

# PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

*Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2024*

*The National Assembly met at a Quarter-past Two o'clock p.m.*

## PRAYERS

(THE HON. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE HON. SPEAKER

### INVITATION TO A HALF-DAY WORKSHOP

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** I have to inform the House that all Hon. Members are invited to a Half Day Workshop jointly organised by Parliament and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 starting from 0900 hours sharp in the Multi-Purpose Hall. UNICEF and ZIMSTATs will jointly present the provincial and district census data and profiles to all the Members.

**HON. ZEMURA:** On a point of privilege Mr. Speaker Sir...

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** I beg your pardon.

**HON. ZEMURA:** I said point of privilege...

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Point of privilege today on a Wednesday?

**HON. ZEMURA:** Yes, please.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Of national interest?

**HON. ZEMURA:** Of national interest.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** But you know that Hon. Member, we do not entertain those on Wednesdays.

**HON. ZEMURA:** So, no privilege today?

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Yes, this was your decision in terms of the Standing Orders.

**HON. MUTSEYAMI:** On a point of order. You did not favour the House with regards to Cabinet Ministers who are not in the House in terms of apologies.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** I was not favoured with the list. As you can see, they are bringing it now.

**HON. MUTSEYAMI:** All the same Hon. Speaker, before you even favour us with the apologies, there is need to take note that if you look at the bench, most of the Ministers are not here. It is now more like a cast in stone....

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** You are opening a debate now. That is no longer a point of order. You have requested me to read the apologies, so I am complying.

#### APOLOGIES RECEIVED FROM MINISTERS

**THE HON. SPEAKER :** The Hon. Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, Prof. M. Ncube; Hon. Dr. Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Child Care; Hon. O.C.Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri, Minister of Defence; Hon. M. Mutsvangwa, Minister of Women's Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development; Hon. Garwe, I thought I saw him here – Minister of Local Government and Public Works, I was advised that he was proceeding to Victoria Falls, but he indicated that he will attend to question time here. Hon. B. Rwodzi, Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry; Hon. T. Mnangagwa, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry; Hon. Dr. Masuka, Minister of Lands; Hon. V. Haritatos, Deputy Minister of Lands; Hon. Prof. Murwira, Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education; Hon. S. Sibanda, Deputy Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education; Hon. Mupamhanga Jnr, Deputy Minister

of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training; Hon. Jesaya, Deputy Minister of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture; Hon. Sanyatwe, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; Hon. D. Phuti, Deputy Minister of Information, Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services; Hon. Kambamura, Deputy Minister of Mines; Hon. A. Gata, Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education; Hon. R. Modi, Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce and Hon. Y. Simbanegavi, Deputy Minister of Energy and Power Development.

I want to assure you Hon. Mutseyami and the House that I have written to His Excellency the President indicating the rosters of Hon. Ministers who appear to be constantly absent in the House, contrary to Section 107 (2) of the Constitution. I want to believe that His Excellency the President will take the necessary action accordingly.

### **ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**HON. KANGAUSARU:** My question goes to the Minister of Finance. How does the Minister's Public Finance Management System ensure timely and transparent disbursement of funds to local authorities

and service providers operating in the rural areas, especially in Hurungwe?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON. D.**

**K. MNANGAGWA):** Thank you Mr. Speaker and thank you Hon.

Member who asks about the PFMS which is our integrated system that ensures payment requests are submitted and disbursements alike. We are having some challenges. The system is going through upgrades to make sure that it caters for the whole of Government.

Historically and in the past few months, it has been working efficiently for the non-NDS and the rest has been manual. As we speak, the necessary upgrades and tweaks are being done, so there will be more efficiency. I would like to think that in the next few weeks or months, you will see a more streamlined payment system, especially at local authority level, both municipal and the rural ones.

**HON. KANGAUSARU:** Thank you for the answer Deputy Minister...

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Order Hon. Member, you address the Hon. Ministers as the Hon. Minister. That is the in-House Standing Order.

**HON. KANGAUSARU:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. Thank you Mr. Hon. Deputy – [*Laughter.*] –

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** *Ko Mr. akubva kupi futi?*

**HON. KANGAUSARU:** Thank you Hon. Minister for the answer – Mr. Hon. – [*Laughter.*] - Mr. Speaker Sir, can I bring it again. Thank you very much for the answer Hon. Deputy Minister. What measures are there in place to address the delays and the leakages?

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Hon. Minister, if you can respond on the question of delays.

**HON. D. K. MNGANGAWA:** I think it is a variation of the same question which will be presumption that there are specific delays other than the general delays from the system not working efficiently. I will reiterate that there are system upgrades to make it more automated as opposed to some of the manual processes that we have to go through. We will see within the next weeks and months, more automated

processes for all our ministries, departments and agencies through the PFMS.

**HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** My supplementary question to the Hon. Minister of Finance is, are there no opportunities for embezzlement of the national purse during this time when we are using the manual system, especially when disbursing money to local authorities? Is there any option to feed into the system once the system is up?

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** I do not know what the Minister will say but when you feed the system, it means you are activating it to be more proficient. I will leave that to the Hon. Minister to respond

**HON. D. K. MNGANGAWA:** While there are delays, this does not mean payments are not happening. There is processing in place which might not be desirable at the present moment but this is being worked on from the technical point of view to make sure that our IT and ICT systems are working efficiently.

**HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA:** My question is directed to the Minister of Transport who is the Leader of the House

today, Hon. Mhona. What is Government policy on public transport for persons with disability, especially those who are physically disabled?

**THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for this pertinent question which is very emotional, where we have witnessed some of our persons with disabilities struggling to navigate and move especially when boarding public transport.

It is quite befitting that I apprise this august House that we are advocating for those who are importing buses to make sure that when they import buses, they also import buses with the provision of accommodating people with disability. We are doing this through the Ministry of Transport but you have seen that quite a number of public service vehicles that we have do not conform to that requirement. We will continue through moral suasion that we have such vehicles plying our roads. We will continue having that regard in terms of making sure public transport is available and is in tandem with those who have

challenges, whether they are disabled or not, in a position to board normally like any reasonable person.

The humble plea to this august House is to come up with very effective pieces of legislation that if you then say you can not continue importing and if it comes again from this august House, we are there to implement with speed but above all, as a Ministry, we will continue with our engagement, working closely with other ministries as a whole of Government approach.

**HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA:** Hon. Speaker, I have heard of late that when you purchase a vehicle and want to register it, you cannot register without a radio licence. So, why is the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development not taking this same initiative to say if your bus does not conform to the regulations and rules that accommodate persons with disabilities, then it cannot be registered? Remember in this country, the President has this mantra that no one should be left behind, where are we as a Ministry? Yes, they were advocating, we thank them but we have not heard that noise about persons with disabilities' transport.

Hon. Speaker, persons with disabilities are being lifted into buses. As a woman, I lose my dignity when I am carried onto the bus with my dress flying all over. Let us give dignity to persons with disabilities, I think the Hon. Minister should even give us more on this issue.

**HON. MHONA:** Once again, thank you, Hon. Speaker. As I indicated, it is an emotional debate that will also affect everyone even those who are seated in this august House. Since time immemorial, we have witnessed persons with disabilities facing such challenges and as I alluded to earlier, yes, we need to move as a country because at times we are not conforming to the dictates of accommodating persons with disabilities. So as a whole of Government, as I indicated, we should look at the public transportation system which falls under the purview of - if we are talking of cities, Local Government.

We are reasoning together as Ministries to mitigate these challenges that we are facing in the transportation of people with disabilities. I agree with the Hon. Member that yes, we need to move with speed so that we present and uphold the sanctity and dignity of citizens, especially those who have disabilities. I thank you.

**\*HON. MUCHEMWA:** I want to ask what measures are in place for the disabled to be exempted from paying for public transport?

Persons living with disabilities are being asked to pay a fare even for their wheelchairs in public transport. What measures are you putting in place to protect persons living with disabilities from paying for public transport?

**\*HON. MHONA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir. I thank you Hon. Muchemwa as well. I would like to inform the august House that the Department of Ministry of Finance, in conjunction with ZIMRA, allows disabled persons to import vehicles on rebate. Many of them have complied with that provision and imported their vehicles. This arrangement allows the disabled to get their cars for use.

In liaising with other Ministers, we will look into that because sometimes the disabled use pirate transport. We will look into that and ensure that they are exempted from paying fares. I will talk to the relevant Ministry concerning that matter. I thank you.

**HON. MUTSEYAMI:** Is it on record that the Government, as of now, does not have legislation that addresses people living with

disabilities with regards to having transport that is both affordable and usable?

**HON. MHONA:** Thank you, Hon. Speaker Sir. Let me also thank Hon. Prosper Mutseyami for that very important question. When it comes to legislation, as the Executive, we are there to enforce. I would also pose the same question again to the august House. If there is that *lacuna*, why are we not putting up legislation to make sure that we have such?

However, to answer Hon. Mutseyami as he has asked, the policy is very clear that no one and no place must be left behind. This is the policy of the Government, whether we are talking of persons with disabilities or we are talking of other service provisions, we must provide transport. Constitutionally, it is the mandate of the Government to make sure that we provide adequate resources that we have so that people, whenever they are boarding our buses, whether it is private or public vehicles, are accommodated.

In cases of those owning their vehicles, I indicated that we have a policy that will enable persons with disabilities to also import their

vehicles using rebates. However, I would also want to make sure that at the end of the day, if there is a gap, we can work closely with the Executive and the Legislature to try to fill the gap. I thank you.

**\*HON. MARIKANO:** Good afternoon Mr. Speaker Sir. My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. What measures have been put in place by the Government in conjunction with what is happening at the Railways of Zimbabwe in terms of maintenance?

Our trains should be able to convey passengers and transport goods as well.

**\*THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Yes goods used to be transported through the railway line, now it is no longer there. However, right now, because of the Vision of His Excellency the President, we have friends and other countries helping to revamp the railway system. Of late, we have had accidents at railway crossings because people thought the railway lines were no longer functional

Yes, our infrastructure was poor and dilapidated, but I would like to tell this Parliament and the country at large that our railway line is still very intact. Our tracks are being used, however, 10% of our tracks need attention and we are working on straightening those tracks. There is a bank that we are engaging with that has promised to avail us the resources so that we can have new engines.

It will take time of course, but it is our wish as Government to revamp our tracks. We will also start with a passenger train from Harare to Bulawayo. We are working on Chitungwiza – Harare tracks in liaison with the CMED. In a short time, we will be working on this track to enable residents of Chitungwiza to come to town by train. The service will also be extended to Norton and Ruwa. I thank you Hon. Speaker.

**HON. MANDIWANZIRA:** Thank you very much Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the Hon. Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development for the articulation of the work that the Government is doing to resuscitate, revive and repair some of the parts of our railways that are not working.

If we consider the fact that we are hardly saying network for the longest time, I just want to find out from the Hon. Minister, are there any plans to build new routes for railways as the Hon. Minister maybe aware that there have been discoveries of mineral resources? For instance, lithium in many parts of our country where the main transport system is just road, but where it wants or justifies the building of the railway network. Is there any consideration by the Government to establish new networks than to just repair what is existing? I thank you Mr. Speaker Sir.

**HON. MHONA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir. Let me also thank my brother, Hon. Supa Mandiwanzira, for that very important question which is very topical and very pertinent. Hon. Speaker Sir, not only the existing infrastructure that I talked about, we have also seen the advent of mining companies like what he has alluded to and the connectivity to those mining companies is of paramount importance again to the Ministry. I can cite a good example, Manhize which is coming on board shortly, where we are going to be constructing a new line from Manhize to Mvuma, that is a 50 kilometer line – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear,*

*hear*]- not only that, it will also feed into Mvuma. We want the shortest possible distance to the port and we are talking of Beira Port Mr.

Speaker Sir. So, we are also earmarking to have a new dedicated line from Mvuma to Nyazura whereby the transporter would not need to take goods to Harare *via* Mutare, but will have a dedicated line again.

We also have to connect the missing link Hon. Speaker Sir, between ourselves and Kafue. We know that if you are going to gravitate towards Mashonaland West, our railway network ends in Lion's Den. So we are connecting Lion's Den and Kafue so that we have the North-South corridor connection now in a proper and sound state. So, you will see us again together with Zambia, constructing the missing link from Lion's Den to Kafue which is also another new line. With the discovery of minerals, it is the desire of the Ministry so that we take the railway line right up to the door step of the mining company. Thank you, Hon. Speaker Sir. – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] -

**\*HON. MATINENGA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir and I thank the Hon. Minister for the answer to the question asked by the Hon. Member on the resuscitation of our railway networks. I will go further

to ask - what timeframe can he give us, are you going to do that this year or next year? Can he explain so that the populace is satisfied? I thank you Mr. Speaker Sir.

**\*HON. MHONA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I thank the Hon. Member for the pertinent question. Her question desires that what I have just said here could be done as soon as possible. For instance, when we spoke about building roads to Parliament – people thought that this was impossible, but the roads are in place now. This means what we are talking about concerning the railway system is what we are working on right now as we see that we have resources in terms of agriculture and minerals. We have sectors that are looking into the railway system right now. We are about to finish Machipanda to Manicaland. We have 10 kilometers that had gone bad; we are trying to revamp that in conjunction with a company from Mozambique.

We are revamping that and resuscitating the railway so that as a land-locked country, we are able to access ports, be it Beira or Maputo. This is why we are resuscitating our railway system. You will see all

this happening as Parliament because we are implementing all this – this is work in progress. I thank you.

**HON. P. DUBE:** Thank you very much Hon. Speaker and thank you very much to the Hon. Minister. Perhaps, would the Hon. Minister assure this House if there are funds allocated for the implementation of these very important projects? Thank you.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Well, the question does not arise, because the Hon. Minister has already indicated that it is work in progress. If work is in progress, then the money must be there somehow, otherwise there would not be any work in progress.

**HON. MASVISVI:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My question is directed to the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, Hon. T. Moyo. What is the Ministry's policy in regard to the enhancement of digital literacy to establish computer and internet connectivity in schools, particularly in rural areas, in line with the Heritage Based Education 5.0 model?

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Is the Hon. Minister in here or the deputy? Hon. Minister Ziyambi, there was a small technical coup and

Hon. Mhona was acting Leader of Government Business. Do you want to take over?

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (HON. Z. ZIYAMBI):** You scared him Mr. Speaker Sir by reference to the word coup. So he is no longer interested. Good afternoon Mr. Speaker Sir.

Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I want to thank the Hon. Member for the question which pertains to availability of internet facilities in primary schools to ensure that our learners are captured early in terms of appreciating digital technology. Mr. Speaker, I thought that the Hon. Member was going to direct the question to the Minister of Information, Communication Technology who is here.

She is very much responsible for ensuring that across the Government sector, we have a whole Government approach. Her brief is to ensure that we have internet connectivity, be it to learners, industry, local authorities, you name it. So with your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, a more informed answer would come from the Minister of Information Communication Technology who is here. I thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION  
TECHNOLOGY, POSTAL AND COURIER SERVICES (HON.**

**DR. MAVETERA):** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. Let me thank the Hon. Member for that question. Like what the Hon. Leader of the House said, as a Ministry, we are superintending for us to be able to make sure we have got digital classrooms, digital connectivity, especially in primary and secondary schools.

The policy direction that we have, Hon. Speaker, is to make sure that we connect all schools. The policy that we have is also to make sure that the connectivity or the network that we are going to be providing will be for only one year and after that, we expect the school to be able to come up with a sustainability plan which will make sure that they will have internet.

Through the Universal Services Fund, we have been able to establish computer laboratories. To date, we have established 202 computer laboratories and we still hope we will be able to do more. We have also managed to connect and give computers to more than 1000 schools. I know that sometimes we might not be able to finish a

computer laboratory, but what we have been able to do is to make sure that at least we avail computers to various schools.

Again, I want to appreciate the visionary leadership of His Excellency, our President. Two weeks ago, he launched an e-learning platform in Makumimavi School in Chikomba West. That alone shows the thrust that our President has in line with us making sure that we have got virtual classrooms and schools that are connected. So this is the policy as far as us making sure that we connect everyone. We do not leave anyone and any place behind, especially in the rural population. Thank you Hon. Speaker.

**HON. MASVISVI:** My supplementary question is, what immediate interventions are you putting in place to reduce the imbalances between the rural and urban schools standard of learning as desired by the NDS1 and 2 towards the attainment of Vision 2030 goals?

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** That is a separate question altogether. It does not connect with digital platforms that was invoked by the original question.

**HON. MASVISVI:** Mr. Speaker Sir, maybe I may elaborate.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** No, you cannot elaborate on a wrong question.

**HON.MASVISVI:** Thank you Hon. Speaker.

**HON. CHIGUMBU:** Supplementary question Mr. Speaker Sir. I want to ask, you mentioned that you are following a policy in terms of computers and computer laboratories in schools. Within your policy, is there anything that caters for standardisation of whatever you are putting up in those schools, considering that technology is moving at lightning speed? We would not want a situation whereby we end up dumping computers in computer laboratories in schools. Do we have any policy that speaks to the quality and standardisation of whatever you are putting in those computer laboratories? I thank you.

**HON. DR. MAVETERA:** Yes, indeed, we have got a standard. This is why you heard me say that when we are giving out computers, we have got different categories. We have got a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 30 for each computer laboratory. We have realised that we also need to look at upskilling whereby we are now training teachers into coding and robotics.

So just looking at that, we are saying we also need to train them. We need to make sure that these teachers are equipped in terms of making sure that they relay this information to our students, at the same time looking at giving standardised connectivity and a certain bandwidth which is equivalent to each and every school.

That is what we have managed to do. However, we still feel that there is more that needs to be done to make sure that at least we come up with ways which will see us introducing more to schools, but as it stands now, it is quite the same in all the schools. All we need to do considering the resources, sometimes it is minimum, sometimes it is maximum, but we have tried to standardise to make sure that it is all the same in each and every area. Thank you.

**HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** Point of clarity.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** You cannot ask a supplementary question through a point of clarity.

**HON: MADZIVANYIKA:** Supplementary question Mr. Speaker. Thank you Mr. Speaker. As a follow up to the issue of connectivity in terms of the rural areas, rural schools, how far have you

gone as a Ministry in terms of the Starlink deal? The Starlink deal has got a broader bandwidth, it has got bigger geographical cover and also fast speed of processing power. How far have you gone to improve?  
Thank you Mr. Speaker.

**HON. DR. MAVETERA:** Yes, as far as Starlink is concerned, we want to thank our President for the visionary leadership that he has shown in making sure that he allows Starlink to be licenced in Zimbabwe. We are now finalising on the technical modalities to make sure that we conclude. I am sure within the next two weeks, we would have concluded. Thank you.

**\*HON. CHOKURURAMA:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to first thank the President for appointing ministers who are able to build this country. My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. With his expertise, all roads are now tarred. As we move between Chivhu and Mvuma, there are a lot of bridges that have their steel girders or edges broken down as the bridges have been vandalised and accidents may occur...

**\*THE HON. SPEAKER:** You are now telling a long story, just go straight into your question.

**\*HON. CHOKURURAMA:** My question is; what measures or plans are there to resuscitate such damaged bridges?

**\*HON. MUTSEYAMI:** On a point of order. My point of order Mr. Speaker is that the question that has just been asked by Hon. Chokururama was asked last week by Hon. Zhou and responded to.

**\*THE HON. SPEAKER:** I was not around but Hon. Minister, is that correct?

**THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** Mr. Speaker, I was also not around.

**\*THE HON. SPEAKER:** And the Leader of Government Business, was the same question asked?

**\*THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (HON.Z. ZIYAMBI):** We were both not here Mr. Speaker.

**\*THE HON. SPEAKER:** Hon. Deputy Speaker, what is the truth here?

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Mr. Speaker, I was not around as well, but maybe my colleague beside me here was present.

**\*HON. TSITSI ZHOU:** I recall that when I was in the Chair, that question was not asked. So, the question should be answered.

**\*THE HON. SPEAKER:** Is that so. This is a challenge for us to know who is telling the truth now – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hansard.*] – We do not have the *Hansard* here as well. So, Hon. Minister, you can respond to the question.

**THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** I would like to thank Hon. Chokururama for the important question. We have people who are criminals in this country. We are busy developing the country while some are busy vandalising our infrastructure. We have some artisanal miners who even dig underneath the roads or rails and in so doing, vandalising our resources. The same applies to the bridges. They go to vandalise some of the components there and sell them. This

is a matter of concern to us as a country and we cannot allow that to continue.

We have rivers and bridges where some of the steel components or girders have been removed. May we have a certain sentence for those people who vandalise so that we can maintain our infrastructure? Even some of our road marks, especially the reflectors that we put on the roads are vandalised. I do not know where we are, but it is our request as a Ministry that we should have a sentence and that wherever we go, we should conscientise each other not to vandalise our infrastructure.

**\*HON. MUCHEMWA:** My supplementary question to the Minister is that in other countries, we see some roads being constructed nicely, but we have private companies which are allocated to maintain the roads. For instance, from Chivhu to Masvingo, there should be a company to ensure that repairs and maintenance is done on the road. Do we have a plan that we can put in place here in Zimbabwe to do the same?

**\*HON. MHONA:** I thank Hon. Muchemwa who comes from Mashonaland East for the pertinent question. It is true that we revamp

our roads and to ensure that we maintain the standards. His vision is also a vision that we have as a Ministry so that when roads have been done, those who will have done the project of that road should take a certain time ensuring that the road is maintained. Whatever repairs are needed, they should attend to them. We look up to these companies to ensure that they maintain and repair those roads should there be any damage. The plan is in place for those who would have worked on the road. A road should last at least 20 years without any damages. If it is damaged before that period, the company should come and attend to that.

**\*HON. MATIZA:** I want to first commend the Minister for a job well done pertaining to the roadworks, but we also have natural disasters that destroy bridges. For instance, Gokwe-Sesame bridge which connects Gokwe and Nembudziya. It helps a lot of people, particularly those who will have fallen ill. People have problems there. What measures do you have in place for damages caused by natural disasters?

**\*THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** I want

to thank Hon. Matiza for the question and I want to say that I am glad to speak to the Hon. Member for the first time. If you look at NDS1, we are expected to attend to infrastructure that is climate resistant. As Government, we work hand-in-glove with the Civil Protection Unit which is under the Ministry of Local Government that whenever there is a disaster, we put our heads together to ensure that those affected can be assisted. For example, if a disaster happens on the road resulting in the loss of lives, Government and Civil Protection Unit come in to assist the affected.

**HON. JAMES:** My question is directed to the Minister of Finance. Can the Minister confirm that the debt he reported to the African Development Bank at the end of April was approximately US\$2.7bn higher than that approved in the budget for this year in December 2023?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA):** Our debt figures are still going through some validation and reconciliation. There has been US\$1.9billion recapitalisation of the Mutapa Fund and an additional US\$1.2billion that

was assumed from the RBZ. These would still need to be reconciled and validated before they are entered in the debt profile. That process is still underway.

**HON. JAMES:** Presumably, these will come through to Parliament before expenditure. Can the Deputy Minister give us an idea what this money is being spent on?

**HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA:** I can assure the Hon. Member that all this expenditure will come through Parliament and the process of validation and the reconciliation, particularly for the debts that we have assumed from the RBZ, as to what exactly these monies were used for, and to make sure that they were actually used for the purposes they were said to have been used for. This is a process to ensure that your question will be answered at the right time. I thank you.

**HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** In the last three weeks, the Minister of Finance tabled the debt position for this country here in Parliament and left copies. Was that not including the debt assumed from the RBZ and the recapitalisation of the Mutapa Investment Fund?

**HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA:** The process of this validation and reconciliation is to ascertain how we treat some of this expenditure, whether it becomes top of the line or bottom of the line. Whether that was the correct position or not, I would ask that we allow the processes to go through the various departments and technocrats. Indeed, there is an additional US\$2.7billion that was presented at the AfDB by the Hon. Minister, which is still going through a validation process. If you can wait for that and how we treat it from an accounting perspective, we should be able to give a precise answer. I thank you.

**HON. G. HLATYWAYO:** I just wanted to find out on the timelines?

**HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA:** I would have to come back again and give timelines. What I can assure the Hon. Member is that this is a process that as Treasury, we are keen to make sure that we close as quickly as possible and ensure that our books are in good order. So, we will try to get it expediently done. The processes are currently underway. I thank you.

**THE HON SPEAKER:** If you may allow me Deputy Minister, did you resolve the issue as per our telephone discussion without you giving details? – [*Laughter*]-

**HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA:** Mr. Speaker Sir, you said you would advise if I needed to intervene and I should wait.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** So, there was no intervention as yet?

**HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA:** From my part no, Mr. Speaker.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** If you can proceed to intervene. On the same note, I would like to see the Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Minister of Energy and Power Development, Minister of Industry and Commerce and the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. When you see me disappear, do not follow me at the same time. Just watch when someone comes back, then you can proceed to see me. There are one or two issues that we need to have *tete-a-tete* on. Thank you.

**\*HON. T. MURWIRA:** My question is directed to the Minister of Energy and Power Development. May you kindly update us on the electricity situation in the country? In some areas, electricity comes back

around 10pm and goes around 3am. What is the plan when it comes to electricity?

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER**

**DEVELOPMENT (HON. E. MOYO):** Thank you very much and I want to thank the Hon. Member for the question. We are currently going through a lean period in terms of power generation mainly as a result of...

**AN. HON. MEMBER:** Point of order Mr. Speaker.

**THE HON SPEAKER:** What is your point of order?

**\*AN. HON. MEMBER:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. The person asked in *Shona*, so she is expecting to be answered in *Shona*.

**\*THE HON. SPEAKER:** I dreamt that she understands English.

**HON. E. MOYO:** Thank you very much Hon. Speaker. I think there is interpretation going on. Hon. Speaker, the issue of power supply in the country is heavily affected by hydrological issues in Lake Kariba where we have lost over 800 megawatts. The stored capacity at Kariba is 1050 megawatts and we are only able to produce 214 megawatts on average because of the water rationing which has resulted out of low

inflows in the lake. On that perspective, after losing over 800 megawatts, it makes it very difficult to sufficiently supply power in the country.

However, we have come up with measures to ensure that our power supply at least is able to make the country function, one of which was the commissioning of Units 7 and 8, which produce above 600 megawatts on a daily basis and those two units are very efficient.

We also have Units 1 to 6 where we have 4 Units in operation and they are producing an average of 300 megawatts. Some of those units are not very reliable and we have come up with a mechanism to constantly repair them. We are doing a lot of maintenance work in those units so that they can be as efficient as possible.

The other measures that we have put in place includes renewable energy, efforts where we have given licences to a number of IPPs who are developing own projects. Some of them are mines, others are factories and agricultural undertakings where they are producing their own power. On the mining front, we have asked Ferro Chrome miners, those ones are subsidised, they have a lower rate in terms of their tariffs.

So, we have asked them and given them a period of time which lapses at the end of next year to develop their own generation plants for own consumption so that we have more power, which is free for social use. I thank you.

**HON. MANGONDO:** Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir, Good afternoon. My supplementary question. First of all, let me thank the Hon. Minister for the detailed response he has given with regards to the incessant power cuts that we are experiencing. My question to the Hon. Minister has to do with power cuts which are caused by faults not repaired on time. I will give an example of my own school and clinic in my own village in Murewa South Constituency which has no supply of electricity since last year due to faults. The question to the Hon. Minister is, what is the policy in terms of repair of faults as well as whether Government has service level agreements with ZETDC in terms of their Service Charter? Thank you.

**HON. E. MOYO:** Thank you very much Hon. Speaker Sir, and thank you for the follow up question. In the case of faults, there are different causes of faults which range from antiquated equipment to

vandalism. On the specific question of the policy, the policy is to expeditiously attend to those faults. In specific cases where those faults have not been attended to for such long periods as given by the Hon. Member, I would propose that we have a discussion around that on the specific issues so that we can make follow-ups and determine what the reasons are. It will be very difficult to generalise in terms of attending to faults because each fault has its own problems and constraints. I would advise the Member that we meet even after this session or they can come to the offices and we have a look into that. Otherwise, the policy is to expeditiously attend to faults. I thank you.

**HON. MALINGANISO:** My supplementary question to the Hon. Minister, is there any service level agreement between the Government and the power utility with regard to this service provision? Thank you.

**HON. E. MOYO:** Thank you very much Madam Speaker. The Service Charter is very clear and that is to ensure that there is expeditious attendance of faults. However, like I indicated earlier or perhaps if I could go back to history a bit, we all know that towards the end of last year, we received a cost reflective tariff after so many years

without one. That resulted in a funding gap which could have affected service delivery in terms of procurement of spares and in terms of other amenities that are required for the service to be rendered seamlessly. Now with the cost reflective tariff, I think the situation has improved although we still lag behind in some areas, especially where high level equipment, expensive equipment is required. As I said, if there is a specific issue, a lot of Members of Parliament visit us so that we rectify some of the issues that they are facing. I think today I hosted two Members of Parliament on the same and I am sure their issues were resolved. Those that we have not been able to resolve are work in progress and there are a number of reasons why in some cases those faults are not immediately attended to. Thank you.

**HON. DHLIWAYO:** Thank you Madam Speaker. My supplementary is, we have an individual who managed to invent a device that can tap radio energy and I think is currently in the United States, Maxwell Chikumbutso. I want to understand if there are any attempts by the Ministry of Energy to do research or to engage such

individuals so that we enhance our electricity generation capacity?

Thank you.

**HON. E. MOYO:** Thank you Madam Speaker. At the moment, we have not followed up that although we shared after reading the article regarding the said inventor and we submitted to the technical departments at ZESA Holdings. We have not really got any responses regarding that and sometimes in terms of technology development, there are a number of stages that the technology has to go through until it matures to a point where it can be commercialised but at the moment, we have not really pursued much of that. Thank you.

**HON. JAMES:** Can I ask the Hon. Minister, he spoke about cost effective tariffs, has he noticed an increase in revenue collections since the conversion to ZiG?

### **THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER**

**DEVELOPMENT (HON. EDGAR MOYO):** Thank you very much Madam Speaker, I think that question was asked before and I will repeat the response that I made last week. There has not been a further increase apart from what was awarded towards the end of last year. What could

have happened for which I ask the Hon. Member to give us a specific written question is that our tariffs were pegged in US dollars and then the movements were now following the movements in the exchange rate. This is what I know but apart from that, there has not been any further increase apart from what was awarded. I thank you.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. James, please may you put your question in writing so that the Minister will go and make some investigations and come to this House with a comprehensive answer.

Thank you.

**HON. MUTOKONYI:** We want to thank you for the buses which are carrying people in the rural areas. Madam Speaker, it looks like that our cheap buses, the ZUPCO buses are no longer plying very well in our areas. So we want to know whether there are any challenges being faced by ZUPCO, why they are not plying these routes. In the Svosve area, they rely on those buses but they are not there.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It is now a specific question. That you mentioned Svosve, it now becomes a specific question. I think the Minister can answer. Hon. Mutokonyi you can repeat your question.

**\*HON. MUTOKONYI:** My question is the public transport which is cheap and safe, they were pirating very well, but now in most areas, they are not pirating, especially in the rural areas. Are there any challenges causing these buses not to ply the rural areas routes?

**\*THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (HON. Z. ZIYAMBI):** I want to thank the Hon. Member for the very pertinent question which shows that the Hon. Member is aware that when our President came into power, there were a lot of ZUPCO buses plying our areas, but has realised that there are not enough in the area where the Hon. Member comes from. What happened is that when this programme was started, there were a lot of problems in the urban areas. You realise that most of the buses that were sourced by the President were put in urban centres, but then if you look closely on the last allocation, he commissioned buses through those who are manufacturing the buses, that they should manufacture buses which are suitable for rural areas. Those buses should be manufactured locally. Those buses which are going to be manufactured, are going to ply all the roads in our country. We were forcing those

buses which we received, but we are happy that those who are manufacturing buses, are collaborating with those from outside so that the buses will be manufactured locally. You will find those buses on our roads very soon.

**\*HON. CHITIMBE:** He says that the buses were now in the urban areas, but in the urban areas, we do not have those buses, where are they?

**\*HON. Z. ZIYAMBI:** The way we see things is different, it depends on what you want to see and what you want to believe in. The buses came, the President commissioned the buses, the responsible Minister was there because he was leading the sourcing and distribution of the buses in the urban centres. If they do not see them, it means they are on the roads that is if she is not seeing them parked at the depots.

Thank you Madam Speaker.

**\*HON. MUCHEMWA:** I have heard from the first speaker that the ZUPCO buses are cheap and reliable, but some of these buses are charging high fares. We knew that there were fare tables which charged according to distances, but these ones are just charging *willy-nilly*. What

is Government policy so that they work together with private companies to provide them with table fares for the benefit of our people?

**HON. Z. ZIYAMBI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. From our investigations through the Government of our President, we see that if we put price controls, they destroy businesses. We do not want to force people to sell at a certain fixed price because those people will go out of business. We encourage market forces so that a lot of people get into this industry. If a lot of people get into the industry, there will be a lot of competition and then people will reduce prices on their own because there will be competition in the business.

**HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** Thank you Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Home Affairs and in his absence, to the Leader of Government Business. Do you have the capacity to arrest and prosecute criminal elements that are alleged to be close to the Presidium of this country? If you are not, is it possible to invoke what has been invoked in November 2017, to correct or restore legacy? I thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AND  
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (HON. Z. ZIYAMBI):** Madam  
Speaker Ma'am, I want to thank the Hon. Member for the question. Can  
the Hon. Member furnish me with concrete proof that the President is  
surrounded by criminals? I thank you.

**HON. MPOFU:** My question is directed to the Minister of Youth.  
What is Government policy on the implementation of addressing drug  
abuse amongst the youths in rural and marginalised areas? I thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT,  
DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING (HON.  
MACHAKAIRE):** Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I also want  
to thank the Hon. Member for her pertinent question. As you are aware,  
our largest population in this country constitutes the youths. We have a  
serious problem of drug and substance abuse but as a Ministry, we have  
a Committee that was created by His Excellency the President, which  
looks into that matter. I however, want to assure the Hon. Member that  
as the Committee and the Ministry sit under the demand reduction pillar,  
on that Committee, we are working very hard to ensure that we create

programmes for the youths to fight this scourge. At the same time, I want to say that as a Ministry, we have started awareness programmes in rural areas to make sure that we educate our youths. We also have a programme that we are working hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Health. They have facilities for those that are drug addicts. I also want to say that in the coming few months, you will see the Ministry going to rural areas to start educating the youths that are under the influence of drugs. I thank you.

**HON. MPOFU:** My supplementary question is, how effective are the policies and initiatives in reducing drug abuse among young people and how is the success measured? I thank you.

**HON. MACHAKAIRE:** Thank you Madam Speaker. Like I alluded to earlier on that in a few months to come, we are going to start rolling out programmes pertaining to this matter though we have already started. In some districts, there are programmes where we are working hand-in-hand with Hon. Members of Parliament to make sure that we educate our youths on the dangers of drugs and substance abuse. I thank you.

**\*HON. MUTSEYAMI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. My supplementary question is on the issue of drug and substance abuse. I want to know what Government is doing in order for a law to be passed so that people are rehabilitated. We have come to the realisation that most of the rehabilitation centres are owned by private companies and they are very expensive and out of the reach of many. What plans has Government put in place to come up with cheap rehabilitation centres so that people can go there for rehabilitation? I thank you.

**\*HON. MACHAKAIRE:** My response to the supplementary question is that we had some places which were COVID centres. Those places are being converted into rehabilitation centres and as I alluded to earlier, we are working together with the Ministry of Health for those places to be converted in order to accommodate drug addicts. We are also getting into private partnerships with other companies so that we help each other and work together. The challenge of drug abuse requires all of us as a nation to work together and fight together. Let me hasten to thank some people who are building their own private places. Some are in partnership with Government and we are taking our children there,

but we look forward as Government, to have our own places in the shortest possible time. We are taking over all the places that were COVID centres and turning them into rehabilitation centres. I thank you.

**\*HON. MUSANHI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I would like to find out from the Hon Minister the Government policy on those who are supplying drugs. They should be taken seriously as they are the ones causing the problems. The people are known and the drug peddlers are known. Those who supply to schools are known as well. I thank you.

**\*HON. MACHAKAIRE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me thank the Hon. Member for his supplementary question. We see the challenges of youths but we have our Home Affairs Department that we work with. We meet in certain meetings with those in charge of Home Affairs. It is the Minister who has the power to prosecute people who peddle drugs but in the few days there was a blitz and most of them were prosecuted.

However, if you do not mind Madam Speaker, I can go and come up with a written statement so that we can put our heads together with Hon. Members.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I think let me help you, Hon. Minister. You can refer the question to the Minister of Home Affairs so that he can come up with a response.

**HON. NKUNI:** I thank you, Hon. Speaker Ma'am. My supplementary question on drug abuse is that prevention is better than cure. What provision does the Ministry have to keep these youths from idleness? I think the cause of drug abuse is because they have nothing to do, especially after high school or university.

**HON. MAVHUDZI:** On a point of order! The very same question was asked last week by Hon. M. Ziyambi and it was responded to.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is it true that the question was asked last week? – [HON. MEMBERS: *Yes.*] – So, Hon. Member you can read the Hansard.

**HON. MAPIKI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, lands, fisheries, water, and rural development, if he is not there I can direct it to the leader of the House. What is the Government policy of removing sand from the rivers and dams because all the rivers are silted when farmers want to grow wheat? In the few open dams, water cannot flow smoothly because of siltation.

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL, AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (HON. Z. ZIYAMBI):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I am not mistaken, three or four weeks back, this question was asked and the Minister articulated it very well and I was also impressed.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is it true that the question was asked? – [HON. MEMBERS: *Yes.*] – Hon. Mapiki, you can refer to the *Hansard*.

**HON. SAGANDIRA:** My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Child Care in his absence the Leader of Government Business.

What is the policy regarding menstrual health management particularly with regards to young girls and women with disabilities?

**THE HON. DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE (HON. KWIDINI):** Thank you, Hon. Speaker. Let me also thank the Hon. Member for the question. The question is very broad because there is no illness which is called menstrual health which is managed by the Ministry as such but the menstrual situation is a known nature that is common to all women. So, particularly in disabled women, I think the Hon. Member can put this question in writing so that we can research more.

**HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for the part answer to the question when he said all women have their menstrual periods

**HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** On a point of order! I think the question was stopped at a point where the one who asked was asked to put it in writing. There is no supplementary question there.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Why not wait to hear from the Hon. Member?

**HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just wanted the Deputy Minister to clarify that for sure all women go through the menstrual cycle. So I would like to thank the Minister for the sanitary wear that is being provided to schools. However, the distribution of these sanitary wear is not equitable because the flow differs from person to person. When they are distributing, I think they should look at equity as well in terms of the number of days and flow. I thank you.

**\*THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you Hon. Nyamupinga.

**\*HON. DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE (HON. KWIDINI):** I want to thank you Madam Speaker for the supplementary question that has been put forward by the Hon. Member.

It is very true, as Government, we consider that all women have their menstrual cycle. We will also consider those who live with disabilities, if they have more menstrual days, they should have more pads. Thank you.

**HON. HUNGWE:** Thank you Madam Chair. My question is directed to the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion. What is the Government position on the rate being applied on pegging prices of goods and services?

There is also need for clarity on issues to do with cost of transacting in plastic money and the exchange rate when acquiring United States Dollars from the banks by companies. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA):** Thank you Madam Speaker. If I got it correctly, the Hon. Member's question is, what is Government's policy in terms of the exchange rate used in shops for the pricing of goods? Would I be correct on that?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA:** Madam Speaker, I think Government policy has been quite clear as announced in the Statutory Instrument that was passed in this august House, just a few weeks ago, that the prevailing interbank exchange rate is the one that is supposed to be used in our grocery stores, retailers and any goods and services. Any deviation from that would attract a fine of ZiG 200 000.00 and the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) is always on high alert.

In as far as the high transaction charges, Madam Speaker that is still within the ambit of the banks. We have taken a policy of non-interference in terms of bank charges and transaction costs, but continue to engage our banks to reduce some of these fees to make it easier and more accessible to use electronic money. I thank you Madam Speaker.

**HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** Thank you Madam Speaker. Mine is a follow-up to the Hon. Minister. I understand that the FIU has been making inroads to manufacturers and retailers by freezing and penalising them. Hon. Minister, my question is, are the retailer prices not cost-recovery prices? Hon. Minister, when we compare the transactional

charges for a company to get money from the bank, the bank charges 5%.

Then next there is IMTT, which has been increased to 2%. Lastly, there is 1% administration fee by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and the total is around 8%. So, will those manufacturers and retailers be able to recover the cost if they are allowed to sell at the prevailing interbank rate? Is it possible Hon. Minister, to look into that so that you do not polarise who are doing business legally? Thank you.

**HON. D. MNANGAGWA:** Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you to the Hon. Member of Parliament. Madam Speaker, we are not too concerned about the pricing of these goods, but rather the exchange rate that is being used. I think we have been quite clear that we will not engage in price controls. We will allow the market to cross those who misbehave to cross themselves out. Our main concern is on the exchange rate that is being used. We will take no notice or heed to the pricing and rather let market forces deal with that but what we will monitor is the exchange rate. Thank you Madam Speaker.

**\*HON. MAKUMIRE:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to add my voice. Hon. Speaker, the places we are talking about are the places that were given for farming. We would like to hear what the Minister is saying to the people that are being abused on their land. The people are suffering a lot. They are not being paid for their labour. What does the Minister say to the people who are suffering for their land?

**\*THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** Thank you Hon Speaker. I would like to thank Hon. Makumire for the issue that he has brought to this House. We said we have two issues. If they are in the rural areas, the committees that are led by chiefs choose people who will be in charge, especially those who are not working in estates. They are supposed to be chosen in these areas. They are chosen so they are given money to buy food. That decision to give them money so that they buy food is ongoing. In Chiredzi, it depends with the place and there is no place without a headman. Thank you Hon. Minister.

**\*HON. NYABANI:** On the issue of social welfare, what happens when someone gets two supplies from the cash transfer and social welfare?

**\*HON. J. MOYO:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. This needs evidence because it is corruption. We would like to know who is doing that so that they are corrected for their mistakes.

**\*HON. CHIDUWA:** Thank you. I would like to know, there is a system that was supposed to be there that would avoid double dipping. Is there yet a system that will avoid someone benefiting from cash and maize? Thank you.

**\*HON. J. MOYO:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. I would like to thank Hon. Chiduwa. We are now putting things digitally and we are working on those who are on cash for food. They are now both being put on digital so that we make sure there is no double dipping. Thank you Hon. Speaker.

**HON. NYABANI:** On a point of clarification, Madam Speaker.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have not given you a chance to speak. Go ahead Hon. Nyabani.

**\*HON. NYABANI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. You said there is a system, those who are registering the husband to social welfare and the wife to cash. The double dipping is occurring. It is my question and I am glad that the question has been brought to the House.

**HON. M. NDEBELE:** On a point of order Madam Speaker. I think the Honorable Member must direct his question to the Minister instead of the Speaker of Parliament. I thank you.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you Hon. Member. Hon. Nyabani, please address to me.

**\*HON. NYABANI:** Thank you Honourable Speaker, the issue that I am addressing is, where I am coming from, a woman is registering on cash transfer and the husband to the social welfare and the child to another. The whole household is benefiting. What can be done so that these can be worked on? Thank you.

**\*HON. J. MOYO:** Thank you Madam Speaker. Hon. Member, I said that when we are giving food, there are people who will still be corrupt and corruption will not be ended by Social Welfare officers only. So if an Honourable Member has any information on that, it is important for it to be brought to us so that it can be clarified by the police. I would like to plead to the House that if there is any corruption that you are aware of, please address them so that they can be worked on.

**REDRESS ON THE DEDUCTION TOWARDS THE GOVERNMENT  
EMPLOYEES MUTUAL SERVICES SCHEME**

9. **HON. MATARA** asked the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to explain to the House on the following:

- a. Why a 2.5% deduction towards the Government Employees Mutual Services Scheme (GEMS) is being made from salaries of some Government employees who have not even consented and yet the scheme is said to be on a voluntary basis and,
- b. To state how the aggrieved can seek redress.

## **THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND**

**SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** Allow me to start by giving a brief background of the Government Employees Mutual Savings (GEMS) Fund. GEMS was introduced in 2021 through a Cabinet decision which sought to create a savings culture across the civil service and also after having noted with concern exorbitant interest rates being charged by microfinance institutions to civil service employees. GEMS fund charges concessionary interest rates of 10% per annum whilst on average, microfinance institutions charge as much as 50% to 90% interest rates per month.

a. Let me inform the House that the 2.5% deduction was only implemented after the issuance of a formal minute to all Heads of Ministries to advise members within their purview of the development.

b. The Government Employees Mutual Savings Fund was rolled out with effect from 01 February, 2021. Circular No. 6 of 2021 was communicated to all Heads of Ministries, departments and agencies

advising them to disseminate information about the rolling out of GEMS to all Government employees under their purview.

c. A follow up Circular No. 8 of 2021 was communicated to all Heads of Ministries and agencies advising them to cause prospective members to complete an opt-in or opt-out form to confirm whether they wish to be members of the fund. In the communication, members in the civil service were advised that should a deduction be made from an individual who elects not to be part of GEMS facility, a deduction reversal will be made on the pay sheet of the following month in favour of the individual.

d. To complete Circular No. 6 and 8 of 2021, press statements were issued on 05 February, 2021 and March 2021 respectively. The press statement made efforts to address some of the concerns raised by prospective members of the civil service about the GEMS fund credit facility.

e. In March, 2022, the Public Service Commission undertook a comprehensive stakeholder's consultation regarding the fund. The

meeting which was attended by all Heads of Ministries across provinces and workers representatives was meant to obtain feedback from civil servants on the GEMS fund a year after its launch. The general view from the workers and management was that the facility was providing cheaper loans to borrowers.

f. GEMS allow members to opt out from the scheme at any time as well as accept opt-in from members who wish to rejoin or join for the first time. Of note, is that 40% of members who opted out have rejoined after noting the developmental advantages of the GEMS scheme.

g. GEMS fund has an approved procedure manual document that lays rules for the benefit of its members. The fund is being managed in a systematic basis that allows all members to benefit. To this end, GEMS loans have seen applications increasing by over 100% month on a month.

h. The GEMS fund is being audited on a yearly basis and wished to note that it got an unqualified opinion during the past year.

## CURBING DAMAGE BY HAULAGE TRUCKS ON THE NORTON- MUROMBEDZI HIGHWAY

41. **HON MALINGANISO** asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House the measures being taken by the Ministry to curb damage by haulage trucks on the Norton-Murombedzi Highway.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO):** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for raising the question. Our Ministry is aware of the damage being caused by haulage trucks on the Norton to Murombedzi Highway. The increased number of haulage trucks on the road in question is as a result of a rise in the mining activities in that area. As a Ministry, we are coming up with a legislative framework that will cap the maximum weight that vehicles can carry on that road to 10 tonnes. Our Ministry will further enforce such once a legislative framework is in place using the Vehicle Inspectorate Department and to complement such, the Ministry is also working on constructing weigh bridges along the major highways of the country.

**HON. MALINGANISO:** Is there a possibility that non-weight bridge enforcement tools can be used, for example, relying on the GVM once a truck is loaded, maybe for purposes of prosecution when the road is abused? Is there a possibility that such measures can be employed?

**HON. SACCO:** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the follow up question. There is capacity to use GVM as an indication of weight but in this case, we need to put in place the legislative framework first to allow us to cap the maximum weight to 10 tonnes. Once that is in place, then we will enforce that maximum weight that we would have put in place using VID and other apparatus.

**DESTRUCTION OF THE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE ALONG THE  
BANKET-ZIPAM ROAD**

42. **HON. MALINGANISO** asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to apprise the House on measures being taken by the Ministry to prevent the destruction of the road infrastructure by heavy vehicles and in particular, the Banket-ZIPAM Road.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO):** I think

Question No. 42 is similar to Question No. 41 where the questioner raises on the destruction of road infrastructure on the Banket–ZIPAM Road and the Ministry has taken your concern Hon. Member. We will also look on this as well as we do the legislative framework for both of these roads and other roads that might be so affected by the increase of heavy traffic due to increase in mining activities. We have also taken note of that one but going forward, as a Ministry, we are also looking into recapacitation of the NRZ so that we can move freight from the road to rail to reduce the degradation of our roads.

**COMPLETION OF BRIDGES AND RESURFACING OF THE  
NENYUNGA-SIMUCHEMBO ROAD**

43. **HON. S. TSHUMA** asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to apprise the House regarding the completion by the Ministry on the construction of bridges and resurfacing of the Nenyunga-Simuchembo Road which has been outstanding since September 2023.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO): I**

would like to thank Hon. Tshuma for raising this pertinent question.

Plans are still in place for the continued road works on the Nenyunga – Simuchembo Road. Most of the work has been done but there are issues outstanding in terms of drainage in which our Ministry is committed to expedite the works and ensure that a good network is in place for all citizens. Under the mantra of His Excellency the President, Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa, of leaving no place and no one behind, I would like to assure the Hon. Member that this road remains a priority under the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development and you will see work soon commencing on this particular road.

**\*HON. S. TSHUMA:** Hon. Minister, do you have any plans to commence work before the beginning of the rain season because when the rain season starts, it will be too muddy.

**\*HON. SACCO:** Let me say we are going to sit down as a Ministry and see what work needs to be done and the amount of money to be used but we also look forward to working with other stakeholders. We have plans that ZINARA will give us fuel so that we do emergency

works on those types of roads. We will sit down and see what resources are needed so that the road can be repaired as soon as possible.

**COMMENCEMENT OF THE MUTARE-GRAND REEF BY PASS  
ROAD TO FORBES BORDER POST**

44. **HON JAMES** asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House when the much-awaited Mutare-Grand Reef by pass road construction to the Forbes Border Post will commence.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO):** I would like to take this opportunity to respond to the question raised by Hon. James. Our Ministry remains committed in commencing the work on Mutare-Grand Reef by pass road construction. The commencement of this project is of ultimate importance as it will divert traffic from Christmas Pass which is experiencing many accidents and causing congestion as heavy trucks are using the Christmas Pass. The commencement of this project will kick-start soon after the necessary

approval for funding from the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion and a PPP has been granted.

**HON. JAMES:** Hon. Deputy Minister, we were led to believe that the PPP partner was already in place waiting for the go ahead. We were told that this project would start in December. Surely on a PPP, the partner comes up with the bulk of the money. Perhaps the Minister could explain how the PPP is going to work in this case. I thank you.

**HON. SACCO:** Let me elaborate for the benefit of Hon James and the House that when it comes to private partnerships, the process is quite exhaustive because you want to make sure that monies spent on projects are spent where we get value for money and that projects of such nature go through the Zimbabwe Development Agency (ZIDA), Attorney General's Office and ultimately they go for Cabinet approval. Once this has been granted, the PPP partner has to access financing. Currently we are now at a stage where the Ministry of Finance has to do the relevant approvals to allow the project to start. I would like to ask the Hon. Member to bear with us as the due process is being done so that in

future, you do not point fingers at us for having any short cuts. I would like to ask the Hon. Member to have patience as this happens.

**HON. ZEMURA:** I want to thank the Hon. Minister for his efforts that the roads will be repaired. I want find out on the road that goes from Harare to Nyamapanda. It is really a dangerous road, but there is nothing that is being done to repair that road. The potholes there may cause a lot of problems. It is a major road which is used by tourists to Mozambique and Malawi. Would you mind Hon. Minister putting it on the list so that it can be repaired as soon as possible?

**HON. SACCO:** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for your follow up question. The Harare-Nyamapanda Road is also under consideration for a PPP and processes are underway to allow an investor to take up the construction of the Harare-Nyamapanda border post road. The process is at an advanced stage and we hope that in the near future, you will see work starting on the road. I would like to assure the Hon. Member that with the issue of potholes, as the Ministry of Transport we are using internal resources to repair potholes on the major trunk roads under the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development.

I would like to go further and say that as the Ministry, we are reintroducing maintenance units across the country where we are buying equipment to equip these maintenance units with pick up trucks, water bowsers *et cetera* so that we can deal with periodic maintenance on our major roads. We will communicate to the responsible provincial roads engineer to look into the issue of potholes on the Harare Nyamapanda Road. I would like to assure you that this is one of our priority roads that we will commence work in the near future. I so submit.

**\*HON. NYABANI:** I would like to ask the Deputy Minister that when they are rehabilitating roads in the country, what criteria do they use to select these roads?

**\*HON. SACCO:** Let me answer in this way, Zimbabwe is quite a big country and we have so many roads to be attended to. According to the President's mantra, no man should be left behind and we are making sure that every road is repaired, but we cannot repair every road in one day because we might be constrained in terms of resources. When you see us going into partnerships, we will be trying to make sure that we

attend to as many roads as possible. No province is going to be left behind when it comes to road repairs.

**PLANS TO RESUME THE RESURFACING OF KADOMA-SANYATI-NEMBUDZIYA ROAD**

45. **HON. S. TSHUMA** asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development to apprise the House on the Ministry's plans to resume resurfacing of Kadoma-Sanyati-Nembudziya Road?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO):** Mr. Speaker Sir, our Ministry remains committed in continuing the resurfacing of Kadoma-Sanyati–Nembudziya Road. Currently, there is a contractor to work on the 8 to 28km peg, to make a total of 20kms in which so far the contractors completed 4.5 km. Further to this, my Ministry is currently working on re-gravelling the 55 to 75km peg distance under ERRP. I so submit.

**REHABILITATION OF THE GALIVA-CHIREYA-NEMBUDZIYA ROAD**

46. **HON. TSHUMA** asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House on the Ministry's plans regarding the rehabilitation of the Galiva-Chireya-Nembudziya Road which has deteriorated to a bad state of disrepair.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO):** Thank you once again Hon. Speaker Sir. To respond to Hon. Tshuma's question, our Ministry is responsible for maintaining the country's major highways and trunk roads that connects with these highways. In light of the above, the road in question Mr. Speaker Sir, is under the purview of RIDA formally DDF which does not follow under the purview of our Ministry. I so submit.

**\*HON. TSHUMA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. I would like the Hon. Minister to explain to the House the difference between roads as he has alluded. In connection with RIDA, which Ministry are we supposed to consult because I was thinking that if it is issues of roads, we must consult the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development?

**\*HON. SACCO:** Thank you Hon. Speaker and I would like to thank Hon. Tshuma. I want to give an example that our roads are different, what we call responsible authorities. *Migwagwa ine mitupo yakasiyana, imwe soko, imwe shumba, imwe chirandu.* Because the roads are different, we are pleading with our Hon. Members so that they understand whether a road belongs to the council or it is under DDF or Ministry of Transport. Our councils get funded through devolution. DDF and RIDA have got their own budget and lastly Ministry of Transport, there is the Department of Roads. This will help our Hon. Members to understand our roads and the responsible authorities.

Secondly, RIDA which was known as DDF, has got a Permanent Secretary who is responsible for RIDA who reports to the Office of the President and Cabinet. I also want to let you know that when we met, it was discussed that RIDA will be getting equipment. We will buy equipment so that we repair our roads countrywide. They are looking forward to getting that equipment in the shortest possible time in two or

three months. So, we look forward that RIDA will be able to maintain our roads. I thank you Hon. Speaker.

**\*HON. TSHUMA:** As Members of Parliament, we will be looking forward that the responsible Minister will have all the answers that we want and the clarity that we need in our constituencies. Like what the Hon. Minister has said, it shows that roads that are not under his Ministry, like RIDA and council, we might not get the right answers because no one will be able to answer those questions. There are districts in Zimbabwe like the one that is in my constituency – Gokwe North, the council cannot even raise money to do maintenance for 2km. They do not have revenue. We still come back to the point where some places are going to be left behind. We are pleading with the Minister to look into that issue so that he can assist. The monies allocated to these areas are not enough. In my area Gokwe North, it has been years now since that road has not been maintained. The other problem is that the authorities responsible for maintaining that road cannot come to this House on question time to answer for themselves. I thank you.

**\*HON. SACCO:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. It is true what you have said Hon. Tshuma. Our road authorities are different. Those authorities include the Department of Roads, Rural District Councils, Urban Councils and RIDA. All those get funding from the same Government. Like I said, we are in the process of buying equipment for our councils. Under devolution, some councils get tippers, TOB and other equipment. The plans that we have as Government is to buy equipment so that our councils get the necessary equipment to repair the roads. RIDA was once District Development Fund and by then it did not have the capacity to repair roads. Because of the Second Republic under His Excellency, Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa, they were given money through the fiscus so that they can be able to buy equipment to construct the roads.

As we know, the roads under the city council can be taken by the Ministry of Transport and have authority over those roads and the Ministry maintains that road; it is a process. If you have other roads that

are in bad shape, you can approach the Ministry of Transport so that the Ministry can look into that road and find a way forward. I so submit.

**\*HON. MAPIKI:** Thank you Hon. Minister for your response. Is there any supervision on the funds allocated to RIDA, and also to look into it that they buy strong durable machines? Do you inspect the equipment before they buy? Many councils bought graders *emuchando* and now those graders are not functioning. Does Government supervise the councils so that they buy the required equipment that are durable? *Magrader emuchando ese akadhakwa.*

**\*HON. SACCO:** I thank you Hon. Speaker. It is true that the Second Republic Government is transparent. The equipment which is being bought is through a tender process and competitive bidding is done. All those things are looked into in terms of costing and durability. There is a process that we are embarking on where we are capacitating our councils that we have our central procurement will be done so that things will add up with Urban Council and ZINARA. We will put our heads together so that we look at what is needed and we put it to tender

so that those who are able to supply durable machines will get the tender.

**\*HON. CHIDUWA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker I want to find out from the Minister, when we embarked on the emergency rehabilitating of our roads, they said all roads are under him but I heard him referring to RIDDA that they have their own roads and ARDA has their own roads as well. Has the policy changed because we thought all the roads were under the Ministry of Transport, despite the Department easing the problem but it is all Government' approach. Has the policy changed?

**HON. SACCO:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I want to thank you Hon. Speaker for your question. It is very true ERRP was put in place so that they would adopt all the roads for the maintenance of all the roads because it was an emergency. As you know, ERRP time came to an end so we are looking for a Statutory Instrument that will extend the ERRP term up to December. For now, it is not yet in place but in the shortest period of time, I think it will be there.

**THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER (HON. MACHINGURA):**

Hon. Minister, we urge you that when you are conducting your meetings, if you can ask about coordination, how it stands, so that Members in the House do not lose any information that has to do with the Ministry of Transport for their questions. We want to have information about some of the roads, and how they are going to be repaired. I do not know how you can tackle that issue.

**REHABILITATION OF THE PLUMTREE-MPOOENGS-  
BEITBRIDGE ROAD**

47. **HON M. NDEBELE** asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House on the measures being taken by the Ministry to rehabilitate the Plumtree-Mpoengs-Beitbridge Road which is in a deplorable state and needs urgent attention.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO):** Thank you Hon. Speaker for allowing me to respond to the question from Hon. M. Ndebele. The Ministry is aware that the road being referred to by

Hon. Ndebele is of paramount importance in the province of Matabeleland South and Zimbabwe at large. From Plumtree to Mpoengs going onwards to Beitbridge, this can be accessed by Mpoengs-Maphisa- Gwanda-Beitbridge Road or Mpoengs-Maphisa-Munama-Guyu-Gwanda-Beitbridge Road. These two routes connect some of the three major Border Posts in the province which are Plumtree Border Post, Mpoengs Border Post and Beitbridge Border Post which is the busiest inland port in the Southern Region. It is certainly without doubt that the rehabilitation of these routes will create unmatched socio-economic benefit to the province and the nation at large. Therefore, it is against this background that the Ministry of Transport has consistently been making efforts through ERP 1 and 2 as well as the Road Development Programme to construct 26 kilometers on Gwanda-Guyu-Manama Road and 5 kilometers on Gwanda-Mapisa where 5 kilometers construction and 10 kilometer resealing along Maphisa-Mpoengs are ongoing.

Hon. Speaker, the ongoing construction of the extremely damaged sections on the Bulawayo-Gwanda-Beitbridge Highway are also being looked into. All these sections constitute the route in question. The House may also recall that His Excellency, the President Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa has declared the extension of ERRP 2 up to December, 2026. We await the relevant Statutory Instrument to allow us to commence works in this regard.

In light of this declaration, the Ministry will continue the construction of Gwanda-Mapisa Road and the Bulawayo-Kezi Road. We will also embark on routine and periodic maintenance works on various degraded sections of this route as we are working towards reestablishment of maintenance units within the Ministry to give us capacity to speed up the process. In addition, for the interest of the House, having noted the importance of the Border Post in Matabeleland South we will also work on the construction of the Plumtree- Maitengwe Border Post Road. I so submit Hon. Speaker Sir.

**HON. M. NDEBELE:** I want to thank the Hon. Minister for answering me on a positive manner. Through you Hon. Speaker as he has said there is a lot of revenue being collected by these three Border Posts. Do you not find it prudent to prioritise things and give us first priority to do the right think linking the three Border Posts so that we are not left behind? Thank you so much.

**THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER:** Hon. Member, is that a comment or a question.

**HON. M. NDEBELE:** It is a comment and a question as well on prioritising things. There is a lot of revenue being realised from the Border Post. Our province needs to be capacitated through this road network.

**HON. SACCO:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir and thank you Hon. Member for your supplementary question and comment. We are currently conducting a nationwide tour, where I am travelling throughout the provinces to get an appreciation of such areas. We have covered Mukumbura Border Post, we have done Mount Selinda and in

the near future I will be travelling to other provinces including Matabeleland South. I would like to get a hands-on experience of what you are talking about so that I can speak after the visit but a point has been raised and duly taken note of that we are losing revenue and this is happening in many areas. We are trying to speed up the processes so that our border post can be opened and we can open up revenue streams for the fiscus, for Treasury to be able to collect the revenue that we are currently losing as a country. I would like to assure the Hon. Member Mr. Speaker Sir that these are one of the areas that I would like to visit to get an appreciation. I so submit.

**HON. ZEMURA:** My supplementary question is as the Minister is going for the visits in Matabeleland South - can he also come and visit Mutoko-Murewa-Macheke Road that has been damaged by the lorries that carry granite stones? The lorries were told long ago by the President to stop the practice and beneficiation be done in Mutoko. A lot of lorries are diverting coming via Harare to avoid being arrested,

they go through our Mutoko Road damaging that road and they do not repair the Road. They are not paying anything to Murewa Council.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO):**

Thank you Hon. Zemura for your valuable intervention. I would like to assure the Hon. Member that when I come to the province, I will definitely tour those roads to get an appreciation under the mantra ‘leaving no-one and no place behind.’ I so submit.

**THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER (HON. MACHINGURA):** Hon. Minister, is it not possible to introduce tolling for these granite carrying transporters so that you can maybe use the proceeds to repair the same roads that they are damaging. Just food for thought.

**HON. CHIDUWA:** Hon. Minister, the issue of the road rehabilitation from Beitbridge going to Victoria Falls and you also mentioned the Gwanda/Mapisa Road. My question is on the roads maintenance unit. It is an issue that came out here in Parliament and your Ministry specifically mentioned that the roads maintenance unit

was going to be resuscitated, but we do not seem to see any traction on the ground. Can you please update us with regards to the resuscitation of the roads maintenance unit and how far you have gone to decentralise it to districts? I so submit.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. SACCO):** I would like to thank Hon. Chiduwa for his pertinent question. You mentioned the Beitbridge to Victoria Falls Road of which from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls we are working on maintenance where we are doing pothole patching. I believe we are more than halfway. We have also been in negotiations as the Ministry with potential investors who are interested in constructing and upgrading the road from Beitbridge to Bulawayo to Victoria Falls and these are at an advanced stage. On the old Gwanda road, a PPP has been awarded recently and I believe work has already commenced so there is progress in that regard. Coming to the maintenance units, as a Ministry we want ultimately to do 50 maintenance units, which is five per province but due to budgetary

constraints, we have started with 20 where a tender has been flighted to procure flatbed trucks, water bowsers and other equipment for these 20 maintenance units. We are also in the process with the Public Service Commission, of employing the relevant skilled staff that is required to man these 20 maintenance units. We hope that in the near future, once the equipment has been acquired, these maintenance units will start to function and we will move to the second phase where we will work on capacitating another 30, bringing at least to five maintenance units per province. So, I would like to report that procurement is already under way for the equipment for these maintenance units. I thank you.

## **WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS TO QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE**

### **DISBURSEMENT OF BEAM FUNDS IN HIGHFIELD,**

#### **BUDIRIRO, GLEN NORAH AND GLEN VIEW**

- 1. HON. CHIDZIVA** asked the Minister of Public Service,

Labour and Social Welfare to inform the House on: -

a) when the Ministry plans to disburse money dedicated for the Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM) to schools in Highfield, Budiro, Glen Norah and Glen View;

b) to explain the selection criteria applied for beneficiaries of BEAM;

c) when the Ministry plans to review this selection criteria; and

d) What plans have been put in place to ensure that the intended beneficiaries benefit from the scheme?

**THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** Madam Speaker, I wish to inform the House that, Government prioritises education assistance to children in difficult circumstances and is committed to settle all school fees arrears under the Basic Education Assistance Module. Further, the ministry acknowledges school fees arrears owed to mainstream primary and secondary schools across the country. The arrears for primary schools amount to ZIG380 430 247 (USD28 369 146.00) while

secondary schools are owed ZIG379 174 554.00 (USD28 350 101.00), giving a sum total of ZIG760 605 102.00 (USD56 719 247.00).

In light of the foregoing, the ministry engaged the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion to clear the aforementioned arrears. ZWL50 000 000 000.00 was therefore allocated for the first quarter of 2024 while actual release was ZWL31 000 000 000.00. This disbursement was against a budget of ZWL805 087 608 000.00 leaving a balance of ZWL774087 608 000.00. The disbursed amount settled 2022 arrears for both primary and second schools in the country including schools in Highfield, Budiro, Glen Norah and Glenview constituencies. The ministry is continuously following up with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion on outstanding school fees arrears as it awaits further release of funds by Treasury to settle the same. As funding improves, my ministry will ensure that timely, religious and predictable payments are made to schools in accordance with the BEAM cycle.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, the Hon. Member is informed that, selection of BEAM beneficiaries is done using a community-based

targeting approach at community level through community selection committees (CSCs). Each primary school community has a Community Selection Committee that has a term of office of two (2) years, that is, to preside over two BEAM cycles.

The CSC shall have 12 members made up as follows:-

- six elected community representatives (three men and three women) with good knowledge of households, no record of abusing children and with a sound appreciation of children's rights issues. The selected members shall be evenly distributed across the school catchment area;

- Two children (one girl and one boy) from the child-led Child Protection Committee, and

- Four ex-officio members made up of two School Development Committee (SDC) members, one each from the primary school and the local secondary school, the primary school head and the Primary School Guidance and Counseling teacher.

The committee receives nominations of children to benefit from BEAM from members of the community. Nomination of potential beneficiaries is done by anyone in the community including children themselves to ensure all deserving children are not excluded during the selection process.

The BEAM programme targets vulnerable school going children aged four to 19 years from Early Childhood Learning (ECE) classes, primary, secondary and special needs schools identified by their CSCs as vulnerable and deserving assistance. BEAM selection and targeting criteria is as follows:-

- i. Children in child-headed households;
- ii. Children in labour constrained households;
- iii. Orphaned children;
- iv. Children who are out of school due to financial constraints;
- v. Children living and working on the streets; and
- vi. Children left behind under the care of an incapacitated guardian.

Currently, the ministry is in the process of reviewing the BEAM Operational Manual through stakeholder consultative processes to ensure the programme remains relevant and effective. The policy review will also include strategies to enhance the targeting modality, transparency and effectiveness among other key parameters.

To ensure adherence to policy guidelines, monitoring visits are conducted by Joint Monitoring Teams (JMTs) from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare (MPSLSW), the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) and the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works (MLG&P), at national to community level. The monitoring process follows the BEAM cycle which comprise of the pre-selection, selection and post-selection stages. JMTs can conduct focus group discussions, surveys, site visits, perusal of records and other appropriate methods to ascertain; the proper constitution of CSCs, client satisfaction with beneficiary selection, including grievances regarding selection of children (inclusion/exclusion errors), that is, the extent to which selected children are deserving by local participatory

poverty or wealth ranking standards for beneficiary and non-beneficiary households within the selected communities.

Additionally, a grievance handling mechanism is in place to ensure that those aggrieved with the processes can air out their views and are heard. This is done through the Grievance Handling Committees (GHC) that are constituted in each community to handle complaints by parents or guardians and stakeholders aggrieved on any aspect of BEAM delivery. The GHC consists of a Ward Councilor (Chair), one village head, a religious leader or repute, two children's representatives (other than the ones in the CSC) and a Community Child Care Worker providing secretariat services to the committee. The village head and the religious leader shall be selected by the community and the tenure of the committee shall be coterminous with that of the CSC (two years). The GHC also sits as a Help Desk when the community meets to validate the prioritised BEAM list and when the community reconvenes to validate the final BEAM beneficiary lists. Furthermore, grievances can be forwarded to the Social Development Offices at district, provincial and national levels.

ASSISTANCE TO CHILDREN OF VICTIMS OF DRUG AND  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN HIGHFIELD, BUDIRO, GLEN NORAH  
AND GLEN VIEW

2. **\*HON CHIDZIVA** asked the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to inform the House the plans being put in place to assist children of victims of drug and substance abuse living in Highfield, Budiro, Glen Norah and Glen View.

**THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** Madam Speaker, children of victims of drug and substance abuse are negatively affected by parental incapacitation which compromises their care environment. As such, they are at risk of dropping out of school, subjected to all forms of violence and deprivations including ill-treatment and neglect in the face of parental incapacitation due to abuse of drugs. As such, my Ministry is mandated to provide care and protection to all children including those whose parents are abusing drugs.

Additionally, in instances where the child's family is incapacitated and failing to provide appropriate care to a child, alternative care options

can be explored which include extended family, supported community care, foster care and institutional care, which is a measure of last resort. The Ministry's position is to promote family-based care for all children and support families through positive parenting sessions to inculcate responsive and nurturing caregiving.

I wish to inform this august House that we also have Community Cadres known as Community Child Care Workers (CCWs) who were trained on early identification and referral of children in need of care for specialist child protection services. Upon receiving cases of such children, my ministry through the Drug and Substance Abuse Unit (Community Reintegration Pillar) and the Child Protection Section provide them with Psycho-Social Support and counseling services to survivors. Online counselling services are also provided using the ministry's toll-free number (0714647002). These psycho-social support services help to build survivors' coping skills and restore human work and dignity. The services are available to the survivor, family members, the community and service providers at large.

My Ministry is also in the process of establishing Outpatient Psycho-Social Support Centers. Currently, our pilot projects are in Harare at Makombe Building and Bulawayo Fort Street Social Development offices. The centers are free for everyone especially children who are at risk and exposed to Drug and Substance Abuse.

To build resilience of survivors, the ministry links them to Social Protection Services, for example, vocational training for youths and adults, education assistance, food assistance, social cash transfers *et cetera*. In addition, the Ministry also provides health assistance to indigent survivors facing challenges in meeting medical costs.

There are interventions to prevent relapse by survivors post-rehabilitation which included follow-up visits and supervision, formation of support groups, creation and strengthening of income generating projects and Internal Savings and Lending (ISAL) schemes, strengthening parenting initiatives to encourage social networking through peer-to-peer support.

Other interventions include the following:-

- Coordinating drug and substance abuse activities at district,

province and national level. Child protection and safeguarding – statutory mandate;

- Conduct Spot Check visits to public places of entertainment policing;
- Information dissemination through Awareness campaigns;
- Assisting the courts through the provision of Child Protection officer's reports in response to child protection issues;
- Providing Psycho-Social Support to the survivors and families;
- Provision of places of safety protection services to improve individual and household resilience;
- My ministry is also secretariat to the Child Protection

Committee from national to sub-national levels. These committees oversee the protection of all children in the country. Children also actively participate in these committees. I thank you.

## OPERATIONS OF THE TONGOGARA REFUGEE CAMP

**3. HON BAJILA** asked the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to apprise the House on operations of the Tongogara

Refugee Camp including its holding capacity, current population and the nationalities of its occupants.

**THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND  
SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** Madam Speaker

Ma'am, the Tongogara Refugee Settlement has 870 hectares designated for refugee settlement. The settlement has capacity to accommodate about 500 000 refugees and asylum seekers. However, currently, the settlement has a population of plus or minus 14 000. The majority of the refugees in the country are from the Great Lakes Region mainly from the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda and some are from East Africa.

The settlement offers all facilities that are accessed by the host community and these include education, health and other livelihood options. I thank you.

**POLICY REGARDING PENSIONERS WHO DID NOT CLAIM  
THEIR PENSIONS**

**4. HON BAJILA** asked the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to inform the House the Ministry's policy regarding

pensioners who did not claim their pension prior to the multi-currency system and are only claiming it during the current multicurrency regime.

**THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** Madam Speaker Ma'am, the Hon. Member is informed that our pension scheme is a final salary scheme. This means, the final salary is the one used to compute pension benefits payable to members. This situation is a replica of what happened in 2009 when the economy was dollarised and the regression method was used to process and pay benefits for affected pensioners. Regression means that, pensionable emoluments as at 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2024 are regressed by 3% backwards for the purpose of determining pensionable emoluments as at date of termination of a member.

Currently, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2024, all salaries are pegged in United States Dollars, part being paid in United States Dollar hard currency and the other part paid in United States Dollar convertible to ZIG using exchange rate on the month of payment. Public Service Commission approved the use of Regression Method stated above to pay all the benefits prior to 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2024. Treasury concurrence is being

sought to pay all outstanding benefits prior to 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2024. I thank you.

## DATABASE AND CATEGORISATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**5. HON. KARITSAMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA** asked the Minister of Public Service Labour and Social Welfare to inform the House whether the Ministry has any database for persons with disabilities that categorises them in terms of their forms of disability.

**THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** Madam Speaker Ma'am, the ministry has District Social Welfare offices all over Zimbabwe and each district has names of all persons with disabilities in the area, types of disabilities and their contacts. It then literally means that the ministry has a database for all persons with disabilities in Zimbabwe. It is important to note that the ministry is currently in the process of coming up with a consolidated database which will be more accurate and reliable.

The ministry has also reached out to ZIMSTAT for support to roll out a nationwide comprehensive survey on persons with disabilities.

## OPERATIONS OF ENTEMBENI OLD PEOPLE'S HOME IN LUEVEVE

**6. HON BAJILA** asked the Minister of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare to apprise the House on the operations of Entembeni Old People's Home in Luveve particularly, its corporate governance and audit system including qualifications of the staff.

**THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** The Hon. Member is advised that Entembeni Old People's home is a private institution which looks after old persons and the Government of Zimbabwe has an obligation to support the institution through payment of per capita and administrative grants. The ministry regularly monitors activities of these institutions. These institutions also submit reports to the ministry.

Currently, the ministry is in receipt of a monitoring report from the Provincial Development Officer for Bulawayo Metropolitan

Province which highlighted challenges that the organisation is facing.

The ministry will engage stakeholders including the City of Bulawayo and the management of the institution on trying to bring normalcy to the governance issues raised.

The ministry will send its auditors to look into the financial management of the institution in order to build their capacity and strengthen their internal controls.

It is not the intention of Government to take control of the institution from its current owners as they are doing a good job in complementing the efforts of Government.

## DROUGHT RELIEF IN THE HIPPO VALLEY AND TRIANGLE ESTATES IN CHIREDDZI

7. **HON. MAKAMURE** asked the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to inform the House what plans have been put in place towards drought relief in the Hippo Valley and Triangle Estates in Chiredzi which have not benefited from Government

assistance and donor aid as they are considered commercial agricultural zones.

**THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** The Hon. Member is advised that Hippo Valley and Triangle Estates are commercial farming areas and inhabitants thereof are presumed to be workers or employees of the Sugar Estates who earn a living through the wages that they are paid. If the workers have any challenges in terms of the inadequacy of their remuneration, they must approach my Ministry through the Labour Administration Department where salaries are negotiated. If they are however genuinely indigent members of the community, they must approach District Welfare offices and be assisted through the public assistance programme.

*Questions with Notice were interrupted by* **THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER** *in terms of Standing Order Number 68.*

## **MOTION**

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**HON. KAMBUZUMA:** I move that we stand over Order of the Day Number 1 until Orders of the Day Numbers 2, 3, and 4 have been disposed of in that order.

**HON. MLOTSHWA:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

## **MOTION**

### **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ZUPCO AND PRIVATE TRANSPORT OPERATORS**

**HON. MASHONGANYIKA:** I rise to move the motion standing in my name that:

CONCERNED by the dire situation of inadequate and unreliable public transportation;

FURTHER CONCERNED with the ever-increasing number of unregistered transport operators that provide services to complement shortages in the public transportation sector;

ALARMED by the increased occurrence of incidents where innocent commuters are victims of robbery by some of the unregistered operators;

ACKNOWLEDGING the critical role played by transportation in the livelihoods of citizens and the overall development of the nation:

NOW, THEREFORE, calls upon—

(a) the Government to provide financial assistance to both the state-owned Zimbabwe United Passenger Company (ZUPCO) and private transport operators for acquisition of more public transportation vehicles;

(b) the law enforcement agencies to intensify their efforts to identify and apprehend unregistered transport operators who operate outside the purview of regulatory oversight. Additionally, it is imperative that stiffer penalties be imposed on individuals found guilty of criminal activities such as robbery or endangerment of public safety within the transportation sector;

(c) the Traffic Safety Council of Zimbabwe to conduct a comprehensive awareness campaign for both operators and commuters on their rights and responsibilities when using public transportation in order to promote compliance and accountability;

(d) the Government to increase its financial support to the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) so as to enhance its operations and provide safer as well as reliable alternative transportation to meet the public demand.

**HON. CHIKWINYA:** I second.

**HON. MASHONGANYIKA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I am gravely concerned by the dire situation of inadequate and unreliable public transport in our country. This issue is compounded by the ever increasing number of unregistered transport operators attempting to fill the gaps in our public transport sector. There is a major public transport shortage in the country.

Zimbabwe, like many developing countries, faces challenges in its public transport system and currently public transport system is

primarily characterised by a mix of informal mini buses known as kombis and limited conventional buses. However, the informal sector dominates the public transport sector and right now leading to issues of overloading, reckless driving, robberies and lack of adherence to safety regulations. The few registered commuter mini-buses and conventional buses are not adequate to ferry people to their destinations. This has resulted in many people using the private vehicles namely; Toyota Wish and Honda Fit, which are not fit to carry many passengers. These small vehicles are always overloaded. Some passengers will be in the boot and shockingly, in front there will be two or three passengers including the driver. These small cars can carry up to 10 passengers. Overloading and speeding of these small cars has resulted in road accidents and innocent people have been killed while some have been seriously injured. To make the situation worse, the vehicles also known as *mushikashika* are not even road worthy. The majority of our public transport vehicles do not adhere to safety standards leading to frequent accidents and discomfort for passengers. Lack of proper infrastructure including bus terminals and designated lands contribute to traffic

congestion and inefficiency. A lot needs to be done at ranks where buses pick and drop passengers.

We are alarmed by the sad incidents where innocent commuters have fallen victim to robberies and other criminal activities perpetrated by some of these unregistered operators. Such occurrences threaten the safety and security of our citizens and thereby undermining the public trust in our transport system. As a country, we should acknowledge the pivotal role that transportation plays in the daily lives of our citizens and the broader development of our nation. There cannot be any economic development without a reliable transport system. The Government must take decisive action to address the issues of public transport.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I, therefore, call upon the government to provide financial assistance in terms of loans to both the State-owned Zimbabwe United Passengers Company (ZUPCO) and private transport operators to facilitate the acquisition of more buses and commuter omnibuses. This will enhance the capacity and reliability of our public transport system.

Law enforcement agencies to intensify their efforts to identify and apprehend unregistered transport operators. We must impose stiffer penalties on individuals found guilty of criminal activities such as robberies or endangering public safety within the transportation system.

The Traffic Safety Council of Zimbabwe to conduct a comprehensive awareness campaign for both operators and commuters. This campaign should emphasise their rights and responsibilities when using public transportation to promote compliance and accountability.

The government to increase its financial support to the National Railways of Zimbabwe to enhance its operations. A robust railway system will provide a safe and reliable alternative transportation option to meet public demand and the Vehicle Inspection Department to intensify regular inspections for public transport vehicles.

I will give a case study of the Dakar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System in Senegal. The Dakar Bus Rapid Transit system in Senegal serves as a notable example of a reliable and efficient public transport system in Africa. The implementation of the BRT system has

significantly improved the quality of public transport in Dakar, offering valuable insights for Zimbabwe to consider when enhancing its public system.

The BRT system in Dakar includes dedicated lanes for buses allowing for faster and more reliable travel reducing congestion and providing a more efficient service to passengers.

The Dakar BRT system utilises a modern fleet of buses, equipped with comfortable seating, air conditioning, and accessibility features providing a more pleasant and convenient travel experience.

The BRT system in Dakar incorporates an integrated ticketing system that allows passengers to use smart cards for seamless travel. Additionally, real-time information on bus schedules and routes is readily available to passengers enhancing convenience and reliability.

The implementation of the Dakar BRT system involved the construction of modern bus stations and terminals as well as the development of dedicated bus lanes and priority signaling, contributing to the overall efficiency of the system.

The Dakar BRT system serves as an exemplary model for Zimbabwe to consider when transforming its public transport system. Zimbabwe can benefit from developing dedicated bus lanes and modern bus terminals to improve the efficiency and reliability of public transport services.

By investing in a modern fleet of buses equipped with comfort and convenience features, Zimbabwe can enhance the overall travel experience for passengers encouraging a shift towards formal public transport services. Let me take this opportunity to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe for the road rehabilitation networking.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker Sir, implementing an integrated ticketing and information system can streamline the travel experience for passengers offering convenience and reliability.

The success of the Dakar BRT system was supported by strong regulatory frameworks and government commitment, emphasising the

importance of policy support for the transformation of public transport.

I thank you.

**HON. CHIKWINYA:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker Sir. I rise to second the motion by Hon. Mashonganyika regarding the issue of public transportation and unregistered transport operators on our roads leading to high occurrences of fatal accidents and robberies against commuters. The merits of this motion are indeed commendable in seeking to find remedies to the challenges facing the transport sector.

Mr. Speaker, to buttress the point raised by the mover, according to the Safety Council of Zimbabwe, statistics between 2015 and 2022, 14 600 people died and 74 000 were injured in road accidents. This translates to an accident happening every 15 minutes. Current statistics show that 1,545 deaths and 7,294 injuries have been recorded in the first nine months of 2023.

The Traffic Safety Council of Zimbabwe recorded 38,482 road accidents country-wide between January and September 2023. This translates to 141 road accidents per day and 5, 89% per hour, or one

accident every 10 minutes. Over the past five years, there has been exponential research on vehicles in Zimbabwe as a result of increased importation by our citizens to the extent of overwhelming our roads. We have also noted that some drivers to a certain extent are unlicensed, under age, or have fake licences and this is a serious cause of concern.

Mr. Speaker Sir, our collective intervention as stakeholders to bring about sanity in the transport sector is required. I commend and applaud the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe once again for a robust and considered effort in the self-evident works of massive national road rehabilitation and dualisation through His Excellency, Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa's intervention by declaring the country's roads a state of national disaster, through Statutory Instrument 47 of 2021 and instituting the Presidential Emergency Road Programme.

Mr. Speaker Sir, he is not just a listening President but an action-oriented President. The National Policy Vision 2030 seeks to enhance the coordination and implementation of programmes and projects for the transport sector. Mr. Speaker Sir, the National Development Strategy 1

(NSD1), 2021 – 2025 states that, “some of the key national priorities of the NSD1 include economic growth and stability”. The transport sector is an enabling pillar for economic growth through infrastructure development.

To this end Mr. Speaker Sir, un-roadworthy public service vehicles and the *mushikashikas* which the mover has adequately covered has become an eyesore congesting our city roads and national highways impacting negatively on the smooth flow of vehicles, thereby affecting effective and reliable transport service provision in our country. Mr. Speaker Sir, I posit that the transport sector in the country faces a plethora of challenges emanating from intertwined regulatory and law enforcement frameworks we must be alive to. As we exercise our oversight and legislative role as Parliament, let me hasten to say that our major milestone would be achieved through a sound regulatory and law frameworks in the transport sector as we cannot achieve much without an effective transport system.

Mr. Speaker Sir, as part of the recommendations, I call upon the Parliament to institute legislation that empowers law enforcing agencies to deal with unscrupulous conduct in the transport sector. They are not doing us any good at all, *vari kuti kanganisira zvakanyanyisa*.

The use of illicit mind-altering substances and drugs as well as operating public service vehicles under the influence of alcohol must be curtailed through the provision of screening by Zimbabwe Republic Police and relevant authorities with on the spot breathalysers and blood tests and action taken.

I second that medical aid kits must be part of the requirements and measures such as fire extinguishers to ensure that the safety of the commuting public who use public service vehicles are also treated on the spot. Drivers and conductors manning buses and *Kombis* must be trained on basic first aid as well as a customer service provision and etiquette through relevant stakeholders from the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the aforementioned challenges require collaborative synergies among the ZRP, local Authorities, VID,

ZINARA and Traffic Safety Council of Zimbabwe among key stakeholders such as the parent Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure Development and the Judiciary to consider deterrent sentences to those found guilty of traffic offences, unfair pricing models of services in the sector and non-compliance in the transport industry as already alluded to.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker Sir, we call upon the following recommendations to be considered:

1. There is need for continuously standardising our Trunk road to match or lead Regional standards and quality as we move towards Vision 2030 through the Ministry of Transport Infrastructural Development in terms of the quality of our roads, signage and carriageway markings such as is the case in Nairobi, Kenya or even our neighboring South Africa as an example we can borrow a leaf from.

2. Resourcing and equipping the VID must be considered through the fiscus from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and Investments Promotion.

3. Gazetted rules must be enforced by law enforcement agencies

which include ZRP, local authorities, VID, Traffic Safety Council of Zimbabwe, ZINARA, the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development and the Judiciary.

Mr. Speaker Sir, as part of the recommendations, the haulage and bulk goods transportation matrix must necessitate a spotlight on the Zimbabwe National Railways to be configured as an essential service though this has been alluded by the Hon. Minister in his response to a question.

The re-introduction of rail passenger's service which will go a long way in solving current transport challenges which result in congested road accidents and robberies to our commuting public. The emerging *mushikashika* and other unroadworthy vehicles. The Minister reported that the programme is underway and we are grateful.

Recapitalisation of the NRZ through the Mutapa Fund is proposed for modern coaches, wagons and a standard rail track gauge that provides seamless regional introgression in the sector. Available statistics point out that in the 90s NRZ at its peak moved large volumes of goods and passengers amounting to 14.4 million tonnes of

cargo against installed capacity of 18 million tons. While in 2021, NRZ transported 2,191 million tonnes of carbon against a target of 3 million tonnes.

If NRZ is back online it will lessen the impact of haulage trucks on our roads which have overcrowded and significantly contributed in damaging both intra and inner city roads in damaging both intra and inner city roads resulting in unbearable congestion.

Mr. Speaker Sir, we are happy that the construction of a new rail route for commuters and goods is being considered. In areas such as the Harare- Chitungwiza, Mabvuku and other areas as the Minister has stated.

The legacy issues bedeviling NRZ, calls for institution of a forensic assessment that is primed at finding lost information by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure Development to be considered for being NRZ is a pillar in our transport sector.

Mr. Speaker Sir, we further call for the Aviation Sector through the Ministry of Transport and infrastructure development, it must not be ignored. I cite the compliance and requirements of the International Air

Traffic Association (IATA) and the Yamoussoukro Declarations on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> rights of airline on open sky policies must be implemented for the safety and convenience of goods and passengers alike. This will ensure that passengers and goods are ferried by Air transport which is an alternative and faster way of transporting both people and goods.

As I conclude Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to highlight that dry ports, water ways and sea harbours play an integral role in complementing the whole transport needs in our landlocked country. The Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development must amplify the prominence of this sector by increasing the developments in the area of transportation. Therefore, Parliament needs to continuously craft practical and beneficial promises in this august House to reap meaningful of benefits in the transport sector for a continued development and growth of our country in line with Government policy of an empowered, prosperous upper middle class society by 2023. I so submit Mr. Speaker Sir, - [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] -

**HON. KAMBUZUMA:** I move that the that the debate do now  
adjourned

**HON. NYANDORO:** I second Mr. Speaker Sir.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2024.

## **MOTION**

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**HON. KAMBUZUMA:** Mr. Speaker Sir, I move that Order of the  
Day, Number 3 be stood over until Order Number 4 on today's *Order*  
*Paper* has been disposed of.

**HON. B. NYANDORO:** I second, Mr. Speaker.

Motion put and agreed to.

## **MOTION**

**REPORT ON THE BENCHMARKING VISITS TO SWEDEN,  
LATVIA AND FINLAND**

**HON. SHAMU:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I move the Motion standing in my name that this House takes note of the Delegation Report on the Benchmarking Visits to Sweden, Latvia and Finland held from 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2024.

**HON. ZIKI:** I second

**THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I call upon Honorable Shamu to move his motion.

**HON. SHAMU:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I will seek your indulgence on the onset, Mr. Speaker Sir, seeing that we have quiet a long report. What I will do is I will introduce the report and I will go straight to our observations and recommendations and most of the content will be available for Members of Parliament to read in the *Hansard*.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Advocate Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, led a Parliamentary delegation on benchmarking visits to Sweden, Latvia and Finland from 4<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>

March 2024. The Hon. Speaker was accompanied by the following Committee Chairpersons:

- Hon. Webster Shamu, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade;
- Hon. Surrender Kapoikilu, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Information and Communication Technology;
- Hon. Joanah Mamombe, Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Climate and Tourism; and,
- Hon. Master Makope, Acting Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology Development;

The overarching objectives of the visit revolved around exercising Parliamentary diplomacy through exploration of potential areas of cooperation and learning best practices in several key areas, more poignantly in the following areas of interest:

- Functions of the Committee of the Future (Artificial Intelligence and Information Communication Technology);
- Renewable Energy and Waste Management;

- Environment and Climate Change; and
- Institutions of Higher Learning and Vocational Training.

The delegation extends its profound gratitude to Ambassador Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mushonga for providing critical support in the preparatory stages of the visits as well as impeccable administrative and logistical support during the visits. Her unwavering commitment to duty resulted in the visits being a resounding success.

In her briefing to the delegation on the operations of the Embassy, the Ambassador started by highlighting challenges and successes recorded by the Embassy this far. In the same vein, the Ambassador expressed gratitude to the President, His Excellency, Cde Dr. E.D Mnangagwa, for the continued efforts in improving the conditions of service for diplomats through timeous payment of salaries, renovation of the Chancery and its adequate furnishings.

## **VISIT TO SWEDEN**

### **Tour of Strangnäs Solar Park**

The Hon. Speaker's delegation visited Strangnäs Solar Park on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The Solar Park is one of the largest solar parks in

Sweden with a total installed capacity of 14 megawatts and an electricity production capacity of 13,000,000 kWh, equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of 4,650 apartments. The project provides residents with affordable and environmentally clean source of electricity, thereby contributing significantly to reduced carbon emissions.

Speaker Mudenda indicated that a project of such magnitude would be highly impactful and beneficial in the quest to have the New Parliament of Zimbabwe Building move to greener sources of energy. Speaker Mudenda further highlighted that mutual cooperation between the two countries' similar projects would be valuable to the Zimbabwean people as the NPB solar project would catalyse such projects across the country as the country boasts of unlimited sunshine radiance compared to Sweden.

### **Meeting with State Secretary**

In the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024, Speaker Mudenda and his delegation interfaced with Swedish Secretary of State, Ms Diana Janse who shared her country's current drive towards reforming its development aid cooperation paradigm by fostering greater strategic

trade and economic partnerships with respective countries, Zimbabwe included.

Hon. Speaker Mudenda acknowledged the existing historical, political and economic ties between Zimbabwe and Sweden dating back to pre-independence. In this context and in the interest of Parliamentary diplomacy, the Hon. Speaker underscored the need for continued dialogue in order to enhance bilateral relations between Sweden and Zimbabwe for mutual benefit.

Accordingly, both sides expressed optimism in exploring further areas of cooperation, particularly in the mining and health sectors where Sweden already has discernible presence in Zimbabwe. The Hon. Speaker assured the State Secretary that property rights for both domestic and foreign investors are guaranteed by the Zimbabwe Constitution. However, the Speaker raised concern about the debilitating effects of illegal sanctions by some Western countries which have constrained the national development agenda of Zimbabwe, particularly that Zimbabwe cannot easily access foreign capital.

In the same vein, he acknowledged the devastating global effects of the Russia-Ukraine conflict on the global economies. In the spirit of Parliamentary diplomacy and in playing its role in the peaceful resolution of the conflict, the Parliament of Zimbabwe supported the establishment of the IPU taskforce on the Russia-Ukraine conflict with the view to finding a solution to end the conflict through diplomacy and dialogue.

### **Working Dinne**

Speaker Mudenda and his delegation met business representatives from Green Business Team and Absolicon Solar Collectors augmented by industry experts and economists for a working dinner at the residence of Ambassador Misihairabwi-Mushonga.

The Green Business team led by Mrs Annika Johansson made their pitch on the development of an off-grid water purification technologies for the production of safe drinking water to the public to avert the scourge of water borne diseases.

The second presentation was made by Mr Joakim Bystrom of Absolicon, whose theme was, ‘Decarbonising Industries with solar

thermal heat: Transforming the world's energy supply'. Mr Bysrom presented a trailblazing model that is rapidly changing the industrial ecosystem anchored on the use of solar energy. On that score, it was noted that the entity had entered into a partnership with Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) wherein the latter will be producing thermal heaters to replace traditional heating models for industries such as breweries across Zimbabwe.

Finally, Ms Angelica Lups di Cruz made a passionate plea to the delegation to preserve the country's cultural heritage within the ambit of trade-offs in the emerging areas of carbon credits. Ms Angelica underscored the need to safeguard land as a pristine resource which is fundamental in maintaining robust biodiversity and sustainable environmental ecosystem.

### **Meeting with Dag Juhlin Dannfelt**

On 5th March 2024, the delegation interacted with Mr. Dag Juhlin Dannfelt, Director General in the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both sides acknowledged the long-standing cordial relations between

Zimbabwe and Sweden dating back to the struggle for independence in Zimbabwe.

Speaker Mudenda expressed his concern over global peace and security issues, particularly the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle-East. He opined that the instability in the conflict regions has ultimately impacted negatively on the global economy, the supply chain of goods and services, food security and attendant humanitarian crisis. In this regard, he called for the expeditious resolution of global conflicts through Parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue.

Turning to Parliament business, Speaker Mudenda expressed Parliament of Zimbabwe's commitment to ensuring that appropriate legislation that promotes the ease of doing business for both domestic and foreign investment is in place. To this end, Parliament of Zimbabwe had enacted legislation for the creation of the Zimbabwe Investment Development Authority (ZIDA), a one-stop-shop investment centre. Accordingly, he called on Sweden to encourage its business community to invest in Zimbabwe.

Finally, Speaker Mudenda called for the unconditional lifting of illegal sanctions which are affecting the country's ability to access foreign capital from the Bretton Woods institutions and the Paris Club.

### **Lunch Meeting with the Swedish Delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)**

On 5th March 2024, the delegation attended a luncheon hosted by the Swedish delegation to the IPU led by the Chairperson of the group, Hon. Margareta Cedefelt. Discussions focussed on the current global conflicts and the role of parliamentary diplomacy in resolving them. Of particular interest was the Ukraine-Russia and the Middle East current conflicts. Both sides agreed that peace and security are critical in achieving sustainable development.

Furthermore, the two sides discussed the possibilities of increasing economic cooperation, particularly on renewable energy which is critical in realising accelerated industrialisation and development in Africa with minimum pollution to the environment.

With regards to labour issues in Zimbabwe, the Hon. Speaker applauded His Excellency, the President, Cde Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo

Mnangagwa, for his wisdom in creating a fully-fledged Ministry of Skills Audit and Development that will inform the Government on Zimbabwe's skills requirements. Regarding the question of labour migration asked by the host IPU Committee, Speaker Mudenda highlighted that this was a global phenomenon which is dependent on the supply and demand for labour in various economies.

### **Meeting with Speaker of the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament)**

The Hon. Speaker's delegation met with Dr Andreas Norlen, the Speaker of the Riksdag (Swedish Parliament) in the afternoon of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Both Parliaments affirmed their commitment to fostering collaboration in strengthening Parliamentary processes through such benchmarking visits and exploring possible areas of cooperation such as in the green revolution trajectory.

In response to Dr Norlen's question on alleged irregularities in Zimbabwe's harmonised General elections of August 2023, Speaker Mudenda expressed deep concerns regarding the generalised nature of the EU's report on alleged election irregularities which were not clearly specified in its report. Nonetheless, Speaker Mudenda reiterated

Zimbabwe's commitment to the evolving tenet of democracy and observance of the rule of law while affirming that as far as Zimbabwe's election outcome was concerned the election was peaceful, fair and credible.

Furthermore, Speaker Mudenda proposed to his fellow Speaker the need to establish a Parliamentary Friendship Association between the two Parliaments in order to cement deeper understanding and collaboration.

Concomitantly, Hon Speaker Mudenda lauded the Swedish Government for establishing the office of ombudsman meant to receive complaints from the public on some governance issues affecting the public. Equally, Zimbabwe is concluding the establishment of an Independent Complaints Commission for the same purpose.

Speaker Mudenda extended an invitation to the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament and his delegation to visit Zimbabwe in the near future, a proposition which was well received by Speaker Mudenda's counterpart.

## **Meeting with Members of the Committees on Transport and Communications, Industry and Trade as well as Environment and Agriculture**

Speaker Mudenda's delegation concluded their tour of Sweden by meeting the above named joint Parliamentary Committees. The meeting discussed the positive use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in various sectors of the economy including its use in e-commerce and sustainable environmental ecosystem. Both sides agreed on the need for a regulatory framework on how AI can be used positively in that respect.

With regards to climate change, the delegation was informed that Sweden's action plan is aligned to the EU climate change regulations. As such, Sweden has been persuaded to utilise carbon taxes domestically as it participates in the EU emissions trading system regarding the purchasing of international carbon credits as a measure to reduce carbon emissions.

In the same vein, Sweden has a robust waste management system which is driven by the natural and cultural inclination towards a clean environment.

## **VISIT TO LATVIA**

### **Meeting with the Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia**

The Hon. Speaker's delegation started its engagement in Latvia on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 with a meeting with Hon. Daiga Mierina, Speaker of the Parliament of Latvia. The historic visit by the Parliamentary delegation from Zimbabwe was indeed instructive on the trajectory of enhanced relations between the two countries and by extension, the two legislatures.

Discussions focused on issues of mutual interest including strengthening economic, trade and people to people bilateral ties between the two countries, possible areas of cooperation between the two legislatures, current global conflict situations that threaten peace and security as well as forthcoming elections for the UN non – permanent seats by the sister Republics.

The Hon. Speaker of the Latvian Parliament unequivocally condemned what she termed Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In this regard, she opined that the European Union unanimously stands with

Ukraine and has subsequently placed issues of regional security as a priority.

On that score, Speaker Mudenda reminded his host that even the callous First and Second World Wars ended with peace round Conferences anchored on diplomacy and dialogue. In that regard, Speaker Mudenda affirmed that the attendant peace and security dividend was non-negotiable. In this context, Speaker Mudenda supported the establishment of the IPU Taskforce on the Russia-Ukraine conflict as well as the SADC initiative for the peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Northern Mozambique and the Eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

It was resolved that modalities would be put in place for the establishment of a Parliamentary Friendship Association that would strengthen the Parliamentary processes between the two legislatures.

### **Meeting with Mr. Kaspars Melnis, Minister of Climate and Energy**

In the morning of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the Speaker's delegation met with the Minister of Climate and Energy, Mr Kaspars Melnis, with the

view of learning Latvian laws and policy architecture around climate change and renewable energy.

Consequently, the Minister informed the Zimbabwean delegation that Latvia is currently engaging relevant stakeholders on the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) which sets goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by increasing renewable energy use. The NECP is augmented by the regulatory framework from the EU bloc.

Furthermore, the Zimbabwean delegation learnt that the Latvian Parliament has a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs') Commission that comprises Members of Parliament and works on issues related to Latvia's implementation of the United Nations SDGs'. This Commission has a Sub-committee on Climate Change that focuses on issues related to climate change in Latvia.

The delegation was informed that Independent Power Producers (IPPs) generate electricity and sell it to traders or directly to the national grid. Renewable energy sources like solar and wind are becoming increasingly central for Latvian IPPs as the country strives to increase renewable energy usage.

Latvia's approach to the application of Artificial Intelligence (AI) focuses on mainstreaming its use across all sectors of the economy and governance. Additionally, the Minister advised the Zimbabwean delegation that AI is being tested for application in Latvian agriculture such as automated crop monitoring, optimising resource use and potentially improving yields. The Speaker's delegation subsequently observed that this is an area which would be greatly beneficial to Zimbabwe on the backdrop of Zimbabwe being an agro-based economy. Relatedly, Latvia has early warning detection systems in place for a plethora of naturally occurring climate change hazards such as floods, droughts, and inclement weather patterns.

### **Honourable Speaker Mudenda's Visit to the Monument of Freedom in Latvia**

Speaker Mudenda, accompanied by H.E. Ms. Daiga Mierina, Speaker of the Saeima (Latvian Parliament), laid wreaths at the Monument of Freedom in Latvia in the presence of a military parade. The Monument commemorates heroes and heroines who lost their lives in the pursuit of Latvian freedom and independence.

## **Meeting with the Latvian Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee**

The Hon. Speaker's delegation subsequently met with Ms. Skaidrite Abrama, Chairperson of the Latvian Parliament's Economic, Agricultural, Environmental, and Regional Policy Committee (EARERPC), and its Members on the afternoon of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The EARERPC holds a broad mandate that encompasses tourism development, making it the busiest Committee in Parliament. Its work spans various areas, ranging from transitioning to renewable energy and electricity market laws to animal protection and competition law. Simultaneously, the EARERPC actively encourages public participation in Parliamentary processes

Speaker Mudenda shared Parliament of Zimbabwe's public participation process, particularly the public hearing process on proposed laws (Bills). He also highlighted that Members of Parliament can table a Private Members Bill such as the one on the abolishing of the death penalty which was tabled by an opposition Member of Parliament.

## **Meeting with the Latvian IT Cluster**

On the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024, Hon. Speaker Mudenda held a productive business meeting with representatives from the Latvian IT Cluster. The Latvian IT Cluster comprises several companies that have a strong accent of the use of AI and digital solutions. The meeting explored potential partnerships and collaboration opportunities between Latvian IT companies and Zimbabwe's Parliament, business and public sectors. Additionally, discussions explored various areas of collaboration, including knowledge transfer, hardware implementation, digital transformation and entrepreneurship development

### **Meeting with His Excellency, the President of Latvia**

To crown the Hon. Speaker's delegation working visit to Latvia, Speaker Mudenda, accompanied by H.E. Ambassador Misihairabwi Mushonga, was honoured to meet His Excellency Mr. Edgars Rinkevics, President of the of the Republic of Latvia on the 8th March 2024. President RinkevicsLatvia expressed his country's keen interest in accelerating political, economic and trade relations between Zimbabwe and Latvia. Accordingly, the President commended Ambassador

Misihairabwi-Mushonga for her spirited efforts in enhancing bilateral relations between the two sister republics.

In concurring with President Mr. Rinkevics, Hon. Speaker Mudenda expressed utmost gratitude for the support rendered to Zimbabwe and its freedom fighters during the liberation struggle. In this regard, he expressed confidence in the positive impact of the benchmarking visit in strengthening bilateral relations between the sister republics in response to His Excellency, President Mnangagwa's mantra **“ZIMBABWE IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS”**.

Additionally, Speaker Mudenda highlighted the negative impact of the war in Ukraine, including imported inflation affecting global economies. He also referred to the escalating conflict in the Middle East resulting in devastating humanitarian crisis. Similarly, Speaker Mudenda bemoaned the conflicts in Africa, in particular, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo where the SADC Region had deployed peacekeeping forces as well as deploring the exponential rise in coup d'états in some parts of West Africa.

The President appealed for Zimbabwe's support in Latvia's bid for the UN non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2025/2026 session. In the same vein, the President pledged that Latvia will also support Zimbabwe's bid for the UN non-permanent seat on the Security Council in 2027/2028 session.

In the spirit of sharing perspectives on global peace and security, the President of Latvia was keen on Zimbabwe to send a delegation to attend the High-Level Peace Summit scheduled for Switzerland in 2024.

In conclusion, His Excellency, the President of Latvia asked the Speaker to deliver fraternal greetings to his brother, His Excellency, Cde Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa. Speaker Mudenda happily obliged that he would deliver the message.

## **VISIT TO FINLAND**

### **Fun Academy Education and Vocational Training**

### **Introduction, AI, and Collaborations at Helsinki University**

### **Presentation on Pedagogics (Learning and Teaching)**

Speaker Mudenda's delegation met with University of Helsinki's Professors and Lecturers on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 in Finland. The University

presented its strategic plan straddling 2021-2030 under the vision:

**"WITH THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE – FOR THE WORLD."**

The goal of the University is to be a leading global university and a centre for "Bildung" (education emphasising personal growth).

Accessibility, openness, work environment and sustainability are its key focus areas. It offers online courses and explores ways of using digital technology in education.

### **Aalto Startup Centre**

In the afternoon of 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the Speaker's delegation visited the Aalto Start-up Centre housed within Aalto University for a highly interactive and informative session. Aalto Start-up Centre, ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> among the World's University Business Accelerator, was founded in 1997. It supports research based and innovative start-ups to build healthy, sustainable and successful businesses through training and access to tools of the trade as well as providing links with relevant key stakeholders. To date, Aalto Start-up Centre boasts of more than 600 alumni companies, employing approximately 3 200 people. This

represents 80% of the start-ups that are still in existence to date, with a 500 million Euro turnover annually.

The delegation was informed that the start-ups are provided with the necessary support systems to ensure that they succeeded.

Furthermore, start-up founders have platforms to interact and share experiences. One such platform is the SLUSH Conference, an annual networking conference for start-ups and venture capitalists. Commenting on the SLUSH Conference, Ambassador Misihairabwi-Mushonga applauded the initiative. However, she bemoaned the apparent lack of participation from the African countries. In order to address this, a Team comprising female African Ambassadors is exploring the idea of having an African Street during SLUSH 2024 where African First ladies would be invited to participate. Additionally, it was recommended that the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology should participate as well.

The delegation was highly impressed by the concept and the success rate. The delegation observed that the concept dovetails with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology's

5.0 model which seeks to refocus higher and tertiary education in Zimbabwe through the five pillars of teaching, research, community service, innovation and industrialisation anchored on cultural heritage.

Recognising the potential of creating a strategic partnership between Aalto and tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe, the Hon. Speaker extended an invitation to the representatives of the start-ups to undertake a visit to Zimbabwe and benchmark with Zimbabwe Universities' innovation and industrial hubs. The other suggested entry point into Zimbabwe is the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) held annually in April.

### **Meeting with the Speaker of the Parliament of Finland**

On 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024, the Speaker's delegation interfaced with Hon. Jussi Halla-Aho, Speaker of the Parliament of Finland. The Host Speaker highlighted that the Finnish Parliament is unicameral and comprises 200 Members of Parliament representing nine political parties. The host Speaker explained that while the different political parties may differ on issues relating to socio economic, political, migration, labour markets and taxation, among other issues. However,

there is always a great sense of unity when it comes to national security and foreign affairs issues.

Speaker Mudenda shared that Zimbabwe is a constitutional democracy and accordingly, Parliament seeks political synergies in its work as well as political tolerance through its Parliamentary processes such as the Committee system whose membership is proportionally drawn from political parties represented in Parliament.

Hon. Speaker Mudenda shared Zimbabwe's position on the conflict in Ukraine to the effect that diplomacy and dialogue should be used to resolve conflicts. Furthermore, Speaker Mudenda extended his gratitude to Finland for taking in refugees from Ukraine. In this context, Zimbabwe supported the position taken by South Africa to approach the courts to ensure that international humanitarian law is respected in Middle East and that there should be a ceasefire to allow for the distribution of humanitarian aid among the victims of the conflict.

Hon. Speaker Mudenda also briefed the Host Speaker on the hot spots in Africa, namely, Mozambique, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the coups in some countries in West Africa.

Speaker Mudenda explained that Zimbabwe continues to enjoy a peaceful environment post the August 2023 harmonised general elections. With regards to processes after the announcement of election results, Hon. Speaker Mudenda explained that an aggrieved political party or Presidential candidate is free to seek recourse from the Constitutional Court seven days after the announcement of results.

Hon. Speaker Mudenda extended an invitation to Finnish business entrepreneurs to invest in Zimbabwe as the Parliament had enacted legislation that addresses the ease of doing business through the creation of Zimbabwe Investment Development Authority (ZIDA), a one-stop-shop investment centre. Additionally, a law to govern joint ventures was enacted. He addressed the issue of property rights by advising that these are guaranteed by the Zimbabwe Constitution under the Bill of Rights.

Speaker Mudenda explained the bone of contention with the West which emanated from the Zimbabwe Government's decision to undertake the land reform programme. He further explained that Zimbabweans took up arms in order to address the land question after the indigenous people were dispossessed by the colonial settlers as well

as the issue of being denied universal suffrage. He explained that, not all white farmers were dispossessed of their land. Rather only those with multiple farms were dispossessed of the excess farms. The Zimbabwe Government, through the Second Republic led by President, Cde Dr. Mnangagwa, has put in place the compensation modalities for white farmers through a special purpose vehicle fund to pay disposed white farmers for infrastructure built on the farms by them.

The Host Speaker posed a question on whether Zimbabwe's agriculture sector had recovered after the land reform programme. In response, Hon. Speaker Mudenda assured the Host Speaker that indeed Zimbabwe had recovered and is now food secure producing adequate maize and wheat despite unpredictable droughts from time to time. Furthermore, the country had started manufacturing fertilizers. The country also boasts of over 10 000 water bodies earmarked for irrigation schemes in the country. It is anticipated that in the medium term, Zimbabwe will be the bread basket of Southern Africa.

Finally, Speaker Mudenda expressed his hope for continued dialogue and exchange of parliamentary best practices between the two

legislatures through the establishment of a Zimbabwe-Finland Friendship Association.

### **Meeting with Commerce and Environment Committees**

The final meeting of the day was held between the Speaker's delegation and the Finnish Parliament's Commerce and Environment Committees to share experiences and exchange best Parliamentary practices in their respective Committee Systems. The delegation was informed that the Commerce Committee primarily deals with policies related to industry, business and energy. Mr. Puisto, Chairman of the Committee, provided insights into the Committee's work in formulating and implementing regulations relative to its Portfolio. On the other hand, the Environment Committee focuses on environmental and climate change governance as well as housing regulations. Ms. Heinaluoma, Vice Chairperson of the Committee, representing the Opposition Party, elaborated on the Committee's responsibilities regarding environmental issues such as the climate change phenomenon and Finland's renewable energy development efforts.

It was instructive to learn that the Finnish Parliament responds to an online petition that has canvassed no less than 50 000 signatures. The Speaker's delegation was also informed that legislation is primarily initiated by Government. In that regard, the delegation was further advised that EU legislation generally takes precedence over Member States' national legislative processes where the EU legislation affects all EU Member countries to the extent that member countries are expected to domesticate EU legislation.

The delegation was amazed to learn that the establishment of a day-care system with equal parental leave for MPs' spouses was a latest Parliamentary legislative innovation which guarantees both spouses equal parental leave opportunity as they alternate in caring for newly born children without loss of income.

The challenges posed by Finland's aging population in the social and healthcare sectors were discussed where the panacea lay in Finland's quest to attract foreign workers to work in critical sectors of economy. The delegation was informed that Finland is exploring

cooperation with other countries, such as Zimbabwe, to fill the labour market deficit.

The Speaker's delegation learnt that Finland's government comprises four political parties. While there is no whipping system, the government leads in deciding policies and programmes.

On the pertinent matter of the establishment of a Parliamentary Friendship Association by both Parliaments, which was a recurring leitmotif during the course of Speaker Mudenda's visit in the Nordic countries, it was noted that the matter will require a Finnish MP to table a motion in the House for consideration. Once the motion is adopted, there is no need for a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Association. Rather the said Association would operate informally guided by issues of mutual interest.

## **OBSERVATIONS**

The following were the observations of the delegation;

Sweden is committed to reforming its development aid cooperation paradigm by fostering greater strategic trade and economic partnerships with countries such as Zimbabwe. It has a vibrant renewable energy

sector, with the Strangnäs Solar Park being one of the largest solar parks in Sweden. It was observed that Swedish companies are already present in Zimbabwe, especially in the mining and health sectors. Furthermore, there are also Swedish companies with expertise in off-grid water purification technologies, solar thermal heating systems and a well-developed waste management system that could be beneficial to Zimbabwe. The Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion be engaged to advance cooperation in this regard.

Latvia actively uses AI across various sectors of the economy, including agriculture for automated crop monitoring, resource optimization and yield improvement. It also has early warning detection systems for natural hazards such as floods, droughts, and extreme weather. In addition, Latvia uses the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change scenarios to model its national disaster risk monitoring and evaluation of its early warning systems for effective management of climate change impacts. It is, therefore, an imperative that the Ministries Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development and

Environment, Climate and Wildlife be engaged to pursue possible economic ties in this respect.

Latvia acknowledges challenges faced by its SMEs, including limited access to proper retail space and financial models. The Latvian government offers a 40% capital investment cost return to established SMEs and provides support to young farmers and environmentally friendly SMEs. It also actively encourages public participation in the legislative process. Stakeholders can submit electronic questions to Parliament, access proposed laws for comment and attend Committee meetings which are often open to the public. Latvia's online parliamentary platforms enable the public to follow Committee debates and directly raise issues with Committee Members or the Chairperson of that Committee. The Ministry of Women Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprises should investigate possible collaboration with its counterpart in Latvia. Parliament should intensify online public hearings.

The delegation observed that Zimbabwe can leverage technology in education bearing in mind that AI has the potential to personalise learning and improve educational outcomes. Zimbabwe could consider

establishing a framework for the ethical use of AI in Educational Technology, similar to the University of Helsinki. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Innovation and Technology Development could promote student innovation by encouraging universities to create programmes that support student entrepreneurship, such as Aalto Start-up Centre's Business Generator programme. The delegation observed that building partnerships between universities and industries can lead to successful innovation hubs by replicating the model between Aalto University and Aalto Start-up Centre.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Ministry of Energy and Power Development should adopt similar Swedish policies to promote renewable energy, such as building solar parks.

The Ministry of Energy and Power Development and ZINWA should collaborate with Sweden to develop green investment projects in Zimbabwe, such as off-grid water purification and solar thermal heating systems.

The Ministries of Environment, Climate and Wildlife as well as Local Government and Public Works should study Sweden's waste management system and develop a more robust system in Zimbabwe.

The Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology and Courier Services should develop a regulatory framework for the use of AI in various sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, to improve efficiency and productivity, Meteorological Services Department and the Civil Protection Department to develop early warning detection systems and disaster risk monitoring and evaluation for effective management of climate change impacts.

The Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology and Courier Services should establish a legal framework for data privacy cybercrime control. As Zimbabwe adopts new technologies, it should ensure there are laws in place to protect student data privacy, similar to Finland's CURRECHAT platform as well as control AI application abuse.

The Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SMEs

Development should implement supportive policies for SMEs, including financial models and improved access to retail space.

Zimbabwe should invest in research and development and support research into AI applications for education and other sectors as guided by the President's policy directives.

Zimbabwe should explore ways to attract Zimbabweans working abroad back to Zimbabwe similar to Finland's efforts to address their aging population and diaspora home investment.

Zimbabwe should participate in international conferences such as SLUSH Africa to expose Zimbabwean start-ups to potential investors and collaborators.

Zimbabwe should explore opportunities for increased economic cooperation with Sweden, including attracting Swedish investment to the country more than the current status.

The Parliament of Zimbabwe should consider a research support system for MPs that involves providing them with access to AI-powered research tools once a development strategy is in place.

Re-cognisant of the cross-cutting nature of AI, Parliament of Zimbabwe should establish an expanded Committee of the Future comprising Chairpersons of Thematic and Portfolio Committees.

The Parliament of Zimbabwe should establish a Parliamentary Friendship Associations with the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag), Latvia and Finland in order to solidify parliamentary diplomacy and foster collaboration on issues of mutual Parliamentary interest.

## **CONCLUSION**

The delegation expresses its gratitude to the Government of Zimbabwe and the Parliament of Zimbabwe for affording it the opportunity to undertake the benchmarking visits which will undoubtedly enhance Parliamentary processes in Zimbabwe.

**HON. MAKOPE:** Thank you Mr. Speaker for affording me this opportunity to add my voice on the motion or report presented by Hon. Shamu on benchmark visit to Sweden, Latvia and Finland. I think Zimbabwe as a nation can borrow a leaf from the best practices which are being done by other nations in the world, particularly the global

north, those nations which are advanced in technology as well as other sustainable development.

I want to second some of the recommendations which have already been made by Hon. Shamu in this engagement. The re-engagement and re-engagement as has been the mantra by His Excellency the President, Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa and also treating all other nations as friends because Zimbabwe is a friend to all and enemy to none. It is also enshrined in the NDS 1 that through technology as well as parliamentary diplomacy of this nature, we can improve the standards of living of our people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on the success stories of nations such as Sweden. In Sweden, the smart solar energy at their Stragnass Solar Park, it produces energy which is enough to supply more than 5 000 households per annum. That energy is connected to their main grid. So, I think we can leverage on their knowledge as well as their cooperation because we have very good relations with countries such as Sweden since independence.

Countries such as Sweden receive sunshine for a short period of time, probably two to three hours because those nations are in arctic regions in the far north and receive sunshine at an acute angle. Back home in Africa, Zimbabwe in particular, we receive sunshine for more than nine hours, especially in the summer season. So, we can use that energy which is with us and I believe such are low hanging fruits that Zimbabwe can take advantage of and reduce this energy crisis that we are mourning everyday because we have the resources at hand already as compared to those countries. They have solar and water heaters. In fact, they have technology in energy which answer all their day to day challenges that I think we can also learn to do.

Let me touch again on the artificial intelligence aspect. This is the way to go Hon. Speaker. As a nation, we should also embrace the artificial intelligence in all sectors of our economy. The Committee has already recommended the establishment of the Committee of the Future in this Parliament. The Committee of the Future is a bit futuristic. It is a

Committee that focuses on the future trends of socio-economic aspects of our society. How does it operate?

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Future, if it is well established at this Parliament, when we are crafting the policies or laws which govern our nation, we will look at the future trends and then we will respond by crafting a policy which responds to that particular eventuality. Let me give a very good example, if we can take the data that we have in our census. If we input that data using the artificial intelligence gadgets which some nations have such as Finland, they can predict the population distribution density, death rate and mortalities for 40 – 50 years to come. Then when you are crafting the policy, as a nation we respond to such situations. So, that Committee of the Future, I think is of paramount importance for us to establish as Parliament.

Artificial intelligence Mr. Speaker, as I have already alluded to, is the way to go. I propose that if we establish a National Artificial Intelligence Research Centre that can be dedicated to advancing artificial

research and development, this centre will serve as a hub for innovation and collaboration.

**Increase funding for research and development:** allocate a significant portion of the national budget to support research projects with a focus on AI applications.

**Promote Public-Private Partnerships:** encourage collaboration between Government, private sector and international partners to drive innovation.

**Develop AI Education Programmes:** integrate AI and digital literacy into the national curriculum to prepare our youth for the future job market.

**Support Startup and Innovators:** provide grants and incentives to startups and innovators working on AI solutions.

### **Proposals for the Committee of the Future:**

To ensure Zimbabwe is well prepared to navigate the complexities of the future, I propose the establishment of an expanded Committee of

the Future within our Parliament. This committee should comprise the Chairpersons of Thematic and Portfolio Committees reflecting the cross cutting nature of AI and other emerging technologies.

### **Mandate of the Committee**

**Strategic foresight:** the committee will engage in continuous analysis of global technological trends and their potential impact on Zimbabwe, providing strategic recommendations to Government.

**Policy development:** collaborate with various stakeholders to develop forward looking policies that promote innovation, economic growth and social well-being.

**Ethical guidelines:** formulate guidelines to ensure the ethical use of AI protecting citizens rights and fostering public trust in technological advancements.

**Capacity building:** advocate for educational reforms and skill development programmes that prepare Zimbabwean workforce for future job markets.

Inter committee collaboration: facilitate coordination among different parliamentary committees to ensure a cohesive and integrated approach to future challenges.

Investing in research and development with focus on AI applications is not merely an option but a necessity for Zimbabwe to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. By learning from the successes of Sweden, Latvia and Finland and aligning our efforts with the President's vision, we can transform our education system, boost our economy and improve the lives of all Zimbabweans.

I urge this esteemed House to support this motion and commit a future where Zimbabwe stands as a beacon of innovation and progress.

**HON. KAMBUZUMA:** I move that the debate do now adjourn.

**HON. NYANDORO:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

*On the motion of **HON. KAMBUZUMA** seconded by **HON. NYANDORO**, the House adjourned at Six o'clock p.m.*