

# **PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE**

*Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2026*

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

## **PRAYERS**

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

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

### **PROCESSING OF PARLIAMENT IDENTITY CARDS**

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** I have to inform the Senate 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 the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2026 from 0900 hours to 1500 hours in the Special Committee Room Number 1, First Floor. Members of Parliament and staff who require Parliament identity cards are kindly requested to make themselves available for this important exercise.

## **APOLOGIES RECEIVED FROM MINISTERS**

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** I have a list of apologies. Hon. General Rtd. Dr. C. D. G. N. Chiwenga, the Vice President; Hon. Col. Rtd. K. C. D. Mohadi, the Vice President; Hon. Prof. M. Ncube, Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion; Hon. T. Machakaire, Minister of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training; Hon. M. Mavhunga, Minister of Veterans of Liberation Struggle Affairs; Hon. K. Kazembe, Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; Hon. M. N. Ndlovu, Minister of Industry and Commerce; Hon. B. Kabikira, Deputy Minister of Local Government and Public Works; Hon. C. Sanyatwe, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; Hon. F. Moyo, Deputy Minister of Mines and Mining Development; Hon. S. Sibanda, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development; Hon. A. Gata, Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education; Hon. R. Modi, Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce; Hon. Tsitsi Zhou, Deputy Minister of Lands and Rural Development.

In the House, we have Hon. Dr. T. Mavetera, Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier

Services; Hon. F. T. Mhona, Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development; Hon. G. Phuti, Deputy Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services; Hon. Simbanegavi, Deputy Minister of Energy and Power Development; Hon. M. Ncube, Deputy Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities; Hon. E. Jesaya, Deputy Minister of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture.

### **ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**\*HON. SEN. BIMHA:** Thank you Madam President, for allowing me to ask my question. My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. I know that there is a lot of work that you are doing to prevent accidents on the roads. Despite that, we are seeing some accidents happening, especially in well-known places also known as black spots. I am referring to a place that I think you also know, between Chivhu and Beatrice, especially as you travel out of Chivhu. That place is so prone to accidents and we are losing a lot of lives. That is one of the places well known as a black spot. I wanted to know whether you have any plans to warn motorists about that area or other such places

so that they may preserve lives as well as the goods they may be transporting. I thank you Madam President.

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

Thank you Madam President. I also want to thank Senator Bimha for that question. While we are in deep sorrow as a country, especially this month of August, where we lost a lot of lives, some died under water and some on the roads. The Hon. Senator raised the issue of black spots where accidents commonly take place. The sad thing is, most of those accidents are taking place on good roads. Most of the fatal accidents, we used to say maybe it is because of bad roads but we realised that on bad roads people tend to drive carefully and they tend to speed where there are good stretches of roads.

Madam President, sometimes you wonder how such an accident took place. The place will be very clear, a wide road, good road and you wonder what spirit was at play. Sometimes people may fall asleep and end up encroaching on oncoming traffic. The Hon. Senator referred to Chivhu all the way up to Mvuma. That is where a lot of accidents have been recorded, especially fatal ones. Some of those

accidents, to my surprise take place during the day, although some occur at night. Through the Traffic Safety Council, we urge people to travel during the day because at night it is not safe. However, most people prefer to travel at night to avoid the police.

The other sad thing is that unlicensed vehicles ply the road, those who died last week, may their souls rest in peace. The commuter omnibus that they were using had no seats and it was a private vehicle that was not meant to carry people but for private use. That is why people then wonder how 33 people may have died, it is because of that. It is a very sad thing, we may take a close look on the roads as the Traffic Safety Council but we may not fully overcome it. Sometimes you may ask people why they want to be overloaded but they will be desperate for transport.

Where people are supposed to be four or few, they should question why they tend to be overloaded to become eleven or more. It is not about the drivers alone but even the passengers endanger their lives by embarking on vehicles that may be risky. As the Department of Roads, we may study the roads in order to put rumble strips or humps, but on the highways, we cannot place humps because it will

not be good for travellers. As the Ministry of Transport, we are indeed troubled. One does not sleep the whole night thinking of people who cause carnage on the roads. I thank you.

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** Thank you Madam President. My question is directed to the Minister of Local Government and Public Works. The Ministry is demanding some order...

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Sorry, Senator Zvidzai, you are directing your question to which Ministry?

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** The Minister of Local Government.

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** The Minister of Local Government is not in the House.

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** I will direct it to the Leader of Government Business.

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** The Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs is in the House, you can go ahead.

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** Thank you Madam President. In fact, before I ask the question, I actually wanted to thank you for a pronouncement for people not to use contraceptive pills so that we can have more people in our country because we are working very hard without getting results – [*Laughter*]-

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Is that the question, Hon. Sen. Zvidzai? Can you proceed with your question?

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** My question is directed to the Leader of Government Business and it is related to issues of local governance. The Minister of Local Government is shouting high and low about removing vendors from the streets of urban areas which sounds like a very reasonable thing. However, the statistics around informal vending in the country is that in Harare, you are looking at more than 300 000 people who live on vending. In Bulawayo, you have got close to 50 000 and if you total up the summation of all these people throughout the country, it is close to a million. Let us just talk about the direct vendors. If we talk of Harare for example, 200 000 times 6 people, 1.2 million are going to be affected. What measures is the Ministry putting in place to make sure that when these people are

pushed off the streets and lose their livelihoods, what will they survive on? What is the halfway house provision for these people? I thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (HON. Z. ZIYAMBI):** Thank you Madam President. I want to thank the Hon. Senator for the question. Before I answer, I just want to reaffirm and thank the Minister of Local Government for that particular stance. We were witnessing a situation of lawlessness where people just wake up and decide to set up a vending store anyway. That cannot be accepted, notwithstanding the fact that they are trying to earn a living. Otherwise, if the overriding factor was, I want to put bread on the table, we would even allow thieves to operate because when they steal they will put food on the table. So, the overriding factor that the Minister of Local Government is looking at is orderliness, urban renewal and ensuring that our streets are clean.

The second phase, the local authorities should then look at places where our vendors should be accommodated rather than allow them to vend anyway, anyhow. I thank you Madam President.



**HON. SEN. NGWENA:** Thank you very much Madam President. My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. Does the Ministry have measurable targets for reducing road deaths and injuries? Will it report regularly to Parliament on progress?

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

Thank you Madam President. Let me also thank Hon. Senator for that very important question. Indeed, we have this in our NDS2 and we also had a United Nations Report that was tabled years back with the agenda 2030 of halving our accidents by 50%. Currently, we are losing precious lives, five per day, according to the report and annually, we get closer to 2 000.

So, the target is to halve, but the desired target is not to have accidents, but that cannot be done in a normal setup. That is our desire to halve by 50% by 2030. This is the position that we have and likewise, she has requested that we update this Senate and also the National Assembly regularly. I think we are amenable to that as a Ministry to give you statistics at the end, whether it is quarterly or

half-yearly; we can do that. This is to conscientise our people given the numbers that we are witnessing that are alarming as we speak. I want to thank the Hon. Senator for raising that. Thank you Madam President.

**HON. SEN. L. SIBANDA:** Thank you Madam President. My question goes to the Leader of Government Business. Madam President, why is it that there are a few police officers manning roadblocks at night knowing fully well that there are a lot of unroadworthy vehicles that span the roads at night? Thank you.

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** You directed your question to Hon. Minister who?

**HON. SEN. L. SIBANDA:** The Leader of Government Business.

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** There is no Leader of Government Business here. He has gone out, maybe you can wait a bit because I have seen Hon. Matuke somewhere there. Maybe he is around and will soon be coming in.

**<sup>+</sup>HON. RITTA NDLOVU:** Thank you Madam President. My question is directed to the Minister of Energy. ZESA has a programme

of removing copper wires replacing with aluminum wires. What surprises me is that people who are removing those cables are leaving other areas with the hanging copper wires. With these copper wires that are left uncovered, we realise that thieves come back to steal those cables, hence residents end up without electricity in their residences. When they are supposed to be repairing those cables, ZESA requires the residents to pay for those cables. Is it Government policy that communities should pay for these cables to be replaced? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER**

**DEVELOPMENT (HON. SIMBANEGAVI):** Thank you Madam President and the Hon. Senator for asking such an important question. What I can say is, I do agree with the Hon. Sen that the ZETDC is indeed replacing copper wires with aluminum wires. This has been done to try to deal with the scourge of criminality that had become rampant as people were trading in copper wires. People would vandalise and steal the copper wires for trading. We have now realised that maybe we need to use other material that will not attract criminals and vandalism so much to our electricity infrastructure.

However, I have taken note of her concern that our workmen or the ZESA engineers, as they are going about doing this duty, they are also not doing it diligently, hence leaving some of the copper wires hanging, which is also attracting thievery. As people try to retrieve the low-hanging copper wires, I have taken note of this and I will make sure that I convey this message to the ZETDC so that they make sure that as they are working, they make sure that they do a tidy job and do not leave the copper wires hanging. Thank you.

**+HON. SEN. S. MOYO:** The Minister did not respond to the part which says, is it Government policy that communities should pay for the replacement of these cables?

**HON. SIMBANEGAVI.** Thank you Madam President. The communities would not be paying initially, but if there is vandalism, usually for the benefit of the community or for purposes of expedience or speeding up the restoration of this infrastructure, the ZETDC would ask the community to come together to try and make sure that the infrastructure is repaired promptly. However, they would also then make what I can say a repayment plan as the community is then given access to electricity on a staggered system as a form of

repayment for the contributions that they would have done to speed up the repair of their infrastructure. Otherwise, it is not the responsibility of the community to pay for damaged infrastructure. This can only be done when there is that communication that if the community repairs the infrastructure, then they would have deferments on the payments of their monthly subscriptions or their usage of electricity to the ZETDC. So, the policy is not that the community should pay.

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** I want to inform the Honourable Senate that we now have Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa, the Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, for those who want to ask questions.

**\*HON. SEN. ZINDI:** Thank you Madam President. My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. A few weeks ago, there was an accident at Kariba of the Kariba ferry. That was the only means of transport for the Mola community, the road was there, but it was not maintained. My question is, because of that accident and for us to reduce accidents that can happen to those travelling through water, what is the Ministry

doing to speed up the maintenance of the road so that people may use the road instead of travelling by water, because the accidents are claiming a lot of lives? I thank you.

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

Thank you Madam President, I also like to thank Hon. Sen. Zindi. The question allows us to clarify to the whole nation through this Senate.

The first thing that I want to say is, when we talk of modes of transport, there is air, rail, road as well as water. So, water transport is not desperation; it is another form of transport, but whoever travels by water must travel safely, the same as the person who travels by air, rail or road. When the Kariba Dam was constructed, people's homes were disturbed such that we ended up having some living on the other side of the dam. People were separated by the dam.

The other one is called Kariba Urban and the other one is Kariba Rural. So, people just cross, but right now people have to go around. It does not mean that the person who is trying to cut across is desperate. There are also fishing camps where people trade and they stop, and there are four of them from Kariba Urban to Chalala. There

are 64kms to cross by water and for someone travelling by road from Karoi to Chalala, they travel 437 kilometres. For someone travelling from Kariba, it is 313 kilometres; that would be the shortest road. The one who travel by water, it is their means of transport and has nothing to do with the roads. Yes, we admit that the roads should be maintained, but I think it is very important that we clarify. We have not witnessed accidents of this kind, but as a country, we relaxed. We did not expect to have this tragedy that occurred.

When people travel by water, we also campaign and inform them how they should travel. It is just like what happens on roads: a vehicle that is supposed to carry four people may carry 12. That boat was supposed to carry 90 people, but it had over 100. It is just like what is happening on the roads, that is misbehaviour. When accidents take place, a lot of lives are lost. We have realised that awareness campaigns were mostly done for roads, so we are going to take those campaigns towards water and urge them to take caution when there are waves and that they should not travel. Like what is done for those who use air, if the controller says, do not fly or do not land, they

listen. I do not intend to apportion blame, but those who are supposed to face justice will do so.

I am not trying to justify, but this is the disaster that we faced as a nation. We have since gathered all the operators in Kariba and the President is saying, let us all work together with the private sector to fulfil this opportunity that has come so that we try to close the gap that has since fallen upon us. I think very soon there will be a board that will be coming. We are now analysing it, but that does not mean that the Minister of Transport will be operating a board as the regulator, that could be the private sector who will be applying that route. After inspections, we will inform the nation that it is now allowed to travel, but now we have been warned and we are going to enforce it differently. I thank you.

**\*HON. SEN. ZINDI:** Thank you Hon. Minister for the response. I wanted to understand, yes, it means there was one boat. What plans do they have to make sure that the boats are increased so that there are two instead of having it being one, because the reason for that overload is because of that shortage? I thank you.



**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** The Hon. Minister may give you the response, but from the response, the Minister said they are looking at solving that Kariba problem right now. I thank you Hon. Minister for explaining clearly to this whole Senate. At least we now understand what was happening in Kariba. When such things take place, I think it is important to give statements to our Houses so that we all know.

**HON. MHONA:** I thank Hon. Zindi. When that accident took place, there were a lot of people because some of the people have their homes in Chalala or Mola and the other problem is, those were school holidays; some were trying to travel to visit their relatives and some were staying on the urban side. So, all along the boat was travelling twice per week. Mostly, people were travelling along the fishing camps. I think when there are several boats, people will not wait for one boat. Government is doing something because that boat was a government boat under RIDA. We are not stopping, and we are looking at procuring more boats, but if we have more boats, it means we will not have overcrowding. I think there will be a boat coming up

from RIDA as well as the private sector, and the fares will become competitive for the good of the travelling public. I thank you.

**\*HON. SEN. MWANZA:** Thank you Madam President. My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. It is a concern from Warren Park. There is an area around Richard's or Bradford turnoff. It has become a black spot, a lot of people have died. There is a bridge there where a lot of accidents are happening. There are no signs to warn motorists. What plans do you have to fix that place? A lot of lives have been lost. On Sunday we buried a 22-year-old child and a few weeks ago, we buried six policemen who died on that spot. I thank you.

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

Thank you Madam President and I also would like to thank Hon. Senator Mwanza. Yes, the place that the Hon. Senator referred to is very bad but the sad thing is that the traffic lights a few metres away from N Richards were installed but some motorists come and knock them down. There were signposts on that area that warned

motorists, but they were knocked down by motorists. The bridge that the Hon. Senator is referring to is the road over rail. It was constructed above the railroad line. There is a slope and as they descend, they tend to overspeed. There is a speed limit of 60 kilometres per hour, going down to 40 kilometres per hour but motorists overspeed and the motorists travelling from Bradford going on to Bulawayo Road are not given an opportunity. So, when a driver fails to judge the speed of another car coming, that is when accidents happen.

As Zimbabweans, let us have that culture of respecting speed limits. We are working together with the Department of Roads as well as the City of Harare so that we can come up with a solution. We cannot install speed humps on highways because it also leads to accidents. We will place awareness teams so that they educate people to slow down and also allow other motorists to come onto the road or turn off. I promise the Hon. Senator that we will not sit down. We will visit local residents as we look for best solutions. I thank you.

**\*HON. SEN. MWANZA:** I heard from you Hon. Minister, that there are some people who do not observe road traffic signs and tend to speed but right now there is no sign that warns motorists that there is a ditch. The most dangerous place is that ditch and that slope as you turn off to Bradford. As Warren Park family, we are tired of mourning because of that place.

**\*HON. MHONA:** Thank you President of the Senate and I thank the Senator for the supplementary question. Like I said earlier on, the problem that we face is, when we place signs, they are vandalised. That is the biggest problem that we are facing. Right now, we are working hard to replace them. The ditch is not so big, but it is because of that flyover. We will replace the signs and ensure that all the road signs necessary are visible.

**HON. SEN. SIBANDA:** Thank you Mr. President. My question goes to the Leader of the House. Why is it that there is a low number of traffic police officers at night on the roads whilst the unworthy vehicles and unregistered ones are on the road? These unregistered

vehicles start their business at night knowing that there are no law enforcement agents in the road. I thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE AND NATIONAL SECURITY (HON. SEN. MATUKE):** Thank you very much. I think she raised quite a pertinent question. She wants more presence of our police officers on the roads at night. I am sure the police are deployed in most of these roads raised by the Hon. Senator, but maybe she wants us to add more police officers in there. I think it could be something which we could do and look into to see whether we can add more officers. I think the question is a bit tricky, because it was going to work in relation with cases which people committed during the night. However, I will convey the message to the responsible Minister to see whether we can increase the presence of police officers at night.

**HON. SEN. ADV. PHULU:** Thank you Mr. President. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. The mantra of the Government is that no one should be left behind. It is a key emphasis across all Government ministries.

What measures are being taken to ensure that rural folk are not left behind in terms of development of the road network? We know that many of the roads are under the RDC, but a lot of those roads are in deplorable condition. What mechanisms are being put in place to ensure that there is adequate supervision? Alternatively, is it not time that we consider reinstating the role of the DDF which used to ensure that rural roads are developed in tandem with the rest of the national road network? Thank you.

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

Thank you Hon. President and Hon. Sen. Phulu, for that very important question and I agree to say most of our rural roads are in a sorry state due to several reasons. If we receive good rains, as much as we celebrate, the same rains will then damage our roads. Just to remind or refresh the memory of my senior counsel, Hon. Sen. Phulu, that DDF is now RIDA and is one of the road authorities. So, it is still there and we also have RDCs, local authorities and the local Department of Roads. These are the four road authorities that superintend over road administration, whether rehabilitation or

maintenance. As we then gravitate towards the budget cycle, I am very happy if we then advocate for adequate funding, especially through these road authorities. Now, they wait for disbursements and disbursements coming from the Central Government and also disbursements coming from ZINARA. So, we equip them, we capacitate them, but in the meantime, if you have seen, ZINARA is procuring equipment for several RDCs.

Today, the Minister of Local Government and Public Works was also in Binga where they are also celebrating the arrival of equipment. This is in tandem again with the devolution mantra but yes, we want RDCs to be capacitated; we want RIDA to be capacitated. Going forward, Mr. President, the point that has been raised by Hon. Phulu is very important, that as much as we have got all these road authorities, we need the harmonisation, especially through the Emergency Road Rehabilitation Programme II which has now mandated the Ministry to make sure that we look for more funding to rehabilitate our roads.

Our road network is close to 90 000 kilometres and quite a large chunk of that is within rural communities and going forward, you will

see us using the resources that we have from ZINARA, but that will not be adequate and also from the fiscus.

The Government has taken a deliberate ploy to say, let us administer trunk roads through partnerships. We are calling for PPPs and the private sector to bring in their finances so that we rehabilitate major roads using such arrangements. I can cite a good example to say, Bulawayo, Victoria Falls; we might need 500 million, but that cannot come from the fiscus. We are inviting the private sector and as Government, we have time now to descend on our rural roads. This is the direction we are taking, to say as much as we have funds from the fiscus, we need to deploy these funds to our rural roads. I want to assure our Hon. Sen. Phulu that this is our strategy going forward so that we do not labour this House again to say, 'Give us so much because even if you give,' I can give you an example.

This year we got 150 million as Minister of Transport, but you cannot deploy it to any one of our major roads. It is inadequate. If we then take that to our rural roads, then it will go a long way. Thank you Hon. Speaker.



**\*HON. SEN. KATUMBA:** Thank you Mr. President. I wanted to direct my question to the Minister of Education, but since the Minister is not available, may I then direct to the Leader of Government Business. My question is, we are facing the opening of schools. There is a big problem of teacher-pupil ratio in schools.. Looking at what we consider, a normal class is supposed to have 35 learners, but sometimes they go up to 50 or 60. As Government, what plans do you have to address that problem of pupil-teacher ratio? Thank you.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Hon. Senator, you have directed your question to the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education and he is not here.

**\*HON. SEN. KATUMBA:** Sorry, Mr. President. I have directed my question to the Leader of Government Business.

**\*THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY (HON. SEN. MATUKE):** I would like to thank the Hon. Senator for the question. The question about pupil-teacher ratio above the recommended number, for example, one teacher may have 60 learners yet the expected standard is 45 and below; if the Hon.

Senator noticed recently, the Government recruited a number of teachers, but the constraint is funding because all those recruited teachers should be in accordance to the budget allocated to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. It is true, Government will be recruiting teachers to reduce the teacher-pupil ratio to adjust it to the standard, but I do not think it is a problem that will be solved immediately. It depends on the economic growth so that we get to a point where teacher-pupil ratio goes to standard.

Right now, the Government is working on recruiting teachers to attend to that. That is a very important question. The Ministry will keep on asking for money from the Ministry of Finance so that we conform to the standards that are also recommended in the country. Thank you Mr. President.

**+HON. SEN. NDEBELE:** My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. I see him putting on headphones. I would like to thank you very much for attending to our requests at Silobela. There are a lot of head-on accidents on the detours themselves because there are no road signs and humps. There will be a lot of dust coming up whereby visibility

becomes poor. We also requested from this House that our friends who are operating in mines, the Chinese tend to over speed and we noticed that they are mostly the culprits in the head-on collisions. We try to run away from them most of the time. Can there be a programme to ensure that they conform to the speed limits and may we also have road signs on those detours and humps as well? I thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** Let me also thank Hon. Sen Ndebele for that very important question. The question is, when are you starting the rehabilitation of Kwekwe-Silobela-Lupane Road? Now, the issue is how you are managing dust because of the road that you have started. I want to assure the Hon. Senator that yes, we do dust suppression where you see bowsters with water but we need to do that constantly. I am happy that in the next two or so weeks, we will be opening the first 10 kilometres, so she will be enjoying. We will not be using the detour that she is talking about. The contractor is moving with speed. We have also mobilised again from the section coming from Kwekwe. So, you see us now that

in the few months, we have opened close to 50 kilometres of the new road on that particular section.

I want to say to Hon. Sen. Ndebele that this is more like a woman who is pregnant that we are rehabilitating this road. You have pains during the nine-month cycle but thereafter you celebrate. So, this is what we are doing on this particular road. It is the road that will then shorten the distance to Victoria Falls by over 200 kilometres. We are excited as a ministry and as Government, that we finally heeded a call from the citizenry that the road must be rehabilitated.

*Questions Without Notice were interrupted by* **THE HON.**

**DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE** *in terms of Standing Order Number 67.*

**HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA:** We are appealing to you that we extend the time for questions without notice by 15 minutes.

**HON. SEN. MDHLURI:** I second.

**HON. SEN. MUPANDE:** Thank you for giving me this opportunity to field my question. Firstly, I would like to thank the Minister of Transport. I kindly request the Minister that, before the rainy season, I really appeal to you because this road will cause a lot

of disasters. There are wild animals. Elephants cross the road. If you come across elephants with smaller calves, they may attack you. So, may that road be attended to earlier? I do not know whether it is because the money is not there anymore. We see them seated on the road and not working. I saw some of them playing soccer. They have forgotten that they are at work. I do not know whether they are given little money, but teachers work even if they are not be paid. We appeal to them to come and work so that they complete the project. I appeal to the Minister. May they complete the road?

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Which road are you talking about?

**HON. SEN. MUPANDE:** I am referring to the road from the Bulawayo-Victoria Falls Highway. The detour goes *via* Dete through the National Park. I thank you.

**HON. MHONA:** The detour that she is talking about also passes through a game park, and the danger is associated with that detour going through the game park. I am glad that substantial work has been done to that particular section. It was quite long, I agree. More than the usual detours that you see, this is stretching to close to

16 kilometres. We are happy that the road is almost done now. When we talk of percentage, we are over 80% completion of that particular stretch that she has talked about. Contractors slowed down on the entire road which is still part of the Bulawayo-Victoria Falls Road, because of finances which we do agree with. We also compete at the same pace that we are tapping for our medicine.

The same pace that we are tapping for agricultural inputs is also the same pace that we rely on, which is why it is very problematic to do our roads in this country. Under very normal circumstances, without sanctions, you can tap into international loans from the IMF, World Bank and other lenders. They can come forth so that you do not use your fiscus to rehabilitate roads because the budget for roads alone can wipe out the complete budget of this nation. So, I am happy that whilst it is very difficult, we are still managing to tap into the fiscus. I want to assure you that now we have mobilised resources, and you will see contractors on that entire stretch coming back to work again. They will not be playing football as she has said. They will be going back to work. I will also be visiting the same contractors just in a few weeks' time to reinforce the urgency of us rehabilitating

that gateway. As for the suppression of the detour, it is also something that will be attended to with speed and that section is almost complete now. Thank you.

**\*HON. SEN. ZINDI:** My question is directed to the Leader of the House. We very much appreciate the highway patrol of the Zimbabwe Republic Police that we expect to be patrolling the highways so that they may enforce the laws on the highways, be it those who may overtake where they are not supposed to overtake, but the surprising part is that most of them, when I travel, especially from Mutare to Harare, you see them parked or stationed in one spot. We do not see them patrolling. They are stationed at one place, just like roadblock police. How are they going to attend to the highway patrol office part where they are supposed to attend to the entire highway? I thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY**

**(HON. SEN. MATUKE):** I would like to thank Hon. Senator Zindi for raising that question that speaks to safety and law enforcement on the roads. I believe that programme was started so that we have speed traps by the police. We also expect inspection or testing of those who

may be driving under the influence of alcohol, but because of the technology that is advancing very soon, we may only install technology cameras on the roads, and we will not find policemen. If a vehicle is speeding as you pass through a camera, the speed will be recorded. That motorist will only receive tickets because of that crime. That is being encouraged and compared to the argument that the police need to patrol up and down, it seems that question is specific and we need to look into that road. From the concern of the Hon. Senator, it looks like there is a specific place or specific road.

Mr. President, even in the urban areas in towns, Government has installed cameras to fish out those who may be breaking the law as well as those who go through red robots. This installation of cameras is taking place in phases. I take note of the concern that the police will be stationed at one place. We need to look into whether they will be working as they are expected to do. I believe that the police have since made a better presence on the highways right now as compared to the past. I thank you.

**+HON. SEN. S. MOYO:** Thank you Mr. President. I wanted to direct my question to the Minister of Industry and Commerce but may



I then direct it to the Leader of Government Business. We have a very troubling issue, especially amongst the youth. There is some alcohol that they are taking which is called *Njengu*. That substance is actually destroying them. Most of them are no longer able to go to work and some of them cannot run households or even being fit in terms of reproduction. What is Government policy with regards to this substance? How can it be stopped so that it is not available in the communities? We have noticed that some of the Ministers maybe the brewers of that substance and we do not expect our children to take that substance called *Njengu*. I thank you.

**\*THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY (HON. SEN. MATUKE):** I would like to thank the Hon. Senator for the question. Before I respond, may the Hon. Senator correct where he says the Ministers are responsible for brewing that substance.

**THE HON. PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE:** Yes, please withdraw that statement.

**\*HON. S. MOYO:** I withdraw Mr. President. Thank you Mr. President, for that correction by the Hon. Senator. With regards to the

question, Government has realised that the drugs and substance abuse is a serious menace to this country. Government has come up with a Cabinet Committee to look into that. There are a lot of substances that have been gazetted and outlawed, considered illegal even in shops. If you are caught with such a drug or substance, you will be arrested. I am sure about the drug that the Hon. Senator referred to, whether it is on the list or not, but if it is a new substance or drug that has been recently released, we need to look into it. Government does not encourage that. Government has spent a lot of money in rehabilitation programmes for those affected in various centres in the past. You may be aware that the President launched some fundraising so that suppliers of drugs and substances may be prosecuted. To be able to respond properly to the Hon. Senator, we need to look into the specific drug that he referred to. If the Hon. Senator is aware of where it is brewed or manufactured, people will be very happy. We request you to write to the Chairperson of the Committee, the Minister of Defence, Hon. O. C. Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri. Mr. President, if there is a specific place that the Hon. Senator knows, that place must be visited and people must be arrested, regardless of whether it is a

minister, like you said, or political heavyweight or someone young, the law just applies to them.

## **ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE**

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Questions

With Notice, Numbers 1 to 4 have been deferred.

**HON. SEN. CHAPFUKA:** I would like the Minister to come, but I point the finger at the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Question Number 1 would be, if we expect one way or the other, without the Minister, if he cannot answer a single question, there are about two questions on Foreign Affairs. Will you implore your office to please intervene on our behalf? The concern is very well placed.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Your concern is very well placed. Hon. Minister Matuke, can you please convey our concerns; we have got a question which is now 12 months old and the relevant Hon. Minister has not turned up to attend to it. Please convey our concerns. Thank you.

So, Question Number 1 up to Question Number 4 are deferred. Hon. Minister of Transport, are you ready to attend to Question 5?

## REHABILITATION AND DUALISATION OF MVUMA- GWERU ROAD

5. **HON. SEN. ADV. PHULU** asked the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development to inform the House the measures being taken to upgrade, rehabilitate and dualise the Mvuma–Gweru Road which is also used as another route to link Bulawayo and Harare and to further explain the projected timelines for the completion of the work in view of the strategic importance of this corridor.

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

President Sir, the Gweru-Mvuma Road known as R7, is a regional road located in the Midlands Province, with a total length of approximately 84 kilometres, connecting Mvuma Town to Gweru City. The road forms part of a significant piece of the national road network as it provides a vital connection between two major regional corridors, namely the Harare-Masvingo-Beitbridge Road and the Harare-Bulawayo-Plumtree Road. It therefore provides an important alternative route linking the country's major transport corridors and facilitates the movement of people, goods and services through the

Midlands Province. The Gweru-Mvuma Road is currently in a poor condition and requires rehabilitation to restore the pavement structure, improve trafficability and enhance road safety. In recognition of the strategic importance and current condition of this road, the ministry has prioritised the rehabilitation of 20 kilometres of the road during this current year.

The procurement process for the works is at an advanced stage and construction works are expected to commence within the next two months. The rehabilitation works will be implemented progressively. The remaining sections of the 84 kilometres will be attended to during the following year, with works continuing until the entire Gweru-Mvuma Road has been rehabilitated.

With regards to the proposed dualisation of the Gweru-Mvuma Road, the immediate priority of the Ministry is to rehabilitate the existing road and restore it to an acceptable and safe standard. A specific implementation programme and timeline for dualisation has not yet been provided. The Ministry will therefore continue with the first rehabilitation programme, beginning with the prioritised 20-kilometre section this year, followed by the remaining sections in the

subsequent year until the entire 84-kilometre stretch is completed.

Thank you Mr. President of Senate Sir.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDNET OF SENATE:** Thank you Hon. Minister, Question No. 6 up to Question No. 12 are hereby deferred.

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** Sorry Mr. President, I wanted to request some clarification from the Minister with respect to the Mvuma Road.

**THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDNET OF SENATE:** With respect to this report, you have just read? Yes.

**HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI:** I just wanted to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that this road has become very, very busy in view of the Dinson Steel Works. This road is pounded by trucks that ferry coal all the way from Hwange to Chivhu, the same trucks that carry tonnes and tonnes of limestone from Redcliffe to Dinson. So, it has become so busy. My understanding is that some of the trucks that pound this road weigh more than the mandatory 30 tonnes.

In fact, they go up to 50 tonnes. Perhaps the Minister could look at reprioritising this in view of the fact that this road is now much

busier than it has ever been and also that it is carrying a load that is disproportionate to its enduring quality. Thank you Mr. President.

**HON. MHONA:** Thank you Mr. President and let me also thank Hon. Sen. Zvidzai for that very important question and contribution. Indeed, this is a very important corridor that we are talking about and he has highlighted the trucks that are being overloaded on that particular stretch. It is quite disturbing, Mr. President, that our VID officers at times are actually impounding vehicles with a tonnage of 67 and you wonder, a 30-tonne truck carrying 67 tonnes, surely our roads will not live long.

To actually address his question, we have also engaged Dinson, which is Manhize, where we are also thinking of, not thinking, but discussing on the railway line from the plant to connect to Mvuma so that in terms of the load, we then divert some of the loads from the road to the railway line and from Mvuma, we then work on a new line to Nyazura. This is the desired plan of the Ministry. To also give due respect to what he has said, we also consider reprioritising like what he has indicated. Surely, if you had moved on that particular stretch two years ago, the road was intact, but now it is in a sorry state. We

are also engaging with my counterpart, the Minister of Mines, that we speak to our miners so that they also participate in rehabilitating our roads and also invite them to participate on the rail rehabilitation and providing rolling stock so that they bring their wagons and we work with them on the rehabilitation programme which we are having through NRZ and make sure that we bring back the cargo on the railway line. This is what we are doing but to buttress his point, yes indeed, we will consider the entire stretch.

*Questions with Notice were interrupted by THE HON.*

**DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE** *in terms of Standing Order Number 67.*

## **MOTION**

REPORT ON THE DELEGATION OF THE OACPS AFRICAN  
REGION PARLIAMENTARY GROUP AND 1ST AFRICA-EU  
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AT EZULWINI PALAZZO,  
ESWATINI

Seventh Order read: Aadjourned debate on motion on the Report of the delegation Report of the OACPS African Region Parliamentary Group and 1<sup>st</sup> Africa- EU Parliamentary Assembly at Ezulwini



Palazzo, Eswatini.

Question again proposed.

**HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA:** Thank you Mr. President, I move that the debate do now adjourn.

**HON. CHIEF CHIKWAKA:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2026.

## **MOTION**

### **REPORT OF THE THEMATIC COMMITTEE ON PEACE AND SECURITY ON ENERGY SECURITY IN ZIMBABWE**

Second Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Report of the Thematic Committee on Peace and Security on Energy Security in Zimbabwe.

Question again proposed.

**HON. SEN. MUPFUMIRA:** I rise to add my voice to this important debate on the Report of the Thematic Committee on Peace and Security on Energy Security in Zimbabwe. I wish to commend the Committee, under the Chairpersonship of Hon. Sen. Zindi, for the thoroughness of this inquiry which took our colleagues from the

boardrooms of Harare to the shopfloor of Hwange Thermal Power Station, the solar fields of Gwanda and Nyabira and the wards of Bulawayo United Hospitals. This is the kind of grounded, evidence-based work that this House should be proud to associate with.

Mr. President, energy is not an abstract subject. It is the difference between a clinic that can refrigerate vaccines and one that cannot, between a farmer who can irrigate a winter wheat crop and one who watches the season pass by, between a rural family that cooks on a three-stone open fire in a smoke-filled kitchen and one that flicks a switch. I want to use my contribution to widen the lens the Committee has already opened, and to speak to the linkages between energy security, climate change, our water resources and wetlands, agriculture and food security and the lived reality of the ordinary villager because these threads run through this report from beginning to end even where they are not always spelt out.

This report rightly places hydropower at the centre of our nation's energy mix, with Kariba South alone contributing roughly half of the Zimbabwe Power Company's generation capacity. This House must not lose sight of how exposed that dependence leaves us.

As recently as 2024, Lake Kariba fell to about 13% of its usable storage during the El Niño-induced drought, forcing painful load-shedding on both sides of the Zambezi. It is only since March 2026, with improved inflows from the Upper Zambezi catchment, that the lake has begun to recover. This is not a once-off event; it is a warning of what an increasingly erratic climate will keep doing to a country that leans so heavily on rain-fed hydropower.

This is precisely why the Committee's observation on ageing infrastructure at Kariba South and Hwange must be read together with the climate reality. A plant availability of 68% against an international benchmark of 85% is bad enough; when the water is there, it becomes a national emergency when the water is not. I, therefore, urge this Senate to support the Committee's call for the Life Extension Programme at Kariba South and the rehabilitation of Hwange Units 1 to 6, but to insist that this work be paired with serious, funded climate adaptation planning for our river systems, not treated as a purely engineering problem.

I also want to speak about our wetlands because a healthy river is only as healthy as the wetlands and catchments that feed it. Areas

such as the Mapfungautsi Forest in the Gokwe area, the Sengwe wetlands and communal lands bordering Gonarezhou and the Sanyati catchment that drains into Lake Kariba, are not decorative pieces of scenery. They are the sponges that hold water in the dry months, recharge our groundwater and regulate the flow of the very rivers that turn our turbines. When these areas are degraded through deforestation, veld fires, siltation and unregulated settlement, the effect is felt many kilometres downstream at Kariba, at Tugwi-Mukosi and in the boreholes our people depend on.

The Committee itself observed, correctly, that continued deforestation and degradation around hydro catchments threaten river flows and the long-term sustainability of hydropower generation. I would ask that this observation be strengthened into a firm recommendation that the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, working with traditional leadership structures around Mapfungautsi, Sengwe and Sanyati, and in the spirit of our obligations under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, develop specific, funded catchment protection plans for these areas, not only Kariba, Mutirikwi and Nyanga as recommended.

We cannot talk about energy security without talking about food security because in Zimbabwe the two are joined at the hip. Every solar-powered borehole, every functioning irrigation pump, every cold room that keeps horticultural produce from rotting before it reaches the market, depends on a reliable supply of energy. The Committee found that the Great Zimbabwe Mini Hydro Power Project on Lake Mutirikwi serves a genuinely dual purpose, generating electricity while also supporting irrigation for sugar estates through its arrangement with the Zimbabwe National Water Authority. This is exactly the kind of integrated thinking that we need to see repeated across our other river systems, particularly as this Government pushes the *Pfumvudza/Intwasa* programme and the wider drive toward climate-smart, irrigation-based agriculture.

Without energy, Mr. President, our climate adaptation strategy in agriculture simply collapses. Drought-proofing our farming through irrigation is meaningless if there is no power to run the pumps and our post-harvest losses will remain unacceptably high if rural centres cannot run cold storage. I would therefore urge that as we roll out the Presidential Rural Solarisation Scheme and the various mini-grid

programmes described in this report, priority connection be given to functioning irrigation schemes, grain storage depots and agro-processing centres so that our energy investment translates directly into food on the table.

I note with interest the Committee's findings on biogas, with 147 institutional digesters and 410 domestic digesters already constructed, and 582 local builders trained over the past two years. This is a quiet success story that deserves more attention than it usually receives in this House. Biogas sits exactly where waste management meets energy security. Every clinic, school, abattoir and growth point that is not capturing its organic waste for biogas is quite literally burning an opportunity. The Hakwata Green Village project in Chipinge which combines solar, biogas digesters and solar home systems, shows what is possible when waste-to-energy thinking is built into a project from the start, rather than added as an afterthought.

I would urge the Ministry of Energy and Power Development, together with local authorities, to look seriously at scaling biogas at municipal level, particularly around our urban waste dump.

This report speaks in megawatts and kilowatts and rightly so, but I want to bring this Senate back to the reality of the ordinary villager. National figures show that well over a third of our people still have no access to electricity at all and that the majority of rural households, more than three in every five, depend on firewood, crop residues and where they can afford it, paraffin and candles for their basic energy needs. This is the honest starting point for any conversation about energy security in Zimbabwe. When we speak of universal access by 2030, we are speaking directly to the woman who wakes before dawn to walk further and further each year in search of firewood because the trees near her homestead were cut down long ago.

This dependence on wood is not a lifestyle choice; it is a consequence of poverty and of gaps in our electrification programme. The Rural Electrification Fund's work with basic solar systems are welcome, but the Committee itself found that only 17 of 51 ongoing grid-extension projects around Gweru were on track for completion, held back by funding shortfalls. Mr. President, until these gaps are closed, our rural people will continue to rely on wood and our forests

and catchments, the very ones I spoke of earlier, will continue to pay the price.

Nowhere is the tension between our agricultural success and our energy and environmental challenges more visible than in tobacco curing. Tobacco remains one of our most important foreign currency earners, but the honest truth is, this House must confront the great majority of our tobacco grown overwhelmingly by small-scale and communal farmers is still cured using firewood.

Government estimates suggest that tobacco curing accounts for somewhere between 15 and 20 percent of the hundreds of thousands of hectares of the forest. Between 20 percent and the hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest, Zimbabwe loses every year. Fossils fuels, COP commitments and the contradiction, we must resolve.

I now turn to a matter of principle and this House should not shy away from this. At COP28 in Dubai, the international community including Zimbabwe, agreed for the first time in nearly three decades of climate negotiations, what was called the UAE consensus, committing parties to transitioning away from fossils in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner so as to reach zero



emissions by 2050. That agreement also called for tripling global renewable energy capacity and doubling the rate of energy efficiency by 2030.

Mr. President, this places us in an uncomfortable but honest position. On the other hand, this report confirms that Hwange Thermal Power Station, a coal-fired plant, remains the backbone of our national grid, anchoring stability for our hospitals and security situations. Coal still needs to carry us through this decade. No responsible Member of this House would suggest switching it overnight.

On the other hand, our rural majority is not burning coal or diesel at all. They are burning firewood at a rate that is stripping our forests faster than nature can replace. Our national conversation about moving away from fossil fuels must therefore run on two tracks at once. A managed finance transition away from coal in our grid exactly is the National Integrated Energy Resource Plan's target by seeking to cut coal's share from over 60% in 2022 to below 20% by 2045. An equal agent transition away from unsustainable biomass burning in

our villages, curing our burns towards clean cooking solutions, biogas and modern renewables.

I would put it to this House that we cannot claim credit internationally for our co-op commitments where at home more than 60% of people still cook on open fire. Both transitions matter and both deserve resourcing, not just the one that photographs well at international conferences. Technical innovations in Zimbabwe should scale up.

Mr. President, this report is in truth, a catalogue of homegrown innovation that deserves wider recognition and faster replication. I would highlight the following for this House's attention:

i. The National Battery Energy Storage System Programme, a joint venture worth USD385 million to instal 1800 megawatts of storage at Dema, Warren, Chelsea and Tokwe substations which will allow us to bank solar and wind power for use after dark, directly addressing the no-power-at-night complaint raised by both Blanket Mine and Turk Mine during the Committee's visit.

The national wind resource assessment programme, with masts such as the one at Guruve's Dickson site identifying locations with

wind speeds viable for future turbines, work that must now be matched with stronger involvement of our universities and research institutions so that the data collected is actually used.

Mini-hydro resuscitation at sites such as Himalaya and Dazi in Manicaland, and net-metering arrangements that allow mines such as Blanket and Turk to feed surplus solar power back into the grid, once the outstanding regulatory and billing bottlenecks are resolved.

Biogas and clean cooking innovation, including the local manufacture of improved cookstoves, aimed at lifting the share of our population using clean cooking solutions from 39% to 70% by 2030.

Mr. President, I want to close by locating this report firmly with the NDS2, covering 2026 to 2030, which this Government has adopted as the final push towards Vision 2030. NDS2 places food and nutrition security, sustainable rural livelihoods and agriculture-led economic growth among its priorities to be delivered through the Agriculture, Food Systems and Rural Transformation Strategy for the same period, its food security, climate resilience and environmental protection priority areas which speak specifically to achieving food and nutrition security through climate-smart agriculture and irrigation.

I support the adoption of this report and the recommendations contained in it. I have sought my contribution to show that energy security in Zimbabwe cannot be separated from the health of our wetlands and river catchments, the resilience of our agriculture, the everyday reality of the villagers still cooking on firewood, the sustainability of our tobacco sector and our honest obligations under the Global Climate Agenda. As Chairman of the Climate Change Thematic Committee, I am pleased to support.

If we get our energy choices right, guided by the evidence this Committee has gathered, we protect our forests, secure our food, keep our COP commitments and give the ordinary Zimbabwean family the light and the power that Vision 2030 promises them. I thank you Mr. President.

**HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA:** Thank you Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to debate. The reason why I stood up to debate today is because of the launch that we had today of the Committee of the Future and the issues of energy align very well with the issues that we are discussing today and I feel compelled to support this motion.

Mr. President, let me begin by commending the Committee for its comprehensive enquiry. I particularly appreciate that the Committee did not confine itself to receiving evidence in Parliament. Members went into the country, visited power stations, mines, hospitals, solar installations, mini-grid projects and Committees were therefore able to compare what exists in our policy documents and what is actually happening on the ground.

Mr. President, that is how exactly parliamentary oversight should operate. Energy security belongs within the peace and security mandate because energy security is a national security. Electricity is no longer simply a household convenience. It powers our hospitals, it powers our mines, it powers our water treatment plants, it powers our telecommunications, it powers our schools, industries, border posts, airports, security installations and increasingly our entire digital economy.

Therefore, Mr. President when electricity supply becomes unreliable, the consequences extend far beyond someone sitting in darkness at home. Productivity falls, business loses money, hospitals become vulnerable, water systems are disrupted, investors reconsider

investment decisions and ultimately, the economy suffers. For that reason, I believe this report deserves serious consideration by this House.

The problem we have is not absence of policy. One thing that becomes very clear from this report is that Zimbabwe does not suffer from an absence of energy policies. We have the Electricity Act, we have the Energy Regulatory Authority Act, we have the National Renewable Energy Act, we have five Pillar Energy Strategies, we have the National Integrated Energy Resource Plan. We have now endorsed Mission 300, through which African countries seek to connect 300 million people to electricity by 2030. Zimbabwe has committed itself Mr. President, to universal access to reliable, affordable, sustainable and clean energy by 2030 - Those are important commitments.

However, our difficulty has consistently been the distance between policy announcement and implementation. The citizen does not experience energy security by reading policy documents.

The woman in rural Matabeleland South experiences energy security when she switches on her light in her home. The nurse

experiences energy security when she can attend to a patient without worrying that electricity will suddenly disappear. A farmer experiences energy security when an irrigation pump is working. A welder experiences energy security when he can work a full day. An industrialist experiences energy security when machinery can operate without production schedules being reorganised around load shedding.

As Parliament, our measurement of success must ultimately be what happens to the citizens. Mr. President, today we launched the Committee of the Future. This debate is particularly significant to me because today we launched the Committee of the Future. That Committee exists because Parliament must not only legislate for today.

Parliament must develop the capacity to anticipate tomorrow. We must look beyond immediate crisis and ask what we will need in 10, 20 or 30 years Mr. President.

Surely, when we speak about the future, energy must be at the centre of that conversation. Zimbabwe cannot afford to be caught

wanting. The economy of the future will consume more electricity, not less. Artificial intelligence and data centres require enormous amounts of reliable energy. Electric mobility will require charging infrastructure. Modern irrigation will require energy. Mineral beneficiation requires enormous amounts of electricity.

Advanced manufacturing requires electricity. Digital health systems require electricity. Modern universities and research institutions require electricity. Our future, Mr. President, our future railway systems, industries, telecommunications and smart infrastructure will require reliable power. Therefore, as we celebrate the establishment of a Committee of the Future, we must also confront an uncomfortable question. What kind of future are we preparing for if we cannot guarantee the power required to power that future?

Mr. President, we cannot speak enthusiastically about Vision 2030, industrialisation, mine beneficiation, technological transformation and becoming upper middle economy while simultaneously accepting electrical shortages as a permanent feature of Zimbabwean life.



We must plan beyond today's load-shedding schedule. We must ask what Zimbabwe's peak electricity demand will be in 2030, 2040 and 2050. We must ask where the electricity will come from. We must ask whether our transmission network will carry it. We must ask whether our skill base will maintain those technologies. We must ask whether our regulatory framework will attract the investment necessary to build that capacity.

Mr. President, the future will not wait for Zimbabwe to solve its electrical problems. Other countries will continue industrialising. Technology will continue advancing. Investors will continue looking for jurisdictions where reliable electricity is available. Zimbabwe must prepare now. This report gives us encouraging examples. At Hakwata Green Village in Chipinge, a 120-kilowatt solar mini-grid is serving homes and businesses. It has supported shops and grinding mills and a bakery. It has electrified a clinic. It has supported digital learning at a school. Young people have received vocational training. That is what energy investment should achieve. Electricity must become an economic multiplier. The Soti Source Solar Project in

Masvingo provides another example. A 169 mini-grid supplies a clinic, school, business centres, churches and the Government offices.

Again, we see that once electricity arrives, economic and social activity follows. Mr. President, this is particularly relevant to our rural communities. The report tells us that approximately 30% of households rely on off-grid electricity and that almost 79% of those are in rural. We must therefore accept that extending the traditional national grid to every scattered rural household cannot be our only strategy.

Zimbabwe's enormous solar potential, decentralised generation, mini-grids and household solar systems can allow rural communities to leapfrog some of the limitations of the conventional grid expansion. Mr. President, the report refers to the Presidential Rural Solarisation which targets 1-kilowatt solar systems for 1.2 million rural households.

If implemented properly, this could fundamentally transform rural Zimbabwe, but a programme involving 1.2 million households already requires serious Parliamentary Oversight. Who qualifies? How are the beneficiaries selected? Which district comes first? Who

supplies the equipment at what price? What warranties accompany those installations? Who repairs the systems when they fail? What is the implementation timetable? Most importantly, Mr. President, we must ensure that access to electricity never becomes politically determined. A rural Zimbabwean must not have to belong to a particular political party to qualify for a solar system purchased through a Government programme.

Electricity is a national development requirement. Public resources belong to Zimbabweans. Mr. President, one finding in this report particularly concerns me. The Committee visited United Bulawayo Hospitals and found a 350 kilowatt solar plant installed in 2026. It has substantially reduced diesel consumption and strengthened energy security in that institution. That is very commendable. Yet even there, the mortuary and laundry remain uncovered.

**HON. SEN. C. MUTSVANGWA:** Mr. President, I listened intently to the debater, to the speaker, a lot of valid points, but I have got reservations about the insinuation that electricity is being rationed by a party or a ruling party in favour of its membership or supporters

at the expense of the opposition. That statement is not valid. It should be withdrawn.

**THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT (HON. SEN. KAMBIZI):**

Did you say that?

**HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA:** No.

**THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT:** Then you may proceed.

**HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA:** Thank you Mr. President. As I was saying, the Committee found that at UBH, United Bulawayo Hospitals and the bill for diesel consumption has been reduced, strengthening energy security in Zimbabwe.

**HON. SEN. C. MUTSVANGWA:** We are listening to more debate. There is a specific issue: the accusation that the ruling party denies electricity to those who are not members of the ruling party. There is no validity to that. It should be withdrawn.

**THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Order!

Your point of order has been taken, but I will have to make a ruling. Meanwhile, the Member will continue to debate.

**HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA:** Thank you Mr. President. More concerning to me personally, however, is the finding concerning

Maphisa District Hospital. The report tells this House that the solar equipment has been installed in Maphisa and Nyika District Hospital, but is not yet operational. Mr. President, this is exactly the kind of problem that frustrates our citizens. The investment has already been made, equipment has been purchased and installed, but the hospital cannot use it. Why? What remains to be done? Who is responsible for commissioning it? How much additional money is required? How long must the people wait? Maphisa District Hospital serves rural communities in Matobo. Reliable electricity in a hospital can literally become a matter of life and death. Maternity services need electricity. Medicine requires refrigeration. Laboratories need electricity. Emergency procedures require electricity. Medical equipment needs electricity as well.

I strongly support the Committee recommendation that these installations must become operational by 31 December 2026. I would actually ask the responsible Minister to report back to Parliament before the deadline with a complete inventory of public institutions where renewable energy equipment has been installed but remains non-operational, Mr. President, because installed capacity that cannot

be used is not capacity, it is stranded public investment. Renewable energy is important but the report correctly acknowledges the reality that Zimbabwe still depends heavily upon baseload generation.

Hwange Thermal Power Station remains central to our national electricity system, yet the ageing Units 1 and 6 have approximately 920 megawatts of installed capacity while effective output is reported at only around 350 megawatts. This is a serious loss of productive capacity. The rehabilitation programme therefore cannot be allowed to drift.

The report also reveals another troubling fact. Government ministries, local authorities and parastatals reportedly owed approximately 188 million as of February 2026. Government cannot demand that ZESA becomes financially viable while Government institutions themselves are among the major debtors. There has to be discipline across the system. If Government departments consume electricity, they must budget for electricity. If parastatals consume electricity, they must pay. We cannot continuously complain that the utility does not have money for spares and allow hundreds of millions in bills to remain unpaid. The report further identifies ZESA legacy

debt at approximately 616.6 million. That is enormous. The Committee recommends restructuring it. I support that recommendation. However, restructuring the debt cannot become an excuse to ignore the structural weakness that created financial distress. We must deal with revenue collection. We must deal with electricity losses. We must deal with efficient infrastructure. We must deal with vandalism. We must deal with procurement and we must deal with Government debtors.

We must ensure professional management and accountability throughout the electricity sector. Otherwise, we will restructure today and accumulate another unsustainable debt tomorrow. I want this House to pay particular attention to the proposed battery energy storage system. According to this report, approximately 385 million is involved in installing 1 800 megawatts of storage capacity at Dema, Warren, Chetsi and Tokwe substations. Battery storage can be transformative for Zimbabwe. One of the limitations of solar energy is obvious. The sun does not shine at night. Storage allows electricity generated during the period of high renewable output to be stored and released when required. It stabilises the grid and allows us to integrate

more renewable energy, but 385 million is a substantial amount of money. Therefore, Parliament must follow this investment closely.

In conclusion, I return to where I began. Today, we launched the Committee of the Future. It was an important moment for this Parliament because it acknowledges that leadership is not simply about solving today's problems. Leadership is about anticipating tomorrow's challenges. Energy is perhaps one of the clearest tests of whether Zimbabwe is genuinely prepared for the future.

**THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa, on your point of order, I am going to revisit the *Hansard* and make a ruling on Tuesday.

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

**HON. SEN. MDHLURI:** I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2026.

*On the motion of HON. SEN. MUZENDA, seconded by HON. SEN. ZINDI, the Senate adjourned at Twenty-Three Minutes to Five o'clock p. m. until Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2026.*