

**PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE**

*Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2026*

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

**PRAYERS**

(THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE *in the Chair*)

**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF  
SENATE**

**SWITCHING OFF OF CELLPHONES**

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** I would like to remind the Hon. Senators to put your gadgets on silent or better still, switch them off.

**MOTION**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**THE MINISTER OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND  
DEVOLUTION FOR HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE**

**(HON. SEN. TAWENGWA):** I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 1 to 3 on today's *Order Paper* be stood over until the rest of the Orders of the Day have been disposed of.

Motion put and agreed to.

## **MOTION**

### **REPORT OF THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION ON WARD 14 OF CHINHOYI MUNICIPALITY AND WARD 6 OF EPWORTH LOCAL BOARD BY ELECTIONS**

Fourth Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Report of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission on Ward 14 of Chinhoyi Municipality and Ward 6 of Epworth Local Board By-Elections.

Question again proposed.

### **THE MINISTER OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND DEVOLUTION FOR HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE**

**(HON. SEN. TAWENGWA):** I move that the debate do now adjourn.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2026.

## **MOTION**

### **REPORT OF THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION ON BY-ELECTIONS HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025, WARD 21 OF CHIMANIMANI, WARD 4 OF GUTU RDC AND WARD 12 OF MANGWE RDC**

Fifth Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Report of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission on By-Elections Held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2025, Ward 21 of Chimanimani, Ward 4 of Gutu RDC and Ward 12 of Mangwe RDC.

Question again proposed.

**THE MINISTER OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND  
DEVOLUTION FOR HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE**

**(HON. SEN. TAWENGWA):** I move that the debate do now adjourn.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2026.

**MOTION**

**REPORT OF THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION ON  
GUTU EAST AND INSIZA NORTH CONSTITUENCY AND  
LOCAL AUTHORITY BY-ELECTIONS HELD ON THE 14<sup>TH</sup> OF  
JUNE 2025**

Sixth Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Report of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission on Gutu East and Insiza North Constituency and Local Authority By-Elections.

Question again proposed.

**THE MINISTER OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND  
DEVOLUTION FOR HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE**

**(HON. SEN. TAWENGWA):** I move that the debate do now adjourn.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2026.

**MOTION**

**REPORT OF THE ZIMBABWE ELECTORAL COMMISSION ON  
BY-ELECTIONS HELD ON THE 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2025 WARD 8  
OF MAKONDE RDC, WARD 9 OF MARONDERA  
MUNICIPALITY, WARD 7 OF MASVINGO MUNICIPALITY AND  
WARD 16 OF NKAYI RDC**

Seventh Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Report of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission on By-Elections held on 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2025, Ward 8 of Makonde R.D.C, Ward 9 of Marondera Municipality, Ward 7 of Masvingo Municipality and Ward 16 of Nkayi R.D.C.

Question again proposed.

**THE MINISTER OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND  
DEVOLUTION FOR HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE**

**(HON. SEN. TAWENGWA):** I move that the debate do now adjourn.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2026.

## **MOTION**

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

#### **THE MINISTER OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS AND DEVOLUTION FOR HARARE METROPOLITAN PROVINCE**

**(HON. SEN. TAWENGWA):** Thank you Mr. President. I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 8 to 10 on today's *Order Paper* be stood over until the rest of the Orders have been disposed of.

Motion put and agreed to.

## **MOTION**

### **REPORT ON THE VISIT TO THE ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN SENATES CONFERENCE HELD IN RABAT, KINGDOM OF MOROCCO**

**HON. SEN. MOHADI:** Thank you Mr. President. I move the motion standing in my name that this House takes note of the Delegation Report on the visit to the Association of African Senates Conference held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco from

8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2026 under the theme, “Contribution of Upper Houses of Parliaments to the Consolidation of Democracy and Preservation of peace in Africa”.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Parliament of Zimbabwe participated in the Conference of the Association of African Senates held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026. The Zimbabwean delegation was led by the Deputy President of the Senate, Hon. Lt. General (Rtd.) M.R. Nyambuya who was accompanied by Hon. Sen. T. Mohadi, Hon. Sen. S. Munemo, Hon. Sen. R. Bwawanda, Mr. C. K. Guvi, Ms. P. P. Chabwera, Mrs. M. Kwangware, Mr. P. Muzenda and Mr. A. Kufandirori.

1.2 The Conference brought together Presidents and representatives of Upper Houses of Parliaments across Africa, alongside inter-parliamentary organisations, to deliberate on issues of common interest relating to governance, democracy and peace-building on the continent. The Conference was held under the theme “The Contribution of Upper Houses of Parliaments to the Consolidation of Democracy and the Preservation of Peace in Africa.”

This engagement provided a strategic platform for benchmarking institutional practices, strengthening parliamentary diplomacy and interrogating the effectiveness of Upper Houses in responding to emerging governance and peace-building challenges across Africa.

The objectives of the Conference included:

- Strengthening the role of Upper Houses in democratic governance.
- Enhancing inter-parliamentary cooperation among African Senates.
- Sharing best practices in legislative oversight, representation and accountability.
- Deliberating on institutional mechanisms for promoting peace and stability across Africa.

## **2.0 PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE**

The Conference programme was structured around high-level engagements comprising the Opening Ceremony, a General Debate, a Closed-Door Meeting of Presidents of Senates and a Closing Session. The Opening Ceremony officiated by the President of the House of Councillors of the Kingdom of Morocco and the President of the

Senate of Côte d'Ivoire, set the tone for the deliberations by emphasising the centrality of strong, credible and inclusive institutions in sustaining democratic governance and peace. This was followed by statements from Presidents of Senates and representatives of inter-parliamentary bodies, reflecting a shared recognition that democratic resilience in Africa is increasingly dependent on the effectiveness of legislative institutions. Deliberations during the General Debate which focused on the Conference theme, underscored the need to reposition Upper Houses from largely procedural review bodies to proactive institutions capable of shaping governance outcomes. Discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening legislative oversight, enhancing inclusivity in representation and expanding the role of Parliaments in conflict prevention and national cohesion.

The Closed-Door Meeting of Presidents of Senates constituted the principal decision-making segment of the Conference and focused on strengthening the institutional framework of the Association of African Senates. Deliberations addressed the launch of the Association's logo and graphic charter, as well as proposals for

amendments to the statutes submitted by member states, notably the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire and the Kingdom of Morocco. The Meeting further demonstrated institutional convergence through the adoption of key amendments to the Association's statutes. These include provisions to broaden membership through the admission by decision of the Conference of any Upper House from an African state that is a member of the United Nations, either as a full member or observer. The Conference also resolved to formalise governance arrangements by setting the term of the Association's President at two years and recognising the appointment of the first female President as Honorary President, signaling a progressive commitment to inclusive leadership.

In strengthening the administrative architecture of the Association it was agreed that the responsibilities of Secretary General will be vested in the Secretary General of the Upper House of the host country. Additionally, the Treasurer will be appointed by the Conference upon nomination by the President, thereby reinforcing internal accountability mechanisms.

The Meeting further endorsed a structured convening framework, comprising an annual meeting hosted by the country holding the rotating presidency and a biennial Conference of Presidents. These measures are set to take immediate effect, reflecting a decisive step towards institutional consolidation and operational clarity. It was also confirmed that the next annual meeting will be held in Rabat, Morocco in 2027.

The Meeting further culminated in the formal designation of the next President of the Association of African Senates, with Mohamed Ould Errachid assuming the presidency, alongside the determination of themes and venues for upcoming Conferences, thereby setting the strategic direction and continuity of the Association's work

### **3.0 ZIMBABWE'S INTERVENTION**

Zimbabwe's intervention articulated a strong institutional perspective grounded in constitutionalism and inclusive governance. The Deputy President of the Senate highlighted the constitutional mandate of Parliament to safeguard democracy, uphold the rule of law and ensure accountability across all arms of the State.

Particular emphasis was placed on the Senate's role as a review chamber that enhances the quality of legislation, as well as its inclusive composition which integrates elected representatives, traditional leaders and persons with disabilities. This model was presented as a deliberate mechanism for strengthening national cohesion and ensuring that diverse societal interests are reflected in governance processes.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe underscored the importance of thematic committees in deepening oversight on human rights, peace and security and advanced the need for Upper Houses to position themselves within early warning and preventive diplomacy frameworks in order to respond more effectively to emerging conflicts.

#### **4.0 OBSERVATIONS AND KEY INSIGHTS**

The Conference revealed a clear and emerging continental consensus that the relevance of Upper Houses is no longer guaranteed by constitutional design alone but by their capacity to act as effective, responsive and influential institutions within governance systems. A central observation was that many Upper Houses continue to operate

below their full potential, constrained by limited technical capacity, weak research support systems and insufficient influence over policy processes. In this regard, institutional strengthening, particularly through enhanced committee systems and evidence-based legislative support, remains critical.

Equally significant was the recognition of the expanding role of Upper Houses in peace-building. There is a growing expectation that Senates should move beyond traditional legislative functions to actively contribute to conflict prevention, mediation and national dialogue processes. This reflects a broader shift towards more anticipatory and preventive governance models across the continent. The importance of inclusivity also emerged strongly with several countries emphasising the integration of traditional leadership, women and marginalised groups into parliamentary structures as a means of strengthening legitimacy and social cohesion.

Finally, the Conference reaffirmed the strategic value of inter-parliamentary cooperation through the Association of African Senates as a platform for knowledge exchange, peer learning and coordinated responses to shared governance challenges.

## **5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In light of the foregoing, it is recommended that the Parliament of Zimbabwe prioritises the strengthening of research and technical support systems within the Senate to enhance evidence-based oversight and legislative effectiveness. This should be complemented by efforts to further capacitate thematic committees, particularly in areas relating to governance, peace and security. There is also a need to institutionalise the Senate's role within national peace architecture, including its integration into early warning and preventive diplomacy frameworks. This would enable the Senate to play a more proactive role in anticipating and mitigating emerging conflicts. Furthermore, the Parliament should deepen its engagement with continental parliamentary platforms, particularly the Association of African Senates, to leverage opportunities for institutional learning and strategic collaboration.

Finally, deliberate efforts should be made to enhance the visibility and policy influence of the Senate within national governance processes, ensuring that its contributions translate into measurable and tangible outcomes.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

The Conference in Rabat provided critical insights into the evolving role of Upper Houses in Africa and underscored the imperative for Senates to transition into more dynamic, responsive and strategically positioned institutions capable of consolidating democracy and safeguarding peace in increasingly complex governance environments. I thank you.

**HON. SEN. CHIEF NHEMA:** I rise to second this report tabled by Hon. Sen. Mohadi on the conference held in Morocco. I was also part of the delegation which was led by the Deputy President of Senate, Hon. Sen. Rtd. General M.R. Nyambuya, accompanied by Hon. Sen. S. Munemo, Mr. Guvi, Mrs. Chabwera, Mrs. Kwangware, Mr. Muzenda and Mr. Kufandirori.

Mr. President, the conference focused on bringing together Parliaments and representatives of Upper Houses of Parliaments across Africa, along with inter-parliamentary organisations, to discuss issues of common interest relating to governance, democracy and peace-building on the continent. The conference was held under the

theme, “The Contribution of Upper House Parliaments to the Consolidation of Democracy and Preservation of Peace in Africa”.

It acted as an eye-opener for benchmarking institutional practice, strengthening Parliament diplomacy, and interrogation of the Executive of Upper Houses in handling emergent governance and peace-building. Challenging across Africa, indeed, the conference had various objectives such as strengthening the role of Upper Houses in democratic governance, and the aims of inter-parliamentary cooperation among African Senates, sharing best practices in legislative oversight, representative accountability, and deliberation on institutional mechanisms for promoting peace and stability across Africa. The conference programme was structured around high-level engagement, comprising the opening ceremony, a general debate and a closed-door meeting of Presidents of Senates.

The opening ceremony was officiated by the President of the House of Councils...

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Order, Hon. Senator! Are you reading the same script as the one presented by Hon. Sen Mohadi?

**HON. SEN. CHIEF NHEMA:** I am just summarising.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** So far, it looks like it is the same script which you are reading and that is not the normal practice. You are supposed to second and read through the main points as it were, fresh, if possible but not read the same script. Do you like to speak to your presentation?

**HON. SEN. CHIEF NHEMA:** Okay, Mr. President, give me another chance to prepare.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** You have already spoken, so I cannot give you another chance, just summarise your presentation.

**HON. SEN. CHIEF NHEMA:** Please give me another chance to prepare.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Okay. I will make an exception.

**\*HON. SEN. GOTORA:** Thank you Mr. President. Let me take this opportunity to put my voice on the report which was tabled by Hon. Sen. Mohadi. Honestly speaking, Upper Houses in the whole of Africa, as I see it, are not taken as just like what they are called Upper

Houses. Why? This is because there is no close relationship between the National Assembly and the Senates in Africa.

The National Assembly does its own things while the Senate does their own things without proper coordination. Peace and security which is being spoken to, honestly speaking, is very important in Africa. To monitor and look closely at peace and security here in Africa, can we safely say it is guaranteed to ensure that we do not remain a continent with disorganised people who are actually going parallel to each other on what will be happening in the country without being selfish? The report which Hon. Senator Mohadi tabled, if we read it closely, it will be good for us to know and be sure that whenever the National Assembly and Senate are operating. We need proper coordination to ensure that what is being said in the National Assembly and what is being said in the Senate should go hand in hand to avoid crossing each other's paths.

I am satisfied with the team, which travelled to Morocco. It was well balanced in terms of representation. If we look into the parties in the Parliament, if we look into gender, the way I see it, the team was well balanced to ensure that if we allow them to explain what they

went through in there so that we can add or support on what we think Africa should have guaranteed peace and security, I think that report should produce good results. I do not know which Hon. Minister can come and respond to that report but I would prefer the Minister of Foreign Affairs to come and respond to ensure that we do produce results from all those foreign travels, just like this conference which was attended by Hon. Senator Mohadi and her colleagues. I thank you.

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

**HON. SEN. CHIEF. NHEMA:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2026.

## **MOTION**

**REPORT OF THE THEMATIC COMMITTEE ON  
INDIGENISATION AND EMPOWERMENT ON THE IMPACT OF  
THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT BANK ON YOUTH  
EMPOWERMENT PROJECTS**

Twelfth Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Report of the Thematic Committee on Indigenisation and Empowerment on the Impact of Youth Empowerment on Youth Empowerment Projects.

Question again proposed.

**HON. SEN. TONGOGARA:** Thank you Mr. President for allowing me to debate on this report. I rise to support the report on the Thematic Committee on Indigenisation and Empowerment on the Impact of the Youth Empowerment Bank on Youth Empowerment Projects. At the onset, I wish to commend the Committee for undertaking this important inquiry.

The findings clearly demonstrate that the Youth Empowerment Bank is not merely a financial institution but a strategic national instrument for addressing youth, unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and drug and substance abuse among young people.

Zimbabwe has a youthful population of approximately 5.4 million people, with about 2.2 million youths classified as not being in education, employment or training. This is a significant demographic that requires delicate intervention through economic empowerment programmes.

One of the most important findings of this report is that youth projects funded through the Youth Empowerment Bank are helping to steer young people away from drug and substance abuse. The Committee observed that funded projects created employment opportunities and occupied young people productively. The notable example was the Youth Employed at Rusero Dairy project who had previously struggled with drug and substance abuse but managed to turn his life around after gaining employment and purpose through the project.

Mr. President, drug and substance abuse has become one of the greatest threats facing our nation. While law enforcement and rehabilitation programmes remain important, the most sustainable solution is to create economic opportunities for young people. An occupied youth is less likely to engage in destructive behaviour than an idle youth.

Every poultry project, piggery project, dairy project, housing project or agricultural enterprise financed through the Youth Empowerment Bank represents a practical intervention against drug abuse. When youth are engaged in productive economic activities,

they develop hope, responsibility and a sense of ownership in society. Therefore, funding youth projects should not be viewed merely as an economic programme but also as a social investment that contributes to safer communities and a healthier nation.

The report further demonstrates that youth-funded projects contribute significantly to economic growth. The success stories presented to the Committee are evidence that when young people are given access to affordable capital, they can create wealth and employment. For example, one of the projects visited, the Nyamuzinga Poultry project, grew from 300 birds to 4 000 birds after receiving support from the Youth Empowerment Bank.

Similarly, the Chinyika Potato project generated substantial returns from its first production cycle, while the Rusero Dairy project increased in dairy herd from 3 to 16 cattle. These examples illustrate that young people are not looking for handouts; they are looking for opportunities. Once empowered with capital, they become employers rather than job seekers. By financing youth enterprises, the Government stimulates agricultural production, increases household

incomes, creates employment opportunities, broadens the tax base and contributes to national economic development.

Mr. President, despite these success stories, the report reveals a major challenge. The Youth Empowerment Bank remains undercapitalised and therefore, unable to meet the growing demand for youth funding across the country.

The Committee found that many viable projects failed to receive adequate funding because of resource limitations. Some projects could not expand despite demonstrating strong repayment records and business viability. This situation undermines the bank's ability to fulfil its mandate. A country with over two million unemployed youths cannot effectively address youth unemployment using an institution that is capital-constrained and physically present in only a few towns.

Mr. President, I therefore strongly support the Committee's recommendation that Treasury should adequately capitalise the Youth Empowerment Bank and transform it from a microfinance institution into a fully-fledged development bank dedicated to youth empowerment. Such a bank would become a powerful vehicle for

inclusive economic development, particularly in rural areas where access to finance remains limited.

Mr. President, investment in the Youth Empowerment Bank is not an expenditure. It is an investment in Zimbabwe's future. The returns are visible in the form of reduced unemployment, reduced drug and substance abuse, increased productivity, enhanced social stability and accelerated economic growth.

As we debate this report, we must appreciate that empowering youth today is equivalent to building Zimbabwe's economy tomorrow. I therefore urge the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion to prioritise the recapitalisation of the Youth Empowerment Bank in future national budgets and to seriously consider its transformation into a fully-fledged development bank capable of reaching every province and district of our country.

Mr. President, with these remarks, I support the report and its recommendations. I thank you.

**HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA:** Madam President, I rise to debate this important report of the Thematic Committee on Indigenisation

and Empowerment on the Impact of Empower Bank on Youth Projects.

At the outset, allow me to commend the Committee for undertaking this inquiry. The issue before us goes beyond banking, beyond loans and beyond project funding. It concerns the future of Zimbabwe's young people and by extension, the future of Zimbabwe itself. Section 20 (1) (c) of our Constitution imposes a clear obligation on the State to take reasonable measures, including affirmative action programmes, to ensure that young people are afforded opportunities for employment and other avenues of economic empowerment. This is not a policy preference; it is a constitutional obligation.

Madam President, according to the report, Zimbabwe has approximately 5.4 million youths, of whom about 2.2 million are classified as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training'. Those statistics should concern every Member of this House regardless of political affiliation.

When 2.2 million young people are outside productive economic activity, we are not merely dealing with unemployment. We

are dealing with a national development challenge. We are dealing with poverty, migration, drug and substance abuse, crime and social instability.

The question therefore becomes, are we investing sufficiently in the future of our young people? The report demonstrates that Empower Bank has produced positive results despite operating under severe constraints.

The Committee visited several projects and found evidence of growth and success. A poultry project in Mutare expanded from 300 birds to 4 000 birds. A dairy project increased its herd from 3 to 16 cattle. A potato farming enterprise doubled its cultivated area and significantly increased income. These are not theoretical success stories. These are real Zimbabwean youths creating wealth through hard work and access to finance.

These examples prove an important point. Zimbabwean youths do not lack talent. They do not lack ideas. They do not lack determination. What they lack is access to affordable capital, infrastructure, markets and support services.

Madam President, the report reveals a troubling contradiction.

The Government has established Empower Bank as a vehicle for youth empowerment, yet the same institution is operating with inadequate capitalisation.

The Committee established that Empower Bank received initial seed capital of USD 2.5 million against a statutory requirement of USD5 million. Even more concerning, Treasury funding remains inadequate and inconsistent. We must ask ourselves a simple question - how can a bank be expected to serve millions of youths across Zimbabwe effectively when it is underfunded? We cannot assign a national mandate and then deny the institution the resources necessary to fulfil that mandate.

This House should therefore strongly support the Committee's recommendation that Treasury provide substantial capitalisation to Empower Bank and seriously consider transforming it from a microfinance institution into a development finance institution dedicated to youth empowerment.

Madam President, the report also exposes the limitations of the current empowerment model. Most projects funded by Empower Bank are concentrated in agriculture. While agriculture remains a vital sector, empowerment cannot be confined to agriculture alone. Our young people are innovative. Some are interested in manufacturing, mining, technology, tourism, renewable energy, value addition and beneficiation.

The future economy will not be built solely on farming. It will be built on innovation, industrialisation and entrepreneurship. As a country, we must deliberately support youth participation in value addition. I come from Matabeleland South, a province blessed with gold, lithium, cattle, tourism resources and agricultural potential. Yet many of our young people watch trucks carrying minerals out of their communities while they remain unemployed. Many watch livestock leaving their districts while there are no processing facilities. Many see wealth passing through their communities without creating jobs for local people. Youth empowerment must therefore be linked to beneficiation and local economic development. Where there is gold, there must be opportunities for youth-owned processing enterprises.

Where there is cattle production, there must be opportunities for youth participation in leather processing and meat value chains. Where there is tourism, there must be opportunities for youth-owned tourism businesses. That is true empowerment.

Madam President, the Committee also identified one of the greatest barriers faced by young entrepreneurs, that is, access to affordable loans. The report notes that loans below USD1 000 attract interest rates as high as 10% per month. The Committee correctly observed that such rates are difficult for start-up businesses to sustain. We must be honest with ourselves. A young entrepreneur who is still trying to establish a business cannot realistically carry a 10% monthly interest burden and remain competitive. Empowerment should empower; it should not create conditions that make failure inevitable. I, therefore, urge the Government to consider concessionary lending windows specifically designed for youth start-ups.

Another issue highlighted by the report is land insecurity. Several projects visited by the Committee were operating on leased land and faced uncertainty regarding long-term tenure. One project almost collapsed entirely because of land disputes and possible

eviction. This is a lesson we must learn. No entrepreneur can confidently invest in infrastructure, irrigation systems, livestock facilities or processing equipment if there is no guarantee that they will remain on the land. Empowerment must be accompanied by secure access to productive assets.

I, therefore, support the Committee's recommendation that the Ministry responsible for Youth and the Ministry responsible for Lands, collaborate to secure land for youth projects.

Madam President, one of the most concerning findings in this report relates to geographical access. Empower Bank currently has a physical presence in only five urban centres, namely Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Masvingo and Gweru. This means that many young people in rural Zimbabwe have limited access to the institution.

We must remember that poverty is increasingly becoming a rural challenge. Many youths in districts such as Matobo, Mangwe, Tsholotsho, Binga, Nkayi, Mudzi and Mbire face significant barriers to accessing financial services. Youth empowerment should not depend on one's postal address. The son of a farmer in Matobo should

have the same opportunity as the son of a businessman in Harare. The daughter of a villager in Mangwe should have the same access to opportunity as someone living in a city. That is what constitutional equality requires. That is what inclusive development demands.

The Committee further observed that collateral requirements continue to exclude many deserving young people. This House must appreciate a fundamental reality. Most young people do not own houses or farms, nor do they possess title deeds. If empowerment programmes require substantial collateral, then many deserving youths will never qualify. The recommendation that Empower Bank explore alternative collateral systems deserves our full support. We should be exploring project-based financing, group guarantees and innovative lending models that focus on viability rather than inherited wealth.

Madam President, one encouraging finding from the report is the social impact of these projects. The Committee observed that funded projects created employment opportunities and helped some young people move away from drug and substance abuse. This is a critical point.

When we invest in youth entrepreneurship, we are not simply creating businesses. We are creating hope, restoring dignity, reducing dependence, strengthening families and stabilising communities. The fight against drug and substance abuse cannot be won through law enforcement alone. It must also be fought through economic opportunity. Young people with jobs, businesses and hope for the future are less likely to fall into destructive behaviour.

While I support this report, I believe Parliament must continue exercising oversight. We need regular reports showing the provincial distribution of loans, gender distribution of beneficiaries, survival rates of funded projects, job creation figures, repayment performance, and number of rural beneficiaries. Public funds must produce measurable outcomes. This House has a duty to ensure that youth empowerment programmes remain accountable, transparent and effective.

In conclusion, the greatest resource of Zimbabwe is not gold, lithium, platinum or tobacco. The greatest resource of Zimbabwe is its people, particularly its young people. This report demonstrates that when young people are given an opportunity, they succeed.

However, it also demonstrates that Empower Bank is attempting to carry a national responsibility with insufficient resources. Therefore, our prayer as this House should be clear. That Government adequately capitalises Empower Bank; that affordable financing be extended to youth entrepreneurs; that youth projects be supported with secure land tenure; that access be expanded to rural communities; that empowerment be broadened beyond agriculture into manufacturing, mining, technology and value addition and that youth empowerment be treated not as a social programme, but as a national economic strategy. If we empower our youths, we empower Zimbabwe. I so submit Madam President.

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

**HON. SEN. MATIBIRI:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2026.

## **MOTION**

**ENSURING FINANCIAL INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

Thirteenth Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on failures by local authorities to provide basic services countrywide.

Question again proposed.

**HON. SEN. NCUBE:** Thank you Mr. President for the opportunity to add my voice in strong support of the motion moved by Hon. Tshabangu on the urgent need to address poor service delivery by local authorities in Zimbabwe. At the outset, allow me to sincerely commend the mover of this motion for bringing before this august House, a matter that goes to the very heart of the dignity, health, livelihoods and overall social wellbeing of our citizens. Service delivery is not merely an administrative obligation, it is a fundamental measure of the effectiveness, responsiveness and developmental trajectory of any society.

The quality of roads, water supply systems, sanitation infrastructure and waste management services provide a clear reflection of the state of governance and the extent to which public institutions are meeting the expectations of the people themselves. When roads deteriorate into dangerous potholes, when refuse remains uncollected in residential areas, when communities

endure prolonged periods without water and when sewer systems collapse and expose citizens to diseases, it is the ordinary men, women and children who suffer the greatest burden. Such conditions undermine human dignity, threaten public health, weaken economic productivity and erode public confidence in local authorities and governance systems.

Mr. President, the motion rightly acknowledges the commendable efforts by the Second Republic under the astute leadership of His Excellency, President Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa, in strengthening service delivery through devolution, infrastructure rehabilitation and the call to action ‘no-compromise service delivery initiative’. However, despite these noble efforts, the reality on the ground reveals glaring weaknesses in governance, accountability and revenue administration within local authorities.

Allow me, therefore Mr. President, to focus my contribution on three critical lines of debate, the crisis of weak governance and revenue leakages in local authorities, the collapse of urban order through illegal activities and space barons and the need for strict

enforcement of financial management systems, council bylaws and accountability frameworks.

On weak governance and revenue leakages in local authorities, Mr. President, one of the greatest paradoxes confronting our local authorities today is that councils continue to increase rates and charges upon residents, yet service delivery continues to deteriorate. Citizens are paying more but receiving less. This points to deeper governance crises involving poor revenue collection systems, corruption, leakages and inefficient financial administration. In many urban centres, councils are sitting on potentially huge revenue streams that are being illegally diverted into private pockets by cartels and unregulated actors. The tragedy is that while councils claim to be financially incapacitated, enormous amounts of money circulate daily outside official municipal systems.

A classic example is the scourge of so-called space barons in Harare and other urban centres. These individuals illegally parcel out land, collect rentals, demand protection fees and allocate vending spaces without lawful authority. Instead of revenue accruing to councils for service delivery and infrastructure development, the

money enriches individuals operating outside the law. This phenomenon has become a parallel shadow economy that undermines urban planning, fuels corruption and weakens local governance structures.

Equally concerning is the proliferation of touts at bus termini and pickup points. Across many towns and cities, commuter omnibus operators are forced to pay illegal daily fees to touts and criminal networks controlling loading bays and transport ranks. These funds are collected in cash, outside the official system with no accountability whatsoever. If properly formalised and administered, these revenues could significantly strengthen council finances. Local authorities could modernise transport ranks, rehabilitate roads, improve street lighting, and enhance sanitation services using revenue currently being lost to illegal collection. This House must therefore appreciate that the challenge facing councils is not always the absence of revenue opportunities, but the inability or unwillingness to establish transparent, accountable and enforceable revenue-collecting systems.

Let me now move to the collapse of urban order and the proliferation of illegal activities. The deterioration of service delivery is also a reflection of weakening urban governance and the collapse of enforcement mechanisms within our local authorities. In many cities, illegal vending, unregulated transport operations and unlawful land occupations are no longer isolated incidents but have become entrenched systems, operating openly and in defiance of council bylaws. This disorder has serious consequences. Illegal vending sites often emerge without ablution facilities, refuse collection systems or clean water access.

As a result, city centres become congested, unhygienic and unsafe. Refuse accumulates rapidly because councils are overwhelmed by unplanned activities occurring outside designated structures. Similarly, illegal transport operations and unregulated pickup points contribute to traffic congestion, accidents and lawlessness. Our cities risk becoming centres of disorder rather than centres of pride, engines of economic growth and investment.

Mr. President, while we acknowledge the difficult economic environment forcing many citizens into the informal sector,

lawlessness cannot become a substitute for economic policy. There must be order, regulation and accountability. Local authorities must reclaim control over urban spaces through fair but extreme enforcement of bylaws. Councils cannot effectively provide service in environments characterised by disorder, corruption and weak administration. There is therefore a need for administrative courage to dismantle criminal syndicates benefiting from urban chaos.

On strengthening accountability through enforcing council by-laws, another critical issue relates to financial accountability and compliance with public finance management principles. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) exists to ensure transparency, accountability and prudent utilisation of public resources.

However, persistent audit findings by the Auditor General continue to expose serious weaknesses within local authorities, including unsupported expenditures, failure to account for collected revenues, procurement irregularities, weak internal controls and non-compliance with accounting standards. These have resulted in many local authorities receiving adverse or qualified Auditor General's opinions. Mr. President, there is therefore an urgent need for strict

enforcement of the PFMA, compliance standards and council by-laws.

Local authorities must no longer treat audit recommendations as optional observations. There must be consequences for gross negligence, abuse of office and financial misconduct. Equally important is the digitisation of municipal financial systems. Cash-based systems create opportunities for leakages and corruption. Councils should migrate towards electronic billing systems, cashless payment platforms, smart parking systems, automated market fee collection systems and integrated transport rank management systems. Such reforms should enhance transparency, reduce corruption and improve revenue accountability.

In light of the foregoing, I wish to propose the following recommendations:

1. That local authorities establish integrated digital revenue collection systems to eliminate cash leakages and improve accountability in parking fees, market stores and commuter omnibus ranks.

2. That the Minister of Local Government and Public Works conduct a nationwide audit of illegal land allocation and activities of space barons with a view to restoring urban order and ensuring all revenues accrue to councils.

3. That councils formalise and regulate commuter omnibus loading points through transparent licencing systems and electronic payment mechanisms so that revenues benefit local authorities rather than criminal syndicates and touts.

4. That strict enforcement of council by-laws be undertaken in collaboration with law enforcement agencies to restore order in cities, eliminate illegal vending structures in designated areas and curb unlawful transport operations.

5. That all local authorities publish quarterly financial and service delivery performance reports accessible to residents to promote transparency and public confidence.

6. That councils adopt performance-based management systems where senior municipal officials are assessed according to measurable service delivery targets such as refuse collection efficiency, water supply consistency and road rehabilitation.

As I conclude, the continued deterioration of roads, water systems, refuse collection and sewer infrastructure in our cities and towns cannot be tolerated in an independent Zimbabwe aspiring towards Vision 2030. Our cities and towns must be centres of order, productivity, dignity and development.

The challenge before us demands integrity in leadership, accountability in governance and courage in enforcement. If revenue leakages are plugged, corruption decisively confronted, by-laws consistently enforced and public resources prudently managed, our local authorities can regain their capacity to deliver quality service to the people of Zimbabwe. Thank you Mr. President.

**HON. SEN. KATUMBA:** Thank you Mr. President. I rise to contribute to this important motion from Hon. Sen. Tshabangu in ensuring financial integrity and accountability in local government. Indeed, service delivery in most urban councils across the country has deteriorated to alarming levels. Residents are paying rates, taxes and various levies, yet they continue to endure uncollected refuse, burst sewer pipes, dry taps, impassable roads and collapsing public infrastructure.

However, while local authorities must certainly be held accountable, we must equally confront the elephant in the room. The central Government itself is failing to adequately support local authorities through the timely disbursement of constitutionally mandated devolution funds and the road rehabilitation allocations. Section 301 of the Constitution clearly provides for devolution of the governmental powers and resources so that provinces and local authorities can effectively deliver services to the people.

Unfortunately, what we are witnessing is delayed, inconsistent and in some instances, insufficient release of devolution funds. Councils prepare budgets and development plans expecting these allocations, but the funds either come late or in piecemeal fashion, making meaningful implementation possible. Hon. President, how can councils rehabilitate roads, repair water systems or upgrade sewer infrastructure when the resources promised under devolution are not available on time?

Furthermore, Zimbabwe National Road Administration (ZINARA) continues to delay the displacement of road rehabilitation funds to urban councils. Roads in Harare, Chitungwiza, Bulawayo, Mutare and

many other cities have become death traps filled with potholes, yet motorists continue paying licence fees, toll gates and fuel levies every single day. The people are contributing but the funds are not reaching local authorities when they are needed most. The situation in towns like Chitungwiza is a national embarrassment. Sewer systems have collapsed, roads are heavily damaged and refuse collection has become irregular. Councils alone cannot shoulder this burden without support from the central Government. We cannot continue blaming councils while starving them of resources.

Local authorities are expected to perform miracles without financial capacity. Genuine accountability must also apply to the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and ZINARA, regarding the timely release of allocated funds. Therefore, we call for the full and timely displacement of devolution funds as required by the Constitution, a transparent ZINARA allocation and displacement framework that ensures councils receive road funds without interference or unnecessary delays, publication of all transfers made to local authorities so that citizens can check what has been

released and how it is being utilised and greater fiscal autonomy for local authorities so that they can respond directly to the residents' needs. Service delivery cannot improve through rioting alone. Councils require resources, policy consistency and institutional support. The people of Zimbabwe deserve functioning roads, clean water, proper waste management and dignified living conditions. I so submit Mr. President.

**HON. SEN. MUTSVANGWA:** I want to thank you for allowing me to extend my appreciation to another Member of the Senate, Hon. Sen. Tshabangu, for bringing this very important motion before this House. The modern economy basically consists, by and large, of two communities, the urban and the rural and to give attention to the state of urban affairs in our country is a very noble cause on the part of this House. That is why Hon. Sen. Tshabangu deserves applause for bringing this motion before the House.

Mr. President, human development throughout history has seen the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas as a mark of progress in human development. Why? It is because urban areas reflect a higher level of production and productivity by human beings

as they are gathered in an urban setting where tools that make life possible in rural development and in rural life are produced. By their very nature, urban areas tend to contribute more to national development than rural areas.

In the constitutional evolution of the modern state, it has been seen fit that urban areas and towns be accorded their own jurisdictions, which even under the Constitution of Zimbabwe are autonomous. They are completely independent, self-governing entities because their focus should be on how to exploit the gathering of people in urban areas in groups that centre around industrial activity or other goods and services which can only be provided in a collective setting provided by urban communities. As a result, the prosperity of urban areas has always been higher. The mark of a country's development is how far it has urbanised its population. In the most advanced countries like America, rural areas are hardly even 1% of the population of the country.

The drift to urban areas reflects the relative prosperity of industrial activity and other goods and services which are provided collectively in an urban setting. If our Constitution provides that

urban areas have their own autonomous governments which can run their own budgets and run their own affairs, it is a recognition of their higher responsibility which is expected of them in contributing to the national economy. It is therefore a misnomer in this House if we are going to encourage dependence on the central Government by people who should be the most productive players in the national economy, those who are in urban areas.

This kind of thinking belies the faulty approach to urban administration which has been the hallmark of the opposition which has been responsible for two decades for the administration of urban areas. It is common knowledge that Tokyo supplies more to the national economy than a rural area in Japan. It is common knowledge that New York supplies more to the economy of America than a rural area in America. It is common knowledge that London provides more to the development of England and the UK than the rural areas where people are heading ships and boats in order to make a living. If we start from this premise, it means it is the duty of the local government administration, the mayors and towns who are elected by their own electorate according to the Constitution, to satisfy the peers of those

who elected them to develop urban areas in such a manner that they can provide prosperity to those urban areas by having towns, having identity on the value chain of the global economy as to why a town exists.

Now, if we are going to be told that a town exists in order to get taxpayers' money from rural people in order to create prosperity, then we are missing the boat. This is the philosophy that leads to indigence and incompetence by local authorities because they assume that taxpayers' money from poor rural people collected by the central Government should be used to subsidise them. No, it is the other way round. Those in urban areas, the mayors, are the ones who are at the airports where investors arrive before they go to urban areas, to rural areas. They arrive in Harare and in Bulawayo, they arrive at aerodromes in towns. Investors come to those areas to invest. They do not go and look for a rural chief to build factories. They go to the mayor or to the town councillor. These are the people who should be at the forefront of investment so that production in urban areas can be high, with goods and services made in urban areas which give you city identity so that when I am in Helsinki, in Colombia or anywhere

else, I can buy goods made in Zimbabwe in those countries. That is what we do when we go to other countries for shopping.

We buy goods from urban sellers of other countries, which are on the global market. That is the purpose of an urban administration to attract investment so that there is prosperity in the urban areas and that people can get jobs. Young people can wake up at 7 o'clock a.m. and go to work and return from work at 5 o'clock p.m. That is why young people go to urban areas. They expect jobs from the urban areas where they are going to. Who provides jobs in those urban areas? Who attracts those companies? It is councillors and mayors who attract those companies. They are the ones who should be responsible for creating wealth in this country to contribute to the national economy, not the central Government that is being targeted here. If we accept that urban areas are dormitories for people to come and sleep, no, they are not dormitories. People can stay there in rural housing. When you come to an urban area, you are expected to work and produce goods and services to satisfy the local market, to satisfy the regional market, to satisfy the global market so that a town can have an identity in the global economy.

The burden lies on the mayors in Africa so that they generate enough income not only to sustain their household, but to contribute to the national economy so that we can have a higher GDP. Now we have a town like Bulawayo, where there is a mayor who is there, who is getting elected to play politics, with an important town which is a historical town in this country, as the headquarters in a town of the country. They used to get steel from this town to Bulawayo and Bulawayo never slept; it was called Steel Town. That is why Dr. Joshua Nkomo who died as a politician in Bulawayo, was also in charge again, which was working on the rivers in the 1940s to supply the roads to the sub-regions. Bulawayo came to be identified as an industrial town.

It collapsed and now the way that it makes steel in South Africa is man-made. This town should be man-made to revive all the sectors in Bulawayo and that is the responsibility of the mayor and the town council as well, to attract investment in that town, to restore Bulawayo to its glory, because the most important raw material is now available in the town. Every week, 200 to 300 large steel leaves Manhize to be manufactured in South Africa. When mayors are

cleverer than those in Bulawayo and in Zimbabwe, they use steel from Zimbabwe to produce in South Africa, which we can buy and steel which has come from this country. Then we are told it is the responsibility of the central Government, you cannot accept that.

It is the responsibility of this House, urban councillors as well as an election for the people to serve their urban councillors because they are not elected to come and beg the central Government for land in Zimbabwe; they are elected to produce and invest. I rest my case.

**HON. SEN MATIBIRI:** Order. There is a danger if we would like to reduce the august House into a political podium. The affairs of our nation must be treated with respect and dignity and when we begin to focus on personalities, we have completely lost the debate. I rest my case Mr. President.

**THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE (HON. SEN. KAMBIZI):** Order. Hon. Senators, I am calling for order. A point of order has been raised and has been noted.

**HON. SEN. NGWENA:** Thank you very much Mr. President, for allowing me to add my voice on the motion which has been brought here by Hon. Sen Tshabangu on poor services that council

provides in Zimbabwe. My contribution seeks to explore the consequences that this failure on the most vulnerable members of our communities, namely women, youths, persons with disabilities and the poor. Councils close to the Government and to the people are responsible for water, sanitation, roads, housing, waste management, public lighting, clinics and local economic development. Councils should therefore never be allowed to fail. When councils fail, it is not merely an administrative inconvenience; it becomes a direct assault on dignity, health, livelihood and the quality of the people. The crisis facing our local authority is visible everywhere and there is national agreement that municipal services leave a lot to be desired. Yet the burden of this collapse is equally shared. It falls most heavily upon those with the least capacity to absorb it.

Let me take some time to look at the effects on different groupings and classes of our population. Effects on women, they suffer more because they are traditionally the primary caregivers in most households. When water systems fail, it is women and girls who walk long distances to fetch water. This exposes them to physical exhaustion, lost productive time and even insecurity.

Poor sanitation and refuse collection expose women to diseases affecting families under their care. In markets and informal trading spaces, inadequate toilets, lighting and waste management create unsafe and undignified conditions. Women entrepreneurs are also affected by lack of vending infrastructure, poor roads, unreliable water and unstable local regulations.

Local authority failure therefore becomes an obstacle to women's economic empowerment. Madam President, young people are trapped in urban environments with limited opportunities. When councils fail to develop industrial sites, maintain infrastructure, support local enterprise, provide recreational facilities, youth unemployment and social exclusion worsen, the collapse of local services also drives informality and hopelessness. Young people become vulnerable to crime, substance abuse and political manipulation because local economies are no longer generating meaningful opportunities. People with disabilities experience exclusion most sharply where infrastructure is poor.

Many public buildings, roads, transport systems and toilets remain inaccessible. Broken pavements, lack of ramps, poor drainage,

and inadequate public transport effectively imprison many disabled citizens within their homes. When councils fail to mainstream disability inclusion into planning and budgeting, persons with disabilities are denied equal participation in community life.

This violates both constitutional principles and basic human dignity.

Effects on the poor - young people are trapped in an urban environment with limited opportunities. When councils fail to develop industrial sites, maintain infrastructure, support local enterprises or provide recreation facilities, youth unemployment and social exclusion worsen. The collapse of local services also drives informality and hopelessness. Young people become vulnerable to crime, substance abuse and political manipulation because local economies are no longer generating meaningful opportunities.

Effects on persons with disabilities:

Persons with disabilities experience exclusion most sharply where infrastructure is poor. Many public buildings, road transport systems and toilets remain inaccessible. Broken pavement, lack of ramps, poor drainage and inadequate public toilets effectively imprison disabled citizens within their homes. When a council fails to

mainstream disability inclusion into planning and budgeting, persons with disabilities are denied equal participation in community life. This violates both constitutional principles and basic human dignity.

Effects on the poor:

The poor suffer the harshest consequences because they depend entirely on public services.

Those with financial means can drill boreholes, use private services, hire refuse collection or move into better-service areas but the poor cannot escape failing local authorities. They live in overcrowded settlements vulnerable to diseases, outbreaks, flooding and fire hazards. Poor roads increase transport costs. Lack of water and sanitation deepens public health crises such as cholera and typhoid.

Thus, local authorities' failure entrenches inequality. These failures arise from several structural challenges, inadequate funding and weak revenue collection systems, corruption and poor accountability, lack of technical and managerial capacity, rapid urbanisation without planning and many more.

However, my contributions will shy away from what may look like a blame game or political point-scoring, which really helps no one in communities. Rather, I would like to make a proposal that mainly helps the situation.

1. Full implementation of devolution:

The Central Government must transfer adequate resources and authority to local authorities in line with the Constitution.

2. Councils must adopt budgetary systems that specifically consider women, youths, persons with disabilities and lower-income communities.

3. Government must prioritise water systems, sewer infrastructure, roads, public lighting and accessible public facilities.

4. Disability inclusion: All local authorities planning and infrastructure development must comply with accessibility standards.

5. Youth economic empowerment:

Councils should create enterprise zones, modernise markets, support local vocational hubs and expand digital infrastructure.

6. Strengthening accountability:

There must be transparent procurement, public audits, citizen participation and strong anti-corruption enforcement.

Mr. President, a failing local authority is not simply a governance issue. It is a human development crisis. When council fails, women carry heavy burdens. Youth lose hope. Persons with disabilities face exclusion and the poor sink deeper into hardship. The measure of good Government is not how the powerful live but how the vulnerable survive. Zimbabwe cannot achieve inclusive development while local authorities remain weak, underfunded and structurally constrained.

I, therefore, urge this House to push for genuine local Government reform, certain devolution, inclusive planning and accountable service delivery systems that place citizens at the centre of Government. I so submit.

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

**HON. SEN. MATIBIRI:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2026.

*On the motion of **HON. SEN. MUZENDA**, seconded by **HON. SEN. GOTORA**, the Senate adjourned at Twenty-Seven Minutes past Four o'clock p. m.*