

# PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

*Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2026*

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

## PRAYERS

(THE HON. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE HON. SPEAKER

NON-ADVERSE REPORT RECEIVED FROM THE

PARLIAMENTARY LEGAL COMMITTEE

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** I have to inform the House that I have received a Non-Adverse Report from the Parliamentary Legal Committee on the Police Amendment Bill [H. B. 11, 2026].

## VISITORS IN THE SPEAKERS GALLERY

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** I have to inform the House that there is a delegation from Ghana in the Speaker's Gallery. I do not seem to see them. Oh, you are hiding behind chairs. I was going to say you are not there. You are most welcome.

## SUBMISSION OF CDF ACQUITTALS

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Following the announcement made on 18 February 2026, reminding Hon. Members of the requirements

to submit Constituency Development Fund (CDF) acquittals, I noted with concern that only 52 out of the 170 constituencies that accessed funding in 2025 have submitted their acquittals. The Hon. Members who have not submitted their acquittals should do so without exception by the 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2026 in terms of Article 14 of the CDF Constitution.

**\*HON. MURAMBIWA:** Thank you, Hon. Speaker. I want to thank the Government of His Excellency Dr. Emerson D. Mnangagwa for its progressive job initiatives - for example, Mucheke Bridge was commissioned recently. The people of Masvingo said that there is a need for everyone to witness what is really happening in Masvingo. When we were going to Masvingo, we used to say we were going via a tarred road but right now, we are saying we are going via tiles.

There were many problems in Masvingo because of Mucheke Bridge. The bridge was narrow. There used to be a lot of congestion because of the narrow bridge at Mucheke but right now there is no longer congestion. Traffic is now moving smoothly. His Excellency Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa is doing a great job. Even in my

Constituency, Zaka North, there are many developmental projects that are happening.

The people in Zaka North have sent me to come and thank His Excellency Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa for the developmental projects that are happening in the country. Right now, the office of the Registrar General was officially opened at Veza Ward 33. Hence, all these initiatives are very important. We also received computers on Tuesday. I am very happy Hon. Speaker. People from Zaka North have sent me to thank His Excellency through this august House.

Right now, we are preparing for the official opening of Chinyazvivi Clinic. All these things were built through the CDF, which was allocated to the constituency and we also use the devolution funds for all these projects, hence people from Zaka North said go and tell the Hon. Speaker so that he can tell the President that the money for devolution and CDF must continue to be allocated because there are a lot of developments that are happening in our Constituency, Zaka North. If the money for CDF

and devolution is allocated and used wisely, there are a lot of developments that are going to happen. I thank you.

**HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** On a point of order. As much as we should acknowledge the President of the country, it is not wise to just drop the name of the President in vain. Remember Mr. Speaker Sir, we are an oversight institution. Our mandate is to bring the President and the Executive to account. So, when you come here every day, it is good to appreciate good works and when you come here daily, it becomes difficult for us to bring the President to account.

As such, as much as we appreciate that, it must have limits so that we remain relevant to the international world who are seeing us today. It would appear as if Parliament has been captured by the Presidium – [AN HON. MEMBER: *Chakanaka chakanaka mukaka haurungwi munyu*] -

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** I do not see any Standing Order that has been violated by the national development. National development is under the purview and superintendence of the Head of State in Government. So, there is nothing amiss to acknowledge

that. In fact, the Head of State in Government is the Head of State of all people of Zimbabwe, regardless of their political affiliation.

*Kutenda kwakitsi kuri mumoyo. Asingatendi muroyi, handifungi kuti tine varoyi pano apa.*

**\*HON. MHETU:** Thank you Hon. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to raise an issue which touches on every woman in this country, especially the money which is being paid by women for registration for their maternity so that they can give birth. Looking at the statistics which have been posted by the Zimbabwe Demographic Survey, it says about 30% of women in Zimbabwe give birth in their houses, which really puts their lives and the new babies in danger.

The research has indicated that women give birth in their homes because they do not have enough money to register for birth. Mr. Speaker Sir, are you aware that the women are being requested to pay money to register their pregnancies from \$20 to \$40 in the Government and council clinics in towns? In the rural areas, they are requested to pay \$10. I want to take this opportunity to notify you that they are selling about four buckets of maize so that they

can register their pregnancies. That maize is supposed to be consumed by their families. We are having a challenge because we do not have enough food and this is due to climate change; the little harvested is being sold.

May the Government intervene and talk to the Ministry of Health and Child Care and councils so that they can reduce the money to register pregnancies to \$5 in the rural areas and \$10 in the towns so that we can encourage women to give birth. We also plead with the Government that those who are being referred from local clinics to the hospitals must not be requested to pay for fuel, which is used by ambulances. I am pleading with you.

May this issue be taken into consideration because it is very pertinent. If our parents did not have the money to register for their pregnancies and give birth to us leaders, this House may not have great Members of Parliament in this House. Some countries have got elderly people only because young couples who are there do not want to give birth. In Zimbabwe, we are happy because the women give birth and even the men are strong. What is really draining them is the money that is needed to register their pregnancies. They are

also told to buy necessities like razor blades, gloves and spirits to be used during childbirth.

Childbirth is not a sickness but it is a zeal to bring development in the country. I want to conclude by thanking those mothers who give birth to triplets. These mothers are given help by the Government. May those parents who give birth to twins get assistance. I thank you.

**\*THE HON. SPEAKER:** Thank you Hon Mhetu for that pertinent point of national interest. I am happy that you have raised your motion in our mother language and you have done it very perfectly. Thank you very much. Excellent job. I urge all men not to have “firepower”. You have heard what I said – [*Laughter.*] -

**HON. MAONEKE:** I rise to share a point of national interest regarding the adoption of a national dress code by our Cabinet, chaired by our President, Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa. In the same vein, let us not forget that this initiative was promulgated by none other than our very own mother of the nation, Dr. A. Mnangagwa, a former Member of Parliament and currently, a philanthropist par excellence.

The adoption of the national dress is a symbol of unity and cultural pride. It is a symbol of patriotism. This initiative to adopt national dress reflects a deep-rooted sense of patriotism among citizens. It encourages Zimbabweans to embrace and take pride in their cultural heritage. At its best, it reinforces national security.

Leadership by example - by wearing national dress, the Cabinet is setting an exemplary standard for the nation, showcasing its confidence in our identity and values as Zimbabweans.

National unity - this initiative can foster national unity, bringing together diverse ethnic groups under a common cultural identity, which is vital for social cohesion and harmony among citizens. Very indispensable again, for national security.

Cultural marketing - promoting our national dress internationally serves as a marketing tool for Zimbabwe's rich cultural heritage and enhancing its visibility to potential investors and tourists.

Economic opportunities - highlighting national dress can create economic opportunities through the textile and fashion

industries, encouraging local artisans and designers to thrive and expand their businesses.

Promotion of domestic resources - utilising locally sourced materials for national dress not only supports local industries, but also emphasises sustainability and the importance of homegrown resources.

In conclusion, I pray that this initiative should be supported as it embodies the spirit of patriotism, self-belief and unity while simultaneously promoting Zimbabwe's culture and resources. It is an opportunity for the country to come together and project a positive image both locally and internationally.

I suggest to Parliament, therefore, a recommendation for a formal endorsement of this proposal at its earliest parliamentary session, emphasising its multidisciplinary benefits across cultural, economic and social realms. Again, a very important point for national security and governance.

It is with profound admiration that we extol the remarkable initiative taken by the First Lady in instituting a national dress code, an innovative concept that transcends mere fashion to encapsulate

the very essence of our national identity. The myriad colours and exquisite designs crafted within this framework are truly otherworldly, reflecting not only artistic ingenuity, but also the rich cultural tapestry of our beloved Zimbabwe.

Her Excellency's visionary endeavour has garnered widespread acceptance across the diverse spectrum of Zimbabwean households, resonating with all citizens irrespective of their geographical domicile. This initiative stands as a statement to her unwavering commitment to fostering unity and pride among our people, skillfully intertwining traditional values with modern artistic. I, therefore, pray that Parliament invites her for a formal endorsement of this initiative and also for all parliamentarians as representatives of the people to buy this national fabric. I also pray that Parliament joins the Executive, the sooner the better, as they are already in the driving seat. I so submit.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Yes, the question of national identity and sovereignty must be the mark of any nation that is proud of itself. That is a good statement and we applaud the First Lady for the initiative that should have happened

soon after our independence, like what other countries have done, especially in West Africa. Thank you very much for the statement.

## **MOTION**

### **BUSINESS HOUSE**

**HON. TOGAREPI:** I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 1 to 20 on today's *Orders Papers* be stood over until Order of the Day Number 21 has been disposed of.

**HON. NYANDORO:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

## **MOTION**

### **REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND CHILD CARE ON THE PETITION FROM MR NGWENYA AND MS NHANGO ON THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Twenty-First Order read: Adjourned debate on the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care on the Petition from Mr. Ngwenya and Ms. Nhango on the prevention and management of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

**\*HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. The Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care, Hon. Bajila, breathed in the programme which has been brought by Mr. Ngwenya that Government through Parliament....

**\*THE HON. SPEAKER:** Excuse me Hon. Member, I do not see your name on the list. What is happening with your Chief Whip?

**\*HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** Hon. Speaker, I had followed the protocol which had said I was debating as had already been alluded to, Hon. Speaker...

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** Hold on, please. Government Chief Whip, are we doing Order of the Day Number 21 or not?

**HON. TOGAREPI:** No, Mr. Speaker, it was a typo. We were supposed to do Order of the Day Number 22.

**THE HON. SPEAKER:** We were supposed to do Order Number 22. Hon. Madzivanyika, the listing here was a bit confused. I apologise to you for that. I hope you will be prepared to debate Order of the Day Number 22. So, Government Chief Whip, you have to move the motion again.

## MOTION

### BUSINESS HOUSE

**HON. TOGAREPI:** Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir. I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 1 to 21 on today's *Orders Papers* be stood over until Order of the Day Number 22 has been disposed of.

**HON. NYANDORO:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

## MOTION

### ENACTMENT OF 30% YOUTH QUOTA IN PROVINCIAL

### COUNCILS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Twenty-second Order read: Adjourned debate on the motion on youth participation and representation in local authorities and Provincial Councils.

**HON. W. MAPHOSA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. Good afternoon. I rise in strong support of the motion on youth participation in local authorities, provincial councils and public service boards. I do not stand as a youth representative, but as a father, elder and a player who understands that leadership is not about holding onto power forever, but about preparation capable of

carrying the nation forward. Young people are not merely the leaders of tomorrow. They are citizens who pay taxes, innovators, and active stakeholders of today. They carry the burden of unemployment, economic hardship and social transformation, yet too often the decisions that shape their lives are made without their voices being heard in the room.

As senior leaders, we must not see the rise of young people in competition, but as proof that our mentorship and nation-building efforts are succeeding. Excluding young people from Government is dangerous for any nation that seeks long-term stability and democratic sustainability. When youths are not represented, locked out of the decision-making space, frustration begins to replace hope and likely to replace priorities. Government systems also become outdated when they fail to absorb young representatives, particularly in this era of technology, innovation and digital economy. Our youths understand modern realities from artificial intelligence, digital entrepreneurship, climate adaptation and emerging industries, yet many of the institutions still fall within this design for a generation that has already passed.

How can we build modern cities without innovation involving the digital generation? How can we engage in innovation while excluding innovation? Zimbabwe cannot successfully compete in a fast-changing world if the governance structure remains disconnected from the youthful majority that constitutes the backbone of our population. I, therefore, strongly support the proposal of the youth quota system in provincial councils, local authorities and public service boards. However, youth representatives must never become ceremonial or symbolic. Young people must not merely occupy seats for appearance but seek royal roads while real decisions are made elsewhere.

They must participate meaningfully in budgeting, policy formulation, strategic planning and development in governments. I also believe we must institute integration, leadership transfer, create structure, membership forward, where experienced leadership deliberately guides young representatives in governance, ethics, accountability and public administration. The leadership transition must never happen accidentally. It must happen with the full

institutional support of this Parliament. The duty of the leadership is not to close doors behind us, behind the youths. It is to hold them open and to hold them open-minded for those who are coming after us.

As I conclude, I submit that the true measure of leadership is not how long we remain in office but the quality of leaders we leave behind. One day, every Member of this House will leave this bench, but the nation will remain. Future generations must never say that we inherited leadership and deny others opportunity instead. They say that we planted trees under whose shade we would never sit. Let us build a Zimbabwe where wisdom and youthful energy work side by side, where young people feel heard, trust and genuinely included, where every generation is called upon to contribute to the nation's development. For that reason, Madam Speaker Ma'am, I fully support this motion and urge this Hon. House to institute meaningful youth participation in the national investment in Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe's future. Thank you.

**\*HON. THOMPSON:** Thank you Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to add my voice to this very important

motion. I want to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency the President, for allowing youths to be in this august House. I also want to thank the Parliament of Zimbabwe for taking the youth representative to be part of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). This clearly indicates that the youths are being taken into consideration so that they can learn pertinent jobs that have something to do with the development of our country. Research statistics show that youths constitute the largest share of the population in the country, which leads us to the conclusion that youths should be given sufficient seats and positions across all organs and aspects of our Government.

The world is revolving in terms of ICT and AI, and youths understand this concept very well as they bring in new ideas. Everything decided today will affect the youth tomorrow. This means that we are going to be the ones who are facing the developments and the problems tomorrow. Youths need to be involved in the council where discussions on development are being held. There is a need for those who have experience to be involved.

Youths must be given enough opportunity because they say those who are already in those positions have greater opportunities.

We are pleading with the Government that other Government departments must give a great percentage to the youths, as they bring in innovation because they are energetic in terms of running around, coming up with new ideas and making things happen. Giving them jobs reduces the number of youths being involved in drugs and substance abuse. Thank you.

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** Thank you Madam Speaker. The motion that is in this august House is very important. I also want to thank the Hon. Members, Hon. Kuka and Hon. Chakukura who put their minds together so that the youth can be involved in many organs of Government so that there is development. I have many issues which I am going to raise but I am going to put them in two different forms.

Firstly, I am going to show the importance of youth being involved in different aspects. I am also going to look at how we have the problem of youth not being welcomed properly, so that when we are now looking at this issue, we know where the problem

is emanating from and know where we are going. When we look at the country's liberation, during the liberation struggle, the youth were the ones who were at the forefront, which clearly indicates that the youth are very important in terms of making sure that there is development and moving forward of the country. You will see that, the youth are very intelligent and they will also help in making sure that things can be done in other ways, which brings change.

Madam Speaker, there is something that is very disturbing, that the youth are now getting older, seeing those who came from 1980, they are still in positions of authority. The youth have nothing to do; they have no percentage in terms of contribution. What it means is that we are wasting the knowledge, we are not giving the opportunity to the youth so that they can bring meaningful development.

**HON. TOGAREPI:** Hon. Chigumbu is here as a Government leader and he claims that he is not part of the development or the leadership of this country. I think we do not know. He is misrepresenting.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Hon. Gumbo, please take your seat. Hon. Chigumbu, Hon. Hamauswa is telling you what to say. Hon. Chigumbu, you said that the youth are now getting old without leading. What are you trying to say?

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** Madam Speaker Ma'am, I do not understand. If the Hon. Government Chief Whip has got his points, he must raise the issues in his debate.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You are the youth, you are in this august House, are you not leading? If someone is already old, is he a youth?

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** Thank you Madam Speaker for correcting me. My point is that for the motion to be debated, it has been noted that the youth are not being given the opportunity. The issue of raising this motion clearly indicates a lack of youth representation in various Government development issues. If you look at the countries that have already developed in this world, it clearly indicates that those countries have managed to harness the knowledge of the youth, resulting in meaningful developments.

If you go to different Government ministries, they are using pen and paper because those who are leading those Government ministries are now 70 to 75 years old and they are shying away from using computers. If you are going to take the youth, they understand the use of computers and the use of modern technology. If we do not make use of the youth on this issue, we are going to lose a lot. We are not going to progress much because we are shunning those who have knowledge. Another issue which I want to raise...

**\*HON. TAFANANA ZHOU:** Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. May the Hon. Member explain to us what the word *gwandaruzi* means? – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible injections.*] -

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** Madam Speaker Ma'am, you see that the issue I am raising is very pertinent for us as a country that we are not going to leave out the knowledge with the youth. If possible, may we come up with a Bill, which will help us to make sure that everything is being followed, or the fulfilment of what is being raised by the youth must be done without politicising it? I am saying this because this country has youth who are very intelligent,

but they were not utilised because they were from the opposition party.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** If you look at this motion, those who moved the motion, they are the youth who were allowed to be Members of Parliament. If you look at this motion, they are the youth who were allowed to be in this House. May you read what the motion says and also debate the issue looking at what the movers of the motion really wanted. If you really wanted to mention some other things and other people and their conditions, you are going to move another motion. You are out of order, Hon. Member.

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. I did not mention Nelson Chamisa's name but I said the youth who were members of the opposition party, were not used. That is the issue which I want to discuss. Most of the youths who are in this are not a part of decision-making.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Excuse me, Hon. Chigumbu, may you withdraw your statement that those who are in this august House do not have any say and they are not decision-

makers. Hon. Chigumbu, may you withdraw your statement? If you, as an individual, do not have anything to say, or if you may say I, do not refer to others, you are out of order, Hon. Member.

Withdraw your statement.

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** May I proceed with my debate Madam Speaker? The issue I want to raise...

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT:** What is your point of order?

**\*HON. MALINGANISO:** Madam Speaker, I am happy that you said the Hon. Member may withdraw his statement and on top of that, he said we are useless. Are we saying that this august House is useless? May he withdraw his statement?

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What you are saying is true Hon. Malinganiso, you cannot say the representatives of the people are useless. Are you trying to look down upon yourself?

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I have already withdrawn my statement. I am withdrawing again. I am being disturbed during my debate...

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Member, you are out of order. To debate a motion, you must read the motion first.

**HON. GUMBO:** Point of order Madam Speaker Ma'am.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, what is your point of order?

**HON. GUMBO:** Madam Speaker Ma'am, I do not believe that a point of order must be raised to challenge the substance of a debate. The substance of a debate is correctly and competently responded to by debate. The Hon. Speaker must not descend into debate and must rule out any point of order that seeks to disturb the substance of Hon. Chigumbu's debate.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Gumbo, may you stand up and withdraw your statement that *hapana chinozivikanwa*.

**\*HON. GUMBO:** I do not see it as an offence Madam Speaker.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I said, withdraw your statement that *hapana chinozivikanwa*.

**\*HON. GUMBO:** I withdraw the statement that they do not know anything. Maybe there is a little that is known.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Gumbo, I said withdraw the statement or I will chase you out of the House.

**\*HON. GUMBO:** That is a tough ruling Madam Speaker. I withdraw.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. You may take your seat.

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** Madam Speaker. May you protect me so that I can finish my report. We might have a mixture of youth from different political parties. For example, in the Opposition, we have got youths like Joana Mamombe and Ostallos who are not being given equal opportunities like other people. These youth are not given the opportunity...

**\*HON. SAMSON:** On a point of order Madam Speaker.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What is your point of order Hon. Samson?

**\*HON. SAMSON:** Madam Speaker, when we are in this august House, may we behave like adults and desist from hateful speeches. We cannot tell other Hon. Members that they know nothing. Those Members who are insulting others must leave this august House.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you Hon. Member, you may proceed.

**\*HON. CHIGUMBU:** Thank you Madam Speaker. What the Hon. Members of the other party do not understand is that the youth who are not in the party are being disregarded. If we enact a law, maybe they will follow it properly. There is a huge difference between the youths. There is a challenge that we are having as the opposition youth. If we are doing programmes or projects as the youths, we should be progressive. If we look at China, their youth are progressive and they are making drones and some digital gadgets. They are being capacitated. That is the reason why their country is developed. Nevertheless, our youth are busy following the *Hulungendes* on social media and joining social groups like the Top Soup and Mafia for E. D. ...

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Chigumbu, may you please take your seat. You failed to debate the motion. You are not debating the motion as it is – [HON. CHIGUMBU: *No, Madam Speaker, you cannot tell me to sit down.*] – If you are failing to debate, I am allowed to ask you to take your seat. May you please take your seat.

**HON. MALINGANISO:** Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that when Government thinks it is appropriate for young people to be here to represent young voices, we somehow end up wasting the opportunity.

Allow me Madam Speaker, to start by commending the Government of Zimbabwe for the commendable strides it has already undertaken towards youth empowerment, particularly the youth quota system in Parliament. A brainchild of the Constitutional Amendment Number 2, a deliberate inclusion of youth in all roles of Parliament [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*].

May I also commend the youth desks in several ministries, the appointment of several youthful individuals as Deputy Ministers

and the National Youth Policy. These progressive measures clearly demonstrate the State's commitment towards inclusive governance and the empowerment of young people as key stakeholders in national development. Madam Speaker, the motion before us seeks not to criticise or critique existing efforts but, to strengthen and consolidate the foundation already laid by the Second Republic in advancing youth inclusion and participation.

Madam Speaker, Zimbabwe is a youthful nation endowed with immense talent, innovation, creativity and energy. Across the country, young people are already contributing meaningfully in agriculture, mining, technology development, entrepreneurship, sports and community development. As the nation marches towards Vision 2030, there is a need to ensure that governance systems continue evolving in a manner that harnesses the demographic dividend presented by our youthful population.

Madam Speaker, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognises that youth participation is not merely a social issue but a governance and development imperative. Distinguished scholars Barry Chekoday and Lorraine Gutierrez define youth participation

as the meaningful involvement of young people in institutions and decisions that affect their lives. Importantly, they argue that genuine participation is measured not by symbolic presence but by actual influence in governance processes.

This distinction is important because modern governance systems function more effectively when all demographic groups are adequately represented within public institutions. Youth participation strengthens civic responsibility, institutional legitimacy and policy innovation. It also promotes a stronger sense of national belonging among young citizens - [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] -

Madam Speaker, international experience demonstrates that countries that institutionalise youth participation through law and policy often achieve stronger developmental outcomes. In Finland, the Youth Act requires municipalities to establish youth councils and consult young people on matters affecting their welfare and development. This framework has strengthened civic participation and enhanced coordination between public institutions and younger citizens.

Similarly, Norway encourages structured youth participation in municipal governance through legally recognised youth councils, which contribute to local planning and community development initiatives. These mechanisms have improved dialogue between Government institutions and young people while promoting innovation in local governance. In Germany, strong legislative support for youth apprenticeship systems, youth councils and local demographic participation has enabled young people to transition more effectively into economic and governance systems. Germany's approach demonstrates that youth inclusion is not merely political but also developmental and economic in nature.

Scholar Catherine Frank further observes that young people are among the most important stakeholders in governance because they are the generation that will live longest with the consequences of today's policy decisions. This observation Madam Speaker, is particularly significant in areas such as climate policy, digital transformation, education, urban planning and economic development where today's decisions will shape the future for decades to come. The same scholar also notes that governance

systems which actively involve young people often benefit from improved police responsiveness, stronger civic engagement and enhanced institutional trust.

Madam Speaker, the motion before this House presents practical and progressive proposals that are fully consistent with our constitutional framework and developmental aspirations. The proposal to enhance youth representation in provincial councils and local authorities is commendable because local governance structures are central to service delivery and community development. Young people possess valuable insights on issues affecting communities, particularly in areas such as innovation, digital services, employment creation and environmental sustainability.

Equally commendable is the proposal to ensure youth representation within public service boards. Strategic institutions such as ZESA Holdings, National Railways of Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Revenue Authority operate in rapidly evolving socio-economic environments that increasingly require technological adaptation, innovation and contemporary policy thinking. The

inclusion of young professionals within such institutions may therefore enhance institutional responsiveness and long-term strategic planning.

Madam Speaker, one of the most profound contributions from contemporary youth participation scholarship is the shift from viewing youth as a problem and moving towards recognising youth as resources. This perspective is important because Zimbabwean youths are not merely beneficiaries of development; they are active partners in national transformation. Indeed, when properly empowered, young people become drivers of economic productivity, community mobilisation, technological advancement and democratic participation. Their inclusion in governance structures therefore strengthens rather than weakens national institutions.

Importantly, this motion does not seek to undermine the wisdom, experience and institutional memory of our senior leadership [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear*]. Rather, it promotes intergenerational collaboration where youthful innovation complements citizen leadership in pursuit of national development

objectives. Madam Speaker, Section 20 of the Constitution already obligates the State to take reasonable measures, including affirmative action programmes, to ensure that youth have opportunities to associate, participate and be represented in political, economic and social spheres. This motion therefore advances constitutional principles that this House has already committed itself to uphold.

As Zimbabwe continues pursuing inclusive growth and modernisation under Vision 2030, young people must be fully integrated into governance systems as partners in development. A nation that empowers its youth strengthens its future leadership, institutional resilience and socio-economic sustainability. I therefore fully support this progressive motion and urge this august House to adopt it in the interest of inclusive governance, sustainable development and national progress. I so submit and I thank you Madam Speaker.

**\*HON. MAKUMIRE:** Thank you Madam Speaker for giving me this opportunity to debate on this motion brought into this House that encourages the youth to participate in positions of

authority, be it in councils, the local authorities and provincial councils that may arise. I support this motion because it acknowledges that the youth are the present and future leaders by increasing their opportunities down to the grassroots, we support that. I would like to thank the Caucus for coming up with such a good idea. As I debate this issue, I will support the Caucus ideas as well as add my own independent ideas so that no one will be falsely accused as I separate these ideas.

Madam Speaker, you realise that the youth are the majority in this country in terms of population. We are more than any other age group. So, if we are the majority, we should be participating in leadership positions from the grassroots up to the highest level. In local authorities, there are some people who are not part of the youth.

**HON. MAKUMIRE: (Speaking)**...In local authorities, it is essential to acknowledge that while there are individuals of various age groups, we do not discriminate based on age. However, we do expect a greater representation of youths as they are the present and future leaders of our communities.

Upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that some political parties are appointing individuals in their seventies and eighties to leadership positions. While this is not inherently problematic, it is important to note that the law in our country stipulates retirement at the age of seventy for certain professions such as teachers and police officers.

After retiring, these individuals may contest for positions as councillors, which raises concerns. We believe that pensioners should not be competing with younger generations for leadership roles; rather, they should be allowed to lead in a manner that facilitates progress and smooth governance.

If we do not address this issue proactively, we may witness individuals crawling into local authorities, Parliament and the Cabinet. This could lead to a situation where leaders are unable to perform their responsibilities effectively. Therefore, we must implement measures to prevent such occurrences and ensure that our leadership structures are populated by individuals who can actively contribute to the advancement of our society since we have

a minimum age and since the law says you can only contest at 21 years...

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Why are we talking about crawling, Hon. Makumire, when there is no one crawling in this House? Where are you taking that from? What is wrong with the crawling? If there is nothing wrong with the crawling, why are you talking about it? Are you the one who wants to crawl as you come into this House?

**\*HON. MAKUMIRE:** Since we have an age restriction in terms of contesting for local authorities, you are supposed to contest at least at 21 years of age. If you want to contest for other top posts, you are supposed to be at least 40 years of age. We wish to open opportunities for the youth. We should put a cap on the age groups and age limit, be it local authorities, Parliament, or other contested posts. We should have open boundaries for the youths to contest freely. May these youths be allocated opportunities or given opportunities in local authorities as well as provincial councils.

The Cabinet must have a lot of youths because that is where a lot of issues for the future and the present of the country are

decided. Yet in Cabinet, there will be no youths, but that is where the most important things are debated or discussed, be it about drugs. So even the Cabinet must have youths. Thank you.

**\*HON. TAFANANA ZHOU:** On a point of order! I expect the Hon. Member not to mislead the nation. The Cabinet has youths appointed by President Mnangagwa.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There are plenty of those of your age in the Cabinet. Some of you are there. You can proceed without misleading the House.

**\*HON. HAMAUSWA:** On a point of order! While there are many opinions expressed by those on the right-hand side that we do not agree with, we maintain parliamentary decorum by remaining silent and taking notes. Therefore, when Hon. Malinganiso makes a statement with which I disagree, I will address it during my debate.

As we engage in discussion here, it is important to note that there are Hon. Members who sit in both the SADC-PF Parliament and the Pan-African Parliament, such as Hon. Nyabani who will be participating in those debates. We must refrain from excessive points of order. There may be visitors present, and it is quite

embarrassing for us to attempt to debate amidst frequent interruptions and noise.

It is particularly concerning that many of those making noise are young Hon. Members. This behaviour does not reflect well on us as a parliamentary body. Let us strive for a more respectful and orderly debate.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let me help you Hon. Hamauswa. If you debate or speak, do not be provocative. If you provoke, how can you open your mouth to that extent? If you provoke, you will get responses.

**\*HON. MAKUMIRE:** Thank you Madam Speaker. We were saying the Cabinet also must have youths who will be representing the interests of the youths. Right now, they will be asking about how they can get employment. Who will represent us in terms of...

**\*HON. TAFANANA ZHOU:** On a point of order! If you give a ruling that the Hon. Member is off topic, that person must not continue talking on the wrong lines.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We corrected the Hon. Member that the youths are there.

**\*HON. MADZIVADONDO:** On a point of order! Let me read out one of the rules that regulate Parliament.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You are out of order.

**\*HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** I cannot be out of order when I am reading a law that regulates Parliament. This law regulates Parliament. I am reading for the benefit of the House.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You are only allowed to refer to the law, not to read it out.

**HON. MADZIVANYIKA:** There shall be freedom of speech and debate in Parliament and before Parliament. This is the law that we are reading, Madam Chair – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] - If the Hon. Member says the Government has done such a thing, I respect your freedom of speech and debate. That is what you are calling for. Let us respect our law.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have heard you Hon. Madzivanyika, all is well. Let the Hon. Member proceed and debate.

**\*HON. MAKUMIRE:** I am saying in the Cabinet there are no youths. Even on the other side of the House where they

handpicked and gave posts, some youths deserve to be there. I am not saying this side, but even that side, handpick those youths to represent the interests of the youths. It is not possible for someone who is not affected by employment to stand up strongly representing the interests of the youths. So, we are saying in the governance, the youths must be well represented, be it in Cabinet, in this House, in the local authorities or provincial authorities. So, these youths, we must not see them being used during elections and being asked to sing in political parties – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] -

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Speak but do not miss the point. Maybe that is what you see. Maybe that is their point of view. So, they may see the youth as old. That would be their point of view.

**\*HON. MAKUMIRE:** Thank you for protecting me against the enemies who are fighting me in this debate. The youth should not only be used to say political party slogans but when the time for elections comes, they are left behind. We should also not see the

youth being asked to sing songs and dance to the *Mai Welly* song, yet they are left out when it comes to posts.

Let us not use them as a *varakashi* to insult people on social media but when it comes to elections, whether Cabinet posts or local authorities, we leave them out. Let us include them. That will help the future of this country to be bright. Let us open up opportunities for the youth to participate in numbers, even in Government positions. Let us continue opening up opportunities so that they may also be directors in local authorities, ministries and even parastatals. That will help us so that when the older ones are gone, the country proceeds. Let us not be selfish and only think about ourselves so that whenever we die, everything else dies with us. Let us move with the youth so that they may also understand how this country moves. So, I would like to support this motion.

My final words are that no one else understands the issues that affect the youth better than the youth themselves. No one can represent the youth better than the youth themselves. The way I am emphasising the points shows that I really understand the interests of the people that I represent in my constituency, as well as the

youth out there. So, we are saying the youth must be well represented at every level of Government. Their voices must be heard wherever discussions to build this country are held.

As I conclude, we do not look down upon the work being done by our elders. It must be clear that we do not look down upon our elderly because working together as mixed age groups helps us. The elderly know the history and the youth also know where we are going but let us say at 70 years. Just as the law says it is the pensionable age, that must apply to electoral offices, so that you understand that people cannot proceed. Those are some of the things that should be considered. When the Public Service Commission says you are old, you cannot proceed; it means you cannot work in the local authorities or any other post. I hope Madam Speaker that you agree with me on this issue.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You are not debating to me. So, let us agree that you are debating your issues.

**\*HON. MAKUMIRE:** We agree Madam Speaker. So, in places like these, where we are, as well as provincial councils, we are saying all offices held through elections are not old people's

homes. They are not places where people should get old or wait to die. It is a place to work. If the Public Service Commission says at 70 you need to retire, you can no longer work, it means the same should happen to all the other posts that are gained through elections. Do not play with 70 years. Imagine thinking all the way to 70 years.

*[Time limit.]*

**HON. GUMBO:** Madam Speaker, I move that the Hon. Member's time be extended by an additional 10 minutes.

**HON. TAFANANA ZHOU:** I object.

Motion put and negatived.

**HON. TOGAREPI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I also stand to debate on this motion that was brought to this House. I also feel really touched because it touches on a very important aspect of our population, our governance, so that we increase participation of all our people and in particular, the youth.

However, I am disappointed that you have the youth debating in this House, encouraging this House and the people of Zimbabwe to go against the Constitution that when people want to be voted in,

they go and canvass for votes. If they are voted in and the youth, from 18 years upwards, have the same opportunity to go and contest against the old man, the old woman and they lose, they want to come and manipulate Parliament so that they can get the position in councils, provincial councils and in any other level.

When they have lost the trust of the people of Zimbabwe, they want to come here and say, please allow us because we are youths. That is very unfortunate. We expect the youth...

**HON. CHIGUMBU:** On a point of order Madam Speaker.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order Hon. Togarepi!

What is your point of order?

**HON. CHIGUMBU:** I think the Government Chief Whip must not go out of the debate. The issue that we are debating here is that the youth must be given an opportunity. He should not politicise this debate at the local council. So, it has nothing to do with the opposition or the ruling party. We are talking about youth in general. I think when I was debating, you were constantly correcting me on that. I want to see you also do the same, as the

Government Chief Whip is also now going out of the debate and becoming too political. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Togarepi, please proceed.

**HON. TOGAREPI:** I also want to emphasise that we come to Parliament in leadership or in any position in the governance of this country because of the mandate that we get from the people of Zimbabwe. If you have a view or if you want to get to a certain position, especially the voted position, go and talk to the people of Zimbabwe so that they vote for you. If you are not yet in Government, continue with your efforts to buy or to encourage the people of Zimbabwe to vote for your political party. You lead this country and you have the opportunity to make those decisions.

Madam Speaker, I want to say from the Government of Zimbabwe's point of view, we are one of the governments throughout the world that have ensured that we have a youth quota. Ten youth were deliberately brought to Parliament without directly being voted for as individuals and these youth may come to this House or become Members of Parliament. They also need their own

competencies if the President has to choose them as ministers or something. You do not go to become a minister when you know nothing. You have to be a minister with the competencies to give to the Government for the development of this country. So, if you are a youth and you do not have the competences, you can represent your other youths so that they get the opportunities that were prayed for in this motion - [HON. HAMAUSWA: *On a point of order!*] - Madam Speaker, may I be allowed to debate? Because the same Hon. Member said, "Allow Members to debate, and here is the opportunity to debate" - [HON. HAMAUSWA: *I have a point of order.*] - No, I cannot help you...

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, Hon. Togarepi!  
Order! What is the point of order?

**\*HON. HAMAUSWA:** Madam Speaker, the Government Chief Whip was in the House when you ruled out Hon. Gumbo for saying that they do not know anything.

I am surprised that the Government Chief Whip is repeating the same thing that no one in this House can decide not to know anything. I am never one to raise a point of order, but this one

cannot be allowed to proceed unless we agree that some people do not know anything in this House. – [HON. S. SITHOLE: *On a point of order!*] - Wait, so that I give a ruling.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Gumbo announced that nothing is known; that is what I asked him to withdraw. It is different from Hon. Togarepi's debate.

You also assisted us that Hon. Members should be allowed to speak out their minds and use that opportunity. What is the point of order Hon. Sithole?

**\*HON. S. SITHOLE:** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member who was talking was saying, *tsvitsviri tsvitsviri* here, we let him speak and now he wants to say point of order. He said we are making noise and used very bad language.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We have to forgive each other so that we may proceed. Indeed, the Hon. Member was forgiven after saying we make noise. You may proceed Hon. Togarepi.

**HON. TOGAREPI:** Issues of voting for positions must be left to the people of Zimbabwe who will then vote me in if I want to continue as a Member of Parliament. We are talking about provincial and local councils. That is what the mover of the motion was trying to encourage the system, the Government, to ensure that we have more youths in those levels because we want their energy and for them to learn, of course they should learn together with the older generation.

Madam Speaker, we will not find a day in our lives when we will sit down with the old and the young and say, 'today, we are handing over to you.' That day will never come, but we mix our young and old people so that there is cross-pollination. They get information from the older generation and pass it on to the younger generation as they grow older.

So, any view that there shall be a cut-off day, that one day we will move and the older people are no longer there, we only have people who are 22 years, that day is not going to come. The young people must strive to be disciplined, to work together with their elderly, learn from them and focus on developing this country.

Surely, such people will be recognised and will be part and parcel of development, whether at the local or provincial level, or at the national government. But surely, if you do not present yourself in an orderly and professional way, you do not encourage yourself to learn and develop yourself, it will be difficult for even your political leadership to give you a committee to lead. It is difficult when your behaviour or your capacity is questionable.

So, Madam Speaker, the issue here is that wherever there are development opportunities, let us help our youth secure a quota. I support that. If we have tenders or any positions or areas of advantage, let us give our youth. In that process, we allow them to learn, grow and use the energy and zeal within them to build this country.

So, the prayer by the mover of the motion, that in every activity in Zimbabwe, whether in social areas, in economic areas, in politics, we thank the Government and the Government led by His Excellency, *Baba vaMnangagwa*. – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] - Those who were in the Ninth Parliament, we moved this motion to request that youths be given a quota in Parliament. We

faced opposition to that position, but both sides agreed that we should go to the President and request it, and it was granted. For once, despite our different political positions, we must celebrate this revolutionary position because this is the way we are going to incubate our youth so that they are also involved in governance.

When we are here as youth, we should not expect things on a silver platter; we should work. – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] -Prove that you came in Parliament either as a youth quota or a women's quota.

I understand from my political party that we said that for every woman who goes to Parliament, one of them must be a youth. When you get that opportunity, represent the youth well. If you do not, then all that we are advocating for, all that is being pushed for by this motion will not help the general youth. I support, expect and encourage the Youth Caucus to develop a concept paper identifying areas where the Government can be more flexible, given that the Government has already shown flexibility by allowing the youth to come through the youth quota, which means the Government can accept many other proposals from the youth.

It is time that those who are in Parliament as youth, who have come by election or through the youth quota programme, must sit down and come up with a detailed concept paper for the Government to take up for the good of the youth. Not only for the councils, not only for the provincial councils, but also for the board. Also in Chapter 12 Commissions, we want to see youth there, not just to represent the youth, but to represent the ideas that will help youth develop and become responsible citizens.

It is not about politics. When we bring such issues and such motions, we are looking at our population. I agree that we have 67% youth and we cannot have all those 67% youth being carried by an older generation. Yet they must contribute to production and carry the lower percentage of the population, those who are about 35 to 120 years. They need the youth to produce and work, be in the social areas and do everything for the economy of Zimbabwe.

As I conclude, we would want to see youth participation. I would encourage those in other political parties to do exactly what my political party is doing. We have deliberately, in every area put youth and we expect those youth to perform as a way of preparing

them to take over this country. Even here in Parliament, we have young Ministers. I just want that to be corrected, that one of our Hon. Members here felt that there are no young Ministers in the Parliament and Cabinet. We have them and we believe it is an opportunity for them to learn the ropes. When they are there, we expect them to represent the youth dividend and ensure that youth benefit from their performance, so that they also admire and aspire to be in the Cabinet.

So, coming here to debate and lie is not correct. We have to debate, facing the facts. The idea of this motion was, how can we have more youth participating in every other area? This is an important benefit to this country because they have energy. If I were to go on a run today, with the Hon. Makumire and Hon. Malinganiso, obviously, they run fast than me though I was a good runner myself. However, it does not mean they have the same intelligence that I have. They will learn about the foundation from me and use it for the good of this country.

Our Constitution, for 18 years, has had no apex. You can be voted in. Young people from 18 to 35 years old are the ones who

show their energy, commitment and patriotism to see Zimbabwe develop. I just wanted to say, this motion is critical and we would want to see the youth caucus coming up with ideas that we can also debate here. They must come up with proposals that Parliament can send to the executive and ensure that more youth are capacitated and supported in their initiatives, so that they can contribute to the development of this country. It is not about politics. We want to see ICT Engineers, surveyors, good farmers and doctors from the youth who have come from your initiative and your ideas.

Not only politics. How many are we here and outside there? If we are going to have 360 youth, what about the 5 million youth outside? Would they all be MPs and where would they be? This is a space with fewer people. On the medical side, there are fewer people but if we spread, all our youth will be able to benefit from the initiative. This motion is very important. Go and explore it further, and come up with ideas that we can send to the executive and push for youth participation in all sectors. I thank you.

**\*HON. CHAIMVURA:** Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to also pass my views in

this debate. I would like to thank the President for what he did , taking note that as youth, that we should be in this Parliament and represent the interests of the youth.

The President made sure that all age groups were prioritised, both the youth and the elderly. When you are growing up, you become a youth and end up being an older person. I am very much impressed by what the elderly do. When they make their choices, they give us equal opportunities and take us close to them, so that we learn. In the 2022 census, we were 60% youth. So, that was taken into consideration, the youth must be in decision-making positions, which we have right now.

My own thoughts are that, during that time when we will be serving those posts, we cannot take all those posts alone. We need the elderly by our side to teach us our culture and the interests of the country. When the elderly were there, we were represented as the youth, which allowed us to be where we are today as youth. When we were represented they used to say, when you grow up and now we have grown up, we have taken those posts and we are everywhere, even here in Parliament, only the blind cannot see.

Anyone can see that there are equal opportunities available for everyone. Without wasting time, I would like to thank Hon. Kuka from the opposite side of the House, for realising and taking note of the important work being done by the President. I thank you.

**HON. MUSHIPE:** Good afternoon, Hon. Madam Speaker...

**HON. HAMAUSWA:** It is supposed to be our turn.

**THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Nyelele did not speak, so on his place, we have given to another Honourable...

**HON. HAMAUSWA:** No, when the Government Chief Whip was talking, then Hon. Chaimvura spoke and now we are going to the other side.

**\*THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There was Hon. Chigumbu and then Hon. Malinganiso, and then it was supposed to have been Hon. Nyelele, who was not around. When Hon. Malinganiso spoke, Hon. Makumire spoke, but you did not complain.

**^^HON. MUSHIPE:** Hon Speaker Ma'am, I do not have much to say, most things that I wanted have been said by previous speakers. Kindly allow me to add a few words from the motion that

was brought by Hon. Kuka, supporting the issues that speak of the youths.

If we look back at our country, the people who fought for this country were the youths. Some of them were young when they fought for this country. After this country had been liberated, these youths who were at the forefront came and occupied the offices and represented the youths. You find out that presently, these very people became successful because they followed orders. They managed to say their voices were heard. We are kindly requesting that every post that is being advertised by the Government, from the grassroots to the highest level, may we have youths being represented in these positions, and their voices heard.

Before going on, let me thank His Excellency, for giving the youths opportunities to be Members of Parliament. I am a product of the President's desire to have youths in Parliament because I am a youth representative.

However, the previous speaker did not say anything wrong. They told us that the youths are not supposed to be given these seats on a silver platter. This is very correct. We are not to be given this

on a silver platter; we are supposed to show and prove that we are worthy of these positions.

We need to pull up our socks so that we can witness and be seen to be active in every place. Speaking about development, we do not want to be seen as lagging. His Excellency came with the mantra that no one should be left behind. In line with this, we are appealing and requesting that they be given a slot in local Government, we give a quota that represents them. We saw that when we are going for elections, we do not deny that people should go and campaign and ask for votes. However, youths do not have enough resources to campaign when it comes to these elections. We are not saying give us everything, but asking for that youth quota in the local authorities.

We accept it as our request. Every deliberation to do with the development of the country and the uplifting of our people, we need the youths to be part of it and their voices to be heard. If we look at our country, we are facing a dynamic change. We do not understand where some of these things were, and where they are going. These are some of the things that we are facing as youths and they

understand them. We want to work for these positions and there is a saying in Mashonaland that the elders can see what is behind the mountains, even when they are sitting down while the young ones cannot see. I am saying this, we accept that the elders are our source of knowledge, they have seen it all and they know most of the things we do not know. We are kindly asking to be allowed to tap from this knowledge so that we can also open our ears as the youths to what they are saying and be able to learn and be able to lead in future because it is almost sunset to them. We do not want to lead when we do not know where the elders come from. By the time we are given the chance to lead, we will be having knowledge of the road that they took. We do not want to be seen selling our country because there was a lot of bloodshed for us to be liberated.

We respect the people who sacrificed their lives for us to be liberated. Going back to the Constitution, Section 20 which was being said by previous speakers, it leaves us Members of Parliament with a challenge. The youths are supposed to be involved in political issues in academics, and almost everything is supposed to be discussed. I appreciate that I am a Member of Parliament as a

product of the youth quota, which came through amendment Number 2 of the Constitution. My request is, may you fulfill this provision of the Constitution, even going down to the grassroots. The youths must be involved in developmental issues, even in politics, from the grassroots and also learn from our elders who are present. Hon. Madam Speaker Ma'am, we are just requesting that youths be allowed to represent themselves and speak their voice, which is in line with the current issues that the youths are facing. If you look at our Committees here in Parliament, you will find out that we have a Portfolio Committee on Youth and the Committee chairperson is a youth. This shows us that Parliament does not take the representation of youth lightly. In every area where there are gaps, the youth must be considered and given a chance to occupy the seats. We are asking for one seat as a starting point. A lot has been said by the previous speakers. I would really want to thank Hon. Kuka for this motion and thank His Excellency, the President, for the provision of the youth quota, which came through the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament. We have 10 Members of Parliament from the youth quota. This is a clear sign that Government did not forget about the

youth. Let this continue. We are committed to working for the Government and we want Zimbabwe to develop. We do not want our elders to be worried about the future of our country, as we might have misled the country. We want to be part of the development and make sure that we steer this country towards great development. I thank you.

**HON. TOBAIWA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise to fully support the motion brought before this House by Hon. Kuka and Hon. Chakukura. This is not merely a youth issue, but it is a national development issue, a governance issue and ultimately a future of Zimbabwe issue. Allow me to begin by acknowledging the significance of this motion. It is grounded not in emotion, but in constitutional principle, demographic reality and practical necessity. The Constitution of Zimbabwe is clear that young people must be afforded opportunities to participate in political, social and economic spheres, yet the life reality tells a different story. One of the limited access, minimum representation and underutilised potential.

Zimbabwe is a youthful nation with over two-thirds of our population under the age of 35. It is both logical and just that our governing structures reflect this reality. However, what we see today is a mismatch between the population demographics and representation in decision-making bodies. When young people are excluded from decision-making, we deny ourselves innovation, energy and fresh representation. We limit our ability to respond to modern challenges such as unemployment, digital transformation and climate change, issues that affect the youth. I wish to commend the Parliamentary Youth Caucus and all the stakeholders involved in the Youth Model Parliament.

That initiative demonstrates that young Zimbabweans are not only capable of engaging in Government, but they are also ready to lead. They are informed to articulate and be solution-oriented. The proposal of 30% youth quota in provincial youth councils and local authorities is both progressive and necessary. It ensures that youth participation is not symbolic but meaningful representation and it must also go beyond and it must also translate into real influence.

Furthermore, the recommendation to include at least one representation in every public service board is a practical step towards inclusive Government. These boards make decisions that affect employment, employment service and also service delivery and also national development.

It is only fair that young people must have a voice at that table. I am particularly encouraged by the proposal to integrate youth into the existing women's quota framework. This is a powerful approach that promotes both gender equality and integration and inclusion. Young women in particular face a double burden of exclusion and this provision addresses that gap effectively. If you look beyond our borders, you see that other African nations have already taken bold steps in this direction. Countries like Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda have institutionalised youth participation in government structures. Zimbabwe must not be left behind. Hon. Speaker, let us just be clear. This motion is not about replacing experience with youth, but it is about complementing experience with innovation.

It is about building bridges between generations, not creating divisions. There may be those who argue that youth lack experience, but I submit that experience is gained through opportunity. If we continue to deny young people seats at the table, how then do we expect them to gain every experience we claim to lack? The future does not wait. Every decision we make today shapes the Zimbabwe of tomorrow. If that future belongs to the youth, as we often say, then they must be active participants in shaping it. This motion is timely, it is justified and it is necessary. It aligns with our constitutional obligations, our regional commitments and our national aspirations.

In conclusion Mr. Speaker Sir, I urge this House to support this motion. Let us move beyond rhetoric and take concrete steps to empower our young people. Let us build a governance system that is inclusive, representative and forward-looking. To this end, I so submit.

**HON. S. SAKUPWANYA:** Thank you Madam Speaker  
Ma'am.

Before I begin, may I firstly say congratulations to you on your new appointment. As I begin, I want to firstly speak to the spirit of this motion. This motion is not a means by which the young people want to compete or contest against the existing councillors or those in those positions *per se*. Ours is not to say that there must be certain wards reserved for young people. We support the first-past-the-post system where voters choose who will represent them, whether young or old. What we are asking for, is that there has to be a deliberate avenue, in which case the decision-making bodies, young people are present. That way, our young people can show their worth and show their communities that there is more to young people than being rabble-rousers.

Madam Speaker, I want to appreciate Hon. Kuka and Hon. Chakukura for moving such an important motion, which I fully support. I will reiterate what has been said before, as I am grateful to our President, Cde. Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa, for in his wisdom, initiating Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 2 which saw young people come to Parliament today through the youth quota and under the women's quota. This policy push has surely not gone to waste.

Today, the very motion that we are supporting, championed by Hon. Kuka and Hon. Chakukura, is a product of the Parliamentary Youth Caucus. The evidence of this motion amongst others, including initiatives of the youth who you see who are active here today in Parliament, shows or shall I say, justifies the youth space in governance.

Madam Speaker, we were here last year in March where we had almost 800 young people from across different political parties who came, debated and agreed that beyond the political lines, there are certain issues that young people can all aspire and agree to. The fact of youth representation in all levels is one such thing and this motion is a direct product of the voices of the young people out there and the rest of the country. It is therefore disheartening that instead of speaking for young people, some of our youth would take this opportunity here in Parliament to score cheap political points at the expense of the message they were given directly by the young people.

However, I believe that we have enough of our young people here who can take a leaf even from what we call the Women's

Caucus, because without the Women's Caucus, they showed us the way. The Women's Caucus pushed for the women's quota, which we see today. When women's matters are raised in this House, Madam Speaker, no one can come in-between and it is not even possible to see which side of the House they are from because they speak with one voice. – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] –

This is the avenue and direction that as the young Members of Parliament, we must also show that we deserve to be in this space and that when it comes to youth matters, no debate goes against the aspirations of young people. Madam Speaker Ma'am, you will note that the mover of the motion, of course, is from a different political party than I am, but what he has said in his motion is just in tandem with our policy, even from this side of the House, that young people aligning to Section 20 of the Constitution, must be represented at all levels of government. This is not something new because, as has been said by many of the speakers, it is something that our President has already initiated. I gave an example to say that we had our initiatives at the Youth Caucus where young people came to Parliament.

The first supporter of our initiatives was Parliament itself, led by the Speaker and our various Chief Whips. That leadership, Madam Speaker, inculcating the ideas of young people must be applauded because it speaks to the strength of the governance system in Zimbabwe that as much as we are not the majority in this House, the young people, our voices are heard. As much as we might not be the majority in this House, our ideas are taken up and that is the importance of having a space in a decision-making body.

The same applies that at the local Government level where we do not have a deliberate policy that requires young people to be in Local Government, we are saying that what is good for the goose must be good for the gander. What has worked at this level of governance in Parliament should surely work in local government, because look today what young people are saying and they are speaking through their young Members of Parliament, which is why we are even debating this motion in the first place.

What is being asked for, we know is not difficult to execute because we know in the Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 2, with it came as well the women's quota in councils and its

implementation was such that even some of the councils, including the council that I hail from, my home district of Makoni, the chairperson is a beneficiary of the women's quota. Speaking to the fact that when an opportunity is created, people with competence can take up that space.

Being young is not a ticket to unprofessional behaviour. Our youth must learn that being young does not guarantee freebies nor does it mean that these spaces must be given to those without merit. What we advocate for is that young people get to be involved in development at every level. In doing so, it helps them not only to directly impact their communities, but they also get to learn and have a feel of what it means to be in governance.

Today, I am a beneficiary of the youth quota system, but I can assure you that in the next election cycle, I will not be sitting in this House as a youth quota Member of Parliament. Someone else will take up that space. Instead, because of my experience in Parliament, I am capable enough to say that in the next cycle I will also contest in the first past the post. I believe I will be sitting right before you in a few years to come, having won first past the post myself. In the

same vein, Madam Speaker, we are saying that as much as we have created specific spaces for young people, it does not mean they are limited to the quota system, but it encourages young people to know that there is an avenue for them. In our communities, there is a belief system that young people are not capable, but if young people are given a chance, they can show their worth.

The quota system is only there for us to be able to capacitate ourselves so that in the next cycle, we go and contest against those who believe that when we complain today to say we have elders, let us contest and let us show the people of Zimbabwe what we can do. For us as young people, this has been a platform within which we can show our capacities.

As I take my seat, I want to just reiterate that the problems of the young when we talk about the young and when we talk about representation, it does not select on your political affiliation. When we talk of youth unemployment, it does not discriminate whether you are in the opposition or the ruling party. When we talk about the spaces that we talk of today, when we talk about the beneficiation of the youth quota, it is not about which political party

you are from, but it is for the generality of young people. That is why this motion is so important because this motion does not touch on one side of the country or the other. It does not touch on whether today you are the ruling party or the opposition. It says every young person in every constituency or in every council must at least have a voice within which they can be heard. May they have a voice within which their concerns are applied, not just in the councils but even in public service boards and as such, I reiterate my support for this motion and trust that it will be adopted, and we push the will of the young people going into the future. I so submit.

**\*HON. MAPIKI:** Thank you Madam Speaker and congratulations for the appointment to the Speaker's Panel. I fully support the debate that was brought by Hon. Kuka. He submitted a very good issue before us. We used to be youths but we also had our elders who were nurturing us. They did this because if we did it on our own, we could have missed the way. I applaud the Government for giving the youth an opportunity and space to an extent when they will be able to stand on their own so that they can be able to know about the tribulations or the problems that are there.

They are supposed to be here in Parliament as well as in different councils.

I applaud the Government for introducing the youth quota but I want it to be increased. The youth must also look into issues of being included in parastatals so that they can also be able to hold very meaningful positions in different areas. The youth are supposed to be in ministries that deal with the livelihood. I heard the youth saying that for you to be a Member of Parliament, you are supposed to be financially sound. You indeed need some money but we must also look at the Ministry of Mines, where there are provincial directors and district directors, where youth must also be included. There must be a youth desk at the Ministry of Mines because we are looking at issues to do with the economy of the country.

If you are fully equipped as a youth, you will not sell out your country. There are supposed to be youth directors in areas like Ministry of Mines and Tourism industry. You must hold big positions so that you will be strong as a youth. If we have a couple

of youth who are directors of mines, our youth will be fully equipped on everything.

I also want to applaud all the strong political parties and have structured youth leagues from the cell to the politburo. I even noticed that even in the Opposition, there were youth like Gondo who were preparing for the youth league, which encourages people to be strong on the issues related to our politics. The person who addressed this motion must be supported. If we do not encourage the youth, they will start engaging in drug and substance abuse, which is a very challenging issue.

We are now thinking that those who were fighting against us devised a plan that our youth must take drugs. If our youth are given the opportunity to be in different areas of development, there will be progress. We heard what the youth were saying but their wings must be spread to different parastatals because some of our parastatals are underperforming. If we have you involved, everything is going to improve. In life, there is what is called wisdom and knowledge that you acquire at school. Sometimes you have knowledge at school but lack wisdom. As the elders, we must

sit down with you so as to teach you the right way and give you advice.

I support your motion but this House must not have the youth alone. It is important for you, as youth, to come in smaller numbers so that we can show you where we came from. This is the same as a relay game, whereby a stick is passed on to another. I applaud this but my main issue is that you must fight for your own quota the same way it is being done to the war veterans who are given the quotas. The main issue that I am worried about, that I must tell you, is that in Zimbabwe or in Africa, we are facing many challenges.

For you to be where you are today, there are people who fought with the enemy and died for this liberation. The enemies are still there. They created organisations or some groups that teach about destabilising the Governments of Africa. For you to be in Parliament, you must know that as Africans, we must be able to protect our endowments and minerals from people like these. If we allow you all to be part of this House you may fail to know what is supposed to be done.

There are some groups that are still there. If you read the history of Uganda, you realise that they take the youth to America on scholarships or bursaries. They will start to teach you how to unsettle your Government. As the elders, we must tell you to protect our legacies Hon. Sakupwanya. This is a commendable issue that you have brought to this House. In 1963, we used to have a party called ZAPU. We sat down with our elders and they told us how to protect the legacy and our heritage was left for us by our elders.

Madam Speaker we support what they said but they must also be included in the viable areas of the economy because if you come here in Parliament without enough capital, you may be influenced to sell out the country. If they are involved in the issues related to the economy, politics or even in the Cabinet, they will be able to protect their heritage or legacy just like the countries in the Middle East.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity. I will conclude by informing them on what is to be done in the august House. Sometimes they will be influenced to unseat the elders for failing to comply with our traditions and what is expected of them.

So Madam Speaker, I support what was said by the youths and rise to tell the youths that we are with them on the issues of the economy but they must be able to guard jealously their inheritance, legacy, heritage and resources. So, as youths, you must be careful on that. Thank you Hon. Speaker for granting me this opportunity.

**\*THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER:** I want to thank you Hon. Mapiki for your very wise words.

**HON. SHAMU:** Thank you Madam Speaker and may I, on behalf of the Chegutu East Constituency and indeed on my own behalf, express my sincere congratulations on your appointment to the Speaker's Panel. Madam Speaker, the motion moved by Hon. J. Kuka and seconded by Hon. Chakukura calling on the Ministry of Justice and Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to enact legislation that provides for a 30% youth quota in provincial councils and local authorities, appointment of at least one youth in every public service board and enhance the existing women's framework in local authorities by mandating that at least one in every three nominees

under the quota be a youth is indeed, Madam Speaker, a noble suggestion.

Madam Speaker, we did hear that this recommendation comes a year after the launch of the Youth Model Parliament by the Zimbabwean Institute in conjunction with the Parliament of Zimbabwe through the Parliamentary Youth Caucus and the Zimbabwe Youth Council under the banner; *Dare reveChidiki/Inkudla Yabatsha*. In his keynote address at the launch of the Youth Model Parliament, the Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Advocate Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda challenged the youths. He challenged young people to take up responsibility and take up the space created by Parliament through the Youth Model Parliament which gives them a window into the future.

There is no doubt that the future does belong to the youths, therefore, the Youth Model Parliament should indeed play its role in providing a platform for the youth to get a valuable experience on how to perform as Members of Parliament. In other words, there should be a deliberate effort and I must say, I am supporting the

view expressed by Hon. Togarepi that our political parties should encourage the youths to play their part and participate in all activities of the Youth Model Parliament. In this respect, Madam Speaker, this participation should see the inclusion not only of those young people who are in Parliament today but even those who are outside Parliament so that they can be able to learn the ropes.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, during the launch of the Youth Model Parliament, speakers that included the Minister of Youth, Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training, Hon. Tino Machakaire and the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Youth Caucus, who has spoken before this august House and Hon. Stanley Sakupwanya, underscored the timeliness of the launch of the Youth Model Parliament. They have said, Madam Speaker, that it provides space for young people to build the capacity and to flourish in various spheres of life, which in this case includes Parliament and any other sectors of governance and indeed the economic sector of this country.

I am aware that the Youth Model Parliament meets only once a year. Maybe we should review that position and recommend that

they at least meet twice, if not quarterly, so that the youth have the opportunity to discuss matters of common interest among them, more than just once a year because we now have evidence of how crucial the Youth Model Parliament is. For we are debating this motion and Hon. Sakupwanya did say so, that this motion was born out of discussions held last year during the launch of the Youth Model Parliament, which means there is more to come if they give them the opportunity. It therefore underscores the fact that the youth are indeed ready to play their role as architects of the future.

We have a philosophy that we are all upholding, *nyika inovakwa nevene vayo/ilizwe lakhiwa ngabanikazi balo*. When we say the future belongs to the youth, we will find that valid statement is encapsulated within that philosophy. We have to prepare the youth for tomorrow.

If we look back, we had Josiah Magama Tongogara, a man who made history through his astute leadership of the ZANLA forces as one of the commanders and as the leader. We need the Josiah Magama Tongogaras of today. They can only come out of

strategies born out of institutions such as the Youth Model Parliament.

We have the likes of His Excellency the President, the Hon. Emerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, again a good example of one who came from being a youth, walked all the way through the liberation struggle of this country. Today, he stands there as the President of Zimbabwe with such a long history of sacrifice. Once again, that is an example of what it means if we inculcate the philosophy of being masters of our destiny in the youth at an early age. He was involved in the struggle at a very early age. However, maybe I am looking back to the likes of the late Herbert Chitepo and I can take us all to date, we have in the chair, Hon. Tsitsi Gezi, we saw her as a youth before she even got married. Today, she is the Deputy Speaker of Parliament.

We have the likes of the Chief Whip of Government Business in this Parliament. Again, another product of the process of a youth that gets oriented in a manner that produces leaders of tomorrow. So, what we are discussing here is a very serious matter, which I think we should give very serious attention to.

I do hope that we shall move with speed to ensure that what we are recommending here is implemented as soon as possible.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**HON. KANGAUSARU:** Thank you Madam Speaker, Ma'am. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your new appointment and indeed, greetings from Hurungwe.

I would like to rise to support the motion moved by Hon. John Kuka on enhancing youth representation in decision-making bodies. Before addressing the substance of this motion, Madam Speaker, permit me to acknowledge the commendable efforts already undertaken by the Second Republic in advancing youth empowerment and inclusion.

Through the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the National Youth Policy, innovative hub, international institutions and the continued prioritisation of youth inclusion under Vision 2030, the Government has demonstrated its recognition of young people as an important partner in the national development.

Madam Speaker, may my support for this motion be anchored not only on representation but also on the economic and

development importance of integrating young people into governance systems. The world economy is changing rapidly. Nations are increasingly being driven by technology, innovation, artificial intelligence, and digital entrepreneurship. In this modern era, countries that successfully harness the creativity and innovation of their youthful population are often more competitive and economically resilient.

Zimbabwe is fortunate to possess a youthful and energetic population with enormous potential in agriculture, mining, technology, entrepreneurship, and the creative industries. Across the country, young Zimbabweans are already demonstrating remarkable innovation through start-up enterprises, digital platforms, and community initiatives. The issue before us is therefore not whether our youth possess capacity, but whether our governance systems are fully positioned to harness that potential.

Madam Speaker, the international experience demonstrates that youthful inclusion strengthens national development. For example, in Singapore, a deliberate investment in youth leadership and technological innovation has transformed the country into one

of the world's leading digital economies. Like Estonia, it became globally recognised for digital governance through aggressive investment in youth technical talent and innovation. Similarly, the United Arab Emirates institutionalised youth participation through youth councils and the appointment of youthful leaders into strategic Government positions. These measures strengthen innovation and policy modernisation.

The proposal to enhance representation in provincial councils and local authorities is therefore commendable because local authorities increasingly require innovative solutions in areas such as service delivery, urban planning, climate resilience and employment creation. Madam Speaker, equally important is the proposal to ensure youth representation within public service bodies. Strategic institutions such as ZESA Holdings, the National Railways of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority operate in a rapidly evolving environment that increasingly demands technological adaptation and fresh thinking. Sustaining institutions are built when Government systems continuously create pathways for emerging talent, innovation and future leadership. Youth

inclusion, therefore, strengthens international continuity and national preparedness for the future.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, as Zimbabwe continues to modernise its economy and Government systems, young people must be fully integrated into decision-making structures as partners in the national transformation. I, therefore, fully support this progressive motion. I thank you.

**HON. KUKA:** Madam Speaker, I rise to express my sincere gratitude to all Hon. Members from both sides of the House for the unity of purpose demonstrated during the debate on this motion.

It is heartening to note that there was an anonymous agreement that this motion is important and timely for the people we represent. I thank Hon. Members for the constructive contributions made, for highlighting the progress achieved so far and for frankly pointing out the gaps that still exist. I wish to especially appreciate the requests made by the Government Chief Whip for the Youth Caucus to sit down, deliberate further and come up with concrete recommendations to be forwarded to the Executive. I believe that when those recommendations are

submitted, they will receive the attention they deserve and see the light of day.

I would have mentioned each Hon. Member who debated by name, but I fear I might unintentionally leave some out. Therefore, I extend my appreciation to all Hon. Members who contributed to this debate. Madam Speaker, with these remarks, I move that the motion be adopted by this House.

Motion that;

APPRECIATING the legal framework for youth representation in the National Assembly;

RECOGNISING the demographic dividend of young people who constitute about 67.7% of the total population in the country;

ACKNOWLEDGING that young people play a critical role in the development of our nation, leveraging on their innovative ideas and deep understanding of issues affecting their generation;

CONCERNED by the limited youth representation in decision-making bodies at every level of government, including private and public enterprises;

NOW, THEREFORE, recommends that the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs:

(a) creates a provision for the enactment of 30% youth quota in Provincial Councils and Local Authorities;

(b) enacts a provision that compels the appointment of at least one youth in every Public Service Board; and

(c) enhances the existing women's quota framework in local authorities by mandating that at least one in every three nominees under the quota be a youth aged 21-35 years, put and agreed to.

## **MOTION**

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**HON. KAMBUZUMA:** Madam Speaker, I move that we revert to Order of the Day, Number 16 on today's *Order Paper*.

**HON. TAFANANA ZHOU:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

## **MOTION**

### **POLICY ON UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK**

**HON. O. SIBANDA:** I move the motion standing in my name that this House;

COGNISANT that domestic and unpaid care work in Zimbabwe is a vital part of national development;

NOTING that unpaid care and domestic work are carried out mainly by women and girls, without recognition, reward or rest, thereby creating an imbalance that deprives them of time to learn, earn, lead and thrive, deepening gender inequality;

DISTURBED that unpaid domestic and caregivers remain unrecognised and uncompensated in many countries, including Zimbabwe, leading to significant social, financial and gender inequalities;

CONCERNED that despite its vital contribution to socioeconomic stability and national development, unpaid domestic and care work is not adequately valued and recognised in national budgetary allocations and infrastructure development to cushion the women and girls who endure long hours of work without any rest;

NOW, THEREFORE, this House calls upon:

(a) The Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to develop a comprehensive policy and legislation on unpaid care work and commissions a national survey to assess the economic

worth of unpaid care and domestic work, including its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and

(b) The Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion to prioritise and increase budget allocations for social protection programmes, infrastructure development and social services.

**HON. TAFANANA ZHOU:** I second.

**HON. O. SIBANDA:** Thank you very much Madam Speaker Ma'am. I rise today with a deep sense of duty to move a motion on a matter that strikes the heart of our society. Unpaid care and domestic work, as you know, include essential activities such as child-rearing, caring for the elderly and the ill. Household chores and community support, are predominantly carried out by women, girls and marginalised groups. Despite their vital role in social and economic stability, these activities remain largely unrecognised and uncompensated in many countries, including Zimbabwe, resulting in significant social, financial and gender inequalities. Yet this quite relentless labour, cooking, cleaning, nurturing children, caring for

the elderly and the sick, is the unseen trend that holds our families together and sustains our economy.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the kind of work is done almost entirely by women and girls without recognition, reward, or rest. This imbalance is not only unjust but also deprives women and girls of time to learn and lead and thrive. It worsens gender inequality and dims the potential of half our population. We must no longer let this essential work stay hidden in the shadows of our national planning.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the time to act is now. The urgency of a comprehensive bill on unpaid care and domestic work cannot be overstated. Legislation would formally recognise and value the contributions that are currently invisible and undervalued in Zimbabwe and many other countries. Such legislation will unlock significant investment in care infrastructure, child care, elderly care, healthcare, clean water and domestic support. It will be our lifeline as seen in other progressive nations. This will enable women to fully participate in the formal economy and public life. It is the path to stronger families, healthier communities and more inclusive and prosperous Zimbabwe.

Mr. Speaker Sir, unpaid care and domestic work hinder women's careers and skills development. It traps women in cycles of poverty by limiting access to education, training and formal employment. Globally, the data is sobering. Women and girls perform over three-quarters of unpaid care work in sub-Saharan Africa. Women spend three to five times more time than men do. In Zimbabwe, women dedicate an average of 25.9 hours per week to unpaid care compared to 16.1 hours for men. In Zimbabwe, 63% of women cited care responsibilities as the main barrier to enrolling in vocational training programmes. With global care needs projected to rise to 2.3 billion people by 2030, the burden will only intensify further, eroding time for education, income generation and personal development. This is a crisis demanding immediate and sustained action.

Mr. Speaker Sir, Zimbabwe has laid a commendable foundation. Our ratification of CEDAW, especially its Article 11, affirms our commitment to valuing unpaid domestic work and promoting shared household responsibility. Our development agenda aligns with SDG Target 5.4, which calls for investment in

public services, infrastructure and social protection to ease the care burden.

Regionally, we are guided by the African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and the SADC Protocol on Gender Development. Domestically, our Constitution provides a robust legal framework. Section 17 mandates gender balance; Section 56 guarantees non-discrimination and Section 80 affirms equal opportunities for women.

To translate these aspirations into action, the National Development Strategy One (2021-2025) and the National Gender Policy (2025-2030), emphasise the need to recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. But resolve alone is not enough; we must act with urgency and clarity of purpose. The time to elevate care work to the centre of our development agenda is now.

Mr Speaker Sir, despite these commitments, unpaid care and domestic work remain unresolved in our country. As urbanisation accelerates and family structures evolve, care needs, especially for the elderly and persons with disabilities, are increasingly unmet. In

urban areas, older persons often live in resource-scarce conditions, despite being key caregivers themselves.

The United Nations' Women's Data confirms persisting gender disparities in our country. Women spend nearly twice as much time preparing meals as men and significantly more time cleaning, fetching water and collecting food. These burdens correlate directly with the gender employment gap. 61% for women versus 72% for men as of 2022. Therefore, time poverty remains a significant barrier to women's economic participation in our country.

Mr Speaker Sir, time spent on unpaid care is directly linked to lower income, greater economic inequality. 70% of working women in Zimbabwe's informal sector lose 15-30% of their potential earnings because of care obligations. Generally, women who do unpaid domestic work have fewer time, resources or networks to start or grow businesses. The unpaid workload also hampers their ability to access markets or financial services, such as loans and savings schemes. When women are unable to participate fully in the

economy, households' income levels stagnate or decline, perpetuating cycles of poverty.

Therefore, Parliament must be concerned that Zimbabwe lacks adequate care infrastructure, which significantly impacts women and girls' participation in the mainstream economy. Unpaid care and domestic work disproportionately affect women, in informal employment. Informal workers, lack workplace protection, worsening conflict related to care responsibility. 92% of employed women in Zimbabwe work in the informal sector, where they balance care duties with insecure, low-paying jobs. For example, market vendors in Harare reported losing 3-4 hours of productive work each day because they need to fetch water or care for their children.

Let me share what we observed in Kenya. In February 2025, we were privileged to be sponsored by the Women's Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence (WALPE), one of our partners in the Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus, to travel to Kenya for a benchmark visit on UPCW. We visited the Nairobi City Country Market Store, known as *Mwariro* Market, which features a

daycare centre within its market infrastructure. This daycare centre has enabled women who make up the majority of sellers at the market to run their businesses while their children are cared for. The cost for daycare services is just 100 Kenyan shillings, less than \$1 per day.

We found this initiative interesting because it allows mothers to continue running their businesses without having to close their shops to stay home with their children. Therefore, policy and legislation supporting the development of infrastructure that complements UDCW would greatly help create time and opportunities for women to pursue income-generating projects and increase family incomes.

Mr. Speaker Sir, social protection programmes such as AMTO, HSCT and BEAM offer support but face challenges of erratic funding, poor coordination and limited accessibility. For instance, only 71 centres exist for older persons, leaving many reliant on informal support. Traditional practises like *zunde raMambo* reflect community resilience, but without Government backing, they cannot meet modern care demands. Public

infrastructure, clean energy, roads, water and sanitation is critical to easing care burdens. Yet 7% of rural households had access to clean water in 2021, and just 66% of the population had access to portable water in 2022. Climate change and extreme weather events like Cyclone Idai worsened these vulnerabilities. Technology can ease care burdens, but digital divides persist, while 85% of Zimbabweans own mobile phones. Internet penetration stands at only 34.8%, limiting access to digital services that support caregivers.

UCW also endangers women's health and safety. Sixty-eight percent of women in rural Zimbabwe report experiencing chronic back pain from fetching water and firewood. For example, during cholera outbreaks, caregivers face infection risks due to a lack of protective gear, contributing to Zimbabwe's 62% maternal mortality rate linked to preventable causes. Additionally, repetitive tasks and manual labour increase the risk of injuries and other health issues. Furthermore, time constraints and financial limitations prevent women from seeking timely medical care for their own health needs. Therefore, the constant burden of unpaid work can lead to

high levels of stress, anxiety and emotional burnout. As you all know, women often prioritise family needs over their health, neglect regular health check-ups and ignore symptoms of illness.

So, what do I mean Mr. Speaker Sir? Unpaid care and domestic work significantly compromise women's physical and mental health in Zimbabwe, often leading to neglect of their own health needs, increased risk of illness, and reduced quality of life. Addressing these impacts requires recognising the implications of unpaid work and implementing supportive policies and services. We are not alone in this struggle. The UN's 5R Framework, Recognise, Reduce, Redistribute Reward, and Represent, offers a comprehensive approach to care policy. The toolkit urges governments to invest more in care infrastructure and to ensure decent work for paid caregivers.

The private sector must also play its part through paid leave and flexible work arrangements. Other nations have taken bold steps. Uruguay's Care Act guarantees care as a right and regulates its quality. Vietnam's Gender Equality Strategy set targets to reduce

the time women spend on household duties. Kenya's Constitution affirms equal parental responsibility, and its National Care Policy recognises care work, redistributes responsibilities and supports caregivers, transforming lives and boosting the economy.

Zimbabwe's commitment to unpaid care work justice and equity is unwavering, but its realisation remains out of reach. The reason is apparent. There is a legal gap; provisions on unpaid care work are scattered across various laws, making enforcement impossible. The Disabled Persons Act (1992), the Older Persons Act, and the Labour Act (1985) offer partial protections but lack comprehensive coverage, especially for paternity leave and shared care responsibilities.

We must fill this gap. Zimbabwe urgently needs a stand-alone Bill on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work. This Bill will formally recognise care work as a driver of economic and social progress. It will boost investment in the care economy, spur grassroots industrialisation, improve livelihoods, and strengthen climate resilience through green technology and AI, fostering inclusive gender-equal development. To our esteemed chiefs and traditional

leadership, we call upon you to rise to this transformative challenge, one that speaks to the heart of our communities and the future of our nation; the realisation of the four Rs - Recognition, Redistribution, Reward and Representation.

In addressing unpaid care work, it is not merely a policy goal. It is a cultural shift with the power to reshape our social values and uplift countless lives. As custodians of tradition and respected leaders, you hold the key to unlocking this change. Your voice and influence can guide our people towards embracing new thinking, towards welcoming modern technologies, clean energy, and professional caregiving services that ease the daily burdens of women and caregivers. Whether it is ensuring access to clean water, supporting care for children, the elderly, and the terminally ill, or advocating for monthly allowances for our elders, your leadership can make these solutions real and sustainable.

By championing these efforts, you help align our communities with Vision 2030 which promises to leave no one behind. You help release mothers, girls, boys, and grandparents and carers from the shadows of unpaid labour, empowering them to participate fully in

public life and the formal economy. You help build a Zimbabwe where care is valued, livelihoods are uplifted and dignity is restored.

As I conclude, I would like to call upon this august House to support this motion before the House, urging the Executive, particularly the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, to develop a comprehensive policy and legislation on unpaid domestic care work. The Ministry of Finance and Investment Promotion, through the Zimbabwe Statistical Office, will commission a national survey to measure and assess the economic worth of unpaid care and domestic work, including its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and to prioritise, increase budget allocations for social protection programmes, infrastructure development and social services. I thank you.

**THE ACTING SPEAKER (HON. J. TSHUMA):** Before I recognise the Government Chief Whip, I thought I must commend both sides of the House. Just as well, Hon. Sibanda has brought an issue of women and their treatment. I must commend both sides of the House on the way you received our new Member of the Speaker's Panel, Madam Speaker Mugomo. Thank you very much

for that. It is good to see Members support each other, especially the women supporting other women. That is the way to go and well done, Hon. Mugomo.

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

**HON. NYANDORO:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2026.

*On the motion of **HON. KAMBUZUMA**, seconded by **HON. NYANDORO**, the House adjourned at Twenty-Three Minutes to Six o'clock p.m. until Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2026.*