National Budget Response Forum

Report

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THE NATIONAL BUDGET RESPONSE FORUM

Convened by: National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC) in partnership with EmpowaYouth
Venue: Empowaworx, Randburg
Date: 25 February 2026

NEXEC
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ADVISORY

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Introduction

The National Budget Response Forum was convened by the National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC) in partnership with EmpowaYouth as part of NEXEC's ongoing work to institutionalise youth participation in South Africa's economic governance and policy discourse.

NEXEC operates as a hybrid economic institution that combines the convening influence of a civic platform with the analytical and operational capacity of a corporate advisory structure. Through its sectoral councils, advisory initiatives, and strategic partnerships, the organisation seeks to position young South Africans not as passive beneficiaries of economic policy but as informed participants and contributors to the country's development trajectory.

Central to this mission is NEXEC Advisory, the organisation's commercial, economic advisory and policy engagement platform. NEXEC Advisory serves as the analytical and strategic engine through which the organisation translates policy developments into actionable insights, facilitates dialogue between stakeholders, and develops structured responses to key economic decisions affecting youth, enterprise, and sector growth.

Within this framework, the National Budget Response Forum forms part of NEXEC Advisory's broader mandate to convene informed, cross sector engagement around major economic policy moments. The National Budget represents the most consequential fiscal policy statement of the year, outlining government's priorities for public spending, economic reform, infrastructure investment, and social development. Its implications extend across employment, entrepreneurship, infrastructure, education, and public service delivery.

Despite the significance of the Budget, structured analysis and debate around its implications often remain confined to government institutions, financial markets, and specialist economic forums. Young professionals, entrepreneurs, student leaders, and emerging sector participants frequently encounter these decisions only once they have already been implemented.

The National Budget Response Forum was therefore designed to bridge this gap.

By convening stakeholders from business, academia, civil society, student leadership, and various clusters of the economy immediately following the Budget Speech, the Forum created a platform for rapid analysis, sector reflection, and collaborative policy engagement. Participants were encouraged not only to interpret the Budget but also to interrogate its implications and contribute to a consolidated youth and enterprise response.

Through this process, NEXEC aims to establish a new model of engagement in which economic policy is not simply observed by young people but actively analysed, debated, and responded to in organised and credible ways.

The Forum therefore represents both a policy engagement platform and a broader institutional commitment: to ensure that the voices, expertise, and experiences of young South Africans form a visible and substantive part of national economic dialogue.

Context: The 2026 National Budget

The 2026 National Budget was presented within a context of gradual fiscal stabilisation and ongoing structural economic challenges.
The Minister of Finance emphasised that South Africa's fiscal framework has reached a turning point following years of rising public debt and economic stagnation.

Fiscal Stability
For the first time in 17 years, government debt is projected to stabilise and begin declining over the medium term. Public debt is expected to peak at approximately 78.9 percent of GDP, after which gradual reduction is projected through fiscal consolidation.

The national budget deficit continues to narrow, and the primary budget surplus is expected to strengthen in the coming years. These developments signal improved fiscal credibility and are expected to strengthen investor confidence.

Economic Growth Outlook
Economic growth remains modest but is projected to improve gradually.

Growth projections include:
• 1.6 percent growth in 2026
• Approximately 2 percent growth by 2028

While these projections represent improvement, they remain below the level required to meaningfully reduce unemployment. Economic expansion above 3 percent is widely considered necessary to absorb the approximately one million young people entering the labour market annually.

Infrastructure Investment
Infrastructure investment remains a central pillar of government's economic strategy.

Over the medium term, public sector infrastructure investment is projected to exceed R1 trillion, with spending prioritised across:
• Energy transmission infrastructure
• Rail network recovery
• Transport logistics systems
• Water and sanitation infrastructure

These investments are expected to stimulate economic growth and attract private sector participation.

Tax and Revenue Measures
The Budget introduced several measures designed to protect households and support economic activity.

Key measures include:

• Inflation adjustments to personal income tax brackets
• Increase in the VAT registration threshold for small businesses
• Expansion of certain capital gains exemptions for small enterprise disposals
• Increase in tax-free savings limits

These measures aim to provide modest relief to households and entrepreneurs while maintaining revenue stability.

Social Spending
Social expenditure continues to represent the largest share of government spending.

Over 60 percent of non-interest spending is allocated to the social wage, including:

• Education
• Healthcare
• Social grants

Social grant support now reaches over 26 million South Africans, reflecting the continued importance of social protection within the national fiscal framework.

Understanding Key Numbers

R1 Trillion
Planned public infrastructure investment over the medium term

26 Million + People
South Africans supported through the social grant system.

1.6%
Projected economic growth for 2026

R230 000
New VAT registration threshold for small businesses

2% PRIMARY SURPLUS TARGET
Projected primary budget surplus by 2028

The 2026 National Budget reflects a fiscal strategy aimed at stabilising South Africa's public finances while gradually positioning the economy toward sustainable growth. Several key figures help contextualise the scale and priorities of government spending.

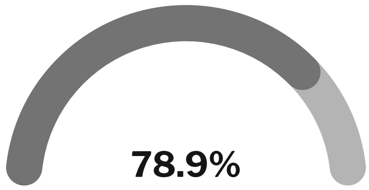
A central commitment of the Budget is over R1 trillion in public infrastructure investment over the medium term, targeting energy, transport, water systems, and logistics networks. This investment is intended to stimulate economic activity, attract private sector participation, and support long-term job creation.

Public debt is projected to peak at approximately 78.9 percent of GDP before gradually declining, signalling improved fiscal discipline after years of rising debt levels. However, economic growth remains modest, with the economy expected to expand by around 1.6 percent in 2026, rising slowly toward two percent in the coming years.

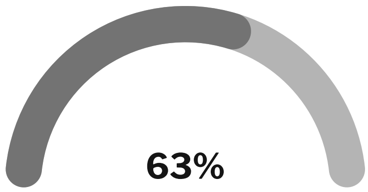
Social protection continues to represent a major component of government spending. More than 60 percent of non-interest expenditure is allocated to the social wage, supporting over 26 million South Africans through education, healthcare, and social grant programmes.

The Budget also introduces targeted measures to support small businesses, including increasing the VAT registration threshold to R230,000, which reduces administrative pressure on emerging enterprises.

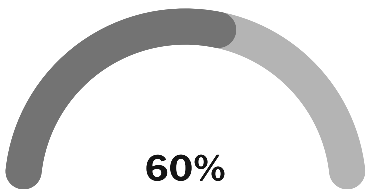
Together, these figures illustrate a Budget focused on balancing fiscal stability with development priorities, with infrastructure investment and social protection positioned as key pillars of government's economic strategy



(Of GDP) Projected peak of South Africa's public debt before gradual stabilisation and decline.



Municipalities currently classified as financially distressed, prompting new municipal funding reforms.



Share of non-interest government spending allocated to the social wage including education, healthcare and social protection.

Sustainable Self Employment Lead: Presidential Youth Employment Intervention (PYEI) and Economic Policy Specialist

Thulebona Mhlanga

Managing Director: Black Management Forum (BMF)

Monde Ndlovu

Chairperson: Transformation in Higher Education at South African Union of Students (SAUS)

Palisa Moleshiwa

Thulebona Mhlanga is an accomplished policy expert, economic researcher, and business writer with over a decade of experience spanning economics, finance, and social sciences. She has worked across government, civil society, and the private sector — including National Treasury, ABSIP, and World Vision. Her work has shaped national and continental debates on BRICS, the township economy, and the small business landscape, while also supporting grassroots SMMEs through her venture, Funda Nathi Writing Consultancy. A former business journalist with eNCA and Mail & Guardian, Thulebona is also a certified life and business coach, social activist, and 2017 ASRI Fellow.

As Managing Director of the Black Management Forum, he plays a key role in advancing Black leadership and systemic change in South Africa's corporate landscape. Monde is a prolific writer and comentator, contributing to national discourse on youth empowerment, economic justice, and leadership development.

His extensive work in organisational strategy, stakeholder engagement, and governance reflects his commitment to reshaping economic structures for greater equality and sustainable growth.

Palisa Moleshiwa is a committed student leader and activist at the University of Johannesburg, currently serving as Chairperson of the Student Representative Council (SRC). In this role, she advocates for student rights, academic excellence, and campus welfare, representing student interests in key institutional decision-making platforms.

Palisa is widely recognized for her principled, solutions-driven leadership and her commitment to constructive dialogue, encouraging peaceful engagement and collaborative approaches to addressing student challenges within the university and broader youth platforms.

Key Speaker Profiles

Key Speaker Profiles

Executive Head: NEXEC Arts and Creatives Council (NARC)

Gina Koffman

Gina Koffman is a qualified television, film, and stage practitioner whose career spans acting, directing, and production. Her work has been recognised nationally and internationally, with her debut lead role in Kleva'ish winning Best African Film at the Cannes World Film Festival and Best Feature Film at the National Film and Television Awards. Alongside her creative career, Gina is a motivational speaker, acting coach, creative director, voice-over artist, and executive producer. As Executive Head of the NEXEC Arts and Creative Council (NARC), Gina champions innovation and inclusivity in the arts, working to create spaces for young and emerging talent while driving structural transformation in the sector.

Group Chief Executive Officer: NEXEC

Matoti Buthelezi

Matoti Buthelezi is a student leader, policy thinker, and economic development advocate based in South Africa. He's built NEXEC to become the largest youth owned advisory and development platform, growing it from the initial 7 founding members to an ecosystem of over 150 young academics, professionals and thinkers.

He has led multiple national initiatives, advisory platforms, and high-level engagements aimed at positioning young South Africans as active participants in the economy rather than passive beneficiaries.

Associate and Head of Business Admin: NEXEC

Nonjabulo Mchunu

Nonjabulo Mchunu is an Accounting Science graduate currently pursuing the globally recognised ACCA qualification to deepen her expertise in financial management and accounting.

Nonjabulo serves as the Strategic Operations Associate for NEXEC, where she contributes to initiatives aimed at empowering young South Africans to participate meaningfully in economic leadership and decision-making.

With a strong foundation in accounting, entrepreneurship, and strategic operations, Nonjabulo is driven by a vision to build impactful businesses while helping create platforms that expand opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs.

Thulebona Mhlanga

Economic Policy Specialist

Opening Context

The Forum opened with contextual remarks by Thulebona Mhlanga, who framed the significance of the National Budget as more than a fiscal announcement.

She emphasised that the Budget serves as a framework through which government signals its economic priorities and policy direction for the coming financial year. For this reason, she argued that citizens, particularly young professionals and entrepreneurs, must actively engage with the Budget rather than view it as a technical government document.

Her remarks highlighted three central considerations:

1. Economic Signals

She noted that the Budget provides signals about where opportunities and risks may emerge within the economy. These signals influence investment decisions, business planning, and employment prospects.

2. Structural Economic Challenges

Mhlanga highlighted South Africa's persistent structural challenges, particularly unemployment and slow economic growth. She noted that economic growth must exceed three percent annually to meaningfully absorb new labour market entrants, yet current projections remain significantly below that threshold.

3. Role of Partnerships

She emphasised that government alone cannot solve unemployment or drive inclusive growth. Instead, solutions must involve coordinated action between government, the private sector, entrepreneurs, and civil society.

She concluded by urging participants to consider how entrepreneurs and emerging businesses can position themselves to participate in the opportunities created by infrastructure investment and economic reform.

Matoti Buthelezi – Group CEO: NEXEC
Nonjabulo Mchunu — Associate: NEXEC

Strategic Framing & Budget Overview

The National Budget Response Forum opened with a strategic framing of both the purpose of the gathering and the broader economic context in which the 2026 National Budget was presented. Together, Matoti Buthelezi and Nonjabulo Mchunu provided the institutional perspective and fiscal overview that guided the discussions that followed.

In his opening remarks, Buthelezi emphasised that the National Budget represents far more than a technical financial document tabled in Parliament. Rather, it is a reflection of the country's national priorities and an indication of how government intends to allocate public resources in pursuit of economic stability, development and social protection.

He argued that decisions of such magnitude cannot remain confined to government institutions, financial markets, and policy experts. Instead, young professionals, entrepreneurs, students, and emerging sector leaders must develop the capacity to interrogate fiscal policy and contribute meaningfully to national economic discussions.

Buthelezi emphasised that the Forum was intentionally structured as an interactive platform where participants were not expected to simply observe policy discussions but actively contribute their insights and sector experiences.

He further highlighted that the insights generated during the Forum would contribute to the development of a consolidated youth and enterprise response to the National Budget, which would form part of NEXEC's broader policy engagement efforts through NEXEC Advisory.

Following this strategic framing, Nonjabulo Mchunu provided a structured overview of the key fiscal shifts emerging from the 2026 National Budget.

She explained that the Budget marks an important transition in South Africa's fiscal trajectory. After years of rising debt and constrained growth, government is now seeking to stabilise public finances while gradually repositioning the economy toward reform-driven growth.

One of the most significant developments highlighted was the projected stabilisation of public debt. For the first time in approximately seventeen years, government debt is expected to peak and begin declining over the medium term. This development signals improved fiscal discipline and a gradual restoration of confidence in the country's public finances. However, Mchunu emphasised that fiscal stability alone will not resolve the country's deeper structural challenges.

Mchunu also noted several measures aimed at easing pressure on households and small businesses, including adjustments to personal income tax brackets, increased tax-free savings limits, and a higher VAT registration threshold for small enterprises.

Taken together, the presentations by Buthelezi and Mchunu established the analytical foundation for the Forum's discussions. Their contributions framed the Budget not simply as a fiscal statement but as a national policy instrument whose implications extend across employment, enterprise development, infrastructure growth, and youth participation in the economy.

"Policy without participation is hollow. Participation without substance is noise. This forum demands both."

Mr. Monde Ndlovu
Managing Director: Black Management Forum (BMF)

Business and Transformation

Monde Ndlovu contributed a reflection on the National Budget from a business and transformation perspective, highlighting the importance of ensuring that fiscal policy discussions remain connected to the structural realities of South Africa's economy.

He began by commending youth-led platforms such as the National Budget Response Forum for creating spaces where emerging leaders can engage directly with national economic policy. In his view, these platforms are essential for ensuring that new ideas and perspectives continue to shape the country's economic trajectory.

"Ideas are critical. They outlive all of us. We have a timeline as individuals, but ideas continue evolving long after we are gone."

Ndlovu emphasised that the business sector in South Africa is far from uniform, noting that large corporations, medium enterprises, small businesses, and microenterprises experience fiscal policy in very different ways. For many smaller enterprises, day-to-day operational pressures often limit the ability to engage deeply with national policy developments such as the Budget.

He also highlighted the structural barriers that continue to affect enterprise development, particularly limited access to funding and institutional support for emerging entrepreneurs. While various enterprise development institutions exist, he noted that their ability to respond effectively to innovative or early-stage businesses remains uneven.

A central focus of his remarks was the issue of economic transformation. Ndlovu argued that transformation remains insufficiently integrated into economic policy frameworks and that greater clarity is needed regarding what transformation should mean in practical economic terms.

"There is still no unified understanding of what transformation truly means and what we are trying to address."

He further encouraged participants to think about transformation not only as a policy objective but as a structured process that requires research, institutional design, and practical frameworks capable of expanding economic participation.

Overall, his contribution reinforced the importance of aligning fiscal policy with inclusive economic development, ensuring that the opportunities created through economic growth and infrastructure investment translate into meaningful participation for emerging businesses and historically excluded groups.

"As institutions grow and mature, they must retain their youthful energy — the power to convene, to challenge, to energise systems and processes."

This principle, he suggested, applies equally to democratic governance, policy platforms, and economic institutions. Youth-led platforms such as NEXEC therefore play an important role in sustaining this dynamism within South Africa's policy landscape

Palisa Moleshiwa
Transformation Chairperson: South African Union of Students (SAUS)

Students and Higher Education

Palisa Moleshiwa contributed a student leadership perspective to the Forum, highlighting the importance of linking national fiscal policy to the lived realities of students and young people within the education system.

She emphasised that while the National Budget often focuses on macroeconomic indicators, its implications are most deeply felt by young people navigating education, unemployment, and the transition into the labour market.

Moleshiwa stressed that higher education institutions remain one of the primary gateways into economic participation. However, the gap between education and employment continues to widen as graduates struggle to find opportunities within a slow-growing economy.

As she observed:

"Young people cannot only encounter the economy once they graduate. We must already be part of the conversations shaping it."

She therefore argued that economic policy must be examined not only through fiscal stability or investment metrics but also through its capacity to expand meaningful opportunities for young people entering the workforce.

Her contribution highlighted the need for stronger alignment between higher education, skills development, and labour market demand.

She further emphasised that student organisations and youth leadership structures have an important role to play in ensuring that the voices of young people are represented within national policy conversations.

Moleshiwa also noted that youth must move beyond passive critique and actively engage policy frameworks in constructive ways.

She further emphasised that youth platforms such as the National Budget Response Forum create important opportunities for engagement:

"Spaces like this are important because they bring policy closer to the people it affects most. Students, young professionals, and entrepreneurs need to be in the room when these discussions happen."

Her reflections reinforced one of the Forum's central themes: that meaningful economic participation requires both policy literacy and structured platforms through which young people can engage national decision-making processes.

Gina Koffman
Executive Head: NEXEC Arts & Creative Council (NARC)

Creative Economy Perspective

Gina Koffman contributed a sector reflection from the perspective of the arts and creative economy, highlighting the often overlooked economic significance of South Africa's cultural and creative industries.

She emphasised that while national budget discussions frequently focus on traditional sectors such as infrastructure, mining, and finance, the creative economy represents a growing and influential component of modern economic systems.

According to Koffman, the arts and creative industries must increasingly be recognised not merely as cultural expressions but as legitimate economic sectors capable of generating employment, innovation, and international economic exchange.

She argued that the creative economy offers particularly important opportunities for young people, many of whom enter economic activity through cultural production, digital media, design, music, and other creative fields.

However, she noted that these sectors often remain under-supported within traditional economic policy frameworks.

Koffman highlighted the need for stronger institutional support structures for creative entrepreneurs, including improved access to funding, intellectual property protection, and business development support tailored to creative industries.

She emphasised that the creative sector frequently operates at the intersection of culture, technology, and entrepreneurship, requiring policy approaches that recognise its unique characteristics.

In reflecting on the National Budget, she noted that while infrastructure investment and enterprise development programmes may indirectly benefit the creative sector, more deliberate policy attention is required to unlock the sector's full potential.

"The creative economy is not separate from the economy. It is part of the economy — and increasingly one of the spaces where young people are already building businesses and livelihoods."
She also emphasised the importance of recognising the creative economy as a site of both cultural expression and economic opportunity.

In many communities, creative industries serve as accessible entry points into entrepreneurship, particularly for young people who may not have access to traditional capital-intensive sectors.

Koffman therefore encouraged policymakers and economic institutions to integrate the creative economy more deliberately into broader development strategies.

She also noted that platforms such as the National Budget Response Forum create valuable opportunities for creative sector voices to participate in national economic discussions.

"If we want a truly inclusive economy, then the creative sector cannot sit outside the conversation about economic policy and growth."

Her contribution reinforced the broader theme of the Forum: that economic participation must be understood across multiple sectors and that emerging industries such as the creative economy will play an increasingly important role in shaping South Africa's future economic landscape.

Key Themes From the Forum

Several cross-cutting themes emerged from the discussions.

Discussions throughout the National Budget Response Forum highlighted several interconnected themes shaping the country's economic outlook. Participants emphasised the need to institutionalise youth participation in economic governance so that young professionals, entrepreneurs, and students are not merely observers of fiscal policy but active contributors to its interpretation and implementation. The Forum also underscored the critical role of enterprise development, particularly the growth and sustainability of small and medium enterprises, as a primary pathway for addressing unemployment and expanding economic participation. Infrastructure investment emerged as a central opportunity within the current fiscal framework, with participants noting its potential to stimulate job creation, improve logistics and energy systems, and unlock private sector activity. At the same time, contributors stressed that the ultimate success of the Budget will depend less on policy announcements and more on effective implementation, especially at provincial and municipal levels where service delivery and economic development initiatives are executed.

Youth Participation in Economic Governance
Participants emphasised the importance of institutionalising youth participation in national economic policy processes.

Enterprise Development
Sustainable growth in the SME sector remains critical to addressing unemployment and expanding economic participation

Infrastructure as a Growth Catalyst
Infrastructure investment was identified as a major opportunity for job creation and economic expansion.

Policy Implementation
Participants stressed that the success of the Budget will depend largely on implementation, particularly at provincial and municipal levels.

Together, these themes reinforced the importance of coordinated action between government, business, and emerging leaders in translating fiscal policy into tangible economic outcomes.

Youth Participation in Economic Governance
Enterprise Development
Policy Implementation
Infrastructure as a Growth Catalyst

Participant Contributions

Summary

The National Budget Response Forum concluded with an open floor engagement where participants from across sectors were invited to contribute their perspectives on the Budget and its broader economic implications. Contributors included representatives from business, student leadership, technology, finance, research institutions, and emerging enterprises, reflecting the multidisciplinary nature of the Forum.

These interventions enriched the discussion by grounding fiscal policy in the practical experiences of those operating within different sectors of the economy. Several key issues emerged from these contributions.

Institutional Accountability

Participants also emphasised the importance of stronger institutional accountability within public sector economic programmes. Questions were raised about the effectiveness of budget allocations and whether funds designated for development programmes are consistently translated into measurable outcomes. Contributors argued that young people must engage more actively with institutions responsible for economic development, ensuring that public resources are used effectively and that policy commitments are implemented in practice.

Overall, the open engagement segment reinforced one of the central themes of the Forum: that meaningful economic participation requires not only policy awareness but also active engagement with the institutions and systems responsible for shaping economic outcomes.

Skills & Labour Market Alignment

Participants highlighted persistent misalignment between education and training programmes and the actual needs of the labour market. Concerns were raised regarding the number of graduates entering the economy with qualifications that do not easily translate into employment opportunities. Contributors suggested that greater attention must be given to practical skills development, technical training, and industry-informed education pathways to better prepare young people for the evolving demands of the economy.

Access to Development Finance

A recurring concern raised by participants was the difficulty faced by emerging entrepreneurs in accessing development finance. While several public development finance institutions exist, contributors noted that funding processes are often complex, slow, and inaccessible to early-stage entrepreneurs. Participants suggested that greater decentralisation of funding institutions, clearer access pathways, and more sector-specific financing mechanisms could significantly improve support for small and medium enterprises.

Outcomes And Recommendations

The National Budget Response Forum served not only as a space for discussion but as a platform for generating practical insights and policy considerations emerging from youth, enterprise, and sector stakeholders. The discussions highlighted several outcomes and recommendations that will inform NEXEC Advisory's continued engagement with economic policy institutions.

Strengthening Youth Participation in Economic Governance

A key outcome of the Forum was the reaffirmation of the importance of institutionalising youth participation in national economic policy processes. Participants emphasised that fiscal policy discussions should not remain confined to government departments, financial markets, and specialist economists. Platforms such as the National Budget Response Forum demonstrate the value of structured engagement between policymakers, entrepreneurs, students, and emerging professionals.

NEXEC will continue to develop this Forum as a recurring policy engagement platform, producing consolidated youth and enterprise responses to major economic policy announcements.

Supporting Enterprise Development and SME Growth

Discussions consistently highlighted the role of small and medium enterprises as a critical driver of employment and economic participation. Participants noted that while the Budget includes measures aimed at easing pressure on businesses, structural barriers to enterprise growth remain significant.

Participants recommended improved coordination between development finance institutions, clearer access pathways to funding, and greater decentralisation of enterprise support mechanisms to ensure that entrepreneurs across regions can access opportunities more easily.

Infrastructure as an Opportunity for Inclusive Growth

The significant infrastructure commitments outlined in the Budget were recognised as a potential catalyst for economic growth and employment creation. Participants emphasised that the success of these investments will depend on transparent procurement processes, effective project execution, and greater participation of emerging enterprises within infrastructure value chains.

Policy Engagement and Accountability

Another important outcome of the Forum was the recognition that youth engagement must extend beyond commentary toward structured policy participation. Participants emphasised the need to actively engage institutions responsible for implementing economic programmes and to monitor whether budget allocations translate into tangible outcomes.

In response to these discussions, NEXEC Advisory will compile insights from the Forum into a Youth and Enterprise Budget Response Brief, which will contribute to ongoing policy engagements with economic institutions and stakeholders

Attendees & Participation

The National Budget Response Forum brought together a diverse group of participants representing multiple sectors of the economy, reflecting the Forum's objective of facilitating cross-sector dialogue on fiscal policy and economic development.

Participants included young professionals, entrepreneurs, policy analysts, researchers, student leaders, and representatives from both private sector and civil society organisations.

Attendees represented institutions and sectors including:

- Finance and banking
- Technology and digital innovation
- Higher education and research
- Energy and infrastructure
- Entrepreneurship and small business development
- Public policy and governance
- Youth leadership organisations

Organisations represented among participants included:

- National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC)
- EmpowaYouth
- Standard Bank
- Harmattan Renewables
- Geekulcha
- University of the Witwatersrand
- Youth Policy Lab South Africa
- African Minds for Applied Research Institute
- Ndlela Entities
- ExecuHoldings

Participants also included student leadership representatives, entrepreneurs, and independent professionals engaged in sectors such as finance, agriculture, technology, and economic development.

This diversity of representation contributed significantly to the quality of discussion, enabling participants to examine the National Budget from multiple sector perspectives and to translate fiscal policy considerations into practical economic insights.

The Forum demonstrated the value of bringing together stakeholders from across the economic ecosystem to engage with national policy moments and contribute to shaping inclusive economic discourse.

Thank You

The National Executive Economic Collective (NEXEC) extends its sincere appreciation to all individuals and institutions who contributed to the success of the National Budget Response Forum.

We express our gratitude to our speakers and contributors for sharing their insights and expertise in interpreting the 2026 National Budget and its broader economic implications. Their contributions enriched the discussion and helped translate complex fiscal policy into practical perspectives for young professionals, entrepreneurs, and sector stakeholders.

We also thank all participants who attended and actively engaged in the Forum. The quality of discussion and the diversity of perspectives demonstrated the value of creating spaces where emerging leaders can engage constructively with national economic policy.

NEXEC further acknowledges the partnership and support of EmpowaYouth and Empowaworx for hosting the Forum and for their continued commitment to advancing youth economic participation.

Finally, we recognise the broader community of young professionals, students, entrepreneurs, and policy thinkers whose commitment to dialogue, collaboration, and constructive engagement continues to strengthen South Africa's economic discourse.

The National Budget Response Forum reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that young South Africans are not merely observers of national economic decisions but active contributors to shaping the country's economic future.

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Annexure: Register

Can you attend?	Name	Surname	Email	Designation	Organisation/ Institute	Sector	Email address	Column 8
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Yes, I'll be there	Gina	Koffman	Koffmangina@gmail.com		4K productions	Business		
Yes, I'll be there	Suki	Tshivhase	sukitshivhase@gmail.com		NARC	Youth		
Sorry, can't make it	Tshenolo	Moeti	Tshenolomoetim@gmail.com		Nzwalo investments	HVAC/Construction		
Yes, I'll be there	Boitshoko	Mokaleng	mokaleng.boitshoko@gmail.com		NEXEC	Youth		
Yes, I'll be there	Luyanda	Ndlela	jokiest_rivulet0h@icloud.com		University of the WitwatersraFinance			
Yes, I'll be there	Zithobile	Nndwa	zitho.nndwa.l0ve@gmail.com		LSN Media pty ltd	Film/Photography		
Yes, I'll be there	Monai	Pholosi	monaipholosi@icloud.com		University of the WitwatersraFinance			
Sorry, can't make it	Mahlako	Chuene	janechuene16@gmail.com		Wits Wits Nexec	Mining Mining Finance		
Yes, I'll be there	Ntobeko	Cele	evpfinance@nexec.co.za		Where's 22 Holding	Technology Finance Real		
Yes, I'll be there	Thabiso	Mokoena	tmthabisomokoena@gmail.com		Bopano capital	Estate & Car Rental		
Yes, I'll be there	Kamogelo	Thobejane	Kamogelo@bopanocapital.co.za		ExecuHoldings			
Yes, I'll be there	Teboho	Senyakoe	info@execuhire.co.za					
Yes, I'll be there	Savannah	Cozzi	cozzis3@gmail.com					
Yes, I'll be there	Dieketseng	Diale	Tsengdiale22@gmail.com					
Yes, I'll be there	Lunga	Sitole	Lungasitole04@gmail.com		Socially Gathering / EducatioEducation			
Yes, I'll be there	Uyema	Ngculu	Uyema07@gmail		Lady of Peace Community FoYouth			
Yes, I'll be there	Thokozile	Mnisi	zilemnisi1@gmail.com		CSL Group Foundation	Youth Youth creative		
Yes, I'll be there	Nomvelo	Gumede	nomveloyoliswag@gmail.com		CSL Group Foundation	Technology Politics		
Yes, I'll be there	Thapelo	Masilela	Dlambiliwc@gmail.com		STADIO School of Fashion	Business Real		
Yes, I'll be there	Zukhanye	Kame	zukhanyekame@gmail.com		Eduvos	Estate/Property		
Yes, I'll be there	Bandile	Kubheka	bandieykubheka@gmail.com		Palatable Politics	Business Youth		
Yes, I'll be there	Thato	Mosikare	Thato@poolometsiholdings.co.za		A &G	Youth Youth		
Yes, I'll be there	Luvo	Mthethwa	luvo.mthethwa@icloud.com		Khulisa Property Devlopers			
Yes, I'll be there	Sinqobile	Dlamini	Sinqobile0403@gmail.com		Nala Media			
Yes, I'll be there	Gabriel	Mamabolo	urbanforum000@gmail.com		NEXEC			
					University		sinqobile0403@gmail.co	
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