

**REPORT ON A ONE DAY ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS
(CSOs) VIRTUAL BUDGET REVIEW ENGAGEMENT WITH CSOs, HELD ON TUESDAY
19th MAY, 2020 AT THE DATA LAB, PLANNING AND BUDGET COMMISSION, VIA
ZOOM VIRTUAL PLATFORM**

1.0 Opening

The meeting began at 10:30am with individual opening prayers followed by self-introduction.

2.0 Presentation:

The Director, Budget made a presentation on the draft 2020 Reviewed Budget which highlighted the processes and macro-economic assumptions underlying the review.

3.0 Observations and Questions raised:

At the end of his presentation, questions, comments and observations were raised thus:

1. In view of the current embargo on recruitment in the State, one of the participants was of the view that there is need to recruit more health workers being frontline health workers in the fight against the scourge and its spread.
2. Another participant observed that the budget of Education has been reduced by 50% and some schools were used as temporary markets. How will these measures impact school resumption?
3. There is the need for the CSOs to have the Excel document of the proposed reviewed 2020 budget.

Responses were given to the issues raised above as follows:

- i. The need to recruit more frontline health workers:
The State Government has reached an advanced stage in the process of recruiting more personnel in the health sector and will be concluded soon.
- ii. Reduction of the Education budget by 50% and use of schools as makeshift markets:
 - a. It is only the Recurrent expenditure of the Education budget that was reduced by 50%, as the schools have been closed since March 2020.
 - b. It is only the space within the schools that are being utilized as makeshift markets, not the physical structures. However, once the schools resume, the makeshift markets will cease to exist within the school premises.
- iii. The need for CSOs to have the Excel document of the reviewed budget:

It was agreed that the Excel document of the reviewed 2020 budget will be made available to the CSOs in due course.

4.0 Challenges/Next Steps

The smooth flow of the virtual meeting was frequently interrupted due to network issues. It was then advised that participants should kindly forward any other observations, questions and comments they may have for further correspondence online.

5.0 Closing: The meeting came to a close with a vote of thanks by the co – chair (Open Budget) in the person of Mr. Emmanuel Bonet.

Signed:

Co – Chair, Government

Signed:

Co – Chair, Civil Society