



Southwest State of Somalia
Ministry of Finance
Budget Department Office

Citizen Budget Consultation Workshop Report on the 2025 SWSS State Budget Held in Baidoa -October 2024

Introduction

October 2024, the Ministry of Finance, Southwest State of Somalia (SWSS) with support from **PREMIS2 Project and RCRFIII** , conducted a Six days of citizen budget consultations on 2025 state budget in Baidoa, aimed at collecting valuable feedback from the public on the 2025 state budget. The consultations were attended by representatives from various parts of citizens, including local community leaders, civil society organizations, business owners, youth groups, women. These discussions were held to ensure that the upcoming budget reflects the needs and aspirations of the people, fosters transparency, and promotes accountable financial management.

The consultations covered several key sectors: education, health, public safety, economic development, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability. This report summarizes the key feedback and recommendations shared by citizens during the consultations and highlights priority areas for the 2025 SWSS state budget.

1. Education: Enhancing Access and Quality

Education emerged as one of the top priorities for the citizens of Baidoa and the wider SWSS state. The public expressed strong concerns about the accessibility and quality of education, in both urban and rural areas. Key feedback included:

- Expansion of Educational Infrastructure: Many participants highlighted the need for the construction and rehabilitation of schools, especially in remote districts. Citizens called for new schools to be built and existing ones to be expanded to accommodate the growing student population.
- Teacher Capacity and Training: There was a consensus that the quality of education is directly linked to the qualifications and training of teachers. Citizens urged the government to invest more in teacher training programs and professional development, particularly in rural areas where teachers are often undertrained or overstretched. Also suggested the salaries and incentives should be raised and reflect on the budget teacher

- Access to Educational Materials: A recurring request was for improved access to educational resources, such as textbooks, stationery, and learning materials. Several participants stressed the importance of introducing technology into classrooms, particularly computers and internet access, to better equip students for the digital age.
- Support for Higher Education and Vocational Training: There was also a call to allocate more funds towards vocational training and higher education programs, especially for youth and women. Participants emphasized the importance of skills-based training to improve employability and reduce unemployment among young people in the region.

Citizens overwhelmingly supported increased investment in education, recognizing it as key to long-term development and economic growth in SWSS.

2. Health: Improving Access and Quality of Healthcare

Health was another critical area of focus, with citizens voicing strong concerns about the state of healthcare facilities and services in Baidoa and other districts of SWSS. Key points raised included:

- Healthcare Facility Expansion: Many participants pointed out the need for more health centers and hospitals to serve remote and underserved communities. They requested the government to increase the number of healthcare facilities, particularly in rural districts where access to medical care is limited.
- Availability of Medicine and Medical Supplies: The issue of medicine shortages in local clinics and hospitals was frequently mentioned. Citizens called for better management of supply chains to ensure that essential medicines, vaccines, and medical equipment are consistently available in healthcare facilities.
- Maternal and Child Health Services: Participants highlighted the need for greater investment in maternal and child health services, including prenatal care, safe childbirth facilities, and postnatal care.
- Training and Staffing: Citizens called for the recruitment of more healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, and midwives, and the improvement of their working conditions. There was also a request for government support to provide continuous professional development to health workers, ensuring they are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge.

In summary, citizens emphasized that improving access to affordable and quality healthcare should be a priority for the 2025 budget, with a focus on expanding infrastructure, ensuring the availability of medical supplies, and increasing the capacity of health workers.

3. Public Safety: Strengthening Security and Justice

Public safety, including law enforcement and the justice system, was a major concern expressed by the participants. Several points were raised during the consultations:

- Support for Local Law Enforcement: Citizens stressed the need to strengthen local police forces and law enforcement agencies. They called for better training, provision of equipment, and adequate funding for police stations in the state to improve security and reduce crime.
- Community Policing: Many participants advocated for the promotion of community policing, where local law enforcement works closely with communities to build trust and cooperation. This approach was seen as a way to improve safety and reduce the potential for conflict.
- Strengthening the Judiciary: There was a strong call to invest in the judiciary, particularly in the construction and operationalization of courts in the areas where there are no courts or operational currently. Citizens emphasized that an efficient and accessible justice system is crucial for upholding the rule of law and ensuring accountability.
- Crime Prevention and Youth Engagement: Several participants raised concerns about youth involvement in crime, particularly in urban areas. Citizens suggested the creation of more youth engagement programs, including vocational training, sports, and community activities, to prevent youth from turning to criminal activities.

The consensus was that the 2025 budget should allocate more funds to enhance security, improve law enforcement capacity, and strengthen the justice system to create a safer environment for all.

4. Economic Development: Fostering Growth and Job Creation

Economic development and job creation were also key priorities for participants. They provided several recommendations on how the 2025 budget could better support economic growth:

- Support for Agriculture and Livestock: Given the importance of agriculture and livestock to the SWSS economy, citizens called for increased investment in these sectors. They requested government support for irrigation systems, agricultural tools, and access to markets to boost productivity and reduce poverty.
- Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): Many participants suggested that the government prioritize support for local businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly women and youth. There were calls for business training programs, and access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Job Creation Programs: Citizens highlighted the importance of job creation, especially for young people. They recommended that the government allocate more funds to vocational training programs, and skills development initiatives to improve employability in sectors such as construction, technology, and trade.

Overall, citizens strongly advocated for a budget that focuses on creating economic opportunities, supporting entrepreneurship, and enhancing productivity in agriculture and related sectors.

5. Infrastructure and Environment: Building a Sustainable Future

Infrastructure development and environmental sustainability were also vital areas of focus during the consultations. Citizens made the following recommendations:

- Roads and Transportation: The need for better roads and transportation infrastructure was frequently mentioned. Participants called for an increase in road maintenance and the construction of new roads, particularly in rural areas, to improve access to essential services and promote economic activities.
- Water and Energy Supply: Access to clean water and reliable electricity was highlighted as a critical issue. Citizens requested more investment in water supply systems and renewable energy sources, such as solar power, to improve living conditions and support economic activities.
- Environmental Protection: Environmental sustainability was also raised as a key concern. Citizens called for initiatives to protect natural resources, manage waste more effectively, and implement climate-resilient agricultural practices. They emphasized that the government should allocate funds to mitigate the effects of deforestation, cutting trees for charcoal production, land degradation, and climate change. Additionally, they recommended to introduce environmental protection measures including fines. Finally, they suggested to invest in environmental protection by provided employment opportunities through job creation

Participants stressed that infrastructure and environmental sustainability are crucial for long-term development and should be prioritized in the 2025 budget to ensure a resilient and sustainable future for SWSS.

Conclusion

The citizen budget consultations held in Baidoa October 2024, provided valuable insights into the needs and priorities of the people of SWSS for the 2025 state budget. The feedback highlighted the critical importance of investment in education, healthcare, public safety, economic development, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability. Citizens expressed a strong desire for the government to prioritize these sectors in the 2025 budget to improve the quality of life, create sustainable economic opportunities, and ensure a safer, more prosperous future for the state.

The Ministry of Finance, SWSS is encouraged to incorporate these recommendations into the final budget to ensure that public resources are allocated effectively, fostering accountability and promoting inclusive development that benefits all communities in Southwest state of Somalia.

Appendix (Photo)

