

- Provide a platform for women, marginalised groups and the public in general to articulate their priorities and expectations for the 2027 National Budget.
- Share findings and recommendations of NETRIGHT's 2026 National Budget Gender Analysis Report and budget advocacy work.
- Facilitate dialogue between civil society actors, policymakers, and other stakeholders on priority areas requiring government's urgent attention.
- Generate evidence-based recommendations to inform NETRIGHT's engagement with government and other stakeholders during the 2027 budget cycle.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The forum is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Citizens' priorities and recommendations for the 2027 National Budget documented and used to inform advocacy interventions.
- Strengthened collaboration between women's rights organisations, civil society actors, policymakers, and other stakeholders on budget advocacy.
- Increased visibility of gender equality and women's rights issues within national budget discussions.
- Enhanced evidence-based advocacy for public revenue and spending and policies that respond to the needs of women, girls, and marginalised groups.

Participation

The forum is expected to bring together 100 participants, including women's rights organisations (WROs), civil society organisations (CSOs), youth-led organisations (YLOs), government officials from relevant ministries, departments, and agencies, development partners, researchers, academics, and policy experts and the media.

Methodology

The forum will adopt a participatory approach, combining presentations and interactive plenary sessions.

Date and Venue

The forum is scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 8th September 2026 at the British Council, Accra.