

**PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE**

*Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2026*

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

**PRAYERS**

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

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

**NON-ADVERSE REPORT RECEIVED FROM THE  
PARLIAMENTARY LEGAL COMMITTEE**

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Good afternoon Hon. Senators. I would like to inform the Senate that I have received from the Parliamentary Legal Committee, a non-adverse report for the following Statutory Instruments Number 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80 and 81 published in the *Gazette* during the month of April.

**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 so that they do not disturb the business of the House.

## **MOTION**

### **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**HON. SEN. MUZENDA:** I move that Orders of the Day Numbers 1 to 11 on today's *Order Paper* be stood over until the rest of the Orders of the Day have been disposed of.

**HON. SEN. GOTORA:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

## **MOTION**

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

Eleventh Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Delegation Report on the visit to the Association of African Senates Conference.

Question again proposed.

**HON. SEN. CHIEF NHEMA:** Thank you Mr. President. I rise to second the report on the visit to the Association of African Senates

Conference held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 2026, under the theme, ‘Contribution of Upper Houses of Parliaments to the Consolidation of Democracy...

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** If you could move your microphone closer to your mouth, please.

**HON. SEN. CHIEF NHEMA:** Thank you. ‘Contribution of Upper Houses of Parliaments to the Consolidation of Democracy Foundation for Peace in Africa’. Mr. President, allow me to commend the delegation led by the Deputy President of the Senate, Hon. Rtd. Gen. M.R. Nyambuya for representing Zimbabwe and for contributing meaningful discussion on the future of democracy, governance and peacebuilding on our continent.

This report comes at a time when Africa is confronted by complex governance challenges, growing demands for accountability and the need for certain institutions that safeguard democracy. The conference rightfully recognised that Upper Houses can no longer remain passively reviewed Chambers but must evolve into dynamic institutions that shape governance outcomes, strengthen oversight and contribute to national cohesion.

I am particularly encouraged by the conference's recognition that peace and democracy are inseparable. The growing expectation that the Senate should play a proactive role in conflict prevention, mediation and national dialogue, speaks directly to our constitutional obligation to promote peace, unity and development. In this regard, Zimbabwe's intervention was both timely and instructive in highlighting the role of the Senate in upholding constitutionalism, safeguarding the rule of law and ensuring inclusive representation.

Mr. President, the report also underscores the importance of strengthening research and technical support systems within our Parliament. In an era where public policy challenges are becoming increasingly sophisticated, effective oversight and evidence-based analysis are needed. A well-resourced Senate is better positioned to scrutinise legislation, monitor Government programmes and provide informed policy guidance that advances national development objectives.

Equally commendable is the emphasis placed on inclusivity. The acknowledgement of traditional leaders, women, persons with disabilities and other marginalised groups as critical stakeholders in

governance, reflects values that are already embedded within Zimbabwe's parliamentary architecture. Such inclusivity strengthens the legitimacy of democratic institutions and promotes social cohesion.

Furthermore, the report highlights the strategic importance of inter-parliamentary cooperation. Through platforms such as the Association of African Senates, our Parliament gains valuable opportunities for peer-learning, exchange of best practices and collective response to shared governmental challenges. This engagement enhances the effectiveness of our institution while strengthening Zimbabwe's parliamentary democracy on the African stage.

The recommendations contained in this report are practical, forward-looking and responsive to emerging governance realities. Their implementation will contribute significantly towards enhancing the visibility, effectiveness and policy influence of the Senate in the national governance process.

In conclusion, this report provides valuable insights into how Upper Houses can contribute more effectively to democratic

consolidation and the preservation of peace in Africa. It reminds us that strong institutions remain the bedrock of sustainable development, stability and prosperity. With these remarks, Mr. President, I wholeheartedly second the report.

**\*HON. SEN. TONGOGARA:** Thank you Mr. President for granting me this opportunity to make a few contributions on the report, which was brought to this House by Hon. Sen. Mohadi, which pertains to the visit of the African Senate Conference which was held in Rabat. I would like to first thank you because you are the one who led this delegation. Again, you are also the Deputy President of the Senate. We know that if you lead the Zimbabwean Senate to represent us, our things will work effortlessly. This is because when you come back, you will notify us of what transpired and also show us as the Senate, what is expected of us. In addition, you will also show us how Senate is supposed to work to develop the country. This will enable us to see that as the Senate, we do not come here to play but to talk so that what we say helps or assists those people who send us.

The report mentioned the issue of research. We know that for things to work smoothly, there ought to be some examinations and

inspections to see the things that are not in order and fix them. This will then make people know that they are supposed to conduct research so that they will also be in line with other countries because things are changing worldwide. New things are coming, so we must not lag.

The other thing that I want to applaud in this report is that it made chiefs lead the delegation. A chief was there in your delegation. We know that as a country, it is important for us to have our chiefs. That is why you see that in this Senate, there are chiefs because we know the function of chiefs in our community. Chiefs are the ones who help us to see that people are living harmoniously. When we were growing up, we knew that when a chief gave an instruction, we must follow it because things were changing. Chiefs used to run affairs in the communities where they come from but now, they are also found in the Senate. When they are trying issues in the rural areas, they now know how the laws are made and how to go about it. When they go into rural areas, they will now be able to apply the knowledge of the law being made in this august House of the Senate.

I also want to say that this report mentioned a lot about the issue of peace and security. A country that does not have peace is not habitable because if people assault each other or shoot each other, as we witness in other countries, then it is not habitable. I would like to say that in our country, Zimbabwe, we are blessed because we have peace. If there is peace, the country will be able to develop. Without peace, people will be focusing on violence and killing each other and doing impractical things that do not help the development of the country. I would like to thank you for going and sharing what is happening in our country. For things to function well, it emanates from the good laws that make people live peacefully. I want to applaud you and your delegation. I also want to thank Hon. Sen. Mohadi who brought this motion. This is a very good thing. Thank you.

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** Thank you Mr. President, for allowing me to contribute and support the report that the Vice President of the Senate was pleased to help craft from an outward-bound visit to a meeting of an association of African Senates. The clear objective of such a visit, as the report says, is to seek to share best practices among

nations and borrow those good practices to strengthen our own institution. We do appreciate that a lot, clearly with the hope that eventually we will get results that impact on the strength of your esteemed Senate. It is common cause that there are structural challenges with the way we do our business in this particular Senate. I hope that with such visits, we can then begin to strengthen the Senate.

The esteem of the Senate in view of the two Houses of this Parliament, the esteem of the Senate is on a lower rank compared to the esteem of the National Assembly. It is basically because of the structural issues related to how mandates are delineated between the National Assembly and the Senate. The Senate, Mr. President, has cried endlessly about a lack of clarity on the part of Ministers to come and transact business with the Senate. The situation is completely different when we go to the National Assembly. All this is because of the structural issues, which I hope some of these visits can sculpt solutions. Our Senate basically looks at thematic areas. It does not oversee ministries.

The argument is that this would be duplication. If you look at other jurisdictions, Nigeria for example, the Senate there oversees

ministries. There is a Committee in the Senate that looks after agriculture and oversees the Ministry of Agriculture. In Kenya, the same. In South Africa, the Senate is clearly assigned to oversee issues to do with provincial governments. They have a clear mandate, which strengthens their capacity to oversee the operations of Government. The argument that if the Senate shadows ministries, then we are duplicating, to me, it does not hold sufficient water. Though other jurisdictions do it and we may actually have different perspectives.

The scrutiny exercise in the National Assembly and in the Senate may be different. We could improve accountability by the adage, *dzokororo ine simba*. Personally, I feel that in other countries like America, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, the Senate is not just looking at the broader issues without going into the details of the operations of ministries and because of that particular challenge, the Senate is extremely enfeebled. It is not taken seriously as it should by the executive. With this presentation, I wish to again go back and thank you for a mission sound, leading perhaps in the future to improve the positioning of your Senate. Thank you.

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

**HON. SEN. MUNZVERENGWI:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2026.

**MOTION**

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND**

**INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):**

Thank you Mr. President. I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 1 and 2 on today's *Order Paper* be stood over until Order of the Day Number 3 has been disposed of.

Motion put and agreed to.

**MOTION**

**APPROVAL FOR ACCESSION ON THE CONVENTION ON**

**INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION**

**THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND**

**INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** I

move the motion standing in my name:

THAT WHEREAS section 327 (2) (a) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that any convention, treaty or agreement acceded

to, concluded or executed by or under the authority of the President with one or more foreign states or governments or international organisations shall be subject to approval by Parliament;

WHEREAS the Republic of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development, is desirous of acceding to the Protocol Incorporating Article 3 into the Convention on International Civil Aviation and its regulatory framework;

AND WHEREAS the Republic of Zimbabwe shall deposit its instrument of accession with the International Civil Aviation Organisation:

NOW, THEREFORE, in terms of section 327 (2) (a) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, this House resolves that the aforesaid Protocol is hereby approved for accession.

Thank you Mr. President. Before us is a session of the Protocol incorporating Article 3 (b) into the Convention on International Civil Aviation. The purpose of the memorandum is to advise the House on the general provisions and accession by the Republic of Zimbabwe to the Protocol incorporating Article 3 (b) into the Convention on International Civil Aviation known as (ICAO).

Further, a motion is moved by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development for the accession to this Protocol in terms of Section 327 (2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. The Republic of Zimbabwe intends to accede to the Protocol incorporating Article 3 (b) into the Convention on International Civil Aviation which aims to ensure the non-use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight. The Protocol came into force on 1 October 1998 when 102 ratifications were deposited with ICAO, thus representing a two-thirds majority of the International Civil Aviation Organisation member states.

Currently, a total of 157 out of 193 ICAO members have ratified this Protocol with most African states including Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique and South Africa having done the same. It is the 25<sup>th</sup> Assembly Session Extraordinary in Montreal, Canada, from 24 April to 11 May 1984, that the International Civil Aviation Organisation adopted a Resolution A25-1 calling on all contracting states to ratify the Protocol incorporating Article 3 (b) into the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

For Zimbabwe to become a contracting party to the Protocol, paragraph 4 lays out the procedure which ought to be followed as

follows. The Protocol shall be open to ratification by any State which has ratified or adhered to the said Convention on International Civil Aviation. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the International Civil Aviation Organisation. Therefore, for Zimbabwe to be a part to the Protocol, an instrument of ratification has to be deposited with ICAO. After acceding to the Protocol, Zimbabwe shall abide by all provisions contained therein.

Scope of the Protocol: The objective of the Protocol is to ensure non-use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight. Use of force against a foreign-registered civil aircraft is assimilated to a use of force against the state of registration and therefore, a breach of Article 2, paragraph 4 of the United Nations Charter and associated Customary International Law. This interpretation of Article 3 (b) is the most consistent with the object and purpose of the Chicago Convention, which is to promote the safety of all international civil aviation. Aviation safety and security are paramount to protecting lives, ensuring smooth aircraft operations and maintaining public trust in the sector and airspace, encompassing measures to prevent accidents and unlawful interference.

The Protocol is thus a result of collective efforts of the international community to modernise the legal framework for aviation safety and security. Failure to accede to the Protocol in turn means that Zimbabwe will not be able to apply the provisions of the Protocol when concluding air service agreements with other states, especially those that are parties to the Protocol. Not only does this negatively affect international cooperation, but it presupposes that Zimbabwe is not in keeping with its obligations of enforcement of international rules of the air. After having gone through an ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme, where it was an audit finding that Zimbabwe had not yet ratified the Protocol, incorporating Article 3 (b), accession to the Protocol would be part of Zimbabwe's collective action plan submitted to ICAO. This, in turn, will ensure the safe development of civil aviation and deviate Zimbabwe from being declared an aviation safety and security concern. As such, the Protocol incorporating Article 3 (b) into the Chicago Convention plays a critical role in ensuring overall aviation safety and security.

That being said, Mr. President, acceding to this Protocol will ensure that Zimbabwe's legal aviation framework is in keeping with

its functions and obligations as established in the Chicago Convention. Recommendation, Mr. President, the Protocol incorporating Article 3 (b) into the Chicago Convention is hereby tabled for accession. I so move Mr. President.

**HON. SEN. GOTORA:** Thank you Mr. President, for giving me the chance to say some words on this Protocol. Certainly, this is a very important Protocol, particularly in this current era where terrorism and counter-terrorism are the order of the day. My worry is, what has delayed us from 1998 to 2026, because we are not a safe nation, we have so many enemies, particularly from Western countries. This is a very important Protocol and I would support that we ratify it because it is important. We may think we are not affected because nothing has happened yet, but it will certainly one day happen.

You remember the aircraft that came from South Africa going to Equatorial Guinea. We ended up impounding that aircraft and sending some people to prison in this country. We may think it was just passing through, but we never know exactly what agenda those people had. I would urge this House to support this Protocol because it is

important. If you watch what is happening on TV in the Middle East, it can easily happen here. My point is, I urge the House to support this Protocol so that our airspaces are kept peaceful.

**HON. SEN. NCUBE:** Thank you very much Mr. President.

I also would like to add a few words on this important Protocol. More so because the safety and security of our airspace is very important. It is also important to contextualise this Protocol, particularly taking into account what has been happening in the Middle East based on the American-induced war in Iran. Airspaces were closed and there was a lot of disruption. What I would like to understand from the minister, in cases like that where two protagonists are fighting, how are aeroplanes protected up there in the space, because when passengers board the plane, they have no other option. The route is already defined.

We see that in the April period, when the war was raging on, the disruption was massive and the amounts in care were very high. International Civil Aviation Authority, by its very nature, standardises all aviation issues, including this important Protocol.

The other point raised by Hon. Senator Gatora from 1998 up to now, why is it so important that we ratify it now? There was no disruption in our Parliaments. Is it because we saw what was happening in the Middle East? Is it not important that some of these international protocols are expeditiously ratified in terms of the service agreement required by the International Civil Aviation Authority?

In addition, ballistic missiles and drones, which seem to be flying all over the show in some cases, what is the impact of that on this protocol? Are we exempt? Then, if something happens, are insurances in place underwritten by the International Civil Aviation Authority to compensate not only the carrier but also the passengers who may be affected in terms of surviving families? I thank you.

**HON. SEN. SHIRI:** I also want to add my voice in support of the ratification of the civil aviation. Ratifying international civil aviation treaties aligns our country, Zimbabwe, with the regulatory framework, with global standards directly and indirectly elevating the country's aviation safety, security and economic standing. By officially depositing these instruments with the International Civil

Aviation Organisation, Zimbabwe ensures its airspace remains internationally recognised and fully competitive.

### **Advantages of Ratification**

- Enhanced safety and security,
- Adherence to universal standards and recommended practices guarantees that Zimbabwean operators meet the highest global benchmarks,
- Reduces the risk of airspace being blacklisted by international carriers,
- Ensures that airlines flying into Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport do so with confidence in the country's security levels and
- Boosts economic growth and tourism.

Ratification allows Zimbabwe to fully participate in liberalised frameworks like the single African air transport market. This opens sky policies, lowers airfares, improves regional connectivity and drives massive job creation by making the country an attractive and accessible destination for international tourism and trade. I therefore support the ratification. I thank you.

**HON. SEN. C. MUTSVANGWA:** Thank you Mr. President for allowing me to support the Hon. Minister for his alertness to the importance of air travel to Africa and for his decision to come to this Parliament so that we can ratify this convention, which has been in the files for a very long time. Clearly, it means that the Hon. Minister is alert to the demands of air travel at a time when Africa is becoming increasingly an important player in global economic activity.

The advent of new and critical minerals in the transition from fossil fuel mobility to electric energy mobility is seeing Africa glow in the attention of all the major and rival industrial powers. They want Africa's minerals if we are going to attain the vision of a carbon-free economy. However, the activity of Africa in terms of the economic activity of Africa has ticked up and the most important means of Africa to connect is through air travel. It is the fastest. The distances are big.

Just last month we had Togo go to the United Nations to demand that the map of the world, which makes Africa look smaller than Greenland coming from what is called the Mercator projection. It makes Africa look small and it warps the minds of the people,

including Africans, about who Africa is geographically on the stage on the map of the world.

You will want to know with gratification that China, America, India and Europe all fit into Africa in terms of geographical area but you look at the map that we grew up with, it makes Africa small and it then affects how people view this continent. So, clearly, the distances are big in Africa and because of the colonial era, connectivity on the ground is very poor.

We had railways and roads, which only moved from capitals to the coast in order to supply goods and raw materials to the European metropolitan powers. No interconnection of Africa. If we are going to speed up Africa's integration under the Africa Free Continental Trade Area, the fastest and easiest way is for an African area of connectivity. Unfortunately, we have this situation where if I want to go to another African country, I have to go and connect through a European capital. This increases the cost of air travel. That is why Africa's air travel tickets are some of the most expensive in the world.

The ticket from Harare to Johannesburg is one of the most expensive in air travel. For just twice that amount you can go to

London or to New York. This anomaly can only be corrected if Africans put their minds together and sign protocols like this, which makes air travel the fastest and easiest mode of African connectivity and when Africans connect, then the world builds up. Then it also makes business bigger and makes investment from outside, from those countries with excess capital wanting African resources; possible. I actually want to give credit to China for building so many airports in Africa so that international standard planes can land on African airports. Just last month, Ndola, Zambia, got a new airport. This is a good thing. China has been building airports for Africa, which other countries have not done for more than 80 to 100 years of colonial history.

This Protocol gives an enabling regulatory environment that makes movement of capital to improve air connectivity in Africa possible. This is particularly a boon for Zimbabwe. We are a landlocked country. We do not have a coast like other countries. The only way we can break out of this colonially imposed manacle of communication is to make sure that we have air connectivity that is the best, the way Ethiopia has turned Africa's connectivity into a

breeze and you see Ethiopia has some of the best planes in the airline industry. To have that kind of possibility in Zimbabwe requires that we become a champion of this protocol.

The previous speaker introduced a new dimension you may not know. We are going to what is called a low-Earth-orbit economy. It means that drones, which take pictures from the sky are going to be car like drones very soon. They are now being tested and connectivity, even at short distances, it will become possible. So, all this, besides the issues of geopolitical risk raised earlier on, there is also the question of how to integrate the higher altitude planes and the advent of these low altitude drones. This protocol addresses the evolution of the global economy. This economy is going to be so big that it will replace cars as a means of travel. You walk from one side of the town to the other in a drone car.

Hon. Minister, you are doing a good job. You are alert to trends on the global stage - [HON. SENATORS: *Hear, hear.*] - This protocol which may have been in a trade, you have brought it here because you are alive to where global trends are going. This means we will always be relevant to where global air travel is going. Hopefully, Zimbabwe

will benefit from this. We were the first country; I was ambassador when we flew Air Zimbabwe to China before any African airline ever went to China. Our airline collapsed. Now, everybody who goes to China has to go through other African airlines. The pioneer baby is not there anymore. Hon. Minister, you are alert to this industry so that we do not lose opportunities again, as we have done...

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Order, order!

**HON. SEN. C. MUTSVANGWA:** I thank you.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Hon. Mutsvangwa, I was not stopping you from debating. I want your attention. I said I was not stopping you from debating. I was going to ask you to address the Chair. You do not address the Minister at all. – [HON. SEN. C. MUTSVANGWA: *Oh, thank you.*] – When you debate, you address the Chair but anyway, you have signed off.

**HON. SEN. C. MUTSVANGWA:** With due apologies Mr. President, I was just so chuffed with the Hon. Minister. I made a mistake. I must come to you and I will make sure that I correct myself next time even if I am excited by a competent Minister. I thank you.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Thank you Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa for your remarks.

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** Thank you very much Mr. President. I rise to support the ratification of this protocol because it largely deals with the protection of civilian aviation, which is a matter of extreme national importance.

Every day ordinary citizens, business people, tourists, diplomats and humanitarian workers entrust their lives onto civil aircrafts. The international community, Mr. President, therefore has a duty to ensure that airports and aircraft are protected from unlawful attacks involving firearms, explosives, missiles or any other ordinary weapons, including bows and arrows and stones.

It is true that the world has witnessed tragic incidents where civilian aircrafts have become targets of violence. Such attacks result not only in the loss of innocent lives but also in profound economic losses. For any single successful attack on civil aircraft diminishes the confidence people have in that mode of transport for the country.

For Zimbabwe, Mr. President, civil aviation is an important pillar of economic development because it helps bring in the need for

it through tourism and such other economic activities involving people willing to invest in beautiful Zimbabwe. Investors and business travellers assess the safety of a country partly through the reliability of security arrangements and the safety associated with the air traffic performance. Consequently, any threat against aviation is also a threat against our quest for economic growth, job creation and national development.

I applaud the Hon. Minister for indeed digging through the dusty cobbles to pick up this important tool and bring it forth here. There are important things we must also be aware of. Ratification of protocols must not become a symbolic exercise. It must not become an exercise where something is brought here and it is done. This Parliament is very kind, for indeed more than 90 percent of the ratifications that are brought here we successfully accede to the same.

Mr. President, Parliament, I repeat, has approved numerous international instruments over the years. Even last year we did, yet implementation is often lagging ... - [HON. SENATORS: *Hear, hear.*]  
– The Government must clearly indicate.

The Minister should take an opportunity to indicate to us, once we have agreed to ratify this instrument, he must come back here, indicate what legislative arrangements he is contemplating, what institutional arrangements he is sculpting and financial measures that he is making to make sure that this protocol becomes effective. It does not just become a piece of nice paper.

Secondly, we must honestly assess the security of our infrastructure. We may have the protocol, but if the security arrangements at our airports are lax or non-existent, there is no point in passing or ratifying this instrument. It must not be a beauty contest. It must be a meaningful exercise that translates into true security for the innocent travellers who come to Zimbabwe, to our airports.

Thirdly Mr. President, security is just not about equipment; it is about people. Airport security personnel: how thoroughly trained are they? How much expertise do we have around them? Immigration officers, customs officials, what is the vaccination programme for corruption that may allow people who do not qualify to pass through our airports to do that? Government should therefore provide details,

Mr. President, of the capacity-building programmes that will accompany the ratification of this protocol.

Fourthly, Mr. President, I support the protocol fully, while urging the Government to present a clear implementation programme. A roadmap, budgetary commitments and regular reports to your esteemed Parliament regarding the progress made, so that we have the protocol and we have got the implementation milestones and we can sit back and celebrate and say we have contributed; we have not just spent time blabbering. Thank you.

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

Thank you Mr. President and I extend my gratitude to the Hon. Senators. I sincerely appreciate your support.

I would like to begin by offering my apologies; indeed the protocol has remained unaddressed for some time. I accept responsibility for this oversight, along with my predecessors.

However, I wish to assure the Hon. Senators that we have initiated a concerted effort within the Ministry to thoroughly review our archives.

We are committed to ensuring that all pending matters are presented before Parliament. This exercise is currently in progress. I would like to apologise on behalf of my predecessors and emphasise that, moving forward we must not treat such important matters with the complacency that has characterised our approach thus far.

I wish to assure this esteemed House that I have taken note of your concerns regarding safety which are of paramount importance, as well as the valuable advice you have provided.

I wholeheartedly concur with Hon. Senator Gotora regarding the urgency of these issues and I believe I have addressed them adequately.

To Hon. Sen. Mackenzie Ncube, I would like to reiterate that the impact of safety on our airspace cannot be overstated. In light of the conflicts we are witnessing globally, we must recognise the necessity of safeguarding our airspace. I fully agree with this sentiment.

Hon. Sen. Shiri, regarding the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), I would like to highlight the connectivity issues that have been elaborated upon by Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa. It is indeed prohibitively expensive to travel within Africa; often one must

travel to another continent only to return to Africa, which is an unsustainable situation. I fully concur that merging the African Continental Free Trade Area will yield significant benefits for our continent. We must act swiftly to enhance connectivity across Africa.

Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa, I express my gratitude for your continued support. As you pointed out, we must demystify the notion that air travel is exclusively for the elite, it should be accessible and affordable for all citizens. I believe that by strengthening our domestic airlines, particularly Air Zimbabwe, as you mentioned, we can achieve this goal.

I would also like to thank you for championing the route to Guangzhou and notably, to Beijing. The direct flight which takes approximately 10 hours, allows us to reach China efficiently. I assure you that we are working diligently to reinstate this direct flight which will greatly facilitate trade and business opportunities for our merchants. The ability to fly overnight and arrive in the morning to conduct business is something we highly value as a nation.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to Hon. Sen. Zvidzai for raising such pertinent issues. We must establish a roadmap rather than

merely engage in discussions. I assure you that we will return to this esteemed House with concrete plans for implementation. I am confident that as we procure new aircraft, they will significantly contribute to addressing the concerns you have highlighted.

Furthermore, regarding our security measures at international airports, we are committed to continuously monitor and uphold safety standards. We will persist in our efforts to ensure a secure environment.

Above all, I thank the Hon. Senators for the support and Mr. President, I thank you.

Motion put and agreed to.

## **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 Report of the Thematic Committee on Indigenisation and Empowerment on the

## Impact of the Youth Empowerment Bank on Youth Empowerment Projects.

Question again proposed.

**HON. SEN. MUZODA:** Thank you Mr. President for allowing me to speak on the report that was brought by the Committee of Indigenisation with respect to the empowerment of the youth in their projects through the Youth Empowerment Bank that is supposed to be assisting them with funding to realise indigenisation in our country and on our citizens. According to the report, this is an important issue that concerns the whole nation at large. If we are speaking of the nation, we are speaking of the youths that are still growing. They are going to be the leaders of tomorrow, leaders of the country, leaders of companies and leaders of banks as well.

The Chairman of the Indigenisation Committee spoke about the challenges they face and how they are treated when they want loans to start projects. Mr. President, the youths have never been employed before. They are school leavers who are joining the nation to work together and develop the nation. We hear the banks requesting collateral in order to assist the youths. Collateral is the guarantee that

you should provide when you want a loan so that when you fail to pay back the loan, the lender will seize the collateral and recover their money.

Mr. President, we are speaking of indigenisation and promoting development of the country through the youth who can participate. Youths come from different backgrounds. Some youths come from underprivileged families, some who come from undeveloped rural areas and do not have livestock or even land. They are trying to work hard so that they have something and they are asked for collateral of livestock in order to access the loans. This is not proper. We appeal to Government organisations and institutions that are in charge of youths to see how they can assist them. If we speak of indigenisation, we are not speaking of the youths only but the citizens of Zimbabwe. Some say, locals.

There are some who are in businesses the youths would like to do and they are the ones who are in charge of the monies that are supposed to be given to the youths to start businesses. They should be engaged so that they can assist and look into the issue of collateral. We are asking the Government to create indigenisation committees

that will be following and monitoring the youth projects for those that would have accessed the loans. This is so that those committees become the collateral because they will be monitoring and supervising the projects and ensuring that the loans are paid back. The youths must have tangible progress rather than requesting collateral from a child who has just left school.

If indigenisation is real in this country, if we are saying it is going to assist us in helping us to develop this country, it needs those that will follow up. Those that will see that if the money is given, there is progress going on and these projects should come from the Government and they should be in order because these projects that we want or sometimes, as the youths, the programmes that we want, may take time to bring back the money that we would have borrowed. So, we would like the Government to assist these youths and follow up to see that if these projects are retaining the money because if you give youths the money, they will use the money differently because they are different.

Even if you give us \$20 000 in here, it will have been finished before it is disbursed. Mr. President, this country needs the citizens to

work hard. We are the owners of this nation and the industries. The shops are not supposed to close 24-7. If we are able to do that, this country will progress. However, if we have time to sleep, we are not going anywhere. If you see a country that has developed, they do not sleep. They exchange duties to say, if you have worked from six, someone else starts at four. If someone is starting at six in the evening, they also finish at six tomorrow and they exchange. If we get time to switch off the machines of industries, the country will not succeed.

In this country, we used to see the shifts in the steel industry. Mr. President, if the machines switch off at Manhize for seven hours, the economy of the country will go down. In gold mining, if you go for two days without mining, the country's economy will go down. I am kindly asking if the Government can look into it and come back and help in developing just like how it used to be. Let us stop looking at who built those industries before. If this industry had a white person before and they left their machinery, let us just take over so that we can move forward.

Let me finish with these words. This country should come back to industrialisation, which should be done by citizens of Zimbabwe who should not sleep. This is because if they sleep, the country will not succeed. Thank you Mr. President.

**HON. SEN. S. MOYO:** Thank you President for giving me this opportunity to add my views on the report. I rise today to present and support the report of the Thematic Committee on Indigenisation and Empowerment on the impact of the Youth Empowerment Bank, also known as Empower Bank, on youth projects in Zimbabwe. This is not just a report but a story of real young people, in real places, who are struggling to survive and it is a call for the Senate to act on this report.

Our Committee did not just sit in the office and read papers. We went out into the field from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, 2025. We travelled to Manicaland and Masvingo provinces. We visited farms, piggeries, dairy projects and the housing scheme. We looked at young people in the eyes and heard what they were going through.

According to the 2022 census, there are 5.4 million young people in Zimbabwe. Of those, 2.2 million young Zimbabweans are not working, not at school and not being trained for anything. We call

them not in education, employment or training. That is not a number but a generation being left behind. The Government created the Youth Empowerment Bank in 2018 to help fix this problem. The idea was good but as our Committee found, the idea and the reality are very different things.

There are other good things Mr. President. Let me start with what is working because there are good stories:

**Mr. Nyamuzinga - Poultry Project, Mutare**

He started with 300 chickens in 2019. Empower Bank gave him a loan of USD3 500. Today, he has 4 000 birds and supplies eggs to Mutare and even across the border into Mozambique. That is what this bank can do when it works.

**Mr. Rusero - Dairy Farming, Mutasa District**

He started with three cows. After getting a loan from the bank, he now has 16 dairy cows and they produce 160 litres of milk. He also employed a young man who had been struggling with drug abuse. That young man now has a purpose, a routine and a job. That is power from youth empowerment.

**Mr. Stanford Chiyaka - Potato Farming, Masvingo**

He started with one hectare after getting a loan of USD3 500. From this first harvest, he made USD14 700. Today he farms two hectares.

### **Miss Nyaradzo Mutande - Piggery Project**

At its peak, her project had 65 pigs, employed more than five full-time workers and up to 20 seasonal workers. She also supported children with disabilities and orphaned children at the height of the project's success.

Those stories show that when young people are given a small push, a loan and some support they can build great things. Mr. President, what we found, the problems, we must also tell the truth about what is going wrong and that there is a lot that is going wrong.

Firstly, the bank does not have enough money. Empower Bank was set up in 2018 with a starting capital of only USD2.5 million. However, the law requires at least five million just to operate as a proper microfinance bank. The Government gave them half of what was needed from the very beginning. Since then, the Treasury has continued to give the bank very little money, which means the bank cannot give enough loans to enough young people.

When Mr. Chiyaka asked for a loan of USD12 500 to buy better farming equipment, the bank said no, not because he was a bad borrower but because they did not have the money. When Mr. Rusero asked for his loan to increase from USD3 500 to USD4 500, just a thousand more to help his project grow, the bank again said they could not do it. This is a bank that is being asked to feed thousands of hungry people with a single loaf of bread. The bank is only in five towns. Empower Bank has offices in Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Masvingo and Gweru. That is five towns in the country with ten provinces and many more towns in the rural areas. Most of our young people who are jobless are not in those five towns. They are in rural areas, in Manicaland, in Matabeleland and Mashonaland. They cannot even contact the bank to ask for help. Interest rates are too high for small loans. If a young person borrows less than 1000, they are charged an interest rate of 10% per month. That is 10% every single month. That means if you borrow 1000 in January, you owe 1100 in February, 1210 in March, before you have ever had the time to start your business and make money. That kind of interest rate kills a business before it starts, Mr. President.

Young people cannot get loans without collateral. Many banks require collateral, something valuable like land or a house that you hand over if you cannot pay back the loans. Most of our young people have nothing. They come from poor families. They have no land, cars or property. The bank's rules exclude the very people it was created to help. Land problems are destroying projects. This was one of the most painful things our Committee witnessed. An example is Mrs. Mutande who built a house from scratch. She drilled a borehole on the land, built chicken cages, fenced the property and built a house. She invested everything. Then a land dispute came up, and she was forced to leave that land. All of her improvements were gone. The 65 pigs were sold off. The workers lost their jobs.

Mr. Nyumazinga's chicken project sits on leased land. If the owner of that land decided to take it back tomorrow, 4000 birds and years of hard work could disappear overnight. We are asking young people to build their future on land that does not belong to them. That is not fair and this is not smart. Too many loans are not being paid back. At one point, almost half, 48% of the Empower Bank loans were not being paid back. Some young people receive loans with no

real intention of starting a business. Others use the money to travel to South Africa or the United Kingdom and are never found again. Some were told by politicians that the loans were free money from the Government and they did not need to pay back.

To their credit, the bank worked hard to fix this and brought that number down to 7%. It shows how much damage false promises and the lack of follow-up can cause. The big picture is that the bank is trying hard with very little but the problem young people face is bigger than any one bank can fix alone. According to the national data, about 13% of young Zimbabweans between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed. Close to 80% of all jobs in Zimbabwe are informal, meaning street selling, small farming and other work with no steady pay, no pension and no protection. Over 2.2 million young people are not working, not at school and not being trained for anything.

The young people of Zimbabwe are not lazy; they are not giving up. They want to work, they want to build, they want to contribute to this country but they are being left behind by a system that does not give them a fair chance. What needs to be done is that our Committee

has made clear recommendations and asks the Senate to support them fully. Number one, the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion must give the Empower Bank a proper one-time large amount of money, a proper capital budget. In the 2027 National Budget, the bank cannot do its job with one hand tied behind its back.

Number two, the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training must work together with the Minister of Lands and Rural Development to give young people who are running projects proper land that cannot be taken away from them. By 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2026, there must be a clear plan for this.

Number three, the bank must stop chasing away young people just because they have no collateral. They must accept the project, assets, chickens, cows, equipment and some of the value when giving out loans. This must be done by August 2026.

Number four, the Government should think about changing the Empower Bank from a small micro-finance bank into a bigger development bank, one with more money and more power to fund

large projects for young people. This should happen by August 2027 when they are serious.

Number five, the bank and the Minister must put a proper system in place to check on funded projects regularly to catch problems early before they become a disaster by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2026.

Number six, specifically for Mrs. Mutanda`s projects, the Ministry must help them find new safe land and get back on their feet. Those people did nothing wrong. They worked hard and they were punished for problems outside their control.

In closing, our young people are watching us. When we visited these projects, we saw young people working in the field, sweating, trying and building. We saw a young man who was once on drugs, now waking up early every day to milk cows because someone believed in him enough to give him a job. We saw a young woman who, even while facing eviction and losing everything she had built, was sitting in examinations because she refused to give up. That is the spirit of Zimbabwean youth and they deserve a Government that matches their spirit.

The Senate must speak clearly and loudly today. The youth Empower Bank must be properly funded. Young people must be given land. The interest rate must be made fair. The bank must reach every corner of this country, not just the five towns. If we have this House today without real action, we will have failed over 2.2 million young Zimbabweans who are not working, not studying and not being trained for anything. I fully support this report, and I urge all the Hon. Senators in this House to support the report. Thank you very much.

**HON. SEN. MATIBIRI:** Thank you very much Mr. President. I rise to contribute to this debate based on the findings of the Thematic Committee on Indigenisation and Empowerment on the impact of the Youth Empowerment Bank on youth projects. Allow me Mr. President, to pay tribute to all the Hon. Senators who have debated before me, whose debates have been very incisive and have challenged us at a very deeper level.

At the level of the nation, Section 20 (1) (a) of the Constitution of this country implores the State and all its agencies to take reasonable measures, including affirmative action, to ensure that the youth are afforded opportunities for employment and other avenues

for economic empowerment. Further, Section 12 (1) (b) of the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act, creates a fund to finance start-up projects for youth in this country.

Mr. President, that commitment on its own, contained in our Constitution must be applauded. At the level of the continent, the African Union has crafted the African Youth Charter which guarantees and protects youth rights to education and employment. At the same level, Agenda 2063 which is a 50-year blueprint, envisions an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on youth and women. At the international level, we remain part of the global community. The United Nations treats the youth as key partners in development. It further notes that there are 1.9 billion young people globally.

The establishment of the Youth Empowerment Bank in Zimbabwe is therefore an important milestone in responding to the youth agenda and most importantly, to harness the unique potential evident in the youth, the so-called youth dividends. I must commend the Committee on Indigenisation and Empowerment for going out there to see the status of our youth in respect of the support that they

are getting from the Empowerment Bank. Enough has been said in this House. We have been given very dramatic examples and challenges that our youth are facing. If we accept that Zimbabwe's youth constitute the bigger population, then we must equally, in the same breath, accept that our economy must be youth-based and youth-centred.

This must not only be a pronouncement on paper, Mr. President. The challenges that continue to affect our country is a situation where we make serious pronouncements and never follow up on them to make sure they are implemented. The issues of interest rates of 10 percent that the report notes are very disturbing. They constitute a clawback on our intentions to genuinely empower the youth. Enough has been contributed in terms of the challenges that the youth are facing and the overall environment in which they are operating. It is disturbing that the bank is only present in five cities out of 10 provinces at a time when we are saying no one should be left behind. We are leaving a significant number of our youth without employment and with nothing to do.

There is a danger in that the first thing that they will do once they find that the economy has nothing for them to trek outside the country where they are not wanted. There, they face xenophobic attacks and all sorts of dehumanising treatment. They will trek back to their country of origin. Sooner rather than later, they will learn. They will begin to know the sources of their challenges.

I am not going to point my fingers at the Government. I am going to point my fingers at us. They are going to realise that the source of our problem lies in our senior people. Then that happens, the security of this nation is no longer. Why, because day in and day out they are exposed to the opportunities, the participation of their counterparts, not only on the continent but globally. They will ask a serious question: why are we like this? Yet someone is sitting down somewhere and crafting a policy that says, for you to borrow, you are confronted with an interest rate of 10%.

We hear in the report that before they even start to service their loans, they are already seriously indebted. That is something very disturbing. What do I propose? The Government is a stakeholder empowerment bank. It must follow through with its money in terms

of providing the right economic environment for economic prosperity. It is not adequate to give someone \$2000 and just allow them to go out there. I speak about the issues of capacity building.

Our youth must be trained adequately in the issues of financial management, project management, marketing, value addition and the potential in the export market. As regards who guarantees loans or issues of collateral, if we are serious about empowering our youth, why not the Government guaranteeing those projects? I have said earlier on, our economy must be youth-based. Why am I advocating for the youth? They are not corrupt, or if they are, they are still learning. The damage that they will cause through those activities is minimal compared to what we do. Let us help them and help them in earnest.

Mr. President, in countries like China, Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa has been there; he speaks glowingly of China. It is the youth who are driving these economies through the various projects because they still have the energy. We must take the harnessing of the youth dividend seriously if we are serious about Agenda 2030, if we are

serious about Vision 2030 and if we are serious about taking this country forward.

Mr. President, as I conclude, the recommendations that are contained in this report require the attention of the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion, and require the attention of the Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development. They must come and explain why we are approving and reprobating at the same time, or blowing hot and cold. At one end, our Constitution protects and guarantees that our youth must be protected and must be given opportunities for empowerment.

On the other hand, we are weighing them down with very high-interest, punitive interest rates. We do not even protect them in terms of the areas where they operate their businesses. We have heard the saddening story of one person who was evicted, his 15 pigs being sold, the small number of workers he had employed also left jobless. These are the realities of our youth. We must rise up to that challenge. As we debate the national budget, these are issues that we must deal with. The Empowerment Bank must be projected to a developmental

bank. Only then will we be able to say we are now serious with the issue of youth empowerment. With these few words, I thank you for affording me this opportunity.

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

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

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Thursday, 4<sup>th</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. CHIEF. NHEMA:** Thank you Mr. President. I would like to address the motion brought forth by Hon. Sen. Tshabangu, regarding councils that struggle to bring development to both rural areas and towns. I agree with the Senator's observations about the councils' inability to foster development.

I would like to share my perspective. I am uncertain whether the issue lies with the policies in place or the laws being enforced. In rural areas, during board meetings, conflicts often arise between councillors and administrators. This raises the question: how can these parties unite to promote development? Perhaps, some policies fuel these disputes.

We often hear about misappropriated funds, leading to the arrest of a Chief Executive Officer. Yet, councillors claim ignorance about these events, even though they are responsible for driving development in rural areas. It is crucial to foster a collaborative relationship between administrators and councillors to facilitate progress.

Currently, following the establishment of the Second Republic, we have witnessed devolution. However, this has not been entirely successful; it seems as though councils are inactive. They are not effectively collecting levies, despite the fact that there are buses passing through their jurisdictions daily. These buses typically charge \$15 or \$20 but reports suggest that fares are increasing to \$50 or \$60. When we analyse the financial outcomes at the end of the month, it

appears that despite the income, there is little to show for it in terms of development.

For instance, while the Second Republic managed to acquire a grader for roadwork, many areas still suffer from poor road conditions. They only require diesel, yet development remains stagnant despite the collection of development levies.

I believe that if the administration receives adequate support, it could enhance the development services that are essential for improving living standards in Zimbabwe. Citizens are expected to contribute to national development, yet the lack of progress in rural areas is evident. A review of the current practices could provide insights into how we can be better supported since funding is available.

When discussing councils in rural areas such as those near Bikita Minerals, it is clear that some councils lack resources. Comparing the development of councils with minimal progress to those benefiting from Bikita Minerals highlights a significant disparity. This raises concerns about the effectiveness of our current system. With those few words, I thank you.

**HON. SEN. MOHADI:** Thank you Mr President for allowing me to add a few words to this important motion which was moved by Hon. Sen. Tshabangu on the poor service delivery by local authorities. Mr. President, at the outset, allow me to sincerely commend Hon. Sen. Tshabangu for bringing before this august House, a matter that affects the daily lives of millions of Zimbabweans. This motion comes at a time when citizens expect local authorities to deliver responsive and accountable services that promote human dignity and support national development in line with Vision 2030.

Mr. President, our towns and cities are a source of national pride. They are the face of our nation and often provide the first impression to investors, tourists and visitors. For urban centres to effectively play their role as engines of economic growth and development, they must have functional systems for refuse collection, water treatment and distribution, sewer management, road maintenance, street lighting and housing development.

It is therefore not surprising that waste management, water treatment and sanitation, infrastructure development and housing delivery are identified as priority areas under the National

Development Strategy (NDS2). The national economic blueprint guiding Zimbabwe towards the attainment of Vision 2030, efficient local authorities are therefore strategic partners in national development.

Mr President, while I fully support the concerns raised by the mover of the motion, I would like to focus on three critical issues that continue to undermine service delivery in local authorities.

### **1. The Negative Impact of Acting Senior Management Positions in the Local Authority.**

Mr. President, one of the most overlooked but significant governance challenges confronting local authorities is the continued occupation of senior management positions by acting officials for extended periods. Several local authorities, including the City of Harare and Chitungwiza Municipality, are operating without substantive appointments in key leadership positions such as town clerks, directors and other senior management posts.

While acting appointments may be necessary as temporary administrative measures, they become problematic when they persist for years without resolution. Acting officials often operate with

limited authority and uncertainty regarding their tenure. The situation creates several negative consequences as follows: -

Firstly, acting officials may be reluctant to make bold strategic decisions or undertake major reforms because they lack security of tenure.

Secondly, they may struggle to provide long-term leadership requirements for the implementation of major infrastructure projects such as water treatment plants, sewer rehabilitation programmes, road construction projects and housing developments which often take several years to complete;

Thirdly, prolonged acting appointments can weaken accountability because officials may prioritise retaining their positions over making difficult but necessary decisions in the public interest.

Lastly, uncertainty at the senior management level often affects staff morale, institutional stability and the continuity of policy implementation.

Mr. President, if local authorities are to successfully implement long-term development plans and meet the requirements of the Minimum Service Delivery Standards Framework, they require stable,

competent and substantive leadership. To that end, I recommend that the Minister of Local Government and Public Works ensure that all local authorities are staffed with substantive senior officers capable of driving service delivery reforms and infrastructure development.

## **2. The Need to Prioritise Service Delivery Over Excessive Administrative Expenditure.**

Mr. President, a second issue concerns the manner in which some local authorities prioritise the utilisation of their financial resources. Residents pay rates and service charges with the expectation that such funds will be directed towards improving roads, water systems, refuse collection, sewer infrastructure and street lighting. However, there have been growing concerns that some local authorities continue to spend substantial sums on workshops, seminars, conferences, allowances, and foreign travel while basic services continue to deteriorate. Such expenditures carry a significant opportunity cost. Every dollar spent on unnecessary travel and allowances is a dollar that could have been used to repair a burst sewer pipe, rehabilitate a road, purchase refuse-collection equipment, or improve water supply infrastructure.

In this regard, I wish to applaud the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Public Works for introducing a moratorium on council-funded workshops and foreign travel. This demonstrates the Government's commitment to ensuring that scarce public resources are directed towards improving service delivery rather than funding non-essential expenditures.

Mr. President, of equal concern is this continued failure by some councils to comply with the government policy requiring approximately 70% of council revenues to be directed towards service delivery and capital development, with 30% allocated to salaries and allowances. When employment costs and administrative expenses consume the bulk of council revenue, little remains for infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and expansion. The result is the deterioration of roads, water systems, refuse collection services and the sewer infrastructure that we continue to witness across many urban centres.

Councils must, therefore, embrace expenditure discipline and ensure that residents' resources are utilised primarily for service delivery rather than administrative consumption.

### **3. The Persistent Failure to Implement the Auditor-General's Recommendations**

Mr. President, perhaps the most compelling evidence of governance and accountability challenges within local authorities is contained in the Auditor General's reports. The Auditor General's findings paint a deeply concerning picture regarding financial management, governance and accountability within local authorities.

As of December 2024, only two out of 92 local authorities reportedly received unqualified audit opinions. The majority received qualified advice or disclaimer opinions, reflecting serious weaknesses in the financial management and governance systems. These findings point to systematic challenges that directly affect service delivery.

The Auditor General highlighted numerous concerns, including weak governance, procurement irregularities, poor revenue collection and debt management, weak internal controls over inventory, poor cash management practices, incomplete accounting records, non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, failure to maintain comprehensive asset registers and delays in implementing modern accounting systems.

Mr. President, one particularly worrying finding relates to asset management. Some local authorities, including Gweru City Council, reportedly did not have asset registers. Without proper asset registers, councils cannot effectively safeguard public assets, plan maintenance programmes or prevent abuse and loss of public property.

The continued failure to implement audit recommendations is equally alarming. Reports indicate that by the end of 2024, Harare City Council had not adequately addressed 27 out of 28 issues previously raised by the Auditor General in the 2023 Auditing Report. This demonstrates that audit findings are often treated as routine observations rather than important Government tools designed to improve accountability and service delivery. If audit recommendations are repeatedly ignored, the same weaknesses will continue year after year, resulting in inefficiency and possible corruption.

To strengthen accountability and improve service delivery, I recommend that all local authorities fully implement the Auditor General's recommendations within specified timelines. The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works should strengthen monitoring

mechanisms to ensure implementation of audit findings. Councils should migrate to electronic government procurement EGP systems to improve transparency and reduce procurement irregularities.

Local authorities should fully automate accounting, billing and revenue collection systems to enhance accountability and reduce leakages. Annual performance assessments of senior council officials should include the implementation of Auditor General recommendations as a key performance indicator and the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works should ensure full implementation of the minimum service delivery standards framework across all local authorities.

Mr. President, the attainment of Vision 2030 requires local authorities that are accountable, financially prudent and focused on delivering quality services to citizens. Poor service delivery is often a symptom of deeper governance weaknesses.

By addressing leadership gaps, improving expenditure priorities and enforcing implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations, we can restore public confidence in local

authorities and accelerate progress towards modern, clean, safe and efficient cities and towns.

I, therefore, lend my full support to the motion moved by Hon. Sen. Tshabangu and urge this House to support measures aimed at strengthening governance, accountability and service delivery within local authorities.

**HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA:** Thank you Mr. President for the recognition. I will hasten to say Sen. Mohadi's recommendations read exactly as my recommendations. I think we were sharing the same notes. On that note, I would like to thank you for affording me this opportunity to contribute to this important motion moved by Hon. Senator Tshabangu regarding poor service delivery in local authorities. At the outset, let me state that this debate is not about political parties. It is not about whether a council is controlled by one political party or another. It is not about assigning blame for the sake of assigning blame. It is about the quality of life of ordinary Zimbabweans. It is about whether citizens who faithfully pay rates, levies, licencing fees and taxes are receiving the services that they are entitled to. Above all, it is about accountability.

Mr. President, the Constitution of Zimbabwe is clear on the purpose of Local Government. Section 274 of the Constitution establishes local authorities as institutions of governance, representing and managing the affairs of people in urban and rural communities. Section 276 grants local authorities the right to govern local affairs and deliver services to residents within their jurisdiction. Further, section 13 of the Constitution obliges all institutions and agencies of Government to facilitate rapid and equitable development to ensure that resources are utilised for the benefit of communities.

Mr. President, the question before this House is therefore straightforward. Are local authorities delivering on their constitutional mandate? For many Zimbabweans, the answer is increasingly no. Across the country, citizens face persistent water shortages, burst sewer pipes, deteriorating roads, uncollected refuse, poor street lighting and collapsing public infrastructure. In some communities, residents have gone for days, even weeks, without reliable access to water. In others, raw sewage flows through residential areas, creating serious public health risks. Yet, despite this deterioration in service

delivery, residents continue to pay rates and levies. Rates, development levies, licencing fees and penalties are increased.

However, service delivery continues to decline. This has created a growing sense of frustration among citizens who increasingly feel that some local authorities have become more efficient in collecting revenue than delivering services. The relationship between residents and local authorities is based on a social contract. Residents contribute financially through rates and levies. In return, local authorities are expected to provide services. When this contract is broken, Parliament has a duty to raise the concerns of the people.

Mr. President, one of the major contributors to poor service delivery is corruption. Corruption is not merely a financial crime. It is an attack on development. Every dollar lost through corruption is a dollar that should have repaired roads, improved water infrastructure, strengthened waste management systems and enhanced public health services. Citizens have a right to know where their money is being spent. Council budget and procurement processes must be transparent. Audit recommendations must be implemented. Public officials entrusted with resources must be held accountable. Without

transparency and accountability, service delivery will continue to suffer.

However, while I support this motion, I must caution against the impression that every service delivery challenge originates solely from local authorities. Oversight requires honesty, fairness and balance. Whilst local authorities must account for how they use public resources, Central Government must equally account for national policies and decisions that directly affect the ability of local authorities to function effectively. Let us take the example of Bulawayo. The decline of Bulawayo's industrial base did not begin in 2023. It did not begin under the current mayor. It occurred over many years of maladministration.

Bulawayo was once the industrial hub of Zimbabwe. It was home to thriving textile industries, engineering companies, leather manufacturers, food processing plants and numerous factories that employed thousands of people. Today Mr President, many of those industries have disappeared. To attribute the collapse of Bulawayo's industrial sector to current local authorities would be historically inaccurate. Industrial policy is not determined by council. Trade

policy is not determined by council. Monetary policy is not determined by council. Investment policy is not determined by council. These are the functions of Central Government.

Therefore, if we are serious about oversight, we must be prepared to interrogate decisions at every level of governance. I particularly wish to place on record that the current Mayor of Bulawayo assumed office in 2023. Yet, when discussions arise regarding Bulawayo's challenges, there is often an attempt to place responsibility on an administration that inherited many of these problems. We must disagree politically but fairness requires us to allocate responsibility correctly. There are also instances where devolution funds have been utilised through procurement systems over which elected local leadership has little direct control.

The Mayor of Bulawayo has publicly expressed concerns regarding the procurement of firefighting trucks acquired through devolution funding arrangements and has publicly questioned whether the prices paid reflected prevailing market values. As Parliament, we are not investigators and we are not a court of law. However, where concerns regarding the expenditure of public funds have been raised

in the public domain, this House has a right and a constitutional duty to ask questions. If a public official responsible for a local authority openly raises concerns regarding the value of money in the procurement of firefighting trucks, Parliament cannot simply ignore these concerns.

The question before us is not who raised the concern. The question before us is whether public funds were utilised efficiently, economically and transparently as required by section 194 of our Constitution. If value for money was achieved, let the facts demonstrate that. If procurement procedures were properly followed, let the records demonstrate that. If public resources were spent appropriately, there should be nothing to fear from scrutiny. Oversight is not an accusation. Oversight is a constitutional obligation. This is precisely why procurement reform remains essential. The corruption that undermines service delivery does not always begin in council chambers. Sometimes it begins in procurement systems. Sometimes it begins in inflated contracts. Sometimes it begins in politically connected networks that profit from public resources at the expense of citizens.

Every dollar lost through an inflated procurement contract is a dollar taken away from roads. Every dollar lost through inflated procurement is a dollar taken away from water provision. It is a dollar taken away from refuse collection and a dollar taken away from essential public services. Mr. President, the same principle applies to land barons. Across Zimbabwe, many communities have suffered from illegal land allocations and poorly planned settlements. Yet, it is often the case that those who profit from such activities are not ordinary Zimbabweans. They are individuals who enjoy access, influence and protection.

If we are serious about ending the scourge of land barons, then accountability must extend beyond junior officials. It must include every person who affiliates, protects or profits from illegal land allocation. The fight against corruption cannot be selective. There must be no sacred cows. Mr. President, as a senator representing Matabeleland South, I must also draw your attention to the realities facing rural communities. Many rural district councils continue to collect levies from communities and receive very little in return.

Many clinics were built by communities themselves. Many schools, it is the same. They were also built through community initiatives. Many dip tanks remain community-maintained. Many roads remain inaccessible despite years of revenue collection. Communities continue to make sacrifices while seeing limited returns on the resources they contribute. Rural district councils were established to serve rural communities, not to become an additional burden on an already struggling citizen.

There is therefore a need for a comprehensive review of whether resources collected from rural communities are translating into measurable improvements in their lives. Mr. President, I recognise that councils face genuine challenges. Population growth has placed pressure on ageing infrastructure. Economic instability has affected revenue collection. Many councils inherited infrastructure that requires substantial rehabilitation.

However Mr. President, financial challenges have become a permanent excuse for poor governance. Citizens can tolerate hardships when they see honesty, transparency and prudent use of public resources. What they cannot tolerate is paying more money

while receiving less. What they cannot tolerate is corruption and mismanagement.

Mr. President, the Constitution does not assign accountability to one level of Government alone. Section 194 applies to all public institutions, agencies of the State. The Constitution demands accountability from councils and ministries. The Constitution demands accountability from procurement authorities. The Constitution also demands accountability from every person entrusted with public resources. However, at this juncture, allow me to make a fundamental constitutional point. Parliament is not the Executive.

Parliament was not created to govern. Parliament was created to represent the people, make laws and hold the Executive accountable. The Executive spends public funds and implements policy. The Executive manages ministries, departments and agencies of the Government. The Executive exercises authority on behalf of the people. Our role as Parliament is different. Our role is representation, legislation, oversight and accountability. Section 119 of the Constitution imposes a duty on Parliament to protect the Constitution,

promote democratic governance and ensure that all institutions and agencies of the State act constitutionally and in the national interest.

Therefore, when Parliament asks questions about procurement, Devolution Fund, local Government administration, industrial decline and land allocation or service delivery, we are not interfering with the Executive. We are performing a duty imposed upon us by the Constitution. In fact, the day Parliament stops asking difficult questions is the day corruption flows unchecked. The day Parliament becomes a cheerleader for the Executive is the day citizens lose their important line of defence against abuse of public power. We are not sent here to defend Government. We are sent here to defend the people. We are not elected to protect institutions from scrutiny. We are elected to ensure that public institutions remain accountable to the citizens who fund them.

Therefore, as representatives of Zimbabweans, we have every right and indeed, a constitutional obligation to ask why service delivery is collapsing. We have a duty to ask why roads remain impassable despite funds being allocated. We have a duty to ask why residents continue paying rates while receiving declining services. We

also have a duty to ask why procurement costs appear disconnected from prevailing market values. We have a duty to ask why communities continue to suffer while public resources are being expended.

This is not opposition politics. This is not hostility to Government and that is constitutional governance. Whether the failure lies in local authority, a ministry, a procurement authority or any other institution, Parliament must demand answers because sovereignty belongs to the people of Zimbabwe. We sit in this Parliament as custodians of their trust. The Executive must therefore, remain accountable to Parliament and, through Parliament, accountable to the people of Zimbabwe. I, therefore, support the motion and propose that Government takes a nationwide audit. As I said, I noted that I have the same proposals as Hon. Sen. Mohadi.

In conclusion, local authorities exist to serve people. Ministries exist to serve people. Government exists to serve people. Public funds belong to the people. No institution should be shielded from scrutiny. No office bearer should be above accountability. No public official should be beyond oversight. Our constitutional duty as Parliament is

not to defend the Executive. Our constitutional duty is to defend the public's interests. If councils have failed, let us say so. If ministries have failed, let us say so.

If procurement systems have failed, let us say so. If corruption exists, let us expose it wherever it exists. Let this House affirm today that accountability is not an act of hostility. Accountability is an act of patriotism. Oversight is not obstruction. Oversight is a constitutional duty and Parliament is at its strongest not when it is silent but when it speaks fearlessly on behalf of the people who sent us here. I so submit. I move that debate do now adjourn.

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

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2026.

*On the motion of HON. SEN. MUZENDA, seconded by HON. SEN. GOTORA, the Senate adjourned at Six Minutes past Five o'clock p.m.*

