

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Thursday, 20th August, 2026

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

PRAYERS

(THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. TOGAREPI: Madam Speaker, I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 1 to 44 on today's *Order Paper* be stood over until Order of the Day Number 45 has been disposed of.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

POLICY ON UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

Forty-fifth Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the need to recognise domestic and unpaid care work in Zimbabwe as a vital part of national development.

Question again proposed.

HON. PINDUKA: Thank you Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to contribute on this very important motion. I rise to support the motion on domestic care work and unpaid care work in Zimbabwe. Looking at the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals at a macro level, SDG 5.4 calls for the recognition of unpaid care work so that the people supporting the domestic care work can also realise value from such a service.

Madam Speaker, in recognising domestic care work and unpaid care work in Zimbabwe, unpaid care work keeps the economy running. If Zimbabweans have to pay for child care and elderly care, that includes cooking, cleaning and support for those in our homes, mostly in rural communities. You will see that even our gross domestic product will also rise through such recognition. The women and girls are the hardest hit by domestic care work and unpaid care work in most rural communities.

However, I would also like to applaud the thrust by His Excellency the President, Dr. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, the thrust to provide sources of water through the Village Business Units established in all 35 000 villages in Zimbabwe. As a result,

this will also cushion and lessen the burden of women mostly and girls across the rural communities. This is also a positive impact in making sure that domestic and unpaid care work is also recognised in Zimbabwe.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, from the Public Service and infrastructure perspective, you also notice that countries like Ghana and Ethiopia have invested much in water provision closer to people, which also resonates with what is currently happening in our communities through the Presidential Borehole Drilling Scheme and this will go a long way in also supporting women and girls who are also mostly engaged in domestic and unpaid care work.

Also, South Africa has a national policy framework. Uruguay also passed a national care system, with public child care and elder care being recognised nationally. In Zimbabwe, I would also suggest that it is high time that we also consider the legislation and also come up with a framework that also recognises the domestic work and unpaid care work that is happening in our country, Zimbabwe. On that same framework, this will also call for the reduction in terms of the provision of other services to women and

girls who are also taking part in this domestic care work and unpaid care work, in making sure that they have other opportunities to engage in other learning activities so that they can also gain other skills in place of domestic and unpaid care work.

This will also call for the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to also engage into a survey that also informs even the Treasury, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and Investment Promotion, to make sure that in terms of budget allocations, the Ministry also gets much of its support through the Treasury releases, so that most of unpaid care work and domestic care work is also recognised in Zimbabwe. This will go a long way as we are aware that as we move towards the Vision 2030 through the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2), in the spirit of leaving no one and no place behind, the domestic work and unpaid care work is a reality in our communities.

It is high time that we, as a country, move forward and recognise of course, through scientific data and research, I think this will also assist in making sure that we have a statistic and science-based approach and framework towards recognising domestic work

and unpaid care work in Zimbabwe. With that contribution, I so submit Madam Speaker. Thank you.

HON. S. DUBE: Good afternoon Madam Speaker. I would like to thank you for affording me this opportunity. Unpaid care and domestic work is pivotal to national development. The future of every nation is shaped by how well it cares for its children today. The first five years of a child's life are critical for brain development, health, emotional wellbeing and future learning. Children who receive quality early care are more likely to succeed in school, develop stronger cognitive and social skills and become productive citizens who contribute meaningfully to national development. Yet many Zimbabwean families struggle to provide adequate care because caregivers, particularly women, receive little support, while access to affordable child care and early childhood development services remains limited. This care deficit not only affects parents' ability to participate in the economy but also compromises children's long-term educational and developmental outcomes.

A national care policy and legislation would address this challenge by calling for increased investment in early childhood development centres, expanding affordable child care services, supporting parents through family-friendly policies and promoting community-based care systems. These investments would ensure that every Zimbabwean child has the opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their family's income or circumstances.

Madam Speaker, South Korea offers a compelling example. Over the past two decades, the Government of South Korea has made substantial public investment in early childhood development and care by expanding subsidised child care, increasing access to quality preschool education and strengthening parental support programmes. As a result, enrolment in early childhood education has risen significantly and research by the OECD shows that children who attend high-quality early childhood education and care perform better academically, develop stronger social and cognitive skills and enjoy better long-term educational outcomes than those who do not. South Korea's expenses demonstrate that investing in care is not just a social welfare intervention but a strategic

investment in building a more skilled, productive and competitive future workforce.

For Zimbabwe, investing in care is better; therefore, not an expense but an investment with lasting terms. Every dollar invested in supporting caregivers and providing quality early childhood services strengthens human capital, improves educational achievement, reduces future social costs and builds a healthier and more productive generation.

Madam Speaker, let me conclude by stating that investing in care today is investing in the next generations of Zimbabweans. I thank you.

HON. P. ZHOU: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am for this opportunity you have given me to give input on what I think about the motion tabled by Hon. Sibanda on the need for Zimbabwe to adopt the Unpaid Care in Domestic Work Policy and Legislation.

Let me start by stating that Unpaid Care in Domestic Work (UCDW) encompasses the wide range of activities performed within the household and community. This includes child care, care of the sick and the elderly, cooking, cleaning and the collection of

wood and water for cooking, for which no monetary compensation is received.

Despite its critical role in sustaining human life and underpinning economic activity, unpaid care work remains largely invisible in national accounts, policy frameworks and development planning. Globally, women perform approximately three-quarters of all unpaid care work. This disproportionate burden constrains women's access to education, paid employment and civic participation, perpetuating gender inequality across generations.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that globally 700 million women are outside the labour market, primarily because of care responsibilities. In Africa, the challenge is even more pronounced, with women spending an average of 3.5 times more hours on unpaid care work than men.

Before I proceed, Madam Speaker Ma'am, allow me to commend the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion and ZIMSTAT for successfully undertaking the time-use survey as promised during the 2025 pre-Budget Seminar, when I called on the Government to conduct this survey so

that we know how much this sector contributed to our national accounts.

While I understand that work is underway to establish the role of unpaid care work in national development, I am pleased that we now have the time-use survey which provides the most comprehensive evidence to date on how Zimbabwean women and men spend their time. Indeed, the data from the Zimbabwe 2020 Time-Use Survey (TUS) confirmed deep structural gender imbalances that necessitate agent policy responses aligned with international and regional frameworks.

Therefore, I am here today to support Hon. Sibanda's motion by situating Zimbabweans' unpaid care work landscape within the ILO's global normative framework, examining the regional status across Africa and drawing on ZIMSTAT Time-Use Survey statistics to characterise Zimbabwe's national profile. Let me hasten to mention that the international response to the challenge of unpaid care in domestic ways is anchored in a cluster of ILO conventions, recommendations and analytical frameworks that together establish the global standard of care.

The ILO 5R framework for decent work is: Recognise, Reduce, Redistribute, Reward and Represent. Let me explain this in detail.

Recognise: to acknowledge the economic and social value of unpaid care work through national accounts, satellite accounting, Time-Use Surveys and policy visibility.

Reduce: to decrease the total burden of unpaid care work through investment in care-supporting infrastructure, clean water, energy access, child care facilities and time-saving technologies.

Redistribute: shift this disproportionate share of unpaid care work from women to men and from households to the State and private sector through paternity leave, community care services and social protection.

Reward: ensure decent wages, social protection and safe working conditions for paid care workers, the majority of whom are women.

Represent: guarantee the voice of care workers, unpaid carers, and care recipients in social dialogue, collective bargaining and policy processes.

SDG target 5.4 operationalises the recognition pillar at global scale, calling on member states to recognise and value unpaid and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family. Progress on this target is monitored through the indicator 5.4, section 1. The proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work by sex is precisely the data that ZMSTAT 2025 TUS generates.

The ILO estimates that every day, more than 16 million hours are devoted to unpaid domestic and care work around the world. When monetised at minimum wage rates, this amounts to approximately USD11 trillion annually, a subsidy to the global economy that is born predominantly by women and girls. Among women of reproductive age 25 to 54 years, two-thirds of those outside the labour market globally cite care responsibility as the primary barrier, representing 379 million women. Africa presents a distinctive unpaid care work context shaped by the structure of poverty, limited public service provision, high informality, climate vulnerability and deeply embedded patriarchal social norms. These

factors combine to make the care burden particularly heavy and unequally distributed.

Across all African countries, women spend significantly more time on unpaid care work than men. On average, African women spend 3.5 times more on unpaid care and domestic work than men, limiting their engagement in education, income generation and community leadership. This time poverty, “the lack of discretionary time to pursue paid work, rest or civic activity”, represents a structural constraint on women's economic empowerment across the continent.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, specifically, the domestic care workforce is characterised by very small formerly paid care sectors, widespread informality, low wages and unsafe working conditions, gender stereotypes that naturalise women's affinity for care work entrench these dynamics, making it difficult for policy to disrupt established patterns of labour allocation within households.

Therefore, the use of timely surveys remains underutilised across Africa. Only a minority of African countries have conducted

national representative TSU and even fewer have conducted them after 2010.

Zimbabwe's 2025 timely survey is therefore a significant continental contribution to the evidence base, positioning the country to monitor SDG 5.4, section 1 and to inform African Union reporting on Agenda 2063 gender targets.

Zimbabwe's 2025 timely survey provides the most rigorous national representative data set on time allocation to date, conducted in accordance with ICATUS 2016 and utilising a 24-hour recall method, beginning at 4:00 a.m. The survey classified activities across the five dimensions - contracted work, employment and learning; committed work, unpaid domestic services and caregiving, free time necessary activities and simultaneous activities.

Key findings reveal deep and persistent gender inequalities; 5.9 hours of female daily committed work *versus* 3.8 hours for males, which is a 228% gender gap for ages 25 to 34. Women spend 3.28 times more time than men - 89.9% female unpaid domestic participation, largest female activity rate after self-care. Meaning

that on average, females spend 1.5 times more than males in committed work, that is domestic and unpaid care work - 5.9 hours against 3.8 hours per day. Conversely, the proportion of time spent by males on contracted work, employment, learning and own-use production was double that of females - 17.5% *versus* 8.7%, revealing the classic double burden dynamic in which women juggle care obligations alongside labour market participation.

The gender gap in unpaid care work was most acute among the 25 to 34 age group, the prime childbearing and working years where the gap peaked is at 228%. This means that women in this cohort spent 228% more time than men on domestic chores, unpaid care work and volunteer work combined. Put differently, if men spend one hour on unpaid care work, women in this age group will spend 3.28 hours on the same activity. The gap diminished but did not disappear with age, reaching its lowest level of 76.9% among those aged 65 and above.

I will conclude by highlighting a few case studies from within African countries that have made measurable advances in adopting

the unpaid care work (UCDW) policy agenda, offering lessons and models that Zimbabwe can adapt to its own context.

Case study: Rwanda

Landmark Legal Reform and Time-Saving Infrastructure
(2021-2025).

Rwanda has implemented one of Africa's most comprehensive and legally grounded responses to unpaid care work. In July 2024, Rwanda revised its law governing persons and family to explicitly recognise unpaid care work in marital property, valuing it at 10-39% of jointly acquired assets. This landmark provision was informed directly by United Nations Women's National Baseline Survey, which measured that women spend 3.7 hours per day on unpaid care work, more than triple the time of men.

At community level, over 1 100 energy-efficient cook stoves and 92 rainwater tanks have been deployed across communities, cutting cooking and water collection time. A 2025 impact study found that women used the saved hours to engage in farming, run small businesses and attend skills training.

Case study: Tanzania

National Policy Commitment and Clean Cooking Technology (2021-2024).

In 2021, the Government of Tanzania made a formal pledge to reduce women's unpaid care work, expand social services and create decent care jobs. This commitment was institutionalised in the National Gender and Women Development Policy (2023), which prioritises shared responsibility for care as a core policy objective. The National Clean Cooking Strategy sets a target of 80% of households using clean water solutions by 2034, directly addressing one of the most time-intensive care burdens.

Implementation has been rapid across Singida, Dodoma and Zanzibar. More than 400 clean cooking and solar technologies were distributed, reducing cooking time by up to three hours per day and cutting weekly firewood collection. Tanzania's case illustrates how national-level political will backed by sector policies and concrete infrastructure interventions, can accelerate the reduction of women's domestic burden at scale.

Therefore, drawing on the global framework regional context, Zimbabwe's TUS evidence and African case-study lessons, the following priority actions are identified for Zimbabwe.

There is an urgent need to develop a National Unpaid Care and Domestic Work Policy grounded in the ILO 5-R Framework with clear targets for reducing the gender gap in unpaid care hours, as evidenced by the TUS benchmark of females spending 5.9 hours against males 3.8 hours in committed work daily.

Incorporate unpaid care work metrics into Zimbabwe's national gender monitoring systems and close the data gap that is historically limited accountability.

Invest in care-supporting infrastructure such as clean cooking technologies, water access, child facilities and care facilities for older persons.

Integrate care-responsive budgeting into national and sub-national planning, ensuring that fiscal allocations to health, education and social protection explicitly account for unpaid care work reduction objectives.

Partner with the private sector to expand workplace child care and flexible work arrangements, reducing the double burden documented for employed women in the TUS. I thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. MATARA: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am for the opportunity you have given me to contribute to this important debate on unpaid care work. I support this motion because meaningful women's leadership cannot be achieved without addressing the unequal burden of unpaid care and domestic work. Madam Speaker, leadership requires time, flexibility, mobility and the ability to participate fully in public life yet across Zimbabwe, countless capable women are unable to pursue leadership opportunities because they shoulder the primary responsibility for caring for children, older persons, people with disabilities and sick family members, while also undertaking household chores such as cooking, cleaning and collecting water and firewood. As alluded to earlier by the previous speaker, Madam Speaker, the Zimbabwe National Time Use Survey of 2025 shows that women spend

substantially more time than men on unpaid care and domestic work.

These responsibilities limit women's ability to attend political meetings, participate in community development structures, contest elections, serve on public boards or assume leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. As a result, women's under-representation in decision-making is not simply a matter of individual choice but a result of the consequences of structural inequalities that continue to confine women to unpaid caregiving roles.

Madam Speaker, Zimbabwe has made important commitments to advance women's participation in leadership. Section 17 of the Constitution obliges the State to promote gender balance at all levels of society, while Section 8 guarantees women equal opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres. Furthermore, Zimbabwe is a state party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of

Women in Africa. Collectively, these instruments recognise that structural barriers, including the unequal distribution of unpaid care work must be addressed if women are to participate equally in public and political life.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, if we are truly committed to increasing women's representation in leadership and decision-making, we must also remove the barriers that prevent them from participating in line with these regional and international commitments to which we are a party. Reducing unpaid care in domestic work is not only a social policy but also a democratic imperative that will strengthen inclusive governance and accelerate national development.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, investing in care is an investment in leadership. A comprehensive national policy and legislative framework on unpaid care and domestic work would promote affordable child care, strengthen social protection, improve access to water, sanitation and other public services and encourage the equitable sharing of care responsibilities between women and men. These measures would free women's time, expand their

opportunities to engage in public affairs and enable more women to assume leadership positions in Parliament, local authorities, public institutions, business and civil society.

I, therefore, urge this House to support the adoption of a comprehensive national policy and legislative framework on unpaid care and domestic work, a necessary step towards achieving equal leadership opportunities for women in Zimbabwe. I thank you.

HON. KAITANO: Thank you very much Madam Speaker Ma'am. I reckon that the motion before this House is a motion that needs closer scrutiny for both sides of the coin. Indeed, Madam Speaker Ma'am, there is a lot of unpaid work, especially for those people who care for others and those people that do certain daily household work but by the end of the day are not paid for it. If they were paid, their incomes would be added to the GDP that we were talking about last Tuesday. They will be part of the GDP figures and part of the per capita income but a lot of it goes unpaid.

At home I have my sister, she does a lot of work but she is not paid. The work that she does at home has a potential to be paid if she were to do it somewhere else, at a company. She would have

been paid a lot of money for that. The best thing about this kind of work is that they are not specialised in one area. One moment they are cleaning, another moment they are cooking, this other moment they are doing laundry, this other time, they are doing gardening. I think it is my view that this kind of work must be recognised by the Government. Those people must either be paid or be compensated in some way because it is real work, it is done at home but take them from home and place them at a company. At home, zero salary and at a workplace, USD500 per month. So, there is need to recognise this work.

Also, Madam Speaker Ma'am, paying caregivers for this unpaid work can protect those who receive the services. It could be, for example, the elderly. In our culture, Madam Speaker Ma'am, I am Shona, I am from Mudzi and I am a *Ngahwe* person. I have had so many instances where the father-in-law is sick at the village then they are taken to Harare for caregiving by their daughter-in-law and probably three, four or six months, the daughter-in-law is taking care of the father-in-law. In our culture, I hear people saying and

allow me to put it in Shona, *muroora ngaapihwe mombe akachengeta atezvara*.

In itself, it is recognition that the work that the *muroora* did deserves to be paid but you know in our culture, you are given a *mombe* as a token. If it were in the commercial world, they could be paid hundreds of thousands of United States Dollars but in our culture, they are just given a token as recognition. So, in our culture, in some instances, caregiving is recognised. This debate or this motion seeks to have this kind of work recognised at Government and national level across all traditions and cultures within the boundaries of Zimbabwe. That is what this motion seeks to advance.

Madam Speaker, even the quality of care should certainly improve. When somebody is recognised for the caregiving that they are doing, they are recognised in some way. Surely, when somebody knows that they are being recognised, Madam Speaker, you will agree with me, when they do their work, they will do it excellently. They will do it unreservedly. They will do it with all their mind, heart and intelligence because they know they are being

recognised. They will not feel used. They will not feel it is one of those things that I can do, there is nothing else I can do but do it.

So, the quality of their work is different from those that feel, if I do good, I am also recognised in a handsome way. That is one advantage and if that is recognised, the quality of caregiving will surely improve. However, the conundrum or the predicament that I face as I think through my debate, what I have just said, I am thinking of the cost on the Government. How big is such a cost going to be? I shudder to think the amounts of incentives, the quantum of the compensation and how it will sit on the fiscus. I am also in a kind of difficult situation Madam Speaker, to also think deeply as to how then we identify these caregivers and not abuse the programme. I am also in a difficult position as to the kind of compensation that must be given, let alone the quantum thereof.

I think these questions, as a House, we need to deeply look into them before we adopt the motion. We certainly need to dig deeper and see what is feasible. Yes, we may come up with something that is workable. Will this not promote gender stereotypes given that the report that I am getting is that what one-

time men do what women are doing 3.28 times. Are we not going to then conclude that some work of caregiving belongs to women?

Those are questions that I am putting across to the House so that we can closely look at them and come up with a feasible or workable solution as to how we balance the need and have them motivated for that.

My sister at home, Brenda, does things but she is not paid. If she were at work she could have been having lots of money. Is it fair not to pay her? Not at all. It is not fair. She has to be paid. So, there is a strong argument for the unpaid work to be paid but how many Brendas do we have? How do we identify them? How do we identify the quantum? What kind of compensation should they be paid? I think it is one of the questions that we need to look at as a House but by and large, I support the motion and we need deeper and detailed scrutiny and analysis of it. I therefore submit Madam Speaker that we need to look at this motion but with a lot of great wisdom in how best we can move forward. I thank you.

HON. MUROMBEDZI: Thank you very much Madam Speaker for giving me the opportunity to add my voice to this

debate. Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon to support the motion tabled by Hon. Sibanda and seconded by Hon. Zhou which calls for the recognition, evaluation and policy intervention on unpaid care and domestic work in Zimbabwe. Madam Speaker, unpaid care is the invisible backbone of our nation. It is the work that makes all other work possible, yet it remains unrecognised, unrewarded and unprotected.

Madam Speaker, unpaid care and domestic work is the invisible backbone of our society. It sustains households, nurtures children support the elderly and ensures the daily functioning of our communities. Yet because it is unpaid, it is often dismissed as women's work and excluded from economic planning. This invisibility perpetuates gender inequality and undermines our national development agenda. Across Zimbabwe, women and girls shoulder the burden of unpaid domestic care work in cooking, cleaning, fetching water and sometimes from distances that are very far away from households, caring for children, the elderly and the sick. This labour, Madam Speaker, sustains households and communities, yet it is treated as if it has no economic value.

The result Madam Speaker, is gender inequality. Women are deprived of time to learn, time to earn and time to lead while girls are pulled out of school to shoulder domestic burdens. Evidence shows that women and girls are disproportionately shouldering this responsibility. Like I have highlighted before, they spend long hours cooking, cleaning, fetching water, caring for children, tending to the sick, tasks essential to human survival but unrecognised in our GDP. This burden, Madam Speaker, deprives them of opportunities. It is not only a question of fairness but of justice and equality.

Madam Speaker, at its core, this motion is about justice. Unpaid care work is not simply a household duty. It is a structural issue that perpetuates inequality. When women and girls are forced to sacrifice education, income and leadership opportunities to shoulder invisible labour, society denies them equal citizenship. Social justice demands that we recognise this imbalance and correct it. To value unpaid care is to affirm that every citizen's contribution matters, whether it is counted in wages or in hours of care. By legislating recognition and allocating resources, we move from

rhetoric to fairness, ensuring that the burdens of care are shared, the dignity of caregivers is upheld and the promise of equality is made real.

Madam Speaker, beyond the social justice imperative, there is also an economic justice dimension. Unpaid care work is a hidden subsidy to the economy. When women spend hours fetching water, tending to the sick or caring for children, they are performing labour that the State would otherwise have to provide through hospitals, schools and through social services. Yet this contribution is invisible in our gross domestic product and absent from our budgets. By failing to recognise it, we undervalue the very labour that sustains our workforce and stabilises our communities.

Investment in infrastructure such as clean water systems, renewable energy and childcare centres is not simply development; it is a redistribution of care responsibilities. It is an acknowledgement that women's time is valuable, that girls deserve classrooms instead of kitchens and that our economy must be built on fairness as well as growth.

The United Nations estimates that if unpaid care work were monetised, it could contribute between 10-39% of GDP. In some countries, including South Africa, unpaid care has been integrated into national statistics, shaping social protection policies as we have heard from Hon. Zhou. This House must therefore call upon the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to develop a comprehensive policy and legislation on unpaid domestic care work and to commission a national survey to quantify its contribution to GDP. Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance and Investment Promotion must also prioritise and increase budget allocations for social protection programmes, infrastructure development and social services. Recognition of unpaid work is not charity; it is justice.

Girls and women burdened with household chores drop out of school, perpetuating the vicious cycles of poverty. The Beijing Platform for Action and Sustainable Development Goal 5 explicitly call for valuing all unpaid care work. Some may want to argue that the nation cannot afford to pay for unpaid care work. I would like to submit before this House that we already pay the price in lost

productivity, in poor health outcomes and in entrenched inequality. Recognition is an investment, not a cost. Others may want to say that care is a private family duty, yet families are the foundation of the nation. If the State values soldiers for defending borders, it must also value caregivers for defending life itself. Madam Speaker, failure to recognise unpaid care work deepens poverty and inequality. Women who spend hours on unpaid labour have less time for income-generating activities, education or civic participation. These perpetuate cycles of dependency and marginalisation. Conversely, investing in social services such as childcare centres and energy infrastructure reduces the burden and frees women to participate fully in the economy.

I just want to jump to the moral imperative before I conclude. This is not merely an economic issue; it is a moral one. We cannot continue to build our nation on the backs of women and girls whose labour is unrecognised, unrewarded and uncompensated. Justice demands that we acknowledge their contribution and create systems that allow them to rest, to thrive and to share the fruits of development equally.

In conclusion, I therefore urge this House to adopt the motion and commit to a Zimbabwe where unpaid care and domestic work is recognised as a pillar of national development. By doing so, we will advance gender equality, we will strengthen our economy and we will honour the dignity of every citizen who labors, whether paid or unpaid.

I humbly submit.

***HON. THOMPSON:** Thank you very much Hon. Speaker for allowing me to add my voice to this motion. Domestic work includes fetching water, firewood, child minding, and minding for the old and relatives who live with disabilities. All these duties allow a family to have stability, hygiene, eating proper food and dressing properly because of the help. Looking at the issue, most women and girls work for around 10 hours, looking after children and other people in the household. This is assumed to be their responsibility without any conversation.

The girl child does not have the opportunity to go to school or to work and to fend for herself, which leads to physical and mental exhaustion and other forms of disappointment. Looking at this

issue, we find that in every home, the husband or the father owns everything and this leads to gender-based violence. Sometimes it leads to suicide or the killing of one member of the family. These women and children do not have any decision-making power and they do not have knowledge or financial resources. The Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare should promote a law which caters for those who do domestic work and who do so for free. There should be a law which gives them off days and even compensation. There must be stipulated payments. Even sick leave; they should be allowed to have time off. When leaving such jobs, there should be clarity in terms of their salaries or wages. They should be trained for these jobs, especially for those who are childminders and those who live with different disabilities. Some end up contracting diseases. Sometimes they can harm those they are supposed to look after because of lack of knowledge. Some can leave their jobs without being paid for a long time. If it is a relative who is looking after children, sometimes the parents just take their child but there is no appreciation given to the childminder. Therefore, it must be clear what hours are expected to be put in by

such workers, by domestic workers and childminders. There should be laws which protect them when they are not treated fairly in their workplace. I thank you.

HON. MADZIVANYIKA: Hon. Speaker, when I heard about this issue of unpaid care and domestic work, I wondered what they were saying because God created us as men and women. Our culture says that women should do all the domestic chores. I said, what is wrong with what is happening? Is it not part of our culture? What are they saying? Is it painful to iron clothes or to wash them? What is really difficult with doing that when it is said to be unpaid? How come men also do unpaid labour? I thank God because I got my revelation. Let me explain how this happened.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, let me explain the duties that are done by women in a rural set-up. There could be 10 people in one household and one wife or one woman who makes sure that they eat or bath. If it is fetching water, it can take 30 minutes or so. They go and fetch water from the rivers which could be a distance from where they are staying. Madam Speaker, the different duties that are done by women in rural areas are quite difficult. They use firewood

for cooking and they go for distances to fetch firewood. They then come back and fetch water and go back home and wash clothes, wash plates, cook for everyone and make sure everyone is bathed and fed. It seems as if it is easy, but when you are given that task, when that woman leaves, you discover how difficult these duties are.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, in the rural areas, a woman is the pillar of the household. Without a woman it becomes quite difficult because of the unpaid care, domestic work that she is doing. Let me also say that even in urban areas, women face a lot of challenges. They wake up at 4 a.m. to make sure they warm water so that school children bath before they go to school. After that, they do the rest of the preparation in the household to make sure there is enough food and everything. This is unpaid care, domestic work. Madam Speaker Ma'am, when I heard this issue, I just said I need to clarify this because the motion does not talk about salaries. I want the House to understand the motion and the rationale behind. It is not about pulling resources so that they are paid but instead, it is about recognising unpaid domestic work. This means honouring the jobs

or the duties that they do in the homestead. What is important is, we need to recognise that they are doing a good job.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, in Zimbabwe, looking at statistics, the findings indicate that children from 0 to 17 years are around seven million and women who look after these children and who are not working are around 1.2 million, which means the ratio is 1:6. One woman looks after an average of six children, not mentioning fathers, men and other people who also need care. For me to be where I am today, it is because of the woman who is at home. That is care work. Let me add on by saying that as someone who was enlightened, I saw it fit that I clarify so that this would help women when we recognise their contribution. So, what is the way forward? It is not about pulling resources for salaries or wages, but it is on how we can reduce the challenge of unpaid care work. How do we reduce it? I would say that a woman who is in the rural areas needs 30 minutes or so to access water. Maybe what we need to do is to bring water close to the homes, maybe allow them to fetch water from the homestead, fetching water from a borehole. This is the intervention that is needed by this motion and in this worker's

house. Even in urban areas, we need to have tap water readily accessible. In rural areas, you find that women struggle to raise food for their children. As Government, for us to reduce that burden, we need to introduce irrigation schemes where they can get a source of income from irrigation projects. It is also our responsibility to solve these challenges.

Madam Speaker, pertaining to firewood, most women use firewood. What is the alternative that we can use? What can we do to alleviate that problem? As Parliament, we need to lobby for affordable gas so that women can use gas. Some can use biogas in the rural areas through the Rural Electrification Programme. We can also electrify rural areas. This is our responsibility as Parliamentarians.

Madam Speaker, we also have an issue of women who are employed but who have small children who are breastfeeding. We need to introduce babysitters for the kids and the women can get an hour break for breastfeeding. This lessens the burden which is faced by women. We also have young girls who go to school. Researchers have found that young girls go through their monthly period cycles

for three or so days every month. So, this is another burden they have over and above unpaid care work. As Government, we need to assist them with sanitary wear and Government should budget for sanitary wear. Sometimes only a small amount of money goes towards sanitary wear. So, as representatives of our people who know that there is unpaid work which is affecting women and girls, we need to push for the vote for allocation of a budget for sanitary wear so that our girls and women benefit.

Madam Speaker, the other important point that I wanted to raise is that as men, we need to understand that this issue is important and we should champion it as men. When we champion the issue, then it will be resolved. As men, we need to support our women as we address the challenge of unpaid care work. It is not about payment but we need to work together to lessen the burden that they face. With those few words, I thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. MUTOKONYI: I also rise to debate on the motion. I think from the prayer of the motion, it also seeks the issue of policy intervention but it is also clear that from a policy perspective, the Government is doing much. If you look at our Constitution,

Sections 17 and 18, it also recognises the aspects regarding this care work. The National Agenda Policy (2013-2030) also seeks to reduce the issues regarding to this care work. The Sustainable Development Goal 5 also seeks to address that. So, from the intervention perspective, the policies are there. What we need to continuously do through the 3-R Framework which says we have to first recognise, like what Hon. Madzivanyika has alluded to, we accept and recognise the great work that is being done by our girls and the women in the communities. So, the recognition is there. The statistics say that over 70% of their time is spent doing this care work, looking after the children and all these other things. So, that is quite a lot of time in terms of time use.

ZIMSTAT, in terms of its time use survey, also alluded that quite a lot of time is spent by these care workers doing this course. If you look at health, we have got the home-based care programmes. A lot of women and girls are the ones whom we see taking care of our elderly and taking care of the sick. This is quite a great job that we have to recognise as a nation and also as parliamentarians so that we can also come up with more sustainable

ways of reducing the working hours of which the Government is in the process and in the motion of alleviating these challenges by drilling boreholes. We have seen again the programmes of the Rural Electrification Programmes. The whole idea is to try to make our care workers minimise the operational or working time so that they also then do not get more hours of doing this care work.

You can see that this care work is big business, particularly in European countries. If we follow suit, that kind of recognition is also very important. What is important is what the Government has done now, it is doing quite a lot. Like I alluded to, we have seen in the statistics, a lot of clinics are being built and this also then reduces the working hours of our girls, our caregivers. Again, all these village business units that we see are also programmes to redistribute in terms of the operating hours. I do support that yes, there has to be recognition in this care work. Indeed, the Government is recognising and much more can still be done for a better Zimbabwe.

HON. P. MOYO: I thank you for the opportunity to debate the motion tabled by Hon. Sibanda on the need to recognise unpaid

care and domestic work. The concept of care is not only performed in hospitals and clinics. Every day, millions of Zimbabwean families provide unpaid care for sick relatives, older persons, persons with disabilities and those living with chronic illnesses. Without this invisible workforce, our public health system would simply be overwhelmed. Yet, these caregivers often receive no training, no financial support and no recognition despite saving Government millions of dollars in institutional care costs.

When caregivers become exhausted, households experience poor health outcomes, preventable illnesses increase and demand for expensive hospital care rises. The absence of structured support therefore shifts greater costs onto the national health system. I believe that the introduction of a national care policy and legislation would integrate care into Zimbabwe's health planning by providing caregiver training, relief services, home-based care support and stronger community health programmes. Such interventions reduce unnecessary hospital admissions, improve recovery rates and enable families to care safely for valuable members within their communities.

Japan provides an instructive example. Faced with one of the world's oldest populations, Japan introduced a long-term care insurance system that provides publicly funded home and community care services while supporting family caregivers. The result has been reduced pressure on hospitals, improved quality of life for older persons and a more sustainable health system. For Zimbabwe, investing in care is therefore not simply social protection, it is preventive healthcare. Every dollar invested in supporting caregivers reduces future healthcare costs while building a healthier and more resilient nation. A stronger care economy is a stronger health system.

HON. O. SIBANDA: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. I would like to take this opportunity today to thank all Hon. Members who added value to the motion that I tabled before the august House. Suffice to say, this motion is very critical in recognising and upholding the dignity of our unpaid care workers in the country. It is my fervent hope that the recommendations and solutions that you proffer will go a long way towards inspiring our unpaid care workers in preserving their unfettered commitment. Towards the

betterment of humankind, I therefore embrace this moment to move that this emotionally charged motion be unreservedly adopted.

Motion that:

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

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

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, this House calls upon—

(a) the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare to develop a comprehensive policy and legislation on unpaid care work, and commissions a national survey to assess the economic worth of unpaid care and domestic work, including its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP); and

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

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: I move that we revert to Order of the Day Number 44 on today`s *Order Paper*.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

**REPORT OF THE JOINT PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON
BUDGET, FINANCE AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION AND**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS ON THE BENCHMARK VISIT TO NIGERIA

Forty-fourth Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Report of the Joint Portfolio Committees on Budget, Finance and Investment Promotion and Public Accounts on the Benchmark visit to Nigeria.

Question again proposed.

HON. P. NDUDZO: Thank you Madam Speaker. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to debate the Nigerian benchmark report presented by Hon. Dhliwayo. I was fortunate to be part of the delegation to this benchmarking visit. We have indeed learned a lot, as indicated in the report. Along the way, we observed certain areas that clearly require improvement while at the same time we also noted that others were our practices and we are already well aligned. What triggered my nerves was the fact that in Nigeria, the unallocated reserve budget does not exceed 5% of the National Budget. We all understand that the National Budget is the most important instrument of fiscal policy.

As Parliament, when we do our debates every year, we must ensure that allocations reflect national priorities and citizens' needs. In countries such as Nigeria, the contingent budget is kept at 5% of the National Budget. We observed that this benchmark ensures that contingent funds serve their purpose, that is, to address unforeseen emergencies without becoming a parallel budget controlled solely by the treasurer. My humble submission is that Zimbabwe should adopt this best practice to strengthen fiscal discipline and align with the religious norms. Over the years, Madam Speaker, we have come to learn that, at large, unallocated reserve have the following undesirable consequences.

We have seen that the large unallocated treasurer effectively transfers allocation authority from Parliament to the Treasury. You can note that Parliament's constitutional power of the purse is diluted when for instance, up to 10% of funds are left unallocated.

Secondly, the Treasury may direct funds without parliamentary scrutiny, creating opportunities for inefficient allocation. This creates opportunities precisely because the Treasury is the one which manages reserves and can use it in whatever way

they deem fit without necessary checks and balances. In such circumstances, resources risk being diverted to areas that may not reflect national priorities, thereby weakening the integrity of our budget process. It is, therefore, important that the Hon. Minister seeks authority to spend the unallocated funds.

Thirdly, this directly touches on one of our main constitutional functions, which is oversight. Parliament will not be able to track spending priorities if large sums remain unallocated. Therefore, I support the submission of a 5% cap on the unallocated reserve as follows, to strengthen Parliament oversight so that 95% of the budget is allocated through parliamentary debate and approval.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, we all understand that the public debt in Zimbabwe is growing, and this calls for sharper scrutiny. Now, one key observation is that when debt reports are presented in Parliament during the Budget presentation, our collective attention immediately shifts to the Budget Statement itself and only a few members give serious focus to debt. As a result, debt analysis is left at risk and the true picture of debt is, therefore, obscured. If you want proper scrutiny of debt trends, if you want to understand how

obligations have built up and how they affect our fiscal space, then you must act. That is why I strongly support the recommendation to establish a debt oversight sub-committee, one that specifically deals with debt issues so that the Parliament can exercise its constitutional role more effectively and safeguard the nation from unsustainable borrowing.

Lastly, we all know that the vision of this country is often reflected in the status of its embassies abroad. Indeed, a beautiful, well-designed embassy is far more than just a functional workspace. It stands as a powerful instrument of foreign policy, cultural diplomacy and national identity. In other words, it is a physical manifestation of a nation's values and pride expressed on foreign soil. As we dream of Vision 2030 at home, our embassies should reflect this trust. I want to commend the Second Republic for the ongoing work on the construction of Zimbabwean embassies in Abuja. It is a massive structure that tells the story of who we are in Africa. I submit.

HON. CHIDUWA: Thank you Madam Speaker. I rise to add my voice in support of the motion by Hon. Lincoln Dhliwayo which

was seconded by Hon. Madzivanyika. The report that we are debating is the joint Report of the Committees on Budget, Finance and Investment Promotion and that of Public Accounts. We had a benchmark visit to Nigeria National Assembly which took place from the 31st of August to the 6th of September 2025.

I was privileged to be a member of the delegation that undertook this very important visit. It was funded by the African Development Bank. Allow me, Madam Speaker, to share with this august House the profound lessons that I personally drew from the visit and why I fully support the motion by the Hon. Chair of the Committee as contained in his Chairman's Report.

I will start with the lessons that I drew from the fiscal oversight committees that we saw existing in Nigeria. One of the most striking observations that I made during our visit to the Nigerian National Assembly was the Elaborate and Specialised Committee architecture that Nigeria has put in place to exercise legislative oversight over public finances. For us, Zimbabwe is a country where Chapter 17 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe establishes the legal foundations of public finances, assigning

Parliament explicit authority to oversee State revenues, approve national budgets, monitor public debt and hold the executive branch to account. Specifically, Section 298 mandates transparency, fair burden sharing in taxation, equitable revenue sharing across tiers of Government and responsible public spending.

I also want to draw your attention to Section 299 which empowers Parliament to monitor and supervise State revenue and spending across all levels of Government, including statutory bodies, commissions and local authorities, to ensure proper accounting and legal compliance. These are the specific sections within our Constitution where Parliament draws its oversight powers. So, in Nigeria, they have got dedicated and distinct committees covering appropriations, finance, aid and loans, debt management, banking and currency as well as national planning and economic affairs. Each of these committees focuses exclusively on its designated area, which then brings in depth, expertise and rigour to the oversight function.

I was humbled to learn that in Zimbabwe, our Budget, Finance and Investment Promotion Committee is expected to cover all that

work that four separate Nigerian committees handle. This is not a criticism of our hardworking Members, but rather a reflection on the need to reconsider and strengthen our committee architecture so that we can discharge our oversight mandate with the thoroughness that the people of Zimbabwe deserve.

The lesson here is clear. Specialisation breeds effectiveness and our Parliament must seriously consider restructuring its committee system to achieve focused and meaningful oversight. The other issue that we also covered during the benchmark visit was the budget process and the importance of budget retreats.

Madam Speaker, may I draw your attention to Section 305 of the Constitution, which is on appropriations. Section 305 requires the Minister responsible for finance to present the National Budget and estimates of the revenue and expenditure to the National Assembly for each financial year. No money can be withdrawn from the Consolidated Revenue Fund unless authorised by an Appropriations Act. These are the provisions provided in Section 305 of our National Constitution.

I was particularly impressed by the manner in which Nigeria's Appropriations Committee approaches the budget process after the Federal President presents the National Budget. So, in their case, the Budget is presented by the President. Rather than conducting a superficial review, the Committee goes on a dedicated retreat where Members conduct an in-depth, line-by-line analysis of budget allocations at the vote, programme and sub-programme levels. This disciplined and structured approach ensures that no allocation escapes scrutiny and that members can meaningfully interrogate the assumptions underpinning the budget.

Furthermore, I noted with interest that Nigerian legislators reviewed the previous year's actual performance before approving the following year's budget, thereby ensuring continuity and accountability in programme implementation. This practice is one that Zimbabwe must urgently adopt. A budget retreat of this nature would transform our budget approval process from a largely ceremonial exercise into a substantive and evidence-based legislative function.

I, therefore, strongly support the recommendation in this report that Zimbabwe should consider a budget retreat where a thorough review of budget allocations is done at vote, programme and sub-programme levels for each ministry, department and agency. The other issue that also caught my attention when I was in Nigeria was on the role of the Legislative Budget Office, which is our Budget Office. The critical lesson I drew from this visit relates to the role of the Directorate of Legislative Budget and Planning in the Nigerian National Assembly, which is the equivalent of our Parliament Budget Office. This Directorate provides independent, impartial and evidence-based analysis to support legislative decision-making in national development plans, the medium-term framework, macroeconomic framework and the medium-term expenditure framework, the fiscal Strategy Paper and the annual appropriations.

What struck me most was that this analysis does not solely rely on information provided by the federal government, but is also informed by verified data from civil society organisations, the National Bureau of Statistics and other recognised institutions. This

independence is critical because it means that legislators are not entirely dependent on the Executive for information, thereby strengthening the principle of separation of powers. Zimbabwe's Parliament Budget Office must be similarly empowered, adequately resourced and given the institutional independence necessary to provide credible and independent fiscal analysis to our committees.

On the issue of the unallocated reserve budget, it is an issue that has already been discussed by Hon. Ndudzo, but Madam Speaker, I would also like to touch on it and draw the attention of the House to the matter that I also found we can draw parallels with Zimbabwe. As has already been mentioned by Hon. Ndudzo, in Nigeria, this vote which is referred to as the service-wide vote is kept at a maximum of 5% of the total budget. Any ministry, department or agency that wishes to access these funds must formally apply to the Office of the President, justifying the emergent circumstances that necessitate such access.

At the end of the financial year, a comprehensive utilisation report is submitted to Parliament for consideration. This is a system of checks and balances that ensures the unallocated reserve is not

abused. In Zimbabwe, the situation is starkly different. There is currently no statutory limit on the proportion of the budget that can remain unallocated. The Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion is authorised to spend these funds through the Appropriations Act without the requirement to seek specific Parliament authority for each expenditure. This is a gap that creates significant risk of fiscal indiscipline and lack of accountability. I therefore strongly support the recommendation that Zimbabwe should introduce regulations to keep the unallocated reserve below 5% of the total budget and require the Minister to seek authority before spending these funds. This reform is not about restricting the Executive but about ensuring that Parliament fulfils its constitutional role as the guardian of public resources.

We also learned a lot about the Debt Management Oversight Function. Section 327 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe deals with international treaties and agreements, requires that international financial agreements and loan conventions involving fiscal obligations be processed or subject to Parliamentary oversight. I draw you again to Section 298, which is on principles of Public

Finance Management which mandates that public borrowing and all transactions involving national debt must be carried out transparently and in the best economic interest of Zimbabwe.

The lessons on Debt Management Oversight were perhaps the most sobering of all that I encountered during this visit. Nigeria has established dedicated committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, specifically the Senate Committee on Local and Foreign Debt and the House Committee on Aid, Loans and Debt Management to provide oversight over the entire debt cycle, from pre-borrowing assessment, approval, execution to post-borrowing monitoring. Every borrowing, whether at the federal or State level, must be approved by Parliament.

When the President wishes to borrow, he writes formally to Parliament, details the terms, conditions, purpose, repayment plan and economic justification. The Committees then hold public hearings, assess debt sustainability and submit reports with recommendations before the full House votes on approval. This is a robust system that ensures that no public debt is contracted without legislative scrutiny and approval.

In Zimbabwe, the Minister presents a borrowing plan to the National Assembly as part of the budget presentation and once that plan is approved, individual loan agreements can be contracted without returning to Parliament for specific approval, although ratification is required after the fact. This is a fundamental weakness in our debt governance framework. Given Zimbabwe's current debt situation, I believe we must establish the dedicated Debt Oversight Subcommittee that specifically deals with debt issues, as recommended in the Chairman's report. Such a Committee would ensure that Zimbabwe's borrowing is transparent, sustainable and aligned with the national economic agenda.

We also had a tour of what is referred to as the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies. I cannot conclude my contribution without mentioning the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, known as NILDS, which serves as the in-house think tank and research hub of the Nigerian National Assembly.

NILDS provides technical expertise, capacity development, research, documentation and policy advice to both chambers of the

National Assembly as well as State legislators. It runs training and interaction programmes for legislators and Parliament staff and conducts policy and budget analysis, supports Bill drafting, legislative research and produces tools such as the Legislative Oversight Manual that provides structured methodologies for committee enquiries.

The partnership between NILDS and the Nigerian Parliament is truly symbolic. NILDS provides the legislature with legitimacy and a clear mandate. While NILDS strengthens parliamentary authority by equipping committees with evidence, tools and training required to scrutinise borrowing, manage oversight of debt service and hold the executives to account. Zimbabwe must seriously explore the possibility of establishing a similar institution or significantly strengthening our existing research and labour services to provide our legislators with the technical support they need to be effective.

As I conclude, we also had an interaction where we discussed the issue of Parliament receiving what is called the first line of charge. I was struck to learn that in Nigeria, the Federal

Parliament's budget, and I think I would want the Hon. Members to listen carefully to this one. The Federal Parliament's budget is treated as the first line of charge of the National Budget. This means that Parliament's funding is secured before any other allocation is made. Yes, we have got all the votes, from Vote 1 up to the last Vote, but what gets the first Vote is Parliament. This ensures that the legislator is adequately resourced to carry out his oversight functions without being financially dependent on, or subject to the goodwill of the Executive.

In Zimbabwe, our Parliament is not similarly protected and this creates a situation where the very institution that is supposed to hold the Executive accountable is itself financially constrained and potentially vulnerable to Executive influence. I strongly support the recommendation that the Parliament's budget should be the first line of charge of Zimbabwe's National Budget. An underfunded Parliament is an ineffective Parliament and an ineffective Parliament is a disservice to the citizens of Zimbabwe when it comes to its oversight function.

Let me conclude by saying the benchmark visit to the Nigerian National Assembly was an eye-opening and enriching experience that has deepened my appreciation of the critical role of a well-resourced, well-structured and empowered Parliament. Such a Parliament plays a role in ensuring fiscal governance and accountability. The lessons we have learned from Nigeria are not theoretical. They are practical, implementable and urgently needed in Zimbabwe. I call upon this House to adopt the recommendations as contained in the Chairman's report in its entirety and urge the relevant authorities to take immediate steps to implement these reforms. I thank you.

HON. DHLIWAYO: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am, for giving me this opportunity to wind up the motion in question. Allow me to express my effusive thanks to all the Hon. Members who have emotionally debated the motion in question, starting from Hon. Madzivanyika who seconded the debate, Hon. P. Ndudzo and Hon. Chiduwa who all supported the recommendation of the report in question.

They all agreed that the benchmark visit provided the Joint Committee with valuable insights into Nigeria's budget process and the role of Public Accounts in the post-audit oversight. The Hon. Members also highlighted the need to adequately budget for debt servicing to avoid debt overhang. They also reflected on the need to improve unallocated reserve utilisation transparency.

In addition, they recommended that the Ministry and Treasury must make more effort to reduce or lower the UR utilisation, trying to match the international peers who capped it at 5%, just as Hon. Chiduwa has alluded to. They all fully supported the motion. Having said this, I therefore move that this House adopts the motion.

Motion that this House takes note of the Report of the Joint Portfolio Committees on Budget, Finance and Investment Promotion and Public Accounts on the Benchmark visit to Nigeria held from 31st August to 6th September, 2025, put and agreed to.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: Madam Speaker Ma'am, I move that we revert to Order of the Day Number 21 on today's *Order Paper*.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

REPORT OF OACPS AFRICAN REGION PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND 1ST AFRICA-EU PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY HELD IN EZULWINI PALAZO, ESWATINI

HON. P. MOYO: I move the motion standing in my name that this House takes note of the Report of OACPS African Region Parliamentary Group and 1st Africa-EU Parliamentary Assembly held at Ezulwini Palazzo, Eswatini from 7th to 14th May, 2026.

HON. NYAKUEDZWA: I second.

HON. P. MOYO: Thank you Madam Speaker. I move to give a report of the OACPS African Region Parliamentary Group meeting – the first Africa EU Parliamentary Assembly.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The meetings of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) African Region

Parliamentary Group and the 1st African-EU Parliamentary Assembly were held in the Ezulwini Valley, in Eswatini, from 6th to 15th May 2026.

1.2 These meetings marked a historic milestone in implementing the parliamentary dimension of the Samoa Agreement. It also marked a major shift from a donor-recipient model of OACPS-EU relationship to a true partnership framework by focusing on shared priorities, equal participation, and regional protocols designed for Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

1.3 Over three days, Africa-EU delegates shared insights on mutually beneficial partnerships in key priority areas, including peace and security in Africa; youth education and mobility; women in agricultural value chains; culture and creative industries in Africa-EU relations; critical minerals partnerships; and the future of multilateralism.

1.4 These priorities are in line with the overall aim of the Samoa Agreement, which is to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

1.5 The delegation from Parliament of Zimbabwe comprised the following;

Hon. Lt General (Rtd) M. R. Nyambuya, Deputy President of the Senate and Head of Delegation,

Hon. P. Moyo, Member of Parliament,

Hon. N. Mlotshwa, Member of Parliament,

Mrs. R. Doka, Director, External Relations,

Mr. M. Mugova, Principal Research Officer,

Mr. O. Muchenu, Security Aide to the Deputy President of the Senate.

2.0 OACPS SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

PARLIAMENTARY GROUP MEETING

2.1 Chaired by the newly elected Chairperson of the OACPS Southern Africa Region Parliamentary Group, Lt General (Rtd.) R.M. Nyambuya, delegates exchanged views and identified key priorities that the sub-region believed should guide Africa's common position under the Samoa Agreement.

2.2 Delegates from Malawi, Lesotho, Namibia, Botswana, Eswatini and Zimbabwe took the lead, with support from others, in calling for a united African voice on youth empowerment, poverty eradication, democracy, climate justice, rural development, governance and resource mobilisation.

2.3 Delegates from Lesotho highlighted the importance of environmental protection and also expressed concern over the slow pace of ratification of the Samoa Agreement, while Botswana called for greater public awareness and support for communities displaced by climate change.

2.4 Furthermore, Zimbabwean delegates, together with Namibian delegates, raised concerns about provisions related to sexual orientation contained in the Samoa Agreement, arguing for respect for African cultural values and national sovereignty.

2.5 The Eswatini delegates proposed practical institutional reforms and received full support from other delegates. These reforms included performance-based budgeting, parliamentary oversight mechanisms, linking Samoa Agreement priorities to

national parliamentary programmes, and allocating 15 percent of the OACPS budget to youth initiatives.

2.6 The Zimbabwean delegates strongly called for the promotion of local value addition and beneficiation of Africa's raw materials to ensure mutually beneficial trade, instead of continued dependence on exporting unprocessed resources.

2.7 All delegates agreed on the need for reforms to establish independent OACPS funding mechanisms in order to reduce over-reliance on the European Union. Proposals made included member state contributions based on a formula that considers economic indicators, as well as capped contribution thresholds to ensure fairness and sustainability.

3.0 MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE OACPS AFRICA REGION PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

3.1 Prince Lindani of the Kingdom of Eswatini who opened the meeting, repeated the urgent need for African countries to speak with one voice on industrialisation, local value addition and youth

employment as key pillars of Africa's development strategy under the Samoa Agreement.

3.2 Hon. Yaya Doumba Marius of the Republic of Cameroon, Chairperson of the OACPS Central Africa Region Parliamentary Group who chaired the meeting, highlighted the common continental priorities under the Samoa Agreement. These included peace and security, counter-terrorism, maritime security, socio-economic growth, infrastructure development, local value addition, beneficiation and industrialisation, climate change response and financing and independent OACPS funding.

3.3 Delegates further agreed that the OACPS should establish election observer missions and that the OACPS Africa Parliamentary Regional Group should strengthen cooperation with regional and continental parliamentary institutions such as the Pan-African Parliament.

3.4 Furthermore, delegates unanimously agreed that reports from OACPS meetings should be tabled before national parliaments within 90 days to strengthen accountability and implementation.

3.5 During the brainstorming session, delegates identified possible OACPS reforms. These included aligning the OACPS structure with the Samoa Agreement, establishing standing committees instead of *ad hoc* committees and streamlining OACPS support staff into a lean and fit-for-purpose structure. Delegates also repeated the need for the OACPS to fund itself, to engage Heads of State and Government to ensure that member contributions to the OACPS are paid.

3.6 In addition, delegates agreed in principle that, in order to further reduce dependence on the EU, the OACPS headquarters should be relocated to one of the OACPS member countries.

3.7 Delegates agreed on the need to re-engage South Africa following its withdrawal from the OACPS.

3.8 On another note, Global Gateway, through Mr. D. Rosa, Head of the Strategic Partnership Unit with the OACPS, briefed delegates strategic flagship partnership projects in Africa. Delegates were informed that these projects include on climate and energy, education and research, health, humanitarian assistance, digital technology, and foreign direct investment (FDI). Of the eight billion

Euros allocated to the OACPS, Africa was reported to receive the largest share, with 132 out of the 256 flagship projects.

3.9 Despite the reported impact of the Global Gateway projects in Africa, delegates, led by the Botswana delegation, expressed concern that development assistance was increasing the OACPS's dependence on the EU instead of promoting industrialisation in rural African areas to reduce rural-to-urban migration.

3.10 Delegates urgently called for Global Gateway projects to directly benefit ordinary citizens, especially women at the community level. In addition, delegates called for the fair distribution of flagship projects among OACPS member states and stressed the need for parliamentary oversight of these projects to strengthen African ownership and control.

4.0 OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SITTING OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE JOINT AFRICAN AND EU PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

4.1 Officially opened by King Mswati III, represented by His Highness Prince Lindani, the occasion carried a clear message of Africa-EU partnership, hope, and Eswatini's growing role on the international stage.

4.2 The speech had a strong forward-looking message, presenting parliamentary diplomacy as an important tool in addressing current global challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, geopolitical tensions, and technological transformation.

4.3 His Majesty also reaffirmed Eswatini's support for the Samoa Agreement, describing it as an important framework for advancing the role of parliamentary democracy during geopolitical tensions, and for promoting trade, investment, food security, climate resilience, education, and digital transformation between the OACPS and the EU.

4.4 During the same occasion, the Hon. Speaker of Parliament of the Kingdom of Eswatini, Mr. Mabuza, emphasised that the Samoa Agreement has introduced a "more modern and balanced partnership," noting that parliamentarians now play a central role in shaping this evolving relationship.

4.5 Adding her voice, Hon. Hilde Vautmans, co-chair of the Africa-EU Parliamentary Assembly and Vice Chair of the OACPS-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in the European Parliament, stressed the need to turn dialogue into real political action. She emphasized that Africa and Europe must work together based on mutual respect, shared Samoa Agreement priorities, common interests and shared responsibilities.

5.0 THE ROLE OF REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR PARLIAMENTS IN PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

5.1 Hon. M. Emounatou Ibrahima, Speaker of the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in her video address, praised the OACPS-EU partnership as a strong international and regional framework. She said it allows parliamentarians to respond to geopolitical tensions, economic and security threats, extremism, terrorism and to use early warning systems.

5.2 She shared ECOWAS's experience in building effective parliamentary preventive diplomacy, inclusive governance, and a

regional parliamentary system. Most importantly, she stressed that peace can only be achieved when youths, women, and minority groups are fully included.

5.3 Delegates from Kenya, supported by delegates from Sierra Leon, identified root causes of conflicts as foreign aggression, scramble for resources, unemployment especially of youths who are vulnerable to radicalisation.

5.4 Following remarks by the Malawi delegates, who underlined the role of regional parliaments in implementing the Samoa Agreement to boost trade, reduce inequality and fight poverty, delegates from Angola, Eswatini, and Central Africa highlighted the close link between peace, security, and development, especially through multilateral cooperation. They also pointed to the African Union Peace Fund (AUPF) as a key tool for financing peace and security efforts, noting that both Africa and Europe continue to face conflicts.

5.5 The delegates urged regional organisations to invest more resources, involve civil society, build trust between governments and citizens and strengthen the role of regional

parliaments in protecting human rights and promoting the rule of law.

5.6 In its contribution, Rwanda referred to the Pan-African Parliament and the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)'s commitment to ending conflicts through dialogue, while warning against regional inaction as seen during the 1994 genocide. Rwanda explained that, guided by history, it is now committed to peaceful conflict resolution, including its recent deployment in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.

5.7 Eswatini added that instability in one country affects its neighbors, and therefore regional parliamentary oversight was crucial in helping secure peace as what happened in Mozambique.

5.8 The Zimbabwean delegates reminded the meeting that regional organizations and parliaments face serious challenges in resolving conflicts. These include limited resources, poor coordination, and the ongoing tension between national sovereignty and collective responsibility. Such difficulties highlight the need to strengthen cooperation, invest in regional systems and show the political will to act firmly.

5.9 The Zimbabwean delegates also emphasised a key lesson learned over the years: governments, regional organisations and parliaments must work together. Governments provide structure, parliaments give legitimacy and together they can deliver lasting solutions.

5.10 In their contributions, EU delegates noted that peace and stability can no longer be taken for granted in Europe, as shown by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. They raised concerns about misinformation and stressed the need for parliaments to defend international law, the rule of law and human rights.

5.11 EU delegates also recognised colonial legacy as contributory to conflicts in Africa and hence parliamentarians from both Africa and EU should address these challenges together.

5.12 They also pointed out that Africa continues to face long conflicts, such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where fighting has lasted about 30 years, causing an estimated 10 million deaths, 7 million displaced people and widespread sexual violence.

5.13 Furthermore, EU noted that in Sudan, civilians suffer from conflict, illicit financial networks, foreign interference, and illegal mining. The delegates emphasised that African and EU parliamentarians must learn from each other and work together. They stressed the importance of representing youths, women, and minority groups, while jointly addressing democratic backsliding since the two continents are closely connected.

5.14 EU delegates also agreed with their African counterparts that strong governance institutions, especially parliaments are essential for peace which is built not only through force but also through cooperation. They further agreed that Africa's territorial integrity and sovereignty must be respected, alongside greater financial support for Africa-led conflict prevention initiatives.

6.0 YOUTH EDUCATION AND MOBILITY

6.1 The Youth Forum, preceded the dialogue and debate on youth education and mobility by African-EU delegates, bringing together representatives from different sectors, including parliamentarians, youths, students, beneficiaries of education exchange programmes such as Erasmus+, women, politicians and

international organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), AU Migration, and the Southern Africa Youth Forum, among others.

6.2 Delegates fully agreed that Africa has the world's youngest population, while Europe has an ageing population, creating opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships.

6.3 Delegates agreed that youth inclusion is a political necessity, especially since more than 70 percent of the Sub-Saharan African population is under the age of 30, representing a significant demographic dividend with potential for economic transformation. Additionally, delegates observed that IOM data reveal that by 2022 there were approximately 300 million migrants globally, with three out of ten migrants being under the age of 30, noting that unemployment and the search for better economic opportunities as major drivers of migration.

6.4 Given the statistics, delegates were in agreement that the success of the Samoa Agreement largely depends on young people, as it will help address challenges facing African youths such as

unemployment, radicalisation, trafficking, and limited opportunities.

6.5 Even as youths migrate, delegates realised that they face further challenges relating to the fact that many young migrants possess qualifications and skills that do not match labour market demands in the EU, resulting in underemployment and youths will not realize the dreams of their career.

6.6 On that note, Eswatini delegates shared their holistic youth programme focused on education for employability led by institutions such as the Eswatini University of Technology, which also promotes safe and orderly youth mobility. Similar experiences were also shared by other delegates, including Zimbabwean delegates, who highlighted the Zimbabwe Open University's active participation in the Erasmus+ programme which offers skills training in green technology.

6.7 Regarding challenges affecting youths, delegates noted that opportunities for education and mobility remain inaccessible to many youths from remote rural communities in Africa, costly visas,

limited legal migration routes, forcing many young people to use unsafe and irregular migration pathways.

6.8 Delegates observed that youth education and mobility even in Africa are shaped by a mix of structural barriers and emerging opportunities: poverty, gender inequality, conflict, and weak infrastructure limit access, while regional integration policies and cross-border programmes are increasingly enabling intra-African student movement.

6.9 EU parliamentarians, on the other hand, emphasised that youth mobility should be properly regulated and managed in order to reduce irregular migration and the abuse of student mobility pathways. Furthermore, EU delegates called for balanced exchange programmes that promote “brain circulation” instead of brain drain. They also encouraged EU countries, as partners of Africa, to listen more carefully and respond more effectively to the concerns of African students.

6.10 In unison, delegates urged African and European countries to ease visa conditions, support university exchange programmes, promote the free movement of youths, goods and

services within Africa and between Africa and the EU and support safe and orderly migration.

7.0 WOMEN FORUM: “Empowering Women in agriculture Value Chains as a driver of Economic Development”.

7.1 All delegates reached consensus that across Africa, women’s access to land, funding, markets and opportunities in the agro-value chain systems continue to be constrained by gender gaps. Therefore, they unanimously called for greater investment in women’s training in entrepreneurship, with particular emphasis on young women and persons with disabilities.

7.2 Mrs. L. Philips, Director of Partnerships and UN Collaboration at the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, in a video address, highlighted that women and girls are the backbone of agricultural productivity, sustaining food security and livelihoods.

7.3 She noted that their contributions within agro-value chains remain heavily undervalued, despite women constituting 21

percent of the agricultural labor force in Europe, 76 percent in Africa and 40 percent globally.

7.4 She emphasised the urgent need to improve women's access to labour, land and decision-making and to strengthen their involvement in agricultural value chains, a responsibility she stressed parliamentarians can fulfill through their legislative and representative roles.

7.5 Hon. M. Mutsvangwa, Minister of Women Affairs, Community and SMEs Development, praised the Samoa Agreement as a renewed partnership between Africa and the EU, stressing that its success depends on agro-systems built on equal participation and full recognition of women's contributions.

7.6 She reminded delegates that women smallholder farmers remain excluded from regional and international markets and lamented that middlemen in agro-value chains continue to exploit women producers. She urged parliamentarians to address this challenge in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

7.7 Delegates from Eswatini reported that smallholder women farmers face limited mechanisation, lack of skills and climate vulnerabilities. They outlined a program designed to transition women agri-producers into large-scale commercial farmers through strengthened policy and legislative frameworks, joint title deed registration and access to concessionary loans.

7.8 Senegal's delegation reiterated the need for improved access to loans, digital technology, and training, while Rwanda shared its progress: that women's land ownership now stands at 94 percent, alongside expanded access to loans and subsidies.

7.9 Delegates from Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Benin, Kenya, and several EU parliamentarians collectively underscored the importance of AU–EU collaboration in supporting women's endeavours across the agricultural value chain, from farm to fork, ensuring value addition and inclusive growth.

8.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE AFRICA-EU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

8.1 During the exchange of views regarding the Draft Recommendations to the Africa-EU Council of Ministers, serious divisions emerged between Africa and EU delegates.

8.2 The first area of contention was the recital section on non-discrimination, which included language affirming rights on the basis of sexual orientation. The EU insisted that the principle of non-discrimination must apply universally, including to LGBTQI individuals who they argued should be guaranteed equal rights. Most African countries opposed this provision, viewing it as a pathway to legalising homosexuality, considered contrary to African cultural norms and religious traditions.

8.3 The second division concerned peace and security in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The EU and DR Congo were of the position that the M23 rebel group should be explicitly named in the text, given its significant role in destabilising the DRC and the wider Great Lakes region. Rwanda strongly opposed singling out M23, stressing that the conflict involves multiple armed groups and that focusing only on M23 was unfair. The DRC, however, insisted

that M23's role must be acknowledged directly, reflecting the deep rift between the two neighboring states.

8.4 The third disagreement revolved around UN Security Council reform. Africa called on the EU to support its longstanding demand for a permanent seat with veto powers, arguing that global governance must reflect Africa's demographic and geopolitical weight. The EU countered that Africa should also support its own bid for a permanent seat. African delegates rejected this as unfair "double dipping," pointing out that EU member states such as France already hold permanent seats. Granting the EU another seat, they argued, would reinforce imbalance rather than correct it.

8.5 The fourth and final area of dispute was the Russia–Ukraine conflict. The EU pressed for language explicitly condemning Russia as the aggressor and expressed concern about reports of African nationals being recruited under false pretenses to fight in the war. African countries resisted being drawn into what they saw as a Cold War-style confrontation. They argued that the EU and its allies, including the USA, have themselves violated human rights and international law in places such as Libya,

Venezuela, Iran, Iraq, and Palestine, causing displacement and suffering. Africa insisted on its right to waive this provision, maintaining neutrality and protecting its diplomatic independence.

8.6 After protracted dialogue and debate that stretched into the following afternoon, with delegates breaking into small caucus groups to seek compromise, agreement was eventually reached.

8.7 On the Russia–Ukraine conflict, African delegates expressed solidarity with displaced people, particularly women, children, and persons with disabilities and emphasised their support for a peaceful resolution through dialogue and negotiations in line with UN principles and international law. In the same text, EU delegates aligned themselves with strong wording condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine.

8.8 On the sensitive issue of LGBTQI rights, African countries secured language guaranteeing them the right to waive this provision, a safeguard also provided for in the Samoa Agreement. This delicate balance allowed both sides to preserve their positions while moving forward with a unified set of recommendations.

8.9 Taken together, these divisions underscore the fault lines in Africa–EU relations. At the same time, they highlight Africa’s determination to assert sovereignty and resist external pressure, while the EU continues to push for universal principles and alignment with its geopolitical stance. The Eswatini meeting therefore, revealed the ongoing challenge of transforming Africa–EU relations from a donor recipient dynamic into a genuine partnership of equals.

9.0 CLOSING CEREMONY

9.1 During the closing session, Co-President of the Africa–EU Parliamentary Assembly Hilde Vautmans stressed that differences of opinion in negotiations should be seen as progress, noting that Africa and the EU are beginning to understand one another better, even if discussions sometimes involve arguments or heated exchanges.

9.2 In his closing statement, Prince Lindani, representing His Majesty King Mswati III, emphasised that the true measure of success of the Africa-EU joint parliamentary meeting would not be the words on paper but the tangible impact of the resolutions on

ordinary people's lives. He cautioned that resolutions must translate into action, reminding delegates that climate change, youth unemployment and instability do not wait.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Youth Mobility and Education

10.1.1 Expand equitable access Parliamentarians should ensure that education and mobility programmes reach rural and underprivileged youth, decentralising initiatives like Erasmus+ so that opportunities are not limited to urban or elite groups.

10.1.2 Harmonise qualifications Align education standards, qualifications and migration policies across Africa and the EU to make student and professional mobility smoother, while easing visa requirements for safe and legal movement.

10.1.3 Invest in digital skills: Strengthen youth employability by funding education in digital skills, innovation, and vocational training, ensuring young people are prepared for modern labour markets and entrepreneurship.

10.1.4 Promote safe migration: Develop policies that expand legal migration pathways, encourage intra-African mobility, and support returning graduates and professionals to contribute to national and continental development.

10.1.5 Support inclusive exchanges: Facilitate regional and international youth exchange opportunities, promote meaningful youth participation in governance, and build partnerships between Africa and the EU so that mobility strengthens sustainable development rather than draining skilled human capital.

10.2 Women Forum: Empowering Women in agriculture Value Chains as a driver of Economic Development.

10.2.1 Strengthen land and resource rights: Parliament should pass laws which guarantee women's secure access to land through joint title deed registration, equitable inheritance laws, and supportive policy frameworks.

10.2.2 Expand financial inclusion: Parliament should promote policy and legislative frameworks which increase women's

access to concessionary loans, subsidies, and digital financial services.

10.2.3 Promote women market access and fair trade:

African and EU parliamentarians should collaborate and promote mechanisms to connect women farmers directly to regional and international markets, bypassing exploitative middlemen.

10.2.4 Invest in skills and technology: Scale up training in entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and climate-smart agriculture, with a focus on young women and persons with disabilities.

10.3 The Role of Regional Organisations and their Parliaments in Peace and Security in Africa

10.3.1 Strengthen preventive diplomacy: National parliaments should build systems for early warning, dialogue, and mediation to address tensions before they escalate into violence.

10.3.2 Promote inclusive governance: Peace requires the active participation of youths, women, and minority groups, parliaments must ensure inclusive representation and policies that

reduce marginalisation, unemployment, and vulnerability to radicalisation.

10.3.3 Invest in peace financing: Both African and EU parliaments should support mechanisms such as the African Union Peace Fund (AUPF) and allocate resources for conflict prevention, peace-building, and reconstruction, while ensuring transparency and accountability.

10.3.4 Defend the rule of law: Parliaments must safeguard human rights, uphold international law and counter misinformation, while exercising strong oversight to prevent democratic backsliding and foster trust between governments and citizens.

10.3.5 Foster regional cooperation: African and EU parliaments should together work through regional assemblies, share lessons learned, and jointly address root causes of conflict such as resource competition, foreign interference and illicit financial networks. I thank you.

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

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 1st September, 2026.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER

VISITORS IN THE SPEAKER'S GALLERY

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER (HON. MUGOMO): I

wish to recognise the presence of Members of Parliament from the Kingdom of Eswatini, namely Hon. Tanele Magagula, the Leader of the Delegation, Hon. Thandeka Mabuza, and Hon. Lindiwe Mabuza, the Clerk of the Delegation. The delegation has been invited by the Zimbabwe Youth Caucus to attend the Youth Model Parliament Programme which will be conducted from Friday, 21 August to Saturday 22 August, 2026. You are most welcome - [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*]-

May you please stand, Hon. Members, so that we can see you clearly. - [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*]- Thank you Hon. Members. You are most welcome.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: I move that we revert to Order of the Day Number 20 on today's *Order Paper*.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

POLICY ON THE ISSUANCE OF HONORARY DOCTORATES BY NON-ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

HON. MAONEKE: I move the motion standing in my name that this House—

RECOGNISING the importance of maintaining the integrity and value of academic titles; 19th August, 2026;

CONCERNED by the increasing trend of non-academic institutions and individuals issuing honorary doctorates without proper scholarly evaluation;

FURTHER CONCERNED that such practice undermines the credibility of genuine academic achievements and diminish the respect for legitimate academic credentials;

RECALLING that traditionally, honorary doctorates are awarded by accredited academic institutions based on notable scholarly or societal contributions:

NOW, THEREFORE, resolves that the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development—

(a) comes up with a policy that prohibits the issuance of honorary doctorates by non-academic institutions and individuals as well as establishing a criteria that restricts such honors to accredited academic institutions only;

(b) undertakes awareness campaigns to educate the public on the distinction between genuine academic degrees and honorary titles.

HON. MAUNGANIDZE: I second.

HON. MAONEKE: Thank you Madam Speaker. The motion is to abolish the issuance of honorary doctorates by non-academic institutions and individuals. Madam Speaker Ma'am, I rise to present a motion that seeks to address an issue that is becoming increasingly concerning within our educational landscape, the

issuance of honorary doctorates by non-academic institutions and individuals.

Background of this situation, the practice of awarding honorary doctorates has traditionally been reserved for individuals of notable achievement, typically by accredited academic institutions. However, we have witnessed the proliferation of non-academic entities that issue such honours, often devoid of any legitimate scholarly evaluation. This trend has not only diluted the value of the title, 'Dr', but has also led to significant confusion and concern within the academic community and the public.

Madam Speaker, of concern is the erosion of academic integrity. The indiscriminate granting of honorary doctorates by non-academic entities undermines the credibility of genuine academic accomplishments. Exploitation and abuse are instances where these honours are issued in exchange for monetary compensation or other favours, creating an unethical environment that commodifies academic recognition.

Public confusion: the existence of numerous individuals bearing honorary titles can mislead the public and diminish respect for legitimate academic credentials.

The impact on the education system: this practice distracts from the value of scholarly work and the achievements which are essential for the growth and development of our educational system.

My proposal, Madam Speaker, is that we take legislative action to abolish the issuance of honorary doctorates by non-academic institutions and by individuals. Also, to establish clear regulations, thus formulating a framework that defines the criteria for awarding honorary titles and limiting it to accredited academic institutions only.

Secondly, raising awareness and promoting understanding among the public regarding the distinctions between genuine academic degrees and honorary titles to mitigate confusion.

Last but not least, enforcement of compliance, thus empowering relevant authorities to monitor and enforce compliance with this new standard, ensuring that any violations are met with

appropriate penalties. Expected outcomes - [HON. MEMBERS:
Inaudible interjections.] -

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Order Hon. Members!

Order! You may continue Hon. Member.

HON. MAONEKE: Thank you Madam Speaker. I was on expected outcomes, restoring the integrity and value of the title ‘Dr.’ within education and professional sectors.

2. Eliminating confusion and establishing clear distinctions between genuine academic qualifications and honorary awards. Lastly, upholding ethical standards in academic recognition and promoting a culture of meritocracy.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I urge my fellow Members of this august House to support this motion aimed at abolishing the issuance of honorary doctorates by non-academic institutions and educating individuals. By taking this step, we protect the integrity and the dignity of our academic titles and uphold the principles of excellence and integrity in our education system.

I move that this motion be considered and referred to the relevant Committee for further deliberations. So, I submit.

HON. MAUNGANIDZE: I rise to second the motion so aptly moved by Hon. Maoneke on the urgent need to preserve the integrity, credibility and value of honorary doctorates and other academic titles in Zimbabwe.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, before addressing the substance of this motion, it is important to appreciate the history and purpose of honorary doctorates. The tradition dates back to the mediaeval universities of Europe, with one of the earliest recorded honorary doctorates being conferred by the University of Oxford in 1478. Since then, universities throughout the world have used honorary degrees or honorary codes of meaning for the sake of honour to recognise individuals who have rendered exceptional service to humanity, advanced knowledge, demonstrated exemplary leadership or made remarkable contributions to society.

Unlike earned doctoral degrees, honorary doctorates are not obtained through years of coursework, original research, examination or the defence of a doctoral thesis. Rather, they

represent one of the highest distinctions that a university can bestow upon an individual whose life and work reflect the ideas of scholarship, excellence and public service. Their prestige has always rested upon the integrity, selectivity and academic credibility of the institutions that confer them.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, for centuries, universities have guarded this privilege carefully because the authority to confer academic honours flows from academic autonomy, scholarly excellence and recognised quality assurance systems. It is this long-standing tradition that distinguishes genuine honorary doctorates from those issued outside recognised institutions of higher learning. The authority to confer such honours has never been an open privilege available to any organisation or individual but a responsibility exercised by accredited universities in accordance with rigorous academic principles.

The motion before the House is therefore both timely and necessary. It is not an attack on the practice of awarding honorary doctorates, for they remain an important means through which universities acknowledge exceptional contributions to society.

Rather, it addresses the growing concern that organisations and individuals with neither academic standing nor legal authority are increasingly purporting to confer honorary doctorates.

Such practices blur the distinction between genuine academic honours and unofficial recognition, thereby weakening public confidence in legitimate institutions of higher learning.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, the mover of the motion has comprehensively outlined the regulatory concerns surrounding this matter; hence, I will not be repetitive.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe recognises education as a fundamental human right under Section 75, while Section 194 requires public institutions to be governed by the principles of professionalism, accountability, transparency and integrity. These constitutional values are equally applicable to institutions of higher learning. Universities are custodians of knowledge, scholarship and innovation. They are entrusted with producing the professionals, researchers and leaders upon whom our country's future depends.

Protecting the integrity of academic honours therefore contributes directly to strengthening constitutional governance and public confidence in our educational system.

Zimbabwe has, over many decades, built an ineffable reputation as one of Africa's leading centres of higher education. Our universities have produced distinguished judges, legal practitioners, medical practitioners, engineers, scientists, economists and innovators whose contributions continue to be recognised across the region and beyond.

Many students from neighbouring countries are chosen in Zimbabwe because of the quality and credibility of our higher education institutions. That reputation has been earned through decades of rigorous scholarship, quality assurance and academic excellence. It is, therefore, a national asset that must be jealously guarded.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, the Second Republic has placed education at the heart of the national transformation through Heritage-Based Education 5.0, which emphasises teaching, research, innovation, industrialisation and community service. This

approach seeks to transform universities into engines of economic growth and innovation as Zimbabwe progresses towards the attainment of Vision 2030. Such an ambitious national agenda depends upon institutions whose qualifications and academic honours continue to enjoy unquestionable credibility both nationally and internationally.

Protecting the integrity of honourary doctorates therefore supports the broader national objective of building a knowledge-driven economy founded on excellence, innovation and integrity.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, universities occupy a unique position in society because they derive their authority not from political power or commercial interests but from intellectual credibility. Every qualification they award carries the reputation of the institution. Likewise, every honorary doctorate reflects the values, standards and judgement of the university that confers it. When a university honours an individual, it is in effect affirming that the recipient embodies excellence, ethical leadership and distinguished service worthy of emulation. Such decisions must

therefore be approached with the highest standards of academic diligence, fairness and integrity.

One of the defining characteristics of honorary doctorates is that they are intentionally rare. Their prestige lies not in the number awarded but in the rigorous processes through which recipients are selected. Across the world, reputable universities subject nominations to scrutiny by academic committees, university senates and governing councils before any honorary degree is approved. Recipients are assessed against objective criteria including integrity, ethical leadership and contribution to knowledge, innovation, national development and service to humanity. Transparency, accountability and institutional oversight remain the hallmarks of internationally respected honorary degree programmes. It is precisely this rigorous process that has preserved the global respect associated with honorary doctorates.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the recent experience of South Africa provides a useful lesson. Following concerns regarding inconsistent practices and the misuse of honorary academic titles, the Council on Higher Education developed a good practice guide on the award of

honorary degrees and honorary professorships. The guide encourages universities to adopt transparent nomination procedures, clear eligibility criteria, ethical standards, consistent institutional policies and public education on the proper use of honorary titles. It recognises that the credibility of higher education depends not only on earned qualifications but also on the integrity of honorary academic awards. Zimbabwe can draw valuable lessons from such international good practice while developing a framework suited to our own legal and institutional context.

Moreover, this issue also concerns the future of genuine scholarship in Zimbabwe. Every year, thousands of Zimbabwean students dedicate years of hard work to postgraduate study. They spend countless hours conducting original research, publishing scholarly work, defending theses before panels of experts and contributing to the advancement of knowledge. Their achievements represent discipline, perseverance and intellectual excellence. Every honorary doctorate conferred outside recognised academic processes inadvertently diminishes the sacrifices of those who have earned doctoral qualifications through rigorous scholarly

endeavour. Parliament therefore has a duty to ensure that genuine academic achievement continues to receive the highest respect and recognition.

At the same time, universities should continue to honour distinguished Zimbabweans whose contributions have transformed society. Outstanding scientists, innovators, educators, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, artists, athletes and community leaders deserve national recognition where their achievements embody the ideals of higher education. However, such honours must always be conferred within a credible academic framework that preserves their prestige and public confidence.

The Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) occupies a central position in safeguarding these standards. As the statutory body responsible for quality assurance in higher education, ZIMCHE has both the mandate and the institutional responsibility to promote consistency, integrity and excellence across Zimbabwe's universities. Through clear national guidelines, robust quality assurance mechanisms, continuous monitoring and collaboration with accredited institutions, ZIMCHE can ensure that honorary

doctorates continue to reflect the highest standards of academic integrity while preserving the international standing of Zimbabwean higher education.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker Sir, this motion is not about limiting the recognition of distinguished citizens. It is about preserving the dignity of one of academia's highest honours. Honorary doctorates should remain rare, prestigious and reserved for individuals whose contributions genuinely reflect excellence, integrity and service to humanity. As Zimbabwe continues to strengthen its higher education sector under Heritage-Based Education 5.0 and advances towards Vision 2030, we must ensure that academic honours remain worthy of the respect they have commanded for centuries.

I, therefore, urge the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education, working together with the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development and all accredited universities, to exercise rigorous oversight by developing clear national standards, promoting transparency and consistency in the conferment of honorary doctorates, strengthening

quality assurance across institutions and safeguarding the integrity and international reputation of Zimbabwe's academic honours for generations to come.

With those remarks, Mr Speaker Sir, I so second.

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

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 1st September, 2026.

*On the motion of **HON. KAMBUZUMA** seconded by **HON.***

NYANDORO, *the House adjourned at a Quarter-past Five o'clock p.m. until Tuesday, 1st September, 2026.*