PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Thursday, 3rd September, 2026

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

PRAYERS

(THE HON. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE HON. SPEAKER

PROCESSING OF PARLIAMENT IDENTITY CARDS

THE HON. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that arrangements have been made for the processing of Parliament identity cards for all Members of Parliament and staff who currently do not have valid Parliament identity cards. The exercise will be conducted on Tuesday, 8th and Wednesday, 9th September, 2026 from 0900 hours in the morning to 1500 hours in the afternoon in the Special Committee Room No. 1, First Floor. Members of Parliament and staff who require Parliament identity cards are kindly requested to make themselves available for this important exercise.

HON. S. SAKUPWANYA: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of national interest to commend the successful hosting of the 2026 Youth

Model Parliament, a landmark initiative of the Parliamentary Youth Caucus that continues to deepen youth participation in Zimbabwe's democratic governance. Firstly, allow me to express my heartfelt appreciation to you Mr. Speaker Sir, for honouring this programme with your presence. Your attendance Mr Speaker Sir …

THE HON. SPEAKER: Just a second, there is an echo in your presentation. Please proceed. I am sure they are attending to the issue.

HON. S. SAKUPWANYA: As I continue Mr. Speaker, our appreciation of your attendance was not merely ceremonial, it reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to empowering young people and nurturing the next generation of national leaders.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Youth Model Parliament has become one of the most important platforms for developing informed, patriotic and visionary young leaders. It brings together youths from all provinces of Zimbabwe to debate national issues, appreciate parliamentary processes and contribute practical policy solutions to challenges affecting their generation. This year's edition was particularly significant as it gained commendation from the region, with us hosting a delegation of young

Members of Parliament from the Kingdom of Eswatini, strengthening parliamentary diplomacy and regional youth cooperation within SADC. The resulting topic areas that were debated by the young attendees and to be brought to Parliament are as follows:

1. Promoting the creative economy as a catalyst for youth empowerment, employment creation and national development.

2. Transitioning Zimbabwean youth from informal hustling to sustainable and structural economic empowerment.

3. Access to sexual and reproductive health rights services and menstrual health products for young people.

This has set the tone for deliverance as the PYC intends to move these motions which are a direct reflection of the aspirations and priorities of our youth. This programme not only gave our 300 young attendees the platform to experience Parliament and speak to the issues affecting them, but it also helped us in our own understanding of our roles as Members of Parliament in the framing of policy.

On the day in question, each member of the Caucus got to be a minister, a chief whip and some of us even got to even sit in your seat

Mr. Speaker, giving us an experience that will enhance our competence and confidence as young parliamentarians.

Before I close Mr. Speaker, it is important that I highlight that the Parliamentary Youth Caucus still request that it be considered well in the Standing Rules and Orders of Parliament so as to comprehend and complement on our efforts to make sure that our work is delivered as effectively and efficiently as we can.

I, therefore, applaud the Parliamentary Youth Caucus, Parliament of Zimbabwe, development partners in which I must mention by name, the Zimbabwe Institute and the Zimbabwe Youth Council and every young participant for making this initiative a resounding success. I so submit.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Thank you very much modern Parliament was exceptionally well organised. Thank you. Congratulations.

HON. V. MOYO: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I rise to bring to the attention of this august House, an issue of national importance concerning our primary health workers. I remember sometime in

December, I stood up on a point of national interest after the withdrawal of funding by the US Government on our healthcare. These workers worked hard in helping and trying to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Government has responded to the issue by taking these workers into Government, particularly those who have for many years been at the frontline of Zimbabwe's response to HIV and AIDS. I wish at the onset to commend Government for its policy decision to incorporate primary health workers into the Public Service Commission. This is a progressive and welcome development which recognises the indispensable contribution that these cadres make to our national health system.

For many years, these dedicated health workers have operated under difficult circumstances, including uncertainty and inconsistencies in remuneration arising from their dependence on funding from the Global Fund. Their incorporation into the public service therefore represents an important step towards providing them with greater employment stability, dignity and recognition.

The importance of these workers cannot be overstated. They are not merely auxiliary personnel; they are the foot soldiers of our national HIV response. They work within communities, often under challenging conditions, identifying people requiring treatment, supporting those living with HIV and helping to prevent new infections. As Zimbabwe continues to pursue the goal of reducing HIV incidence, we must strengthen the community-level systems that support prevention and treatment. It is particularly important that people who are on antiretroviral therapy (ART) are closely monitored and adequately supported to adhere to their medication.

Consistent adherence is critical to achieving viral suppression, improving the health of people living with HIV and reducing the risk of onward transmission. In this regard, counselling must remain an integral component of HIV services. Our primary health workers are uniquely positioned to provide the counselling, follow-up and community-based support required to ensure that patients do not discontinue treatment or take their medication inconsistently.

We cannot expect these health workers to carry such a significant national responsibility while leaving their own welfare unattended. I therefore wish to make an appeal to Government concerning those primary health workers who have served the nation for many years, some for even more than two decades and are now reaching the end of their service without any meaningful gratuity or terminal benefit in recognition of the years they have devoted to our people. It is a matter of fairness and justice that a person who has given 20 or more years of their productive life to the service of this country should not simply walk away from employment empty-handed and without any tangible recognition of that service.

I, therefore, implore Government, as it integrates these workers into the Public Service Commission, to consider a fair and appropriate gratuity or transitional benefit for those who have served for many years under the previous arrangements. This is not merely a question of money. It is a question of recognition, dignity and fairness in employment. We must ensure that our policies do not inadvertently leave behind the very people who have sustained our public health programmes at community level for decades.

Those who have dedicated themselves to protect the health of our communities deserve to leave the service with dignity**.** I, therefore, urge the Ministry of Health, working together with the Public Service Commission and the Treasury, to urgently examine this matter and establish an appropriate mechanism for recognising the long and dedicated service of these primary health workers. Let us celebrate their incorporation into the public service, not only by changing their employment status, but also by ensuring that their years of sacrifice are properly acknowledged and rewarded. *Twalumba loko*. I thank you.

HON. MAONEKE: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I wish to raise a matter of significant national importance that signals a defining turning point in our country's economic recovery trajectory and our foreign policy objectives. It has been confirmed that the United Kingdom and France have formally agreed to co-chair the new Debt Consultative Group (DCG) to structure Zimbabwe's debt settlement strategy under the Structured Dialogue Platform.

This development is not merely administrative; it is a profound testament to the efficacy of this Government's "Engagement and Re-Engagement" policy. For years, the burden of our external debt hindered our ability to access affordable international credit and stifled our potential for rapid economic expansion. The willingness of the United Kingdom and France, two major global economies to steer the committee responsible for restructuring our debt sends an equivocal message to the international community.

It signifies restored confidence. By co-chairing this process, these nations have signaled a renewed willingness to work alongside Zimbabwe in resolving longstanding arrears, effectively endorsing our commitment to structural economic reforms.

Diplomatic maturity, this partnership proves that our diplomatic re-engagement efforts are bearing tangible fruits. Moving from isolation to collaborative dialogue with key Western partners is a critical achievement that strengthens our standing in the global arena. Mr. Speaker Sir, the benefits of this new development by the UK and France cannot be overstated. If you think of improved debt sustainability, with the guidance of such experienced international stakeholders, we are in better positions to formulate a credible sustainable and phased roadmap to address our external debt obligations. Think of enhanced investment climate. International investors look for stability and clear pathways for fiscal management. Having the UK and France intimately involved in our debt resolution framework acts as a seal of approval which will help derisk the Zimbabwean market and encourage Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Access to capital markets, resolving these arrears is the prerequisite for unlocking new affordable lines of credit. This will allow our industry, agriculture and infrastructure sectors to access the capital they need to modernise and grow. This aligns intimately with our President’s mantra and development philosophy of being a friend to all and enemy to none, whilst leaving no one and no place behind.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, while this international support is a major win, the hard work of internal fiscal discipline and economic reform remains the responsibility of this House. We must maintain our commitment to the reforms that brought us to this table. I urge this

Parliament to recognise this achievement as a call to redouble our efforts in domestic policy implementation, ensuring that we create an environment where we can capitalise on this renewed international goodwill for the benefit of every Zimbabwean. I submit.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Yes, there is hope at the end of the tunnel regarding our international and domestic debt. I stand guided by the Acting Chief Whip.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I move that all Orders of the Day be stood over until Order of the Day Number 19 has been disposed of. I thank you.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC WORKS AND NATIONAL HOUSING ON A PETITION FROM RESIDENTS OF CHIPINGE ON

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY ISSUES AT CHIPINGE TOWN COUNCIL

HON. DR. NJANJI: Mr. Speaker Sir, I move the motion standing in my name that this House considers and adopts the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing on a Petition from residents of Chipinge on governance and accountability issues at Chipinge Town Council.

HON. NYAKUYEDZWA: I second.

HON. DR. NJANJI: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I present the report on behalf of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing on the petition from the residents of Chipinge on governance and accountability issues at Chipinge Town Council. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker Sir, I will move on to the introduction.

Introduction

According to Section 149 of the Constitution, read together with Standing Order No. 191 and Appendix E of the Standing Rules and Orders, every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has the right to petition Parliament to consider any matter within its authority, including the enactment, amendment or repeal of legislation. To this end, the Committee received a petition from the residents of Chipinge, led by Mr. Godwill Mlambo, who besought Parliament to look into governance and accountability issues at Chipinge Town Council. In terms of its mandate, the Committee resolved to conduct an enquiry on the governance, financial management and sales delivery practices of Chipinge Town Council.

Petitioner’s Grievances

The petitioner was aggrieved by the issues of non-transparency and accountability failures in the operations of Chipinge Town Council as reviewed by the Auditor General's report for the years ending 31 December 2022 and 2023, both of which issued adverse opinions.

Petitioner’s prayers

The petitioners implored Parliament to exercise its oversight role by;

(a) Undertaking an urgent oversight visit to Chipinge Town Council to assess governance, financial management and sales delivery practices.

(b) Summoning Chipinge Town Council officials to explain the non-implementation of the Auditor General's recommendations from 2022 and 2023.

(c) Directing the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works to enforce compliance with budget consultation requirements under section 219 of the Urban Councils Act and the Circular 3 (2012).

(d) Investigating the current billing rate and setting framework constituted by Chipinge Town Council.

Methodology

The Committee received oral evidence from the following stakeholders:

(a) Mr. Godwill Mlambo, the lead petitioner

(b} Chipinge Town Council, led by Chairperson, Councillor Kingston Dlumo

(c) Town Secretary, Mr. James Mutemera and

(d) Ministry of Local Government and Public Works.

The Committee further conducted a fact-finding visit to Chipinge Town Council from 5th to 8th March, 2026 and held a public hearing in Chipinge. The evidence gathered from the visit and the oral evidence sessions from these different stakeholders provided the Committee with enough information to come up with a comprehensive report on the issues raised by the petitioner.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

Nepotism on Recruitment of Senior Council Officials

The petitioner had raised allegations of nepotism in the recruitment of senior management, including the current Town Treasurer, Mr. J. Mbudzana and the Housing Director. The Committee found out that the recruitment of senior officials of council was done according to the set principles and guidelines of recruitment. Documentary evidence in the form of recruitment documentation such as shortlisting minutes, attendance registers and interview records and a letter of confirmation from the Local Government Board dated 16th

April, 2025, indicated that the recruitment process was conducted in accordance with the established procedures.

The evidence given to the Committee confirmed that the interviews were attended and observed by representatives from the Public Service Commission and the District Development Coordinator's Office which provided an additional layer of oversight and transparency. This evidence exonerated the Town Council from any allegation of nepotism in the recruitment process.

To further demonstrate that the recruitment procedures were conducted in a transparent and procedurally compliant manner, the council availed additional documentation relating to other senior appointments made during the same period. A review of these records revealed that the appointments were undertaken through commutative processes consistent with the applicable regulatory framework.

Management of Council recreational and development assets

The petitioner raised several allegations relating to the management and use of public recreational and development spaces within the town. These included claims that the Chipinge Golf Course had been converted into residential stands and secondly, the public swimming pool facilities had been converted into commercial premises which were poorly maintained despite the payment of lease fees by the tenants. However, the visit conducted by the Committee found out that the Chipinge Golf Course area had not been sold contrary to the allegations made in the petition.

No residential stands had been sold within the golf course area and the land has instead been earmarked for the development of the new Central Business District (CBD) for the local authority.

Records obtained by the Committee further revealed that the Chipinge Town Council had already designated an alternative site for the development of a golf course as reflected in its master plan which was currently awaiting approval by the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Public Works.

The Swimming Pool Area

With regard to the public swimming area, the Committee established that the swimming pool formed part of the Council Stand No. 281 which houses the Town Council's offices. The allegations by the petitioner that the swimming pool area had been sold could not be substantiated. Chipinge Town Council had been leasing out changing rooms within the swimming pool area to generate revenue intended to support service delivery. The swimming pool was still under the ownership of the council and was earmarked for the rehabilitation in the 2026 budget cycle. Council was receiving monthly rentals from the tenants although the makeshift changing rooms were in a deplorable state.

It was further gathered that notices of vacation had been issued out to the current occupants of the changing rooms to make way for the rehab and refurbishment exercise.

Service Delivery and Public Infrastructure

The petitioner raised concerns regarding the deterioration in service delivery, particularly road maintenance, sewer and water infrastructure, billing processes and refuse collection. Findings from the public hearing indicated that service delivery had improved under the council's stewardship of the current management and councillors. The public rejected the petition in its entirety, arguing that they were not involved in its crafting and subsequent submission to Parliament. While acknowledging that the challenges in service delivery still remain significant, improvements have been made, particularly in water and sewer infrastructure.

Devolution funds were credited for providing piped water supply to Chipinge Town Council's wards.

Furthermore, the Committee was informed that the persistent issues were largely linked to economic constraints, incomplete projects and the need for enhanced community engagement and public-private partnerships to accelerate service delivery.

Billing and Rate Collection

The petitioner raised key issues on unfair billing systems, high-rate charges and non-involvement of residents in rate reviews transpiring at Chipinge Town Council. From the oral evidence session with the council's management and the council Chairperson, the Committee was informed that the Town Council implemented the valuation roll for rate billing setting on 1 January 2025 to ensure fairness, affordability and transparency in rate billing. The implementation was informed by the recommendations of the Auditor-General's observations from Chipinge's billing system which had previously relied on a flat and fixed-rate model. The system has since been automated leading to enhanced transparency, improved efficiency and more accurate billing processes. Despite this switch to automated billing, the Committee found out that widespread non-payment of rates was still prevalent.

Budget Consultation and Community Engagement

The petitioner raised concerns regarding inadequate consultation of residents during the budget formulation process. The petitioner highlighted that consultation meetings were frequently conducted during weekdays, thereby limiting the public's ability to participate. Furthermore, concerns by the petitioner raised that some consultation meetings were held concurrently in different wards, creating conflicted scheduling and budget objections were ignored.

However, the evidence gathered by the Committee extinguished the allegations made by the petitioner. The council presented evidence in the form of budget approval letters from the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, attendance registers for budget consultations, minutes of meetings for objections consideration and adverts for budget consultations. It was evidently clear from the evidence that the petitioners' allegations lacked merit. Furthermore, from the documentary evidence received by the Committee, Chipinge Town Council follows the dictates of Section 219 of the Urban Councils Act and Section 49 (1) of the Public Finance Management Act on budget preparation.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ISSUES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT FINDINGS

The petitioner raised concern over adverse audit opinions for the year 2022 and 2023 Chipinge Town Council audit reports. The Committee was informed that the recurrence of the adverse audit opinion in 2023 was a result of time constraints in implementing the 2022 audit recommendations. Out of the eight recommendations made by the Auditor General, Chipinge Town Council had implemented four recommendations, which are the computation of the beer levy, implementation of a valuation roll for billing, biological assets valuation and made significant headway in implementing IPSAS standards. Key to note was that the segment report was still a work in progress and all the outstanding accounts had been finalised and were due for submission to the Office of the Auditor General. The Committee was furnished with documentary evidence on the council's implementation of recommendations of the Auditor General.

KEY AUDIT ISSUES.

Water Infrastructure Grant Management

The Auditor General's reports identified that a USD 2 million grant provided for water infrastructure was not recorded as income in the council's financial statements. The Committee gathered that the grant was a donation managed entirely by the United Nations Office for Project Services with no direct disbursement to the council. In this regard, the council did not record the funds and ultimately could not quantify the value of work undertaken. The Committee found that the donation by UNOPS was beyond the council's ability to control and despite the council's request for financial information relating to the project, correspondence received from UNOPS provided to the Committee indicated that the requested information could only be accessed through the United Nations Board of Auditors or the UNOPS Internal Audit Group.

Biological Assets Management

As far as biological assets were concerned, the petitioner had raised serious allegations concerning the mismanagement of biological assets, particularly cattle. The Committee established that council owned thirty cattle which were under the stewardship of a cattle herder remunerated for USD600 per month. However, due to persistent land and grazing shortages and escalating operational costs, the cattle project was ultimately rendered unsustainable.

The Committee gathered that the council's decision was made to dispose of the cattle through a public auction conducted on 29th December, 2025. Documentary evidence in the form of a notice of auction was availed to the Committee and the disposal of biological assets followed the proper procedure of asset disposal and the petitioner's allegations were unsubstantiated.

COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS

The Committee observed that despite switching from a fixed rate billing system to an automated approach to billing, non-payment of bills was still continuing as a result of an information gap on the understanding of the current billing system by the residents of Chipinge Town Council.

The Committee observed that the capacity building for councillors was inadequate in terms of conducting ward feedback meetings. Furthermore, it was observed that there was a lack of alternative public engagement methods on budget consultations through electronic media. Although the council was adhering to the Urban Councils Act in gazetting proposed tariffs and rates in newspapers, it was observed that the dissemination of information was not utilising various media such as community radio, SMS notifications and its social media platforms.

The Committee observed that the building structures within the swimming pool area had significantly deteriorated and were now in a dilapidated condition, posing a serious safety risk to occupants.

The Committee observed that inaccessibility to council information by the public was the main force driving the misplaced allegations of financial misconduct and maladministration at Chipinge Town Council.

The Committee observed that Chipinge Town Council had made significant progress in implementing recommendations of the Auditor-General. However, much still remains to fully comply with the provisions of the Public Finance Management Act with regard to the timely submission of audited financial statements.

The allegations made in the report were not validated during the Committee’s intensive enquiry on governance and accountability issues at Chipinge Town Council. In this regard, the Committee observed that the allegations were either blown out of proportion or exaggerated by the petitioner without concrete facts.

The outcome of the public hearing with residents of Chipinge painted a different picture to that of the petition. The Committee observed that the residents were at loggerheads with the prayer and grievances of the petition clearly discrediting its intent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works must provide capacity building for councillors on public consultation, financial literacy and effective communication strategies on an annual basis.

Chipinge Town Council must employ alternative engagement methods, particularly on budget consultations such as virtual meetings and radio consultations to increase inclusivity and accessibility by 31 October 2026.

Chipinge Town Council must conduct outreach programmes to educate residents on billing procedures and provide detailed billing statements to increase transparency and trust in council operations by 30 August 2026.

Chipinge Town Council must enhance accessibility of information on the use of funds by clearly linking revenue generated from leases to specific community benefits, thereby strengthening financial transparency and accountability by 31 August 2026.

Going forward, Chipinge Town Council must craft a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure full disclosure and transparency for any donation from development partners.

Going forward, Chipinge Town Council must comply with the provisions of the PFMA to timeously submit its audited financial statements to the Office of the Auditor-General as outlined in sections 49 and 35 of the Public Finance Management Act.

CONCLUSION

The enquiry into governance and accountability issues at Chipinge Town Council demonstrated that the council had a pattern of merit-based governance, adherence to legal and financial regulations, proactive infrastructure management and commitment to service delivery. The issues raised by the petitioner were misleading and the evidence gathered from oral evidence sessions, including the visit to Chipinge, documentary evidence and the public hearing was based on the petitioner’s allegations.

The council’s proactive approach to implementing audit recommendations, safeguarding of recreational assets and transparent handling of its recruitment process and infrastructure projects demonstrates a commitment to accountability. The recommendations outlined in this report provide a roadmap to further strengthen governance, enhance financial transparency and improve public engagement. It is the fervent expectation of the Committee that these recommendations will be given serious consideration so as to strengthen the council's thrust towards excellence in service provision and good corporate governance. I thank you.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Thank you very much Hon. Dr. Njanji for the titivating report. I do not want to suspect that you did not find anything substantial because the spirit of the traditional leader there, Ndunge, might have prevailed on you to come up with a very positive report. Well done indeed.

HON. NYAKUEDZWA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. Ndunge passed away two years ago, so no one bewitched us.

THE HON. SPEAKER: The sons and daughters are there my friend. I am well informed and they are performing very well. Some of us are clients there.

HON. NYAKUEDZWA: Two sons *vakunamata kwaMarange.*

THE HON. SPEAKER: Thank you.

HON. NYAKUEDZWA: Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the concerns raised in the petition from the residents of Chipinge regarding governance and accountability at Chipinge Town Council as detailed in the Fourth Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, 2026. I fully support Parliament's oversight role, but it is imperative that we base our assessments on evidence and comprehensive investigations.

The Committee's thorough enquiry has demonstrated that the allegations of maladministration, nepotism and financial mismanagement were largely unsubstantiated. The investigations included a fact-finding visit, oral testimonies from all stakeholders, including the petitioner, council officials and the Ministry of Local Government. Concrete documentary evidence showed that recruitment of senior officials was merit-based, with oversight from independent bodies such as the Public Service Commission and Local Government Board. This follows best practice models visible in countries like

Rwanda which have been lauded for transparent public sector recruitment to curb nepotism and building professional local governance.

Mr. Speaker Sir, with respect to asset management, concerns about the misuse of public recreational facilities, specifically the golf course and swimming pool were thoroughly investigated. The Committee clarified that the golf course land has not been compromised, but earmarked for future development aligned with urban planning priorities similar to urban renewal initiatives in South Africa's eThekwini Municipality where balancing development with public recreational spaces is a delicate but transparent process.

On the swimming pool, while some leased facilities were in disrepair, the council has shown commitment to rehabilitating these assets within the current budget cycle, reflecting adaptive management amidst economic challenges.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, service delivery improvements on water, sewage, roads and refuse collection were noted by the public during hearings, contrasting with the petition's negative portrayals. Importantly, the Committee recognised economic constraints and infrastructure completion as factors impacting service quality and reality not unique to Zimbabwe but common in many African cities like Lusaka in Zambia where financial limitations slow infrastructure upgrades, yet ongoing efforts continue steadily.

On financial management and billing system, the council moved from a flat rate model to an automated valuation roll-based billing system as recommended by the Auditor General. This aligns with reforms implemented in Botswana where digital billing improved transparency and efficiency in Local Government revenue collection. However, the report candidly notes ongoing challenges with non-payment of rates, calling for intensified public education and outreach, recommendations the Committee wisely emphasised.

The Committee's observations on public consultations highlight the need for innovation in civic participation. The petition's claims of inadequate consultation were disproven by documented evidence, yet the Committee rightly urges increased utilisation of electronic platforms and community media to broaden engagement. This is reflective of progressive governance in Ghana and Kenya where digital tools and radio forums have significantly increased local citizen involvement.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, in conclusion, the Committee report paints a picture of a council committed to improving governance, accountability and social delivery within a challenging socio-economic environment. The petition's allegations can thus be seen as overstated and non-reflective of the collective voice of Chipinge residents, many of whom expressed satisfaction with current management during the public hearing.

Going forward, Parliament should reinforce support for capacity building, transparency and community engagement to consolidate gains at the Chipinge Town Council. Our experience from other African countries shows that sustainable local governance change requires a collaborative effort between elected officials, civil servants, citizens and development partners. I, therefore, urge this Honourable House to adopt the Committee's recommendations and continue to exercise robust oversight while supporting local authorities in their mandate to deliver quality services with integrity. I so submit.

HON. MATEWU: On a point of order Madam Speaker Ma'am!

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

HON. MATEWU: Madam Speaker Ma'am, it must be noted that the Auditor General, for the past three financial years, has given the Chipinge Town Council an adverse report. An adverse report means that the financials are so misstated and that they do not comply with the financial regulations and with the Public Finance Management Act. It must also be noted that the Public Accounts Committee will visit Manicaland next month on this matter. To say that the financials of Chipinge are in order, that is not factually correct given the Auditor General's report. I so submit.

HON. MAVHUDZI: Thank you very much Madam Speaker Ma'am, for allowing me this opportunity to also add my voice on this report. I rise to support the report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government and Public Works concerning the Petition on Governance and Financial Management and Service Delivery at Chipinge Town Council. As Parliament, our responsibility is to listen, investigate, establish facts and ensure accountability. I want to commend the

Committee for undertaking consultations, engaging the petitioner and council for conducting a fact-finding visit and holding a public hearing. The Committee found several allegations contained in the petition that could not be substantiated.

On alleged nepotism, the Committee found no sufficient evidence to support the allegations and established that the recruitment procedures had been followed with relevant oversight. On the golf course, the Committee established that it had not been sold for residential stands but was earmarked for development of a new central business district, with a replacement of the golf course provided in the new master plan.

At the same time, in supporting this report, it does not mean that Chipinge Town Council is perfect. There are real challenges. The swimming pool, for example, remains council property but has deteriorated significantly and requires rehabilitation. Public assets must not merely exist on the asset register, but they must be maintained and made useful to communities as they are intended to serve.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, I welcome the introduction of an automated valuation roll-based billing system in Chipinge. However, billing reform must be accompanied by communication. If residents receive bills they do not understand, they will question them and may fail to pay. Local authorities must therefore improve billing education and provide statements and strengthen engagement with residents.

I also support the Committee's emphasis on public consultations. Local compliance is not always the same as meaningful participation. A newspaper advertisement may satisfy the law, but the real question is whether ordinary citizens knew about the meeting, understood the proposals and were given a genuine opportunity to influence decisions.

I now wish also to connect this report to a broader question of devolution. Chipinge experience demonstrates that local authorities cannot be expected to carry devolved responsibilities without adequate resources, capacity building and institutional support. This is where the issue of provincial councils comes into play. Provincial councils are very important because they help with the proper functioning of local authorities. A properly functioning provincial council could provide coordination between Chipinge Town Council and other local authorities, Government ministries, technical agencies and development partners. It could help to coordinate water and sewer projects and support spatial planning, facilitate technical assistance and identify local government problems before they become a crisis.

In other words, provincial councillors can become a bridge between the Central Government and local authorities. However, for this system to work, we need a clear legislative framework. I, therefore, call upon the Government to table the Devolution Bill before this House and operationalise provincial councils which are a critical facet of our Local Government system. We cannot continue to speak about devolution merely as a constitutional aspiration. With this, I support this report. I thank you.

HON. CHITIMBE: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. I rise to support the adoption of the Fourth Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing on the petition from the residents of Chipinge regarding governance and accountability issues at Chipinge Town Council. This petition allowed Parliament to investigate serious allegations raised by residents. Evidence was received from the petitioner, Chipinge Town Council, the Ministry of Local Government and members of the public.

A fact-finding visit was also conducted in Chipinge. The findings showed that many allegations were not supported by evidence. The Committee established that the recruitment of senior council officials followed the proper procedures and there was no proof of nepotism. It was also established that the Chipinge Golf Course was not converted into a residential stand as alleged.

In addition, service delivery challenges still exist, particularly in road maintenance, refuse collection and infrastructure development. However, improvements in water and sewer services were noted through devolution funds. Another important issue is communication between the council and residents. Many residents do not fully understand the automated billing system, resulting in mistrust and non-payment of rates. The council must improve public education and provide clear and transparent billing statements. Residents must also be given meaningful opportunities to participate in budget consultations through community meetings, radio programmes, social media and other accessible platforms.

I support the Committee's recommendation that the ministry should strengthen the capacity of councillors. The council should improve public engagement, educate residents on billing and ensure transparency in the use of public funds. Accountability, transparency and community participation are the foundation of good local governance. I, therefore, urge this House to adopt and support this report.

HON. MAPOSA: I rise to support the adoption of the Fourth Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing on the petition concerning government and accountability issues at Chipinge Town Council. I wish to commend the Committee for conducting a thorough and balanced and evidence-based enquiry through oral evidence, documented verification, an effective-finding visit and a public hearing before reaching its conclusion. This demonstrates the parliamentary constitutional oversight responsibility of ensuring that every petition brought before this House is assessed objectively and fairly.

This report highlights that accountability must always be grounded in verifying facts. The petition raised serious allegations relating to nepotism, financial management, poor sales delivery and inadequate public consultation. However, after examining recruitment records, financial documents and hearing submissions from both residents and council officials, the Committee found that none of these allegations could be substantiated. This reinforces the principle that Parliament protects both the right of citizens to petition and the integrity of the public institution through a partial investigation process.

I am encouraged by the Committee's findings that Chipinge Town Council has made measurable progress in strengthening cooperative governance and financial statements. The implementation of several Auditor-General recommendations, the adoption of an automated valuation-based billing system, progress towards compliance with the public financial management standard demonstrate a commitment to improving accountability. Nevertheless, the council must continue implementing all outstanding audit recommendations and ensure the timely submission of audited financial statements to promote transparency and public confidence.

One of the key government directions from this report is the need to strengthen communication and public participation, inviting all stakeholders whenever they prepare their budgets. The Committee observed that the limited access to council information contributes to mistrust and misunderstanding and misinformation among residents despite the council complying with the statutory consultation requirements. I, therefore, strongly commend outreach and radio platforms, visual consultation and public education and billing procedures and the automation of council revenues.

In conclusion, this report provides an important roadmap for strengthening local governance and transparent safe delivery not only in Chipinge but across all the local authorities in Zimbabwe. Information is key. Meaningful citizen participation and responsible management of public resources. I, therefore, urge this House to adopt the Committee report and its recommendations in full so that confidence in local authorities continues to strengthen through good governance and improve safe deliveries in our communities across the whole country. I submit.

HON. BUTAU: Thank you Madam Speaker for giving me an opportunity to support the report on Chipinge Road Council by our Committee, headed by our Chairman, Hon. Dr. Njanji. I would like to start by clarifying that the Local Government Committee is not responsible for public accounts. What we do is that we fall under the Local Government Act and that is what we supervise. Our visit to Chipinge was motivated by a petition which is a citizen's right to communicate directly with Parliament. That on its own is an important role of Parliament.

The challenges faced by Chipinge Road Council are a product of communication which in some cases creates a facade, a veneer of lack of transparency and is not accountable to the accounting system of auditors, as others may wish to suggest to this House. Petition’s prayers, in this case, caused the Committee to visit Chipinge Rural Council and established, in my view, that one of the challenges is their poor interaction with the Ministry of Local Government, the poor implementation of ICT in the system of local governance and when such systems are absent, there is a tendency that residents, citizens, will see things in an opaque fashion and the visit by the Committee was able to establish that some of the issues that the petitioner raised were therefore not verifiable.

The issue of the availability or non-availability of devolution funds is one of the biggest challenges of our system as we are trying to push the Treasury Department to avail resources for the full implementation of the Devolution Act. The Committee's report recommends that the Ministry of Local Government and the councillors in the various districts of the country should improve or build on a new platform that makes communication transparent and less opaque.

In my view, these are my observations and I recommend that this House endorses and accepts the report as tabled by our Chairperson. I thank you.

HON. CHIDZIVA: Madam Speaker, allow me first to commend the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, under the able leadership of Dr. Maxwell Njanji, Mhizha and indeed, the entire Committee for the thorough and diligent work done in producing this report. I rise to support the mover and seconder of this report.

Madam Speaker, the message from this inquiry is very clear: Chipinge's problem is not simply governance, it is a serious communication and accountability gap and that gap is creating mistrust between council and residents. The recommendations before us therefore cannot become another set of resolutions that gather dust.

First, capacity building for councillors. This must be treated as a necessity, not a routine workshop. Councillors are the bridge between council and the people. If they cannot effectively communicate with residents, explain policies and provide feedback, then mistrust will continue to grow.

Second, alternative communication channels. Madam Speaker, the 31st October, 2026 deadline must mean something. Council cannot continue relying mainly on traditional newspaper notices when residents are listening to radio, using SMS and living on social media. If council has information but residents cannot access it, then council has effectively failed to communicate.

Third, billing education. The Committee found that the automated billing system itself is not the fundamental problem. The problem is that residents do not adequately understand it. So, let us be clear; non-payment caused by poor understanding is a problem council can fix. Council was given a deadline of 30th August 2026 to educate residents. We must demand evidence of what was done, not simply accept another promise.

Fourth, transparency in lease revenue. Residents have every right to ask: how much money was collected, where did it go and what service did it produce? There must be a clear connection between revenue collected and services delivered. Transparency is not a favour to residents; it is an obligation.

Fifth, the USD2 million water grant. Madam Speaker, the confusion surrounding this funding must never happen again. Development partners, council and Government must operate within a clear, documented and verifiable framework. When millions of dollars are involved, there must be no room for ambiguity.

Finally, compliance with Sections 35 and 49 of the Public Finance Management Act is fundamental. Audited and timely financial statements allow Parliament and residents to verify, rather than simply trust how public resources are being managed. Madam Speaker, a report is only as good as its implementation. We must therefore adopt this report but more importantly, we must follow up on every deadline, every recommendation and every commitment. The people of Chipinge do not need more promises. They need results, transparency and accountability. I support the report and I support the mover and seconder. I thank you.

HON. DR. NJANJI: I move that the debate do now adjourn.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume, Tuesday, 8th September, 2026.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: I move that we proceed to Orders of the Day, Numbers 20 and 21 on today's *Order Paper*.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC WORKS AND NATIONAL HOUSING ON A PETITION FROM THE MASHONALAND WEST BUSINESS ASSOCIATION AND THE PROVINCIAL COUNCILS AND ADMINISTRATION BILL

HON. DR. NJANJI: I move the motion standing in my name that this House considers and adopts the report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing on a petition from the Mashonaland West Business Association and the Provincial Councils and Administration Bill.

HON. KANUPULA: I second.

HON. DR. NJANJI:

Introduction.

According to Section 149 of the Constitution, read together with Standing Order No. 191 and Appendix E of the Standing Rules and Orders, every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to petition Parliament to consider any matter within its authority, including the enactment, amendment or repeal of legislation. To this end, the Committee received petitions from Mr. M. Chidyamazana, representing the Mashonaland West Business Association and from Mr. Admire Mutizwa, representing the Zimbabwe Council of Churches. The petitioners besought Parliament to exercise its oversight and legislative roles by expediting the passage of the Provincial Councils and Administration Bill. In terms of its mandate, the Committee resolved to conduct an enquiry into the concerns raised by the petitioners and produced this comprehensive report.

Petitioners Grievances

The petitioners were aggrieved by:

The prolonged delay in the passing of the Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Administration Bill [H. B 5, 2021].

The delay stalling the operationalisation of Provincial and Metropolitan Councils, thereby undermining the constitutional vision of devolved governance.

The absence of empowered provincial structures resulting in persistent challenges in local development planning, delayed service delivery and weakened accountability mechanisms at subnational levels.

Petitioners' Prayer

The petitioners besought Parliament to: Prioritise and expedite the consideration and passage of the Provincial Councils and Metropolitan Administration Bill to unlock the full implementation of devolution in accordance with Chapter 14 of the Constitution.

Exercise its oversight role to ensure that once enacted, the provisions of the Bill are effectively implemented, adequately resourced, and informed by inclusive consultation processes that reflect the voices and needs of Zimbabwean citizens.

Ensure that the Provincial Councils and Metropolitan Administration Bill explicitly promote inclusive representation by mandating the participation of youth, women and persons with disabilities in provincial and metropolitan councils.

Methodology

The Committee received oral evidence from the following stakeholders:

a) The Mashonaland West Business Association

b) The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and;

c) The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works.

The Committee also received written submissions from the Office of the Attorney General.

COMMITTEE FINDINGS

Through its engagement with the petitioners, the Committee established that Chapter 14 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, particularly sections 268 and 269 which provide for the establishment of Provincial and Metropolitan Councils, were still to be fully operationalised notwithstanding its clear constitutional provisions.

The petitioners submitted that the proposed Provincial Councils and Administration Bill would strengthen Provincial and Metropolitan Councils, by stimulating regional development through the establishment of special economic zones and the accelerated implementation of integrated development planning. Whilst the petitioners acknowledged the Government's efforts to advance devolution through the implementation of the National Development Strategy 1 and 2, reservations were however made regarding the pace, scope and effectiveness of its implementation. The continued non-functionality of Provincial and Metropolitan Councils was creating cleavages for continued non-galvanisation of the success achieved under NDS1 as the nation marches on towards Vision 2030.

In response to the issues raised by the petitioners, the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and the Office of the Attorney General acknowledged the issues raised and emphasised the importance of the Bill in as far as national development and participatory governance was concerned. However, despite the urgency and utmost need of the Bill, the Ministry and the Office of the Attorney General highlighted that the promulgation of the Bill had met significant hurdles.

Reasons for the delay

Incoherence in the structure of Provincial Councils

The Committee gathered that the Government gazetted the Provincial Councils and Administration Amendment Bill on the 31st of March 2021. However, the presentation of the Bill to Parliament was delayed to make way for the Constitution Amendment (No. 2) Act of 2021 which sought to amend Section 268 of the Constitution, prior to this amendment, Section 268 provided for the composition of Provincial and Metropolitan Councils to include Senators and Members of the National Assembly. The Committee was informed that this structure raised practical and constitutional challenges as it blurred the separation of roles between Members of Parliament and devolved governance structures. Henceforth, it became imperative to realign the composition of Provincial Councils to ensure coherence, functional independence, and constitutional compliance.

The Committee gathered that delays in the enactment of Constitution Amendment (No. 2) resulted in the lapse of the then Provincial Councils and Administration Amendment Bill. Consequently, a new Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Administration Bill was subsequently drafted.

The Committee was further informed that the new draft was currently under consideration by the Cabinet Committee on Legislation (CCL) as it seeks to align the legislative framework with the 2013 Constitution, as amended, and to clarify the institutional relationships and operational modalities governing devolved governance.

Issues on the current Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Administration Bill

The Committee was informed that the new draft Bill still contains several areas of concern that require further consultation prior to its submission to Parliament for consideration. Key outstanding issues include the following:

1. The precise nature of the relationship between the Office of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution and

Provincial Councils, particularly with respect to coordination, oversight and accountability mechanisms;

2. The delineation of roles and responsibilities across the three tiers of Government to ensure policy coherence, duplication and clear lines of authority and accountability; and
3. The manner in which a unitary State will effectively accommodate and operationalise a devolved system of governance.

These unresolved issues were cited as the primary factors contributing to delays in securing Cabinet approval for the draft Bill.

Committee Observations

The Committee observed that despite the urgency and utmost need of the Bill for the operationalisation of Provincial Councils, it was equally fundamental to comprehend and decipher the complex and sensitive process of devolving functions within a unitary system of government. Given the delicate nature of the tenets of devolution, the Committee notes that due diligence should be given to balancing consequences of transforming a centralised/unitary system into a devolved system.

Secondly, the transfer of governmental powers and responsibilities to lower tiers of Government must be undertaken only when it is appropriate to do so and to those levels of government which are demonstrably competent to exercise those responsibilities. Without creating capacity first, institutions may falter under the weight of increased responsibilities which come with devolution functions and power.

Given the nuanced and far-reaching implications of devolution, the Committee observed the need for the Provincial Councils and Administration Bill to be explicit in defining the role of Ministers of State for Devolution Provincial Affairs under the devolved system of governance. The Bill must be balanced on the fundamentals of governance to ensure an appropriate equilibrium between the imperatives of devolution, unity and stability within the existing unitary framework.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs should prioritise and expedite the gazetting of the Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Administration Bill by the end of the Second Quarter of 2026.

The Government should ensure that the Bill clearly defines the institutional relationship between the Office of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution and Provincial Councils, particularly with respect to coordination, oversight and accountability mechanisms to eliminate ambiguity.

The Bill must explicitly demarcate the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of Government to ensure policy coherence, prevent duplication of functions and establish clear lines of authority and accountability.

The Government should adopt a phased approach to devolution, anchored on institutional readiness, ensuring that functions are only devolved to lower tiers of Government that demonstrably possess the requisite administrative, technical and financial capacity to execute them effectively.

Conclusion

The Committee notes that the concerns raised by the petitioners are both legitimate and urgent, particularly in light of the constitutional imperative to operationalise Provincial and Metropolitan Councils under Chapter 14 of the Constitution. While the Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Administration Bill remains a critical instrument for advancing participatory governance and balanced regional development, its enactment must be approached with careful consideration. Due diligence must be heeded to the structural, institutional and constitutional complexities inherent in devolving power within a unitary State.

Accordingly, the Committee emphasises that the successful implementation of devolution hinges not only on the timely passage of the Bill, but also on the establishment of clear institutional frameworks, the strengthening of capacity at subnational levels and the adoption of a phased and well-coordinated approach. Addressing these issues holistically will ensure that devolution is catalyst for the attainment of Vision 2030.

HON. KANUPULA: I rise to support the report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing on the petition regarding the prolonged absence of the Provincial Metropolitan Council Administration Bill.

As I start, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to the Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. Dr. M. Njanji, for presenting the report. The Committee has gone beyond identifying the delay in enacting a Bill. It has also carefully interrogated the institutional and governance issues that must be addressed to ensure that devolution is implemented effectively and sustainably.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, my contribution is centred on two important issues. Firstly, the success of devolution depends on a clear institutional relationship's ambiguous accountability mechanism.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, one of the most significant findings of the Committee is that the current draft Bill still contains unresolved questions regarding the relationship between the Office of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution. The Committee further found that there remains uncertainty regarding the distribution of functions and responsibilities among the three tiers of government.

These technical issues are fundamental governance questions that will determine whether devolution becomes an engine of development or a source of institutional conflict. Every effective governance system requires clarity regarding who is responsible for what, who supervises whom, who accounts to whom and where ultimate responsibility lies. Without such clarity, institutions will end up duplicating functions and issuing conflicting directives.

Madam Speaker Ma’am, devolution was never intended to create competing centres of authority. Rather, it was designed to bring Government closer to the people while maintaining coherence within our unitary constitutional framework. It is, therefore, imperative that the Provincial and Metropolitan Councils Administration Bill provides an explicit legal framework defining the respective mandates of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Provincial Councils and Local Authorities. Such legislative certainty will strengthen coordination, eliminate unnecessary overlap and improve the efficiency of public administration.

I, therefore, fully support the Committee's recommendation that the Bill should clearly define the institutional relationship between these structures, as well as explicitly demarcate the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of Government.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, successful devolution must be anchored on institutional readiness and capacity, rather than just a transfer of functions. The Committee observes that the implementation of devolution is a complex constitutional reform that must be undertaken with due diligence. It further notes that Government responsibilities should only be devolved to institutions that possess the administrative, financial and technical capacity to execute those responsibilities effectively.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, legislation alone cannot deliver development. Institutions must have the human resources, financial resources, technical expertise and governance systems necessary to translate legislative intentions into tangible improvements in people's lives. Without adequate institutional capacity, devolving functions may unintentionally weaken service delivery, delay development projects and frustrate every community that the devolution is intended to empower.

A first approach, as recommended by the Committee, is therefore not a sign of reluctance or delay. It recognises that sustainable devolution requires careful planning, institutional strengthening and continuous capacity development before additional responsibilities are transferred.

As we pursue Vision 2030 and implement National Development Strategy 2, our objective should be to establish critical councils and institutions that are capable of planning, coordinating and driving inclusive provincial development in an effective and transparent manner.

Accordingly, I strongly support the Committee's recommendation that the Government should adopt a phased approach to devolution, anchored on institutional readiness and measurable capacity. Such an approach will ensure that devolved institutions are equipped to discharge their constitutional mandate effectively and sustainably.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker Ma’am, the Committee's report reminds us that the true measure of devolution is not the enactment of legislation alone, but the establishment of governance institutions that are properly structured, adequately resourced and capable of delivering meaningful development outcomes to every province. For this reason, I fully support the Committee's findings, observations, and recommendations. I so submit. Thank you.

HON. MAPOSA: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma’am for giving me this opportune time to debate on the petition. Madam Speaker Ma’am, I would like to support the adoption of the Second Report of the Committee of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing on the petition that was submitted by the Mashonaland West Business Association of Zimbabwe Council of Churches regarding the prolonged absence of the Provincial Council and Administration Bill. I commend the Committee for undertaking a comprehensive inquiry into this important constitutional matter. The report rightly recognises that devolution is not merely a policy choice but a constitutional obligation under Chapter 14 of the Constitution, which seeks to promote inclusive governance, balanced regional development and greater citizen participation in decision-making.

Madam Speaker Ma’am, the prolonged delay in operationalising Provincial and Metropolitan Councils has created gaps in coordinated provincial planning, accountability and effective service delivery. While Government has made significant progress in implementing devolution through the National Development Strategy, the absence of the enabling legislation continues to limit the full realisation of the constitutional vision of devolved governance. It is therefore important that this House supports measures that will accelerate the legislative process while safeguarding constitutional integrity.

Madam Speaker Ma’am, I appreciate the Committee's balanced approach in acknowledging that the delay has been influenced by legitimate constitutional and institutional considerations. The need to align the Bill with Constitution Amendment No. 2, clearly define the relationship between Ministers of State for Provincial Affairs and

Provincial Councils, and properly delineate responsibilities across the three tiers of Government demonstrates that devolution must be implemented within a coherent and well-coordinated governance framework rather than through a rushed legislative process.

Madam Speaker Ma’am, I strongly support the Committee's recommendation that the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs should expedite the gazetting of the Provincial Councils and Administration Bill. However, the Bill must clearly define coordination, oversight and accountability mechanisms, prevent duplication of functions and ensure that Provincial Councils are equipped with the administrative, technical and financial capacity necessary to discharge devolved responsibilities effectively. A phased and well-planned implementation will strengthen rather than weaken our unitary State.

In conclusion, this report provides a practical roadmap for advancing devolution in a manner that is constitutional, accountable and development-oriented. Operationalising Provincial and Metropolitan Councils will enhance participatory governance, improve local development planning and bring Government closer to the people. I, therefore, urge this House to adopt the Committee's report and its recommendations in full so that devolution becomes a meaningful instrument for achieving Vision 2030. I so submit. Thank you.

HON. NYAKUEDZWA: Madam Speaker, I stand before you today to express my firm support for the comprehensive and critical report presented by the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, concerning the long-standing delay in the enactment of the Provincial Council's Administration Bill.

This report not only highlights the pressing issues faced in operationalising our constitutional mandate, but also provides a clear roadmap towards actualising devolution, regional development and participatory Government in Zimbabwe.

Our Constitution, particularly Chapter 14, lays the foundation for a devolved governance system that seeks to empower our provincial and local structures, bringing Government closer to the people and promoting regional development and equity.

The delay in passing the Provincial Council's Administration Bill is more than just a legislative lapse. It hampers our aspirations for a more participatory and balanced system of governance. The report rightly underscores that devolution is not merely a legislative matter but a constitutional imperative and an imperious national goal aligned with Vision 2030. Madam Speaker, we recognise that true progress cannot be achieved without decentralising authority, strengthening local institutions and empowering our provinces to lead their development trajectories.

The constitutional provisions in Sections 268 and 269 articulate a clear vision for establishing provincial and metropolitan councils as autonomous bodies capable of driving regional development, service delivery and local participation. These structures are designed to facilitate regional planning, resource allocation and accountability. By acknowledging the constitutional mandate, Madam Speaker, we affirm our commitment to constitutionalism and good governance. The delay in enacting the enabling legislation, the Provincial Council's

Administration Bill, has stored this constitutional vision, leaving a vacuum that undermines the very tenet of devolution.

The report emphasises that fully operational provincial councils will stimulate economic development, attract investments and ensure equitable distribution of resources. This is consistent with the directives of national strategies such as the National Development Strategy 1 and 2, which intend to promote regional development and inclusivity.

The petition from the Mashonaland West Business Association and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches reflect genuine frustrations at the prolonged delay in operationalising these constitutional structures. Their concerns, delays in service delivery, weak accountability and fulfilled regional development potentials are valid and immediate. We accept the urgency expressed in this petition. It is our collective responsibility to accelerate the legislative process and implement reforms that serve the public interest.

The Committee's findings and recommendations are anchored in this urgency. Their call to prioritise and expedite the passage of the Bill targeting the end of the second quarter of 2026 is pragmatic and feasible.

It demonstrates a commitment to act decisively without compromising quality or constitutional integrity.

The Constitutional Amendment (No. 2) Bill of 2021 sought to rectify this, aligning provisional structures with constitutional principles, ensuring fractional independence and facilitating effective decentralisation.

Furthermore, the Committee underscores the importance of clarifying the relationship between the Office of the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution and the provincial councils themselves. This is critical to prevent overlaps and conflicts in oversight and coordination.

The Committee advocates for a phased approach, one that emphasises institutional capacity building at the provincial level before devolving substantial powers. This is not only prudent but essential to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of devolved governance.

The report candidly acknowledges that the process of devolving functions within a unitary state is complex and sensitive. The reforms involve constitutional amendments, legislative drafting, institutional restructuring and capacity enhancement, each with its unique challenges. Some of these challenges include achieving consensus across political actors, adequate resourcing and preparing provinces to handle these devolved responsibilities.

Madam Speaker, the delays also offer lessons, namely that reform must be rooted in clear practical frameworks that recognise existing institutional capacities and seek to strengthen them before large-scale devolution.

The report emphasises the importance of coordination among various arms of Government, especially between the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, the Office of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works. Parliament, must play its oversight role vigorously to ensure timely passage, scrutinise proposed amendments and facilitate public participation.

Furthermore, stakeholders such as local authorities, civil society, business associations and community groups must actively engage in consultations to foster inclusive governance and consensus building. In this regard, Madam Speaker, the Government remains committed to creating an enabling environment for participatory processes, ensuring that the legislation reflects the voices and needs of our citizens.

Decentralised decision-making allows local authorities to respond swiftly to community needs, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and improve service provision from health and education to infrastructure and sanitisation. Regional planning and development initiatives such as special economic zones and tourism hubs will attract investment, create jobs and enhance regional competitiveness. The Bill proposes mandatory representation of youth, women and persons with disabilities and aligns with rights-based development and social inclusion.

Local revenue generation and resource allocation will become more efficient and transparent, fostering local accountability and reducing reliance on centralised funding. The report's recommendations provide a pragmatic blueprint. It prioritises the gazetting of the Bill by the end of June 2026, clarifying institutional relationships and roles, especially between provincial councils, the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and the national ministries. It also adopts a phased approach to devolution, emphasising capacity building and institutional strengthening before full decentralisation. It also secures adequate resources and technical support for provincial authorities, conducting direct public education campaigns to foster understanding of devolution and participatory governance. This debate is rooted in our commitment to the nation's constitutional aspirations and global best practice in decentralisation and local governance.

Devolution offers a pathway to social justice, economic equality, and sustainable development. It embodies the people's right to be at the centre of decisions impacting their lives, fostering inclusivity, transparency and accountability. Our Government has always emphasised the importance of institutional reforms, capacity building, and constitutional adherence. Delays in the enactment of the Provincial Councils and Administration Bill are genuinely regrettable but rectifiable. With resolve and collective effort, we shall overcome these hurdles and the fruits of devolution will be realised for the betterment of all Zimbabweans.

In closing, I call upon all Members of Parliament, stakeholders, and citizens to unite behind this noble project of devolution. We must view this process not as a political contest but as a national mission to build a resilient, inclusive and prosperous Zimbabwe. Let us support the implementation of this report's recommendations, advocate for timely legislative action and participate in a timely in fostering dialogue and consensus. The journey towards effective provincial governance is a shared responsibility. I urge the House to reinforce its support to this crucial reform for it is only through collective effort that Zimbabwe can fully realise its constitutional promise of devolution. I so submit.

HON. MAVHUDZI: Thank you Madam Speaker for giving me this opportunity to also debate on this very contemptuous issue of the Provincial and Metropolitan Councils and Administration Bill, also known as the Devolution Bill. Madam Speaker, the petitioner has raised a very fundamental question and the question is; when will the constitutional promise of devolution become a practical reality in Zimbabwe? Maybe we really need to debate this issue with the background that the issue of this piece of legislation was first raised in this House in the early sittings of 2024. We are in 2026, yet the

Provincial and Metropolitan Councils and Administration Bill is yet to find its way to Parliament.

The Attorney General's office promised this very same Committee that the Bill would be brought to Parliament by the end of the year. However, in 2026, nothing has happened. Chapter 14 of the Constitution provides for devolution, while Sections 268 and 269 provide for Metropolitan Councils and Provincial Councils. However, these structures remain incompletely operationalised. The petitioners are therefore right to call for Parliament to expedite the necessary legislation. Devolution is not about creating another layer of Government. It is about bringing decision-making closer to citizens and ensuring that provincial development responds to local economic and infrastructural needs. Provincial Councils can strengthen regional development, integrated development planning and economic initiatives.

I acknowledge the challenge identified by Government, including the relationship between Ministers and Provincial Councils, the division of functions among the three tiers of Government and how devolution should operate within a unitary state. However, these challenges should not become an excuse for indefinite delay. The Executive must respect the dictates of the Constitution and expedite the enactment of this Bill. Whilst I support a further approach to devolution with administrative and technical capacity built in provincial institutions, this process should never be scapegoated to delay devolution. Devolution delayed is development delayed. Devolution delayed is accountability delayed.

This Constitution has established the principle. Our responsibility now is to give this principle institutional life. Let us therefore move from the promise of devolution to the practice of devolution. I so submit Madam Speaker.

HON. DR. NJANJI: I move that the debate do now adjourn.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 8th September, 2026.

MOTION

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE ON THE 2025 THIRD QUARTER BUDGET PERFORMANCE

HON. CHIDUWA: I move the motion in my name that this House considers and adopts the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Industry and Commerce on the 2025 Third Quarter Budget Performance Report for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

HON. MUSHORIWA: I second.

HON. CHIDUWA: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Section 299 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe grants Parliament the authority to oversee and monitor State expenditure and that of its agencies, ensuring that all revenue is properly accounted for, all spending is lawful, and appropriations are implemented within the approved limits and conditions. In addition, Section 33 (2) of the Public Finance Management Act requires every accounting officer to prepare and submit quarterly financial statements and report, which the Minister must then table before the relevant Parliamentary

Portfolio Committee within sixty days after the end of each quarter. Guided by these constitutional and statutory mandates, the Portfolio Committee on Industry and Commerce reviewed the Ministry of Industry and Commerce's Budget Performance Report for the Third Quarter of 2025. This report outlines the Committee's key findings and observations regarding the Ministry's performance during the period under review.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To check whether the Ministry managed to achieve its 2025 Third Quarter Budget performance targets.
2. To check whether the Ministry effectively used the resources in the 2025 third quarter.
3. To proffer recommendations that would assist the Ministry in effectively executing its mandate.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The Committee analysed the 2025 Third Quarter Budget Performance Report from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce with technical assistance from the Parliament Budget Office. The

Committee sought clarity from the Ministry on several issues, which were responded to through an oral evidence session and written submissions.

4.0 COMMITTEE FINDINGS

4.1 The Committee noted that although the Ministry's website was operational, it required further enhancement through the addition of links to key agencies, budget and performance information, public notices, and comprehensive service details. In response, Ministry officials indicated that the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe and SAZ links were already accessible from the Ministry website. The Ministry had since secured the node from SIRDC and ZIMTRADE to put their links on the Ministry website for enhanced public access to sectorial information.

In addition, steps were being taken to improve the platform, including integrating links to SIRDC and ZIMTRADE, expanding public information, introducing a monthly events calendar, updating service-related content, and developing a digital system for the Trade

Measures Department while also leveraging a WhatsApp platform to enhance public engagement and feedback.

4.3 Budget Allocation by Programme

In the third quarter, the Committee noted that the distribution of the allocation reflects an emphasis on industrial development with the largest allocation towards Programme 2 (*Industrialisation*) receiving 57% of the budget for the quarter.

Programme 1 (Policy and Administration) was allocated ZWG 36 034 500 representing about 26% of the total budget. The allocation was intended to support policy coordination, administrative functions, and institutional operations. The Committee further noted that Programme 3 (Consumer Protection and Quality Assurance) received an allocation of ZiG23 917 750 equivalent to approximately 17% of the total third quarter budget. While the programme plays a critical role in safeguarding consumer interests and enforcing quality standards, the relatively lower allocation might limit the scope of regulatory inspections and enforcement activities.

4.4 Budget Allocation by Economic Classification

The Committee noted that in the third quarter, the largest allocation was towards Use of goods and services (32%) reflecting a larger support for the Ministry's operational activities followed by Acquisition of fixed assets (24%) and Compensation of employees (15%). The allocation was in line with allocations for the year.

Budget utilisation by Programme

The Committee noted that Programme 1 (*Policy and Administration*) had a third quarter target of ZiG36 034 500 against which ZiG14 560 351 was disbursed, translating to approximately 40% of the estimated quarter target. Actual expenditure amounted to ZiG6 379 456, translating to approximately 44 % of the funds disbursed and 18% of the estimated target for the programme. The low expenditure outturn may affect implementation of planned administrative activities and service delivery functions of the Ministry. It was also noted that Programme 2 (*Industrialisation*) was allocated ZiG 7 763 500 for the third quarter; however, disbursements amounted to only ZiG6 904 963, equivalent to about 9% of the quarter target. Actual expenditure totalled ZiG 9 250 860, exceeding the amount disbursed during the quarter by

34%. The Committee was informed that the expenditure surpassing disbursements was attributable to the utilisation of second quarter disbursements during the quarter under review hence a variation between the expenditures and disbursements.

Programme 3 (*Consumer Protection and Quality Assurance*) had a quarterly target of ZiG23 917 750, with disbursements of ZiG12 675 285, representing approximately 53% of the quarter target for the programme. However, actual expenditure was ZiG3 136 939, accounting for only 25% of disbursed funds and 13% of the estimated quarter target. The Committee noted that this significant underspending may constrain regulatory inspections, quality assurance activities, and consumer protection enforcement. Overall, the budget utilisation rate in the third quarter across all programmes remained low at 14% of the estimated quarter target. The delayed and inadequate cash releases undermine effective programme implementation.

Budget Utilisation by Economic Classification

Compensation of Employees had a third quarter target of ZiG20 942 250 against which ZiG2 273 646 was disbursed and fully expended.

The expenditure represents approximately 11% of the quarter target for the expenditure head. The low level of expenditure and disbursement may have implications for staff related costs and operational effectiveness over time. The Ministry officials informed the Committee that the significant variance was as a result of an understatement of the cumulative expenditure for the quarter. The Committee established that the annual budget allocation of ZiG83 769.000 was equally distributed across the four quarters to form quarterly targets of ZiG20 942,250 which was 25% of the original budget allocation. The cumulative expenditure for the quarter was actually ZiG12 170 815, which was 58% of the quarter target.

4.5 Cumulative budget utilisation by Economic classification (January to September 2025)

The Committee noted that cumulatively, budget utilisation for Compensation of employees (39%), Acquisition of fixed assets (9%), Capital transfers (14%) and Use of goods and services (50%) remained very low. Current transfers utilised **ZiG 112 233 320,** translating to 73% of the estimated target for 2025. The Ministry reported that advances to the Ministry amounting to **ZiG 2 984 476.52** were not included in the expenditure by the fund. In addition, expenditure for acquisition of fixed assets and Capital transfers remained low due to ongoing tender processes.

The Committee established that the Expenditure for Current transfers was high because Standards Association of Zimbabwe utilised part of its 4^{th} quarter recurrent expenditure in the third quarter. Also, the low utilisation rate under Compensation of Employees was attributed to ongoing reconciliation processes involving the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion and the SSB. An improvement in utilisation was expected in the fourth quarter upon completion of these reconciliations.

The Committee established that cumulatively, expenditure across all programmes was below the budgeted funds for the 2025 fiscal year. Programme 2 (*Industrialisation*) utilised 7% of the estimated budget for the year. Programme 1 (*Policy and administration*) utilised 24% of the estimated budget for 2025. By the end of the second quarter, Programme

3 (*Consumer protection and quality assurance*) had utilised 100% of the budget for the year.

The Committee also noted that cumulatively, the budget utilisation rate by Programme was 27%. The low absorption rate may risk delayed implementation of programmes towards the industrialization agenda. Postponed activities risk compressing spending into the latter half of the fiscal year, which can lead to rushed implementation and reduced quality.

4.8 Performance Management

The Ministry reported strong performance in the third quarter under Programmes 2 and 3, with notable achievements in industrial growth, consumer protection, and quality assurance. Under Industrial Growth and Development, the Ministry exceeded several targets, including facilitating 15 rural industrial projects against a target of 8, engaging 10 strategic investment partners against a target of 3 and conducting 12 export development programmes against a target of 9 while also successfully optimising 8 value chains, reviving 4 Community Share Ownership Trusts, and profiling 2 export markets.

The Committee, however, noted with concern the stagnation in the processing of Committee Bills that were announced in previous State of the Nation Addresses (SONAs). Long-awaited Bills include the Empowerment Bill, Standards Bill, Sugar Production Bill, Competition Bill, Legal Metrology Bill, and the Iron and Steel Bill. The Committee was informed by Ministry officials that the Legal Metrology Bill and the Standards Bill were at an advanced stage and were expected to be finalised before the end of the year.

4.10 Auditor General's Reports

The Committee noted that the Ministry's 2024 Appropriation account received a Qualified opinion, and the following issues were raised by the Auditor General:

Open Items:

The Ministry had uncleared items in the revenue ledgers and Sub-PMG cash books, including ZiG 928 066 in deposits, ZiG31 784 911 in expenditure, and prior year amounts of ZiG4 483 490 997. Treasury Circular No. 1 of 2025 mandates that all open items be *cleared before bank reconciliations, annual returns, and financial statements are prepared.*

Director Finance Ms. F. Nyabunze informed the Committee that continuous engagement with Treasury was being done on the issue, however Treasury was yet to upload the transfers related to USD salary payments for the financial year to enable the Ministry to clear the general ledgers. In addition, Treasury instituted a broader framework to address all the open items relating to prior periods to allow for smooth transition to the IPSAS reporting requirements going forward and age analysis of all the open items was submitted to Treasury for consideration and input to the clearing framework that was intended to address the technical issues faced by some ministries for the past reporting periods.

ii. Budget Utilisation:

The Ministry had a budget of ZiG207 707 628 but received only ZiG64 976 624 (31%) for operations and capital. Employee compensation of ZiG32 250 777 was fully funded and it translated to

16% of the approved budget. At year-end, the Ministry owed ZiG22 911 168 to suppliers, which remained unfunded.

The Committee was informed that the operating environment since the observation was raised was still characterised by non-release of appropriated budget, cashflow constraints and delayed access to cash support for the released budget. Treasury issued circular number 10 in 2025 on and have also issue circular number 2 of 2026 which was again giving guidance Government Expenditure Containment Measures which spelt out the economic environment and the appropriate measures to ensure sustainability of Government business.

iii. Payment Arrears*:*

The Ministry had arrear payments with various suppliers and service providers totalling ZiG22 911 168, with some invoices dating back to January 2024. There was no evidence that these liabilities were periodically reported to Treasury for funding to facilitate clearance.

In response the Committee was informed that the Ministry managed to service 84% of accumulated debts during the 2025 financial period through cumulative payments amounting to ZiG19 185 203.83 to various creditors. The 2024 arrears which were rolled over into the 2026 financial year are amounting to ZiG3 726 964.17 which was 16% and largely payable to TelOne, CMED, Security services and two International organisations for membership subscription fees. The Ministry informed the Committee that it intends to clear these arrears during the second quarter period of 2026.

iv. Outstanding Revenue:

For the second year, the Ministry had outstanding Assize fees of ZiG6 567 398 over 100% higher than in 2023 with no evidence of adequate follow-up. Section 42 (4) of the Public Finance Management (Treasury Instructions), 2019, requires timely enforcement of revenue collection.

Director Finance Ms. F. Nyabunze informed the Committee that the Ministry partially managed to recover most of the outstanding debts during the 2025 financial year. The No payment No service policy was also being implemented with exceptions to strategic entities or projects i.e. GMB and this policy has aided in avoiding further accumulation of debts for assize services.

v. Revenue Received from Consignment- Based Conformity Assessment (CBCA) Programme:

The Ministry's CBCA Programme contracted four companies required to pay 20% royalties quarterly, 15% to the Exchequer and 5% retained for capacity building. CBCA royalties were recorded under Import and Export fees, lacking a separate PFMS ledger. Reported royalties were USD3,345 981, but invoices raised totalled only USD2 045 777, showing delayed invoicing.

The Committee was informed that the Ministry requested for creation of separate Revenue material code for Royalties which was a new code across Government in the PFMS. The separate classification of the revenue item took effect in July 2025. Invoicing was now being done right at the end of each quarter. In addition, the Ministry managed to account for outstanding revenue which was due at 31 December 2024 hence the matter was fully resolved.

vi. Change of Ownership for House Acquired in Bindura:

The 2023 Auditor General's report noted the Ministry purchased a Bindura property for USD150,000 as Provincial Offices. Two years later, as of May 27, 2025, ownership had still not been transferred with the Deeds Registry and Bindura Town Council.

The Ministry responded that there was remarkable progress on the matter. The seller managed to pay for her capital gains tax to ZIMRA and she was cleared on the 16th of September 2025. The Ministry also managed to secure a rate clearance certificate from Municipality of Bindura on the 12th of February 2026. The Ministry was set to approach the Attorney General for conveyancing services to facilitate change of ownership and hopes to get tittle to the property by the third quarter of 2026.

STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT FUND 2023

i. ***Unidentified Deposits Finding:*** *Unidentified deposits rose sharply by ZiG563 637 208, from ZiG113 259 714 in 2022 to ZiG676 896 922, due to poor management systems for tracking* *employer deposits. This growth raised concerns about the Fund's financial control.*

It was responded that the issue of unidentified deposits remains a matter of concern and that continuous engagement with Treasury and the banks was ongoing. The fund was considering to make use of selected banks to administer the deposits through the use of electronic deposit slips with mandatory fields to facilitate improved payment identification. Currently efforts were ongoing to reconcile and identify the sources of deposits already made to ensure that all funds transferred are correctly accounted for.

ii. **Accounting Package Finding**: *The fund manually receipted foreign currency Levy Income of ZiG14 071 183 298 instead of using PFMS. The SDF system was not upgraded to handle USD and ZAR, violating Section 13 (2) of the Treasury Instructions, 2019, which requires statutory funds to use the same accounting package unless authorized otherwise.*

The Committee was informed that the SDL Revenue system was currently operational but not functioning at the desired level of efficiency. The Ministry of ICT through the CCS Department are currently conducting a technical review of the system whose findings will guide the Ministry going forward on whether to move to a new system or continue to enhance and interface the existing systems. The final recommendation would also assist in addressing the challenge of unidentified deposits by strengthening revenue tracking and reconciliation processes.

iii. **Cash and Cash Equivalents:** *For the fourth year in succession, the fund continued to maintain huge balances in the bank accounts instead of investing the surplus balance as required by Section 13 (2) of the Standards Development Fund Act [Chapter 14:19], which states that any part of the monies not immediately required for the purpose of the Fund may be invested in such manner as the Minister, may approve.*

The Committee was informed that the fund had written to Treasury seeking authorization to invest surplus funds not immediately required for operations. Treasury has requested additional information, which the fund was currently compiling to facilitate the approval process.

iv. **Levy and Rental Debtors:** *The fund failed to clear outstanding levy and rental debts, which rose sharply from ZiG861.7 million and ZiG41,617 in 2022 to ZiG4.53 billion and ZiG1.36 billion in 2023 reflecting poor recovery efforts and weak debt collection. Bulawayo and Mutare stations did not ensure timely 0.5% levy payments by employers. Some levies dating back to 2019 are now likely uncollectible due to inflation and currency changes, underscoring the need for better payment enforcement.*

The Ministry officials submitted that the Ffnd was intensifying debt recovery efforts through follow-ups and improved employer and tenant engagement. Although the fund did not have a formal Debt Management Framework, it recognized the need for one and intended to develop and implement it to guide systematic debt monitoring, collection, and reporting. This framework would also include strategies to mitigate future accumulation of debts and manage currency-related losses.

5.0 COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Ministry Website and Public Engagement

Observation:

The Ministry’s website was operational but lacks comprehensive links to agencies, budget information, and service details. This limits transparency and public engagement.

Recommendation:

The Ministry should enhance the website by September 2026, integrating links to SIRDC and ZIMTRADE, publishing monthly events calendars, and expanding service-related content.

5.2 Budget Allocation by Programme

Observation:

Programme 2 (Industrialisation) received the largest allocation (57%), Programme 1 (Policy and Administration) 26%, and Programme 3 (Consumer Protection and Quality Assurance) 17%. The lower allocation to consumer protection risks limiting regulatory inspections and enforcement.

Recommendation:

Rebalance allocations in the **2026 budget cycle** to strengthen consumer protection activities while maintaining industrialisation priorities.

5.3 Budget Utilisation by Programme

Observation (Programme 2):

Only 9% of the quarter target was disbursed, with expenditure exceeding disbursements due to reliance on prior funds. This distorts reporting and delays industrialisation projects.

Recommendation:

Treasury should harmonise cash release schedules with programme targets by September 2026.

Observation (Programme 3):

Only 13% of the quarterly target was utilised, constraining consumer protection enforcement.

Recommendation: Accelerate expenditure absorption, achieving at least 70% utilisation by 2nd Quarter of 2026.

5.4 Cumulative Budget Utilisation

Observation:

Cumulative utilisation remained low across most classifications, with only current transfers reaching 73%. Low absorption risks rushed spending later in the year, reducing programme quality.

Recommendation:

Introduce mid-year expenditure reviews by July 2026 to identify bottlenecks and improve absorption rates.

5.5 Performance Management

Observation:

The Ministry exceeded industrial growth targets but progress on key Bills (Empowerment, Standards, Sugar Production, Competition, Legal Metrology, Iron and Steel) remains stagnant, delaying legislative reforms.

Recommendation:

Finalise pending Bills, starting with the Sugar Production Bill, by 31 October 2026 to support industrialisation and consumer protection frameworks.

5.6 Open Items:

Observation

Uncleared items in revenue ledgers undermine financial accountability.

Recommendation:

The Ministry should clear all open items by 30 June 2026 in line with Treasury Circular No. 1 of 2025.

5.7 Budget Utilisation

Observation

Only 31% of the approved budget was received; this results in constrained operations.

Recommendation:

Treasury should improve cash release consistency by 30 June 2026.

5.8 Payment Arrears

Observation

Arrears of ZiG 22,911,168 to suppliers undermine supplier confidence.

Recommendation:

The Ministry should clear all arrears by 30 June 2026, prioritising legacy debts.

5.9 Outstanding Revenue

Observation

Assize fees of ZiG 6,567,398 remain outstanding, weakening revenue collection.

Recommendation:

The Ministry should enforce strict collection policies by 30 June 2026, with quarterly updates and reporting to Parliament.

5.10 CBCA Royalties

Observation

Delayed invoicing risks misstatement of revenue.

Recommendation:

The Ministry should maintain quarterly invoicing and reconciliation, fully operational by 31 July 2026.

5.11 Property Ownership – Bindura

Observation

Ownership transfer delays risk asset mismanagement.

Recommendation:

The Ministry should complete conveyancing and secure title by 30 June 2026.

5.12 Vehicle Records

Observation

Unrecorded vehicles weaken asset control.

Recommendation:

The Ministry should maintain updated registers with quarterly audits starting April 2026.

Standards Development Fund (SDF)

5.13 Unidentified Deposits

Observation

Deposits rose sharply due to weak tracking systems, undermining financial control.

Recommendation:

The Ministry must implement electronic deposit slips with mandatory fields by 31 December 2026.

5.14 Accounting Package

Observation

Manual receipting of foreign currency violates Treasury Instructions.

Recommendation:

Treasury should upgrade PFMS to handle USD/ZAR transactions by 31 October 2026.

5.15 Cash and Equivalents

Observation

Surplus balances remain idle instead of being invested.

Recommendation:

The Ministry must invest surplus funds in approved instruments by 30 June 2026.

5.16 Levy and Rental Debtors

Observation

Debts rose sharply due to poor recovery efforts, some dating back to 2019.

Recommendation:

Launch a debt recovery strategy by August 2026, with quarterly progress reports.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee notes that while the Ministry achieved notable industrialisation and consumer protection outcomes, budget utilisation remained low, arrears persisted and financial management weaknesses were evident. Implementation of the above recommendations within the specified timelines will strengthen fiscal discipline, improve service delivery, and support Zimbabwe's industrialisation agenda.

HON. MUSHORIWA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I rise to support the report that has been presented by Hon. Chiduwa, the esteemed Chairperson of Industry and Commerce. The report is in respect of the 2025 third quarter performance of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

Before I proceed, I must highlight how important the Ministry of Industry and Commerce is. Most of us are aware that during the budget processes, this is one of the ministries that gets less than 2% of the budget. Yet, this is the Ministry which is the cornerstone of economic development of this country. When you talk of industrialisation, transformation of the economy, you are talking about the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. If you analyse as done by Hon. Chiduwa, you realise that in spite of the fact that this Ministry gets a small allocation from the budget, when it comes to the disbursement matrix, the story is not that good. This Ministry gets very little in terms of cash releases.

If you see a Ministry of this nature getting somewhere around 31%, it tells you that we are actually shooting ourselves in the foot as a country. This is the Ministry that we want to help other sectors of the economy in terms of ensuring that all the attributes, milestones that we have stated within the NDS2 are achieved. However, you cannot achieve them when this Ministry is underfunded. We now have this Ministry owing a huge chunk of debt to local creditors. You heard that the Ministry owed more than ZiG22 million to local creditors. What does that mean? It means that it compromises the Ministry's mandate.

Furthermore, it also makes the Ministry as an entity a bad debtor to as many suppliers as possible. If this continues, you will then find out that most suppliers may not be willing to continue to grant credit to a customer who does not pay. This is the problem that we have under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce.

This Ministry is also in charge of the Standard Development Fund. This fund is lucrative and gets a lot of money. In terms of ranking of funds within a Government, it is one of those funds that has got a lot of money that gets in. I can tell you even without the need for me to look at the statement: this is an account that we have millions of ZiG and USD sitting in. However, this money is not doing anything. It is just sitting in the bank and who is benefiting? It is the bank. The bank uses that money for own lending to other clients because it is free money to the bank.

We understand that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce tried to talk to the treasurer to have this money so that it is invested. Unfortunately, they hit a brick wall. It is our view that this money on the standard development level needs to be invested rather than for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to continue to have that money in its books.

The other challenge is that if the standard development fund continues to hold huge chunks of money, there is a temptation and we are seeing that temptation creeping into the Ministry of Industry and Commerce because of failure to disburse cash timeously. The Ministry is now starting to borrow some money from the Standard Development Fund which has its own problems.

So, it is our view that the treasurer must allow the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to invest monies in the Standard Development Fund as a matter of urgency. The other challenge which I want to raise has to do with consumer protection. Many of you may be aware that the ministry has got the responsibility of ensuring that consumer rights are protected. It is even worse now and because of the porous borders, we now have got a lot of substandard goods coming into our country.

We also have got another challenge where even local entrepreneurs are cutting corners and producing substandard goods. We also have another problem of businesses taking advantage of consumers. The challenge is that the Ministry is failing to get sufficient resources to enable their mandate on consumer protection for the Ministry to properly execute that mandate. They are failing to do that.

I also need to raise the other issue that the Chair has mentioned. Most of us are aware that during the First Republic, as we want to call it, we had an empowerment law. You know that we had the empowerment and indigenisation laws but that law was amended through the Finance Act of 2019, if I am not mistaken. Whilst it removed the need of foreigners to have less than 50% stake in a business, it however, had unintended consequences because the moment we removed that law, we also then left an open system where empowerment of our indigenous was therefore not protected by law. This is the reason why we feel that there is a need for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to do whatever it takes to ensure that we have got an empowerment Bill to come into this august House.

Everywhere you go, in each province, in Mutoko, they are mining granite. In Shurugwi, where the mountains and the hills are being levelled down in search of gold. You go to Chiadzwa where there is diamond, the question that the ordinary person asks is; what benefits are we getting? Remember, Mr. Speaker Sir, there is a difference between the revenue that comes to the Central Government through taxation but the people want to see some sort of empowerment within their districts, within their provinces, coming from the resources that we have.

Some years ago, we used to have one economic Blueprint which Hon. Jonathan Moyo, as he was Minister, used to run with. It was called the ZIM ASSET. That Economic Blueprint, the name itself was so nice. Unfortunately, we might not have implemented it as it was supposed to. I believe that we need as a country and our people to also benefit economically from the Zimbabwe assets that we have. This is the reason why there is a need to ensure that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce comes up with the Empowerment Bill.

Mr. Speaker Sir, there is another disturbing issue pertaining to the Ministry. They have been receiving qualified Auditor General opinion on their accounts, partly because of failure to do reconciliation. Even on the Standard Development Fund, I think you heard the Chairman stating our recommendation to ensure that there is electronic deposit slips. The Ministry is failing. They do not even know who has deposited what unless that person comes and says, I went to the bank, I deposited this.

The Ministry is in the dark. Their reconciliation leaves a lot to be desired. It does not just only affect the Standard Development Levy, even the assize fees. The Ministry's accounts need to be improved to ensure that every revenue that needs to be collected is collected. Every revenue that needs to be realised is realised. I think this is what needs to happen.

Before I sit down, I just need to emphasise the quest of saying that we as the Parliament, this august House, need to ensure that we support this report. We call for Treasury to timelessly disburse money to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce. If we do not do that, all the things that we talk about will not yield results; you talk of Vision 2030, it will just become a slogan. You talk of NDS2, it will just become a slogan. As long as you do not fund this Ministry, which is instrumental in terms of economic turnaround, there is nothing that happens in this country which does not have industry and commerce. Whether it is in mining, agriculture or tourism, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce is the bearing that turns that economic wheel. Because of that, the bearing needs to be oiled to make sure that it continuously functions and drives this economy forward. If we do not do that, sooner rather than later, we will have an economic breakdown. Where we wanted to go or aspire to go, we will not then go there.

We cannot have a country whose economic blueprints are nice and good on paper but then they fail on the implementation aspect. I remember, Mr. Speaker, at one time in the last Parliament, we went to Rwanda with the Committee on Budget. We wanted to study, to find out how Rwanda was doing in terms of IPSAS accounting. We went there hoping to find something so good and interesting, only to be told that you Zimbabweans are coming here to learn about IPSAS. Do you know what we did? We took the IPSAS document from Zimbabwe, studied it and then this is the one that we are implementing. Yet, we the authors of it are not doing anything.

This is the same thing that we will now find ourselves in, Mr. Speaker Sir, if we are not careful. We have got the NDS2 document and Vision 30, but it does not help us to have the flowery documents which are not supported financially. The best way is to support the Ministry of

Industry and Commerce. Once you do that, everything comes and it starts to function well. I thank you Mr. Speaker.

HON. MAPFUMO: Thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to also add my voice in debating the Third Quarter Budget Report of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce which was presented by our Chairman, Hon. Chiduwa. I would also want to give a thumbs-up to Hon. Mushoriwa for he has just added his voice by seconding the motion. Allow me, Mr. Speaker, to say I rise to debate the Portfolio Committee on Industry and Commerce report on the Ministry's 2025 third quarter budget performance.

The facts are concerning, by the end of the third quarter, the Ministry had only utilised 14% of its quarterly targets and just 27% of the annual budget programme, Programme 2 on Industrialisation which got the largest allocation of 57%, only received 9% disbursement. Despite this, the Ministry exceeded its performance targets with 15 rural industrial projects against a target of 10 strategic investors against a target of – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*.] –

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER (HON. J. TSHUMA): Order, order! Hon. Members, please take your seats. Hon. Zvaipa, please take your seat. Can we do it silently over there, please? You may proceed.

HON. MAPFUMO: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. It is very important that Hon. Members really pay attention to this motion by Hon. Chiduwa on this Committee because all committees essentially should fall under Industry and Commerce because that is where all industries belong. If we are to achieve our legislative role, Hon. Members should pay attention to this. I thank you Mr. Speaker of – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*.] –

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Order, order! Hon. Members, let us listen. It is good to listen and find out where we are as a country and in the economy. Primarily, this is our role so that we can execute it effectively. Those who feel like they want to speak with loud voices, please, you may excuse us. It is allowed. Right – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*.] – Hon. Mavhudzi please, can you do it quietly there! You may proceed Hon. Mapfumo.

HON. MAPFUMO: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. As I was saying, Programme 2 on industrialisation which got the largest allocation of 57%, only received 9% disbursement. Yet despite this, the Ministry exceeded its performance targets with 15 rural industrial projects against a target of eight, 10 strategic investors against a target of three and 12 export development programmes. This tells us two things. First, our industrialisation agenda is possible with limited resources and yet officials are delivering. Secondly, Treasury delayed cash releases and this is strangling that progress. You cannot budget for factories, value chains and SMEs and then release less than 10% of that money.

Mr. Speaker, we also have serious accountability gaps. The 2024 appropriation account received a qualified audit opinion. We have Zimbabwe locals, Zimbabwe ZiG22. 9 million in supplier arrears. ZiG6. 5 million in outstanding assize fees and the standard development fund has unidentified deposits, up by ZiG563 million. This is also of… – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*.] –

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Order, order. Doorkeeper, can you stop the process of registering there. Can you stop the process and only do it if they come one at a time. Let us have all the Hon. Members there and take their seats. If there are more than two, do not do it. Can I have only one Member there in the back and the others, please take your seats. Who is there behind you? Hon. Chitimbe, who is the Hon. Member behind you? – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*.] – Hon. Members, can you be serious there. You may proceed Hon. Mapfumo.

HON. MAPFUMO: Thank you Mr. Speaker. As the Ministry advocates for consumer protection, it is amazing that Hon. Members forget they are also consumers who need protecion. So, it is good to pay attention. We also have serious accountability gaps. The 2024 appropriation account received a qualified audit opinion which had 22. 9 million in supplier arrears, ZiG6. 5 million in outstanding assize fees and the standards development fund as an unidentified deposit, up by ZiG563 million. Consumer protection which got only 17% of the budget utilised just 13%. This directly limits inspections and exposes consumers to substandard goods.

Several times, Mr. Speaker, you can spend 10/15 seconds on your cell phone just saying hello to yourself, but the billing does not stop. The billing continues and you are never reimbursed. This is what we are talking about as an example, when we are alluding to consumer protection and substandard service delivery. Equally worrying Mr. Speaker Sir, is the legislative backlog. Key Bills announced in SONA are Empowerment Bill, Competition Bill, Standards Bill, Iron and Steel Bill remain stagnant. Without these laws, our industrial policy has no teeth.

Mr Speaker Sir, I therefore support the Committee’s recommendations:

1. That Treasury harmonizes cash releases with programme targets by June 2026.

2. Mr. Speaker Sir, that the Ministry clears all arrears and open items by June 2026.

3. The pending Bills to be finalised by October 2026 to support industrialisation and consumer protection.

4. That we rebalance the 2026 budget to strengthen consumer protection while maintaining industrialisation priorities.

Mr Speaker Sir…

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Order Hon. Mapfumo. The June 2026 deadline that you had set, what have you done about it? Was it not prudent to extend it or you have achieved that?

HON. MAPFUMO: Mr Speaker Sir, in June 2026, when we heard the oral evidence, we did not actually get to finality as a Committee to speak in the same voice with the ministry. We are looking forward that in our next engagements with the ministry, we will iron out any outstanding issues.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: So, do you not think that you need to move that date forward until you meet with the ministry so that your report speaks to the current?

HON. MAPFUMO: Yes, Mr Speaker Sir, I stand guided. Mr. Speaker Sir, we cannot talk about Vision 2030 and an upper middleincome economy when our Ministry of Industry and Commerce is funded on paper but starved in practice. Let us fund it, let us spend it and let us account for it. I thank you and I humbly submit.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Thank you very much for your contribution. So, I think in that same line, when your dates have been superseded by any event, Hon. Members need to look into that so that our reports speak to the live occurrence of our oversight roles. Thank you very much for that report.

HON. MADZIVANYIKA: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to regurgitate. I am very sure that the bulk of the submissions were actually presented by my fellow Hon. Members. What I am going to do is just add a bit of flesh so as to give impetus to our report.

First of all, Mr Speaker Sir, I want to make it very clear that I am in full support of the report given by the Chairman of the Portfolio Committee on Industry and Commerce, the third-quarter of 2025 Budget Report.

Mr. Speaker Sir, it is very important to understand that we derive this mandate from Section 299 of our national Constitution which actually provides that Hon. Members of Parliament must make sure that they oversee and monitor Government revenue and expenditure to ensure that everything is done according to the law.

Mr. Speaker Sir, let me just quote, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce has got three main pillars. The first pillar is policy and administration; the second pillar is industrialisation and the third pillar is quality assurance and consumer protection. So, I will look at these three fundamental pillars to see if everything was done in line.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the most fundamental pillars from these three, to me, is industrialisation and quality assurance and consumer protection. So let me start with industrialisation. At the end of third quarter of 2025, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce required 57% of resources to pillar number two, which is the industrialisation, but then it actually received only 9% out of the 57% which is so worrying because industrialisation is the backbone of this ministry.

Let me put things into perspective, Mr. Speaker Sir. You will find that this industrialisation part is the one which deals with the value addition. Look at our economy, Mr. Speaker. We need to improve value chains so that we become competitive on the international market and we also get more value than what we are getting.

Imagine Mr. Speaker, if we are to improve value addition in all facets of our industry. Look at the dividends that are coming from the PGMs. Look at the dividends that are coming from areas where we have introduced this policy. It is spectacular. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure that if we continue along this trajectory, if we become serious on this pillar, we will go a long way. We have got a lot of industries, Mr. Speaker, that need to be value-added, that need to improve in terms of value addition and also deepening the value chains.

We have got the leather industry. Those are low-hanging fruits because we have got a lot of cattle and a lot of leather in Zimbabwe. We have got the motor vehicle industry. Instead of just assembling, let us improve Mr. Speaker Sir. We have got the cotton for the clothing industry. We have got the iron and steel industry. All these industries, if we do not sell raw materials, instead we sell improved goods that will assist us as a country. So, this is why I am saying we need to make sure that the industrialisation pillar of this ministry is actually fully supported.

Mr. Speaker Sir, we are boasting as a country right now that the expectation of the first half of the year, from January to June 2026, as given by the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) through the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion is that Zimbabwe got about 11 billion worth of exports in half a year. So, the expectation at the end of the year is that we will get around 17-18 billion in terms of export revenue.

So, what we need to do Mr. Speaker Sir, with this pillar is to see what percentage of those exports are value-added. When we get to around over 50% of our exports being value-added, then we are moving in the positive direction in terms of development and in terms of industrialisation as a country. This is the area that makes the country tick. It is the area that makes the country go, it is the biggest cash flow to our country. So, we do not want the bulk of our export earnings to come from issues that are not productive. We need it to come from mechanised exports which are value-added so that we maximise the benefit.

So, Mr. Speaker Sir, let me also talk about the last pillar which is the consumer protection as well as standard consumer quality assurance. Mr. Speaker, this ministry is very important.

This is the area where the Hon. Minister is dealing with the CBCA to see if there conformity in terms of goods that are being imported from other countries. The Minister of Industry and Commerce should make sure that those goods are actually tested and qualified in terms of quality, in terms of their ability to satisfy the implied needs of the people of Zimbabwe and make sure that we protect the health of local citizens, to ensure that the standards are maintained, to ensure that competition is controlled and it encourages fairness in the industry. You will find that these two pillars are so critical.

However, Mr. Speaker Sir, the fund that is going to this ministry is actually quite low and we expect the Government to improve on this one. As much as we get the lowest allocation in terms of budget allocation, we need to see an improvement in disbursement because everything else revolves around money Mr. Speaker Sir.

Mr. Speaker, let me go directly to a few issues that have been left out by my colleagues. It is so fundamental Mr. Speaker that whenever we want to regulate industry, there should be a law. Law is everything. Mr. Speaker Sir, law is law whether good or bad, whether just or unjust. So, what we are saying is that without that law, we will do nothing in terms of regulating our industry.

Look at the sugar industry, Mr. Speaker. There is little regulation there. Look at the empowerment area, the Employment Bill is yet to come to Parliament. Let us talk about the Competition Bill. Have they set the guards to ensure fairness in the industry? So, all these Bills need to come back to Parliament so that we ensure that this industry ticks and it must tick in the best possible manner.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few areas that I need to raise that need to be addressed. These are negative issues that the Ministry must try to control or regulate. First of all, it is worrying that out of the 22 million in arrears to contractors at the end of the third quarter for this Ministry, 19 million was not reported to the Treasury. There was no evidence provided by the Ministry to show that this other 19 million was reported to the Treasury.

The danger of this is that all these other ministries can amass debt without the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion knowing. That creates a lot of dishonesty in the manner in which a ministry should operate. The law provides that you cannot spend money without the approval of the Treasury and when this happens, it is a very dangerous red flag that must be corrected.

The same Ministry, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, in the year 2023, purchased a property in Bindura. That property cost USD150 000. They wanted that property to be used as a provincial office but then payments were made to the seller of the property. Payments were made by the Ministry. However, the fundamental problem that we are seeing right now is the change of ownership.

When the Government pays, we expect to see that property in the asset register of Government, particularly that Ministry but what happened, Honourable Speaker, is that no such documentation has been done. No proper change of ownership has been done to date. The only information that we got from the Ministry is that the seller paid duty to ZIMRA but there is no evidence of such. We thought we would be favoured with an assessment or with the receipt showing that indeed the seller has paid. So, as Parliament, we do not believe in word of mouth. We believe in documentary evidence that actually points to the fact that something has been done and as such, to me, nothing has been done so far.

I would like to urge the Ministry of Industry and Commerce to expedite this process, to ensure that the Government does not lose out because if this sits like this for more years to come, it might end up disappearing and then we will bring another issue to say, what happened to our property. So, we want to ensure that the property sits in the name of the Government, particularly the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, rather than leaving it like that.

Hon. Speaker, let me talk about the Standards Development Fund. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce, under the pillar of quality standards and consumer protection, houses this fund called the Standards Development Fund. The Standards Development Fund's source of income is money coming from employers. If you hear this statement, the Standards Development Fund, it is a fund which is used by this Ministry to ensure that they improve standards across Zimbabwean industries. Particularly, this money is distributed to the Standards Association of Zimbabwe. It is also given to the National Competitiveness Commission. These are the mutual beneficiaries of this fund.

So, what then happens, Hon. Speaker, is that the Standards Development Fund Act stipulates that all employers in Zimbabwe should contribute 0.5% of all their remuneration. So, 0.5% of all employers' remuneration is supposed to be given to the Government, to this Ministry, under what is called the Standards Development Fund. It is a levy that all these employers should pay but what then happens is, there is an account number to which employers should deposit money. So, money is just piling into the account but there is no corresponding evidence to say which company has paid and which company has not paid. As of today, Hon. Speaker, the amount that is undetected or unreported right now has increased by ZiG563 000.

This is so worrying because we are seeing deposits into a Government account, the Standards Development Fund. There are deposits but there is no corresponding record to see who has deposited and we are saying, is it difficult to correct as a whole Government under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce? Is it difficult to introduce an electronic form where someone needs to pay? You should just compute that form and then that corresponds to the amount paid. It is very simple but the only reason why this system continues to be an open item in terms of audit is that there may be some possibility of the risk of fraud with our funds because when there is no record of who paid, money just coming in, it can be easily abused.

To make matters worse, Hon. Speaker, collections in US dollars are made manually and that is dangerous. In the 21st century, manually recording revenue is the worst thing that can happen because what we can do is, we can destroy the evidence. I can print my own receipt book which is synonymous with that of the Government, collecting money from employers and then putting the money into my pocket.

So, we do not want this kind of weakness in our national revenue. If this continues, we will end up forcing the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion to take back control of this fund. Instead, it must go straight to the Consolidated Revenue Fund rather than to have this kind of situation where manual receipting is done in the 21st century.

So, Mr. Speaker, after getting both sides of the coin, the good and the negative, I wish to submit that the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, by and large, is on course. It is doing better with the current resources but it must make sure that accountability and protection of our national resources are a priority. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 8th September, 2026.

On the motion of **HON. KAMBUZUMA** *seconded by* **HON. NYANDORO,** *the House adjourned at Fourteen Minutes past Five o'clock p. m. until Tuesday, 8th September, 2026.*