



Republic of Singapore

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Singapore does not have a formal gender responsive budgeting initiative in place. However, efforts to improve gender mainstreaming in planning and policy have raised awareness of the need to also improve gender responsiveness in budget systems and processes among some groups.

The government's Fourth and Third CEDAW Report identifies that the formulation and review of policies includes the analysis of the policy's impact on beneficiaries through wide consultations (Singapore Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCDYS) 2008: 21). Prior to presenting submissions to Cabinet, Ministries are required to ensure relevant views, and concerns are considered in the policy formulation. Further '[a] gender perspective would be adopted as part of the stakeholder approach on issues where women and girls and/or men and boys are stakeholders' (Singapore MCDYS 2004: 14).

A suite of policies to support parenthood was introduced in August 2008, including longer maternity leave as well as childcare and infant care leave (for both parents), infant and childcare subsidies and finally financial support for families. These policies aimed at improving the interactions between work and family life and reduce the financial burden on families (Singapore MCDYS 2008: 7). The speech by the Minister of Community Development, Youth and Sports (2006: 8) in the East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting (30/06/06 - 01/07/06) highlights several measures to improve family and work commitments, including \$10 million allocated to assist the implementation of 'work-life strategies and programmes in the workplace' – the Work Life Works (WoW!) Fund. In addition, the Women's Desk – under the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports – has initiated gathering and collecting sex-disaggregated data from Ministries to assist in research and provide general information (Singapore MCDYS 2004: 15).

Yet the CEDAW Shadow report draws attention to the fact that in the 2007 budget, allocation for the national women's machinery and on issues of gender mainstreaming, among others, were not identified (AWARE 2007: 47). To support efforts to improve gender equality outcomes the CEDAW Committee has recommended that the status, resources and mandate of the national machinery are strengthened and further resources are directed to collection, use and availability of sex-disaggregated data (CEDAW 2007: 4).

The NGO Association of Women for Action in Research (AWARE) drew attention to the need for improving budgetary allocations in relation to particular groups of women in terms of the new Workfare Income Supplement Scheme. This scheme aims to improve the employability and incomes of older low wage workers, while building up their Central Provident Fund (CPF) for retirement, housing and healthcare needs. AWARE applauded this initiative but argued that the Budget needed to respond better to the needs of older women who struggle to balance work and family commitments. These concerns were supported by Parliamentarians who 'urged that the scheme be conducive for stay-at-home mothers to return to the workforce and that special bonuses be also extended to get the women back into the workforce'. However AWARE goes on to caution that these concerns 'are often premised on not wasting the productive resource in women, rather than from a perspective that policies have discriminated one gender from remaining active in the workforce' (AWARE 2007: 77).

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