

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Thursday, 19th March, 2026

The Senate met at Half-past Two o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS

(THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE *in the Chair*)

HON. SEN. GOTORA: Thank you Mr. President. I rise on a point of national interest. I am not sure whether I should raise it now.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE (HON. SEN.

KAMBIZI): I think we will do it after question time. Let me be guided.

Hon. Sen. Gotoru, you may take your seat. I am being advised that on a Thursday, it is...

HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI: In terms of Standing Order Number 61, a Senator who is not a Minister is allowed to make a one-minute statement on a matter that he believes is of national interest. Accordingly, I think it is not fair for the House to deny a Senator who has something to say in terms of that particular Standing Order.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: Thank you very much Hon. Sen. Zvidzai for checking the rule book. Yes, it allows a

Member to give a one minute statement on a point of national interest on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays. As such Hon. Sen. Gatora, you are recognised to give your one minute statement – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] –

HON. SEN. GATORA: Thank you Mr. President. I had read the Standing Rules before coming here because I did not want to stand up and confuse the House. I have a point of national interest Mr. President.

This morning, I woke up to shocking news from the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority (ZERA), where the price of fuel in this country has just made life difficult for everybody. – [HON.

SENATORS: *Hear, hear.*] - Fuel, Mr. President, is as good as water because it fuels business, agriculture, conservation and literally everything. Our fuel in this country, in my view, is supposed to be very cheap. Why? Because we are blending with sugar. – [HON.

SENATORS: *Hear, hear.*] - Since we are blending with sugar, the actual cost of the imported fuel is therefore reduced by the fact that we are generating part of our fuel now locally, which is number one.

Number two, we have a State pipeline from Beira to Harare and we have a huge storage facility at Msasa, at the Mabvuku turnoff. – [HON. SENATORS: *Hear, hear.*] - I personally do not understand the effect of the war in Iran, Israel and the United States of America or even the war in Russia and Ukraine because we are quite a distance away from them. The underground facility in Mabvuku is so large that we should be able to store enough fuel to last us for years. I happen to know the facility's size. Thank you Mr. President.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: Thank you Hon. Sen. Gatora. Once again, it is good to read the rule book. It guides you accordingly and you will not be at any disadvantage.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE

APOLOGIES RECEIVED FROM MINISTERS

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: I have a list of apologies with me here, which reads as follows: Hon. General Rtd. Dr. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga, the Vice President. Hon. Colonel Rtd. K.C.D. Mohadi, the Vice President. Hon. O.C.Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri, Minister

of Defence, Hon. M. Mutsvangwa, Minister of Women's Affairs,
Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, Hon. Dr. Z.
Soda, Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services,
Hon. M. N. Ndlovu, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Hon. Prof. Dr.
A. Murwira, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Hon.
B. Kabikira, Deputy Minister of Local Government and Public Works,
Hon. C. Sanyatwe, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural
Heritage, Hon. D. Phuti, Deputy Minister of Information,
Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Hon. F.
Moyo, Deputy Minister of Mines and Mining Development, Hon. R.
Modi, Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce, Hon. J. Sacco,
Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, Hon. V.
Haritatos, Deputy Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural
Development.

In the House, I have the usual figure of week in, week out.

Hon. Mhona, Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development,
Hon. Sibanda, Deputy Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education and we

also have Hon. Eng. Makwiranzou, Deputy Minister of Mines and Mining Development. These are the three we have, with the hope that others will join us as we move forward.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

***HON. SEN. BIMHA:** Thank you Mr. President. My question is, our country's economy is agro-based but the agricultural sector relies on critical inputs like fertilisers. We import these inputs, although we know they are not adequate. We also have other raw materials used to make fertiliser available in this country, like phosphate, which is available in Dorowa. We understand that Dorowa has a lot of potential, but the company is unable to produce those fertilisers or manufacture the ingredients.

I want to find out from the Hon. Minister whether Dorowa can be given the requisite resources to ensure that the locally available phosphate is used in manufacturing fertilisers, so that we stop importing fertilisers, which push up prices and affect us as consumers of agricultural products. Thank you.

***THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINES AND MINING**

DEVELOPMENT (HON. DR. MAKWIRANZOU): Thank you Mr.

President. I also thank Hon. Sen. Bimha for raising that question.

Indeed, our country is agro-based but to be productive in the agricultural sector, we need fertilisers. Even with adequate water, without fertilisers there is no good output.

The fertilisers are like salt in our soils. The Government realised that it spends a lot of money importing fertilisers, so it decided we need to recapitalise Dorowa to manufacture them. Dorowa was then put under the Mutapa Investment Fund and they are working together.

Anyway, I went there to find out about the progress and noticed that Dorowa is close but we expect it to start churning out fertilisers around May. The problem is that their machinery is outdated. When I visited the place, they received funding from the Mutapa Investment Fund to retool and re-equip so they could start manufacturing fertiliser. Yes, we need 450 tonnes of phosphate, so they say they will start manufacturing it this year.

They expect to assist wheat farmers. So, I thank Hon. Sen. Bimha for the question. We expect that the forex that we were supposed to use to import phosphate and other fertilisers will be used for other purposes. Thank you.

HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI: My supplementary question is, Dorowa Mine used to produce 150 000 tonnes of phosphate for the downstream industries as mentioned by Hon. Sen. Bimha. I just wish to ask in supplement to what Hon. Sen. Bimha asked. When are we likely to jack up production to be close to those quantities? Is the effort that you have put in it together with Mutapa able to resuscitate production at Dorowa Mine to the extent of 150 000 tonnes per year?

* **HON. DR. MAKWIRANZOU:** Thank you Mr. President, for the question indeed. Dorowa, on how they used to work, the percentage from the ore that comes out for phosphate is just 10%. The rest which you are talking about are supposed to be pumped out. They used to have one pump only. So now, they bought another pump, which means they are now able to pump 24-7 every day for the rest of the year. They can

only stop during maintenance. If a pump is not functioning, they will close and let another one work. Indeed, we expect to reach those levels being referred to by the Hon. Senator. I thank you.

***HON. SEN. KADUNGURE:** Thank you Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity. My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, Hon. Mhona. I would like to applaud him for attending Senate every sitting. My question is, I would like to focus on Mazowe Road. The graders are not working well because it is muddy and they are sinking. Why can you not work on Rushinga Road which has only four kilometres left? Many people in Rushinga end up hiring cars to go to Karanda because it is a tarred road all the way.

***THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** Thank you Hon. Sen. Kadungure. I would like to inform that during rainy seasons, there are some works that we are able to do and some that we cannot because of the rain. I would like to thank you and promise you that there is someone who is now working on that road, Rushinga-

Chimhanda, that includes the road to the hospital that you have mentioned. You will see the contractor starting work and to finish work that has not been done for some time.

+HON. SEN. MLILO: Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

My question is directed to the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education. I have noticed that there is a change in the weather or climate. As a Committee, we have moved around in rural areas particularly. We heard that during the rainy season, teachers and pupils are not able to go to school because the streams will have flooded or some bridges will have been eroded. What efforts were made, because we realised that there is a lot of rain this time around. Education is very important for children. What efforts have been made to ensure that all pupils go to school?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT (HON. S. SIBANDA): Thank you very much, Mr. President. I thought this one is a question regarding the Minister of

Primary and Secondary Education. I thought it is going to be responded to by the leader of the Government business.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: Hon. Sen. Mlilo, the relevant Minister is not around and no one is able to respond to that. So can you shelve it?

+HON. SEN. MLILO: Point of order Mr. President. I think my question is relevant. Even if he is under tertiary education, can he not respond to that question?

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: It is not a point of order anyway. He has already said he cannot answer that question. He feels it is for Primary and Secondary Education. Probably, forcing him to respond to that might give us the wrong answer altogether. In all earnest, he has said he cannot. Shelve it and then we will have it next week. I think he has been honest.

***HON. SEN. ZINDI:** My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. We are seeing on social media some comments, with so many places and because of the rain, most bridges that were constructed, for example, I was going through a

script from Mberengwa, Chiredzi and Runde River, it says that it is flooded, the bridge was eroded. Some low-level bridges that were constructed some time ago, Mudzi is also another area. My question is, these bridges that are eroded that have been recently constructed, does that mean those who constructed the bridges are not experts or is it because of the velocity of the water that the bridges are being washed away? People cannot go to work, especially those in Masvingo. There is a certain school in Masvingo, students are not going to school because of a bridge that collapsed or was washed away by the rains. Also, do you say that there was expertise in those who constructed the bridges because I feel that you would be using more money for the same thing? Thank you.

***THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** Thank you Hon. President of the Senate and thank you Hon. Zindi. Firstly, I want to correct the Hon. Senator's statement regarding the bridges that have been recently constructed. These are not the bridges being washed away. The rains we experienced a few days ago were flash floods,

primarily affecting Mberengwa. Those from Mberengwa can attest to this. The bridges in question are well-known; they are some of the structures that have been damaged by the rains. Even those who remember the time we faced cyclones can confirm this.

From what I know, last week in Mberengwa, most areas saw their bridges washed away, resulting in a complete halt to transportation.

Currently, efforts are being made to assess how many bridges have been eroded or washed away. Some individuals have been found stranded on an island and require assistance. In such incidents, the replacement of bridges is often delayed due to the need for funding.

However, after constructing a bridge and then learning that it has been washed away, only to hear claims that it was not built properly, I would like to request examples of such bridges. It is important to note that these were the very bridges that had already been washed away and I want to emphasise this point.

In English, we refer to certain types of structures as Bailey Bridges. In Mberengwa, there is one that we previously used as a temporary crossing; we collaborated with the military to ensure that

people could cross during emergencies like this. These are the bridges currently being utilised by the community while we seek experts to construct a permanent bridge.

***HON. SEN. MUNZVERENGWI:** My question is directed to the Deputy Minister of Mines. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the Government through the Department of Mines and Mining Development. From what I have read today, there are plans to place external officers from the Ministry of Mines in various districts. This initiative is something we welcome. As women in the mining sector, we are particularly looking forward to increased inclusion of women in these efforts. I would like to hear from the Deputy Minister regarding our request.

You have successfully introduced mechanisation programmes in agriculture, including tractors, combine harvesters and ploughs. We want to know if it is possible to establish a comparable programme for women in the mining sector, to demonstrate that women are equally strong contributors in this field. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINES AND MINING
DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR OIL AND GAS
RESEARCH AND OTHER STRATEGIC MINERALS
EXPLORATION (HON. ENG MAKWIRANZOU):**

I would also like to thank Hon. Sen. Munzverengwi for the questions she raised. Our goal is to establish offices in each district, similar to what is being done by other ministries, such as agriculture. With these offices, we will focus on empowering women and youth in the mining sector.

Regarding the issue of tractors, we are indeed providing loans through the Mining Industry Loan Fund. This fund not only offers loans but also supplies machinery, as we recognise that some miners lack the necessary equipment for their operations. In such cases, we instruct individuals to acquire the machinery and we will cover the hiring fees.

The Government aims to empower women and we seek to understand what resources are being mined in our various areas. By appointing district mining officers, we can gather information on the mining activities in specific districts. Thank you.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: We are pleased to be joined by Hon. Dr. Soda, Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services, as well as Hon. Minister Garwe, Minister of Local Government and Public Works, and Hon. Minister Muswere, Minister of Skills Audit. They are all here and ready to address your questions.

HON. SEN. MDHLURI: My question is directed to the Minister of Transport, in light of the recent fuel price increases, what policy measures has the Ministry put in place to regulate and monitor the public transport fares to prevent arbitrary and unjustified increases?

Still on the same vein, I would want to know from the Minister if the Government is considering any subsidies or relief measures for public transport operators to cushion both the operators and commuters from the impact of rising fuel costs. Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA): Thank you Mr. President and I would also like to thank Hon. Senator Mdhuri

for the question. However, I must acknowledge that part of it may be beyond my scope to answer.

Regarding fares, we have two categories: intra-city fares, which pertain to cities and are supervised by local authorities, and inter-city fares, which involve long-distance buses and they both fall under the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development.

We have a working team, along with our road motor transportation division, that engages with stakeholders concerning price increases. In such cases, we meet with operators and associations to reach an agreement on fare adjustments. For day-to-day city fares, I am confident that my colleague, the Minister of Local Government and Public Works, will be able to address that specific question.

THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS (HON. DR. GARWE): Thank you Mr. President. We have not yet established a position to protect residents and citizens from being overcharged by *mushikashika* operators on the road.

However, we have scheduled an all-stakeholder meeting for Monday, which will include urban transport associations. Our goal is to

prevent arbitrary fare increase across the country. That is the update I can provide at this time, but I will bring a formal report later if necessary. Thank you.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: We will be pleased to hear that outcome next week. Thank you.

HON. SEN. ZINDI: In response to Hon. Minister Mhona's response to the question raised by Hon. Sen. Mdhluri, my concern is on the issue to do with enforcement to make sure that the transport providers are really adhering to the stipulated fares. Why am I saying so? Each time it rains, the fees increase. Where it was a distance being charged a dollar, it comes to two dollars. If it is a holiday, intercity with many passengers, a USD10 fare from Mutare to Harare, it can cost USD15 or USD20. So, my concern is with the matter of enforcement. What measures do they have in place to ensure that they strictly adhere to what is stipulated? I thank you.

HON. MHONA: Thank you Mr. President. Once again, I want to thank Hon. Sen. Zindi. When it comes to intercity, as I indicated earlier, there is no point where transport associations will just have figures or

fares that are not agreeable pertaining to the way we structure the transport sector. We engage them and if we have complaints, they normally highlight or raise those complaints through our Ministry. We have not faced such a fault. However, relating to the intra-city, which is city to city, I am sure Hon. Minister Garwe, after he has engaged the operators, that question will be addressed accordingly. Thank you Mr. President.

HON. SEN. CHAKABUDA: Thank you Mr. President. My question is directed to the Leader of the House because I see the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife is not in. My question is, what is the Government policy to control plastic littering of the environment? I thank you.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

(HON. SEN. MATUKE): Thank you very much President of the Senate. The first thing is that nobody is allowed to litter. Littering is an offence. That is the first thing. Just to complement that, I think you know the Government introduced the last day of the month as a day

where people would go cleaning their cities. I think there is no policy but it is an offence for one to litter.

***HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** Thank you Mr. President. My question is directed to the Minister of Energy and Power Development. My question has to do with the high prices of fuel in this region. Zimbabwe is the only country that has the highest price for fuel that is going for USD2.17. In Zambia, it is going for USD1.60 and in Botswana, USD1.10. Fuel for Zambia passes through our country, Msasa. The excuse that is being given is that there is a war. The high price of fuel seems as if the war is happening here in our country. I would like to understand the reason why some other countries are doing such a good thing for their people. The war is there but the prices of fuel here are going up, very high. What is it that is causing that? Moreover, does our Government not have any other options so that if things go like this, they assist in other ways so that fuel does not go up?

***THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER DEVELOPMENT (HON. SIMBANEGAVI):** Thank you Hon. President of the Senate. I would like to thank the Hon. Senator for the

important question that he has asked. The issue of fuel is that the war is not happening here in Zimbabwe, but there is a war. Those are things that affect us. Even though we are far from where the war is happening, Zimbabwe was unfortunately already importing fuel from those countries that are at war. So, we realise that those are things that draw us back as a country that we import fuel from those countries. It is something that made our prices for fuel to continue going up.

As Government, we sat down and realised that if we had taken that initiation of raising prices because our fuel comes from those countries through the sea but it takes time for that fuel to arrive here. If we hesitate to buy that fuel at such a price, it will then result in a shortage of fuel. So, it fits that we get the fuel, buy it at a higher price but we already have what we call the fuel levy. That is the money that is deducted by the Government. However, at this time when things are becoming so difficult, the Government takes some of that money to subsidise prices so they do not go up

Sometime ago, the fuel went up and we took 11 cents off. We made the fuel not go up by 11 cents and it remained at USD1.71 but the

price continues to go up, so we tried. If the Government had not intervened, the fuel would have gone up from that amount that is currently there. It was supposed to be at USD2.20 but because the Government was subsidising, we maintained the price. It depends on the Government. They see how the economy in their country is performing and can subsidise the prices of different commodities at a certain stage. If you are comparing other countries like Zambia, their Government subsidise commodities that they see fit whenever they are cushioning their prices. Zambia has problems with issues related to energy, especially electricity. They decided that they cannot have a shortage of both fuel and electricity, and made a decision to put more funds towards fuel. Their fuel looks as if it is a bit lower but it is only an issue of their subsidisation.

It is higher and they pay up to 60% in subsidies towards their fuel. Here, we are subsidising but doing so where we see that the Government is able to stabilise the economy from everything that is needed in the country. Thank you Hon. President.

***HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** Let me mention some statistics.

Zambia, their price for fuel was \$1.51 before the war. Now, it is \$1.60. Tanzania, it was \$1.30. They only increased the price by \$0.05. In Mozambique it was \$1.20. Now, it has been increased to \$1.25. They only topped it with \$0.05. South Africa, it was \$1.04. Today, it is \$1.06. They only topped it up with \$0.02. Botswana, they have not hiked the price. Namibia, \$1.12. They only topped it up with \$0.05 to \$1.15. Here in this country, sometimes we blend our fuel with ethanol from Chiredzi. So, I think the Ministry does not see it fit to do more subsidising. They should go to Mozambique and Zambia to get some ideas because they no longer have ideas.

***HON. SEN. ZINDI:** I would like to thank the Minister for the response that they are trying to subsidise but I see that the subsidising that they are doing is not a subsidy for our economy to go on because the economy needs fuel. The increase in fuel prices will cause the price of everything to go up. My supplementary question is, since there is a relationship between the increase of fuel prices and the hiking of prices of basic commodities, why are we failing to lower the fuel prices so that

we are at par with other countries around us who have not reached the price of \$2 because of the war? Almost everything where fuel is involved, the prices will definitely increase. What is hindering you from controlling the fuel prices?

***THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER DEVELOPMENT (HON. SIMBANEGAVI):** When people are in their country, there are some things that each and every country chooses to subsidise and not subsidise because of various reasons. Each country has its own priorities. Some have lower prices for certain things and some things will have high prices. Here in our country, if we look from where the fuel is coming from, our pipeline comes from Beira. So, for our fuel, sometimes we have a reserve at our border from the east. Some of the fuel comes to Harare, Mabvuku. Zimbabwean citizens can travel to Beira and buy it from Beira.

Government will notice that that is the case. We removed the regulations that people are able to take fuel from Beira. Now that the fuel has gone up, it is not one person's problem but it is a problem that

we are all facing because of the crisis but our citizens can go to Beira to import and then sell it at a price that is better.

People from other provinces can even come to Harare and take fuel from here and resell the fuel at their filling stations without going to Beira. If our citizens are able to take that fuel, they can resell it at that price and be able to get a profit but what we are saying is, our people get this fuel despite the fact that it is expensive and because it is available.

HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: My supplementary question will be Hon. Minister, given that the significant portion of the fuel prices is made up of Government taxes and levies, is the Ministry prepared to review or reduce these charges to cushion citizens or should Zimbabweans accept that fuel has become a revenue collection tool at the expense of the economy?

HON. SIMBANEGAVI: May the Hon. Senator repeat the question slowly?

HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: Hon. Minister, given that the significant portion of the fuel prices is made up of Government taxes

and levies, is the Ministry prepared to review or reduce these charges to cushion citizens or should Zimbabweans accept that fuel has become a revenue collection tool at the expense of the economy?

HON. SIMBANEGAVI: Mr. President, I am sure issues of taxes and revenue lies within the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion. May I defer the question to the Leader of Government Business?

THE MINISTER OF STATE SECURITY (HON. SEN. MATUKE): The Acting Minister of Energy and Power Development is present. With your permission, may he be allowed to respond?

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: Permission is granted. You may respond Hon. Minister.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, PUBLICITY AND BROADCASTING SERVICES (HON. SODA): Thank you Mr. President of Senate. Maybe let me give a bit of context. There is a question that was raised with regard to the blending that we are doing in the country where we use ethanol. Currently, our stocks have depleted and we are blending at 5% until April when production of ethanol

begins. So, usually, the blending is a mechanism by which prices can be contained but, unfortunately, we do not have adequate stocks to try to use to lower the prices.

Then, coming to the situation that is at play, you will notice that because of the disruptions of the routes of supply, I know one of the Hon. Members mentioned the Strait of Hormuz, where about 20% of the oil that gets into the world passes through. It has been blocked and what it then entails is that we have to use much longer routes in order to bring the product into the country. I appreciate the observation that has been made by the Hon. Member who asked or enquired.

Lastly, can we not re-examine the issues of our levies or the issues of our taxes so as to try to reduce the cost of our fuel? I will refer to one of the countries in the region which is selling its diesel at \$2.85 and it is not far away from us, that is Malawi. This aligns with the response that has been given by the Hon. Deputy Minister, that the pricing also takes into account the tax regimes in every country. We appreciate that because of the situation that we are faced with, we will discuss with the

Hon. Minister of Finance with a view that the levies and the licences be reviewed.

I know certainly that the Government is committed. Just this last Tuesday, I think you are all aware that there are some taxes, permits, permit fees and licences that were reviewed by our Government in the spirit of the ease of doing business. So, we will take the proposal that has been made by this House to the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, that this is what the people have said and we will hear from the Minister of Finance. I thank you.

HON. SEN. S. MOYO: Thank you Mr. President of President. My question will go to the Minister of Mines and Mining Development. In the region like Matabeleland, where mining activities exist, communities are still facing poor infrastructure and unemployment. What specific policies ensure that mining benefits the locals? I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINES AND MINING
DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR OIL AND GAS
RESEARCH AND OTHER STRATEGIC MINERALS**

EXPLORATION (HON. DR. MAKWIRANZOU): Thank you Mr.

President of Senate and I also want to thank the Senator for bringing up that question. I recently visited Matabeleland, so I will certainly be very interested if there is any specific area that he knows has poor infrastructure or is failing to extract and process. I will be glad to know those places and I will tackle them. I thank you.

*Questions Without Notice were interrupted by the **ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE**, in terms of Standing Order No. 67.*

HON. SEN. ZHOU: Mr. President of Senate, I propose that the time for Questions Without Notice be extended by thirty minutes.

HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: I second for it to be added with 45 minutes.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: We will extend by 15 minutes.

+HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: Thank you Mr. President of Senate. I am glad that I heard the Minister say he visited Matabeleland. It is not one place. If we were to ask the Minister to specify the places, I think we would be disrespectful because there are a lot of places in Matabeleland. I come from Matopos, Kezi, where there is a lot of gold but there are no

roads, schools or hospitals. So, which Matabeleland did the Hon.

Minister visit where he realised that there is no need for fixing? I thank you.

HON. DR. MAKWIRANZOU: Mr. President of Senate Sir, that was a lengthy statement or question from the Hon. Member. Can I respond to it more clearly and more definitively, if I can get a written statement? I thank you.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: All right, that is fine. Can that be put in writing?

HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: I definitely will Mr. President of Senate. Thank you.

HON. SEN. ZHOU: Thank you very much Mr. President of Senate. My question is directed to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, concerning maybe two higher institutions of learning, which are Great Zimbabwe University and the United College of Education. Recognising that the Second Republic has attached a lot of support to persons with disabilities in terms of producing students with disabilities which has resulted in opening many doors for opportunities for those

students, we engaged the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Tagwira, to issue a statement concerning delayed fees from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and all other institutions have heeded the statement that was written by the Permanent Secretary of Higher and Tertiary Education. These two institutions have remained adamant and a lot of things have been happening.

I am seeking guidance from the Ministry as to what can be done so that at least students with disabilities can be given their results and also allowed to participate in their graduations, even if fees payment would be delayed by the Department of Disability Affairs. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT (HON. S. SIBANDA): Thank you Mr. President. I would like to thank the Hon. Senator for this question. I think this is a specific question with regards to two specific institutions that the Hon. Senator feels have not been responded to I request if that can be put in writing so that I can bring a comprehensive response in the next sitting of Senate. So, I submit.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: Thank you Hon.

Minister. Hon. Senator Zhou, in all earnest, put it in writing, stating all the necessary details so that the Minister can bring a comprehensive response.

***HON. SEN. TONGOGARA:** Thank you Mr. President. I am directing my question to the Leader of the House. Previously, at the Registrar General's offices, we were witnessing long queues. People would wake up and join the line around 3 a.m. Our Minister went to investigate the causes of the long queues and it was corrected but the problem of long queues is now back on the area of birth certificates. Now that the documents to have access to birth certificates are being sold, do you have any plans in place to resolve this issue just like what you did previously? Each child must get a birth certificate because it is their right. It is happening at Market Square. Thank you Mr. President.

***THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY (HON. SEN. MATUKE):** Thank you Mr. President. Thank you for the important question that has been asked by our Hon. Sen. Tongogara. Since the question that has been raised is linked to a specific office, I

would like the Minister to look into it and then give a statement on the state to do with birth certificates.

***HON. SEN. MUZODA:** Mr. President, my question is going back to the Minister of Energy. Last week, I asked the same question that is being asked today. Does our country have fuel reserves that if we are faced with a difficult situation, people will be safe before the fuel price goes up? Mr. President, which fuel is going up because we have got fuel reserves that are going to last for three months. How many days does it take for fuel to be transported from Hormuz to where we can have access to the fuel so that we know the fuel has arrived and the prices have gone up?

***THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, PUBLICITY AND BROADCASTING SERVICES (HON. SODA):** Thank you Mr. President. When fuel is being sold, we use what we call replacement costing. It means that if we have one litre of diesel here in Zimbabwe on the market, we know that after it has been sold, there must be another litre to replace that litre we have taken. We do not wait for the fuel to come from Hormuz and arrive here. When we remove one litre for

resale, we must be able to purchase another one litre to replace that one we would have sold. We do not wait for the fuel to arrive first. We must ensure that we maintain our reserves, but that does not mean the fuel in the reserves will not be sold. We are only mentioning this because it has to do with security because if the tankers transporting our fuel are affected by security crisis, we must have fuel readily available for resale to people.

I think I responded to this question here or in the National Assembly on the 4th of March that the fuel that we have in the reserves will last for up to two to three months. However, we will not wait and use the fuel that is in the reserve and purchase after it has been used up. We replace what we would have sold and we look at the price that we will be going to purchase that fuel so that the price that we will use to sell the fuel to the people. We have heard your grievance. It depends on each country and how prepared they are as well as the state of their economy. The fuel difference on the fuel prices depends on the taxes and levies that are imposed. We will take up your grievance to the Minister of

Finance and ask if there is anything that can be done. If there are funds available, we can look into it and ensure that we have fuel reserves.

THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE: Before the Ministers who are not affected by the Questions With Notice leave, I want to thank you all for coming to the House. We really appreciate your effort.

Questions Without Notice were interrupted by **THE ACTING PRESIDENT OF SENATE** *in terms of Standing Order Number 67.*

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE
PROGRESS ON THE MUZARABANI INVICTUS OIL AND GAS
PROJECT

4. **HON. SEN. ZINDI** asked the Minister of Mines and Mining Development to inform the House the progress to date regarding the Muzarabani/Invictus Oil and Gas project.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINES AND MINING DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR OIL AND GAS RESEARCH AND OTHER STRATEGIC MINERALS EXPLORATION (HON. DR. MAKWIRANZOU): Thank you Mr. President. I also want to thank Hon. Sen. Zindi for that very pertinent

question asking the progress made to date. The Muzarabani Project is located within the Cabora Bassa Basin in Northern Zimbabwe. It is currently the most advanced oil and gas exploration and initiative in the country. Since acquiring the project, Invictus Energy has completed extensive seismic surveys covering the basin. It has drilled Mukuyu 1 and Mukuyu 2 wells, which confirmed the presence of hydrocarbons. This exploration was done under the Petroleum Exploration and Production Agreement with Government (PEDPA).

Critically, the Government of Zimbabwe and Invictus have finalised this long awaited exploration and they have gone into what we call Petroleum Production Sharing Agreement (PPSA). This agreement establishes a stable, transparent and internationally competitive legal and fiscal framework for petroleum production.

The activities that are taking place in Musuma 1, before you start sinking holes, you have to create what is called a site well pad. These are massive structures which are being prepared and we think that this will be completed by the end of this first quarter and when that is completed, it means that the wells start to be utilised. We will put in more

equipment. Then there is the Mukuyu Gas Field appraisal which involves activities on the Mukuyu Gas Field and we hope that this is now already taking place. Mukuyu 1 and Mukuyu 2 drilling campaigns have to be started soon. The programme is designed to delineate the size of the field where we are going to extract and resolve the quality of the hydrocarbons that we are going to extract.

Now, let me go to the formal execution of what I call the Petroleum Profit Sharing Agreement (PPSA). This formal document, as I said, has been completed and there is a definitive legal and fiscal framework upon which to work. What is the importance of our Muzarabani Oil and Gas fields in view of the global energy crisis and the conflicts that are occurring in the Middle East? We are quite aware that these are affecting us and we are taking every step to try and move as fast as we can. For Zimbabwe and the broader Southern African region, this crisis presents both challenges and also some significant opportunities. So, we have to look at our energy security and the important import substitution. Zimbabwe relies heavily on imported petroleum and we are now exposed by this conflict. So, this is why we

are working as fast as we can to make sure that we can substitute some of the imports.

The second issue is that it also presents favourable investment climate for hydrocarbon development. The global energy crisis has renewed international focus on diversifying supply sources away from the conflict-affected regions. This has created a favourable environment to frontier exploration and to explore our resources.

Thirdly, we have to look at the regional energy hub potential. The Cabora Bassa Basin or Muzarabani is giving us an opportunity and the proximity to Mozambique's existing gas infrastructure means that we can be able to cooperate or enter into a joint venture with Mozambique on the Southern Africa Power Corporation.

Fourthly, we need to strengthen Zimbabwe's energy mix. Natural gas from the Cabora Bassa Basin would complement Zimbabwe's existing hydroelectric and solar energy capacity providing reliable and base-load power and supporting industrialisation. I must also mention that gas is widely recognised as a cleaner transition fuel positioning

Zimbabwe favourably in relation to global climate commitments and meeting the country's urgent development needs.

In conclusion, Muzarabani Oil and Gas is at an inflection point. The finalisation of the PPSA is very important because it means that drilling can now commence and this is why there is work on Musumi 1. The conflict gives us opportunities to explore our own resources and to be self-sufficient. I thank you.

HON. SEN. ZINDI: Mr. President, I am very pleased with the Deputy Minister's response in terms of ensuring that this deal comes to fruition. However, I want to implore the Deputy Minister in terms of what definitive measures they are taking or putting in place to ensure that this project is fast-tracked in view of the disruption in fuel supplies we are currently experiencing. Since we already have this project in place, may he kindly inform this House what definitive measures they have put in place?

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINES AND MINING
DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR OIL AND GAS
RESEARCH AND OTHER STRATEGIC MINERALS**

EXPLORATION (HON. DR. MAKWIRANZOU): Thank you, Senate President. Indeed, the conflict is affecting us and we are taking every step to move as quickly as possible. Working as the whole of Government, we have a working committee which consists of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Energy and Power Development and the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development . The definitive action we have done is to encourage Invictus because oil extraction is a huge project. We have to encourage it to work with other players and this is why we got Mutapa to be involved and Mutapa is now working with us and also sometimes having to input some resources. Certainly, the requests that are made by that group of extractors, we are working on them immediately to make sure that they move and we do not stand in their way. Thank you, Mr. President.

EXPLANATION ON THE UTILISATION OF ZIMDEF FUNDS

6. **HON. SEN. ZINDI** asked the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development to inform the House why the ZIMDEF fund is not being utilised to fund students

on attachment. Additionally, why, in some cases, if students are paid, they receive their allowances in ZiG (ZimbabweGold), despite companies contributing in USD.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION, INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT (HON. S. SIBANDA): Thank you Mr. President.

I wish to sincerely thank the Hon. Senator for raising such a pertinent question, which reflects deep concern for the advancement of our human capital development and the welfare of our students on industrial attachment. This is indeed a matter of national importance as the future of our economy rests upon the skills and competencies of our young people. On the question of why the ZIMDEF Fund is not being utilised to fund students on attachment, allow me to place on record that the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund does, in fact, provide industrial attachment allowances to students from polytechnic institutions as well as those under the apprenticeship programme. However, the fund is relatively small in size and scope. The number of university students requiring attachment allowances each year is

significantly higher than the fund's current capacity. As such, ZIMDEF is unable to extend support to university students without compromising its sustainability. The Ministry continues to explore mechanisms to broaden the resource base so that in future, more students may benefit equitably.

Then, on the second part of the question on why, in some cases, students receive allowances in ZiG despite companies contributing in United States Dollars, it is important to clarify that ZIMDEF collects revenue in both ZiG and United States Dollars. The fund allocates the bulk of its United States Dollar receipts towards critical projects and programmes being undertaken by universities, polytechnics, industrial training colleges, teachers' colleges, as well as research and innovation agencies. Consequently, allowances for students are often disbursed in ZiG in line with the fund's revenue mix and expenditure priorities. This approach ensures that while students receive their allowances, the broader mandate of ZIMDEF in supporting institutional development and innovation is not compromised. That also improves the quality of education that those particular students will enjoy. I wish to assure the

House that the Ministry remains committed to strengthening the financing of students' attachments. I submit.

HON. SEN. ZINDI: Thank you, Mr. President. If you may allow me to implore the Hon. Deputy Minister to bring to the House the list of students who have actually accessed or have been paid the allowances and the denomination in which they have been paid. I am saying so, being influenced by the discussion by the students themselves that they are not accessing or they are not being paid through ZIMDEF while they are on attachment. Also, some employers were also saying they are contributing but the students who are on attachment are not receiving those ZIMDEF funds. Thank you.

HON. S. SIBANDA: Thank you Mr. President. My response will be in two parts. Firstly, the Hon. Senator is saying she has spoken to students who are saying they are not receiving their attachment allowances. However, in her question, she questioned why they are getting it in ZiG. Then the second part is on the issue of statistics. That becomes a very specific question that needs to be put in writing so that we can bring the statistics.

HON. SEN. ZINDI: I take note, Mr. President. I will put it in writing as well.

On the motion of **THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINES AND MINING DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR OIL AND GAS RESEARCH AND OTHER STRATEGIC MINERALS EXPLORATION (HON. DR. MAKWIRANZOU)**, *the House adjourned at Nine Minutes past Four o'clock p.m. until Tuesday, 24th March, 2026.*