



# REPORT ON THE SDG 5.C.1 INDICATOR

“PROPORTION OF COUNTRIES WITH SYSTEMS TO TRACK  
AND MAKE PUBLIC ALLOCATIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY  
AND WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT”

# SERBIA



**INDICATOR 5C.1**  
**SDG**  
**COUNTRY REPORT FOR SERBIA**

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**CONTENT**

**Introduction**.....3

**Methodology** .....3

**Chapter 1. The commitments to gender equality by identifying adequate policies, programs and resources or budgets** .....4

**Chapter 2. The existence of mechanisms to monitor the allocation of resources according to these policy objectives** .....5

**Chapter 3. The existence of mechanisms to make resource allocation publicly available to increase accountability.**.....10

**Conclusions and the score overview**.....10

**Recommendations**.....12

## Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as Goal 5 (SDG 5), defines: achieving full gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls and commits to a “significant increase in investment to close the gender gap”. The costs and available resources needed for gender equality are key to the implementation and achievement of SDG 5 and all gender goals within other goals.

Monitoring the allocation of resources for gender equality and their availability is an important step in assessing progress towards meeting these goals. Therefore, the indicator 5.c.1. - "The proportion of countries that have systems for monitoring and allocating public resources for gender equality, directly assesses the transition of countries to gender responsive budgeting, which determines the entry point for a globally unique methodology for gender responsive budgeting.

This indicator measures three important components of a gender-responsive public finance system:

- (i) a commitment to gender equality by identifying adequate policies, programs and resources or budgets;
- (ii) the existence of mechanisms to monitor the allocation of resources according to these policy objectives;
- (iii) the existence of mechanisms to make resource allocation publicly available to increase accountability.

The main limitation of the indicator is that it is process-oriented, not results-oriented. Unfortunately, the indicator does not provide data on the quantity, quality or adequacy of the allocated resource allocations. As such 5 c.1. the indicator is "an indicator of the characteristics of the fiscal system. It is not an indicator of the amount of finances allocated for gender equality and women's empowerment" (D. Elson).

## Methodology

As part of the Gender Budget Watchdog Network project, funded by the Austrian Development Agency and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the status of the public finance system in 2020 was assessed in seven countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Herzegovina, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and the Republic of Moldova. The assessment was prepared by partner organizations in the project: Center for Research and Management of Public Policies (Macedonia), Kosovo Womens' Network (Kosovo \*), Gender Knowledge Hub (Serbia), Gender Alliance for Development (Albania), Women's Action (Montenegro), Center for the Promotion of Civil Society (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Kingstone (Moldova).

According to the methodology, the system should be run by the Ministry of Finance in cooperation with the sectoral ministries and the National Women's Machinery, and overseen by an appropriate body such as parliament or public auditors. The comparison in this report is made on the basis of data collected for fiscal 2019 in the target countries assessing the following 5 aspects: (i) the institutional framework for the GRB; (ii) gender equality in budget planning; (iii) gender equality in budget adoption; (iv) gender equality in budget execution; and (c) gender equality in budget control. Assessment fully based on the Methodological Guide for SDG Indicator 5.c.1.

Scoring according to the methodology of indicators is structured as a "scale" by classifying countries into one of three categories: 'fully eligible', 'access to requirements' and 'non-eligible'. The use of scoring on a scale was recommended at the Expert Group Meeting (March 2017) to encourage countries to improve their monitoring systems and to show progress over time.

This is a report for Serbia, which is an integral part of the comparative regional report for the Western Balkans and Moldova.

## Chapter 1. The commitments to gender equality by identifying adequate policies, programs and resources or budgets

In Serbia, gender equality and anti-discrimination are guaranteed by the Constitution (Article 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia), which guarantees the implementation of equal opportunities policies. In Serbia, there is the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination adopted in 2010 and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, as an independent regulatory body, has been established by the same Law. The Law on Gender Equality includes provisions related to the equality of women and men in various fields. Among other things, the law defines the obligation to keep gender-sensitive statistics, the participation of both sexes in policy and decision-making, the obligation of local governments to establish machineries for gender equality, equality at work and employment, in family and social life.

Serbia has ratified key international treaties and conventions related to women's rights and status and gender equality (CEDAW, other UN documents, Council of Europe documents, etc.).

The key and umbrella national policy in the field of gender equality is the National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period 2016-2020, which contains 3 general goals, including the introduction of gender responsive budgeting and the consolidation of all policies, at all levels.

Other sectoral policies are not consistently engendered, but most sectoral policies include measures related to gender equality and the advancement of women, such as the Entrepreneurship Support Strategy, the Youth Strategy, the National Employment Action Plans and others. However, for now there is no single overview of gender responsive policies or goals of gender equality within different sectoral policies.

Having in mind the obligations defined by the Law on Budget System, as well as changes in the system of policy planning (including the methodology of impact assessment), we can expect that in the coming period the number of specific sectoral goals in the field of gender equality will be higher.

Civil society organizations can advocate that the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, as a national mechanism, monitors and publishes an updated list of documents and gender goals in various areas.

Public finance reform, of which gender-responsive budgeting is a part, generally aims to strengthen the link between policy objectives and the budget.

The current approach in the introduction of GRB aims to increase the amount aimed at achieving goals in the field of gender equality and strengthen the gender perspective within all budget programs and sectoral policies and activities of budget users, as well as "allocation efficiency which means allocating budget funds to improve gender equality" as defined in Article 4 of the Law on Budget System. The same Law defines the GRB as a restructuring of revenues and expenditures with the aim of contributing to

gender equality. GRB in Serbia is based on linking the competencies of budget users, sectoral policy priorities and gender agenda priorities. As the number of beneficiaries and programs covered by the introduction of GRB grows (in accordance with the plan of gradual introduction which increases the number of those who are obliged to apply GRB every year), the number of goals and the amount of funds also grows. These programs are certainly linked to global and national goals in the field of gender equality.

In the budget for 2020, GRB was introduced by 41 out of 47 budget users at the state level, through 66 programs, 83 program activities and 21 projects, i.e. 86 GRB goals and 232 gender indicators. At the provincial level, all 25 budget users covered by the plan implemented the GRB through 41 programs, 70 program activities, 116 objectives and 288 indicators.

For 2018, at the provincial level, it was calculated that a total of RSD 8,950,000,000.00 was planned for the programs in which the GRB was applied, and RSD 8,077,000,000.00 was executed. However, these are amounts for all programs as a whole, in which there are other activities. Therefore, it is necessary to work on software improvements and monetary reporting on the application of GRB.

What is missing is a more systematic budgeting of the implementation of the National Strategy itself. According to the Evaluation of the Implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2018, there is no clear link between strategic priorities in the field of gender equality in line ministries and activities and measures from the NAP and gender responsive budget programs in line ministries. Therefore, it has not been calculated, nor is it possible to calculate how much funds have been allocated / spent on the implementation of the key national policy in the field of gender equality.

It is necessary to estimate the costs of actions during the adoption of the next NAP and to connect them with the GRB process at the national level. In addition to improving the NAP implementation process, this can also contribute to the results of the introduction of gender responsive budgeting, as priorities at the level of line ministries will be defined.

Significant funds are allocated for contributing to gender equality, but the exact amounts as well as whether they are sufficient to achieve the objectives the results cannot be estimated. If this assessment is to be possible, it is necessary to more systematically coordinate the implementation of the National Strategy and budget the National Action Plan, in accordance with the priorities and capabilities of the actors who can / should contribute to these activities. The Law on Budget System, Article 79, regulates the rules and obligations for reporting on budget execution. Semi-annual and annual reports must include data on progress / setbacks in objectives by specific indicators in the program, program activities and projects, which includes GRB objectives and indicators. Deviation from the objectives must be justified, and in Article 61, it is defined that the difference between the planned and executed budget can amount to a maximum of 10%. As GRB is very strongly involved in the budget planning phase, it thus enters into mandatory execution in accordance with the plan and reporting on budget programs. In December 2016, the adopted amendments to the Law on Budget System introduced the obligation to report on the budget in accordance with the program structure, including the GRB. Pilot reporting according to this methodology was for the 2017 budget. The report on budget execution from 2018 was published in 2019, and the report for 2019 is being prepared.

## Chapter 2. The existence of mechanisms to monitor the allocation of resources according to these policy objectives

By March 31 of each year, the Ministry of Finance prepares a Plan for the gradual introduction of the GRB, which determines the budget users who are obliged to apply the GRB in the budget for the next year. The same plan is obliged to be prepared by the Provincial Secretariat for Finance and local departments for budget and finance.

Based on the Plan, the Government of RS, i.e. AP Vojvodina, i.e. local self-government clearly define the programs in which the GRB will be applied. However, there is no statement on the contribution or impact of the budget as a whole on gender equality, nor the priority for which the funds are committed. An overview of budget targets involving GRB is provided in the Annual Progress Report prepared by UN Women for the current and previous year, respectively.

For example, during the discussion on the draft budget for 2019 in the National Assembly, there were no elements related to gender-responsive goals or the contribution of the budget to achieving gender equality / improving the position of women, neither by the Minister, nor by MPs. According to transcripts available on the Open Parliament website, gender, gender equality or gender responsive budgeting were not mentioned by ministers or members of the Assembly during discussions on budget adoption. There were no amendments to the Budget Law for 2019 or discussions in the working bodies before the adoption on the budget.

However, the involvement of members of parliament at all levels in discussions on budget adoption and reporting could be improved in general, and in particular from the perspective of the introduction of the GRB. Clearly defined statements on the distribution of funds for gender equality and a summary of the GRB of progress should be available to members of parliament and local and provincial assemblies, but also to citizens.

Along with the annual plan for the introduction of GRB, the Ministry of Finance is also preparing Guidelines for the introduction of gender responsive budgeting, which are submitted to direct budget users and published on the website of the Ministry of Finance.

This document provides clear guidelines for the preparation of gender responsive budget programs and defines three possible ways to introduce the GRB:

1. gender mainstreaming in programs;
2. special measures or affirmative action;
3. regular program activities, where indicators are sorted by gender.

The same instructions stipulate that gender responsive budget programs must include: at least one gender responsive budget goal that clearly contributes to the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of gender stereotypes and the definition of at least one gender responsive program activity in the relevant program. In addition, the Guidelines emphasize the mandatory classification by all data / indicators of the budget program, which refer to persons (persons) by gender.

Each year, the number of gender responsive budget programs need to be increased until it is included in all budget programs and related activities and projects. These guidelines are part of the Annual GRB Plan adopted by the Ministry of Finance at the state level, the Provincial Secretariat for Finance and the local finance departments. In addition, between April and July, when the preparation of the budget

Gender Budget Watchdog Network in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of Moldova

according to the annual GRB plan begins, budget users are provided with technical support for the preparation of the GRB proposal provided by UN Women.

In the Law on Budget System (2015), GRB is defined as the application of gender analysis to the budget. This means that within each budget program, gender issues and priorities are defined, i.e. the gender gap, which needs to be closed through interventions planned within a certain program. That is, the impact on gender equality is assessed and goals are defined so as to ensure the contribution to gender equality. However, in practice, this approach still does not work flawlessly, which is to be expected given the complexity of the system and actors. The biggest challenge is the formulation of key gender issues within the program, in areas where sectoral gender analysis is not available and the lack of expertise within the system that would enable gender analysis within the "regular procedure" of budget preparation and adoption.

That is why through info sessions and various trainings, support is provided to budget users for the introduction of GRB, as well as constant capacity building and support for conducting gender analyzes in different sectors or at the level of budget users. Some of the conducted gender analyzes are precisely budgeted in the programs of budget users, such as the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance, the Public Procurement Directorate, the Ministry of Construction, Infrastructure and Transport.

However, there is a lack of internal procedures and capacities for ex ante gender analysis that would be integrated into the policy-making process, but also the process of annual budget assessment or fiscal strategy on a biennial or three-year basis.

Amendments to the Law on the Planning System of the Republic of Serbia, adopted in 2018, can contribute to the mandatory ex-ante impact assessment (in Article 31) while the gender ex - ante analysis is not mentioned in this Act. In February 2018, the Decree on the methodology of public policy management, analysis of the effects of public policies and regulations and the content of individual public policy documents was adopted. Impact assessment is defined in Article 27 of this Decree and includes "social impact assessment with special attention to certain categories of people, especially vulnerable groups and with special reference to the impact on gender equality". It was also emphasized that the gender impact assessment should include an assessment of the impacts of the proposed policies on gender equality, especially on the underrepresented sex. Sectors in which gender impact assessment is particularly important are also defined. These are the sectors of competitiveness, urbanism, spatial planning and construction, as well as areas that have a significant impact on the population. Article 37 of this Decree states that performance indicators must be gender responsive and disaggregated by gender. Article 55 states that measures analysis reports should also include the impact of proposed policies and measures on gender equality.

As the Regulation was adopted in 2018 for policies and programs in the 2019 budget, an impact assessment under this Regulation has not been conducted. As stated, the regulation refers to policies and programs whose financing is planned from the budget, and includes the impact on the budget, but does not include the analysis of the impact of the budget as a whole or areas defined as priority for financing in the Fiscal Strategy.

By the way, according to the Law on Gender Equality from 2009, the role of mechanisms for gender equality (at all levels) is to analyze and evaluate policies from a gender perspective. In practice, especially



at the local level, procedures and capacities are lacking and gender analysis is not systematically applied, nor is the role of gender machineries in GRB process been defined. The role of gender mechanisms in social impact assessment - ex ante analysis - must be strengthened as well as the capacities of all involved actors. The draft of the new Law on Gender Equality includes provisions that strengthen the role of mechanisms for gender equality, but the Bill still did not enter the parliamentary procedure years after its drafting, and intensive advocacy campaigns for its adoption.

According to Article 40 of the Law on Gender Equality, "statistical data collected, recorded and processed at the level of the Republic of Serbia, autonomous provinces and local self-government units, as well as in institutions and organizations exercising public authority, public enterprises and companies, must be expressed disaggregated by sex. The statistical data referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article are an integral part of the statistical information system of the Republic of Serbia and are available to the public, in accordance with the law ", although in practice this is still a challenge and is not fully implemented. For example, after numerous requests and initiatives, data from the Business Registers Agency on entrepreneurship are still not available by gender or data in the statistical reports of the Republic Pension and Disability Insurance Fund.

The Republic Office for Statistics in its periodical reports "Men and Women in Serbia" presents gender statistics in various fields (health, education, social welfare, judiciary, employment, earnings and pensions, spending time, decision-making, and so on). The ROS is also continuously improving the availability of data disaggregated by gender, monitoring of SDG indicators, and since 2016, Serbia has also prepared two reports of the Gender Equality Index.

Also, the number of gender analyzes and research on various aspects of the position of women has increased, as well as reports on the status of women's human rights and CEDAW reports.

Gender-disaggregated data are not used consistently in policy making, neither at all levels (local, national and provincial), nor in all sectors. There are also examples that in the analysis of the situation gender disaggregated data are in place and gender aspects are elaborated, but the measures and objectives lacked articulation that would correspond to the identified gender gaps and causes of inequality.

In that part, but also in other aspects, there is a lack of supervision over the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality, which should have been eliminated by adopting a new one. Ongoing requests from CSOs for data and reports and policies that would be gender sensitive and include gender disaggregated data can contribute to improving records and their use in public policies, and it is therefore important that other CSOs working and advocate on evidence based policy development also apply the gender responsive approach in their exercise and actions.

Defining gender-responsive indicators in regular program activities and the obligation for all indicators related to people to be disaggregated by gender is an integral part of the introduction of the GRB in accordance with the Law on Budget System and Guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Finance. However, in practice it is still difficult to always collect data for and there are indicators that are not formulated in a SMART manner, and reporting at the level of program outcomes has not yet been fully implemented, primarily due to the complexity of the process of changing institutional practices and the transition from linear to program budgeting. In addition, data on final beneficiaries of budget funds are

rarely available and this system certainly needs to be improved, through constant pressure on institutions to submit data of public importance, if not in other ways.

In parallel with the reform of public finances, there is a reform of public policy management, which is reflected in the development of the legal framework, institutions and procedures (Republic Secretariat for Public Policies, Law on Planning System, etc.)

Ex-post analysis of public policies is defined in Article 40 of the Law on Planning System: as an evaluation of the impact of public policies, i.e. an assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of public policies.

As previously mentioned in section in the Regulation on Public Policy Management Methodology, gender and vulnerable groups are highlighted as significant categories in ex-ante impact assessments. However, gender impact assessment is not integrated comprehensively and consistently throughout the methodology meaning all steps that it requires. The application of this methodology has not yet taken root in practice, nor is it related to reporting on budget execution. Therefore, it cannot be said that key programs and policies are currently subject to ex post gender impact assessment. As gender aspects are only one part of the whole methodology, we do not know how informative these analyzes will be in the domain of the impact of policies on gender equality and how much space for in-depth analysis within the application of the methodology there will be.

Civil society can advocate for the implementation of Article 40 of the Law on Planning System, which states that monitoring the implementation and impact assessment of public policies is done taking into account data and information collected by all bodies and bodies responsible for implementing policy measures or activities, as well as those collected from other sources. It also could be an assessment of relevant civil society organizations on the possible impacts of policies and their implementation, as well as the budget as a whole.

In the 2019 budget, the State Audit Institution implemented gender-responsive budgeting in its own budget and established the GRB goal: to contribute to independent reporting on the introduction of the GRB, to the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia and other stakeholders. This means that within its regular audits, which take place according to the annual plan, on the sample of budget users, the SAI will monitor whether or not they have applied the GRB. For those users who were included in the Plan, i.e. who are obliged to apply the GRB in a certain budget year.

This means that as a part of regular activities and work methodology, SAI includes monitoring of the following of the GRB Implementation Plan.

The SAI is an independent institution and as such conducts an independent audit. A methodology that will include verification of the success of the application of GRB, and not only verification of its' application is currently under development.

Independent audit of the entire budget, which would refer only to gender responsive budgeting, compliance of the budget with policies and regulations in the field of gender equality or audit of the budget process has not been conducted.

## Chapter 3. The existence of mechanisms to make resource allocation publicly available to increase accountability

In Serbia, data on goals in the field of gender equality, measures, and indicators are available to citizens because they are the part of budget documents that are published and publicly available on the website of the Ministry of Finance or in the budget. The GRB implementation plan and guidelines are available as separate documents and have been published in an accessible manner.

Budget execution reports also include data on the execution of budget programs in which the GRB has been applied. Data on the amounts allocated and spent on programs and activities that contribute to gender equality are not available, because the processing of budget data still does not allow calculation in that way, but improvements are being made. In AP Vojvodina, the amount of programs in which GRB has been applied has been calculated, while at the national level, an overview of the number of programs of goals and indicators is annually available. This overview is available as part of the annual progress reports on the introduction of the GRB prepared by UN Women within the support to the process and the Ministry of Finance. The report is not available on the website of the Ministry of Finance, and the data are not available on the website of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality. In that sense, the data are available to the extent that it is prescribed for the budget in general, and the accessibility of information on the GRB to the general public and citizens can be improved.

As previously written, data on the programs in which the GRB will be applied are available on the website of the Ministry of Finance and the amounts allocated for these programs are available in the budget documents, within the program part of the budget. Data on activities carried out through programs and the amount of money, however, are not systematically available to the public by budget users, in the sense that data on budget execution not always include beneficiaries data disaggregated by gender, nor is the contribution to gender equality clearly highlighted. But all execution and budget data are available according to the budget calendar, as the GRB is an integral part of the process.

In Serbia, there are numerous initiatives and programs aimed at increasing budget transparency, and opening the process for civic participation. One such initiative is the Citizens' Budget Guide, developed with the help of the Swiss Development Agency. As part of the initiative, budget reviews for citizens, including information on budget execution and rebalances, have been prepared and are available on the websites of the Ministry of Finance, provincial governments and local self - governments. The Ministry of Finance also prepares videos that present the budget to citizens in a friendly and accessible manner.

Gender responsive budgeting or gender equality are not mentioned in these documents, which is a missed opportunity for popularization of GRB.

The video about gender responsive budgeting in Serbia, created by UN WOMEN, focuses exclusively on the gender perspective of public financial management. The video is currently available on the UN Women YouTube channel.

## Conclusions and the score overview

### Conclusion for the criterion 1

In Serbia, the goals of the national policy in the field of gender equality are clearly defined, and the systematic immersion of sectoral policies is also one of them, defined by the National Strategy for Achieving Gender Equality. Budget funds for achieving goals in the field of gender equality are

Gender Budget Watchdog Network in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of Moldova

determined through the GRB process itself, which is an obligatory and integral part of the budget process as a whole and has been gradually introduced since 2016.

Country	Are there programs or policies of the government, that are designed to address well-identified gender equality goals?	Do these programs or policies have adequate resources allocated within the budget, sufficient to meet both their general objectives and their gender equality goals?	Are there procedures in place to ensure that these resources are executed according to the budget?
Serbia	1	1	1

**Conclusion for criterion 2**

Within the budget process, budget users and programs in which the GRB will be included in a given year are clearly defined and instructions for the introduction of the GRB are given through guidelines prepared for budget users by the Ministry of Finance. Gender analysis is an integral part of the process, in part defined by gender responsive goals, although the methodology, systematicity, obligations and scope of gender analysis still need to be worked on. Gender analysis of the impact and effects of budgets and budget programs has not been conducted.

Country	Does the government provide, in the context of the budget, a clear statement of gender related goals often known as a gender budget statement?	Does the Ministry of Finance issue call circulars or directives that provide specific guidance on gender responsive budget allocations?	Are key programs and policies, proposed for inclusion in the budget, subject to an ex ante gender impact assessment?	Are sex disaggregated statistics and data used in a systematic manner across key programs and policies in a way which can inform budget-related policy decisions?	Is there a requirement to apply a gender perspective in the context of setting budget related performance objectives?	Are key programs and policies subject to ex post gender impact assessment?	Is the budget as a whole subject to independent audit to assess the extent to which it promotes gender responsive policies?
Serbia	1	1	1	0	1	0	0

**Conclusion for criterion 3**

It is necessary to increase the availability of information on GRB to citizens, as well as to improve budget reporting so that information is available on the amounts allocated for achieving the goals in the field of gender equality and the achieved results.

Gender Budget Watchdog Network in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Republic of Moldova

Country	Is the information on gender equality allocations published in an accessible manner on the Ministry of Finance (or office responsible for budget) website and/or related official bulletins or public notices?	If published, has the information on gender equality allocations been made public in a timely manner?	If published, has the information on gender equality allocations been made public in an easily understandable format?
Serbia	1	1	0

### Recommendations

- An overview of engendered sectoral policies, that includes clear gender responsive goals needs to be made;
- When adopting the next NAP, it is necessary to clearly estimate needed budget funds for activities and to link them to the budget programs of the key stakeholders, in order to enable the monitoring of the amounts allocated and spent on the implementation of national policy for gender equality. This certainly does not mean that it is not necessary to monitor all the other allocations in budget programs that are the result of the introduction of GRB and the achievement of these goals contribute;
- Budget users should improve reporting on the implementation of GRB, in a way that information on execution within budget programs is available as well as gender-sensitive indicators;
- There is an urgent need for the adoption of a new Law on Gender Equality, which would include provisions related to monitoring the implementation of the law itself, and especially in the position, mandate and resources of gender equality machineries, as well as gender-sensitive statistics;
- It is necessary to continuously put pressure on institutions for the availability and use of data disaggregated by gender;
- It is necessary to monitor the representation of gender-responsive goals in the fiscal strategy, as well as the links between the government's work plan, fiscal strategies and the budget;
- It is necessary to advocate for a more active role of parliament in monitoring of the implementation of GRB, but also reporting on the results achieved and funds spent on contributing to gender equality and for the discussion on GRB within budget adoption session, and encourage the government and the Ministry of Finance to prepare a separate overview of budget contribution and priorities in the field of gender equality.