

I am a 3rd year LLB student, a young South African who studies the law but lives the economy.

South Africa stands at a crossroads. Our economy is projected to grow at only 1.6% this year. On paper, that is growth. But for the 32% of South Africans without jobs, for the mother in Limpopo choosing between electricity and food, for the graduate with a degree but no article, there is no growth.

As law students, we are taught that the budget is not just numbers - it is a legal and constitutional instrument. Section 215 of the Constitution demands that our budget must be transparent, accountable, and must promote economic development.

I believe this budget must address three legal-economic crises:

1. The Cost of Living Crisis is a Justice Crisis.

When inflation eats salaries and food prices rise, crime rises. When people cannot afford lawyers, they cannot access justice. Legal Aid South Africa is underfunded, and maintenance courts are overloaded. If this budget does not

fund access to justice, it fails the poor. A budget that does not protect the vulnerable is unconstitutional in spirit.

2. Unemployment is a Threat to the Rule of Law.

Over 60% of youth are unemployed. We are creating a generation that knows the Bill of Rights but has never enjoyed the right to work under Section 22, or the right to dignity under Section 10. An unemployed youth is not just an economic statistic - he is a candidate for the criminal justice system. This budget must move beyond social grants - which are necessary - to real investment in youth-owned businesses, township economies, and skills development for law graduates who cannot find articles.

3. No Economy Grows Without Legal Certainty.

Why is foreign direct investment low? Because investors fear uncertainty. They fear corruption, delayed court cases, and changing regulations. To fix the economy, this budget must fund the NPA, the Special Investigating Unit, and the Zondo Commission recommendations. Fighting corruption is not a legal issue alone - it is an economic strategy. Every rand lost to corruption is a rand stolen from a clinic, a school, a court.

In conclusion,

We do not need a perfect budget. We need a rational budget. A budget that understands that law and economy are twins.

You cannot grow an economy where contracts are not honoured, where property is not safe, and where justice is only for the rich.

As a future lawyer, I am not asking government to give us jobs. I am asking government to create a legal and economic environment where we can create jobs for ourselves and defend the rights of others.

