

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Thursday, 10th September, 2026

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

PRAYERS

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE

SWITCHING OFF OF CELLPHONES

THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE: I would like to remind the Hon. Senators to put your gadgets on silent or better still, switch them off so that they do not disturb the business of the House.

APOLOGIES RECEIVED FROM MINISTERS

THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE: I have a list of apologies: Hon. Gen. Rtd. Dr. C. D. G. N. Chiwenga, the Vice President; Hon. Col. Rtd. K. C. D. Mohadi, the Vice President; Hon. B. Rwodzi, Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry; Hon. M. Mutsvangwa, Minister of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development; Hon. P. Kambamura,

Minister of Mines and Mining Development; Hon. M. N. Ndlovu, Minister of Industry and Commerce; Hon. V. Haritatos, Minister of Lands and Rural Development; Hon. E. Jesaya, Deputy Minister of Sports, Recreation, Arts and Culture; Hon. C. Sanyatwe, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; Hon. N. T. Mazungunye, Deputy Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; Hon. Mombeshora, Minister of Health and Child Care; Hon. Machakaire, Minister of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training; Hon. A. Gata, Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education; Hon. Dinha, Deputy Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare; Hon. R. Modi, Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce; Hon. Y. Simbanegavi, Deputy Minister of Energy and Power Development; Hon. M. Ncube, Deputy Minister of National Housing and Social Amenities; Hon. T. Kwidini, Deputy Minister of Health and Child Care and Hon. T. Zhou, Deputy Minister of Lands and Rural Development; Hon. Kabikira, Deputy Minister of Local Government and Public Works; Hon. Chikomo, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Hon. Sacco, Deputy Minister of Transport and

Infrastructural Development; Hon. Makwiranzou, Deputy Minister of Mines and Mining Development Responsible for Oil and Gas Research and other Strategic Minerals Exploration. Some of these ministers, we never see them in the House. It is very sad.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

HON. SEN. SHIRI: Thank you Mr. President. My question is directed to the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training, Hon. Mupamhanga. What inclusion targets and reasonable accommodations are built into the USD1 million Economic Empowerment Fund and the USD2 million Presidential Youth Empowerment Revolving Fund for young entrepreneurs with disabilities? I thank you.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING (HON. MUPAMHANGA): Thank you Mr. President. I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the question. Currently, in the Ministry, there is no in-built mechanism for those with disabilities. However, we do encourage that in all our programmes, not just on the loan amounts and the empowerment schemes that the

Hon. Senator mentioned, but also in vocational training centres and also in youth services in Zimbabwe.

We encourage that we be always cognisant of people with disabilities and encourage our structures, that is, our provincial heads and district heads to seek young people with disabilities so that they can also be part of the loan schemes. I do not have figures at hand but we have seen an increase in the number of young people with disabilities in all our programmes including those that are accessing the loans both from the Presidential Empowerment Scheme and from the Youth Economic Empowerment Fund. I thank you.

HON. SEN. SHIRI: Thank you Mr. President. Hon. Minister, will the youth with disabilities also receive collateral waivers under Empowerment Bank products? I thank you.

THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE: It is really not a supplementary but I will allow the question to stand.

HON. MUPAMHANGA: Thank you Mr. President. May I say that we do not have collateral waivers on our loans. What we have done is that we have worked together with the Reserve Bank

of Zimbabwe, so we work around the issue of collateral because young people do not have collateral. So, they form asset registers. If they are importing machines, those become the collateral. Where possible we try to minimise the issue of collateral because we are aware that young people do not have collateral.

In that same vein, young people with disabilities will be subjected to the same whereby they build an asset register. It could be livestock or machinery that they are importing. That becomes the collateral for the loans that they take. Thank you.

***HON. SEN. MAVENYENGWA:** Thank you Mr. President. My question is directed to the Minister of Youth Empowerment, Development and Vocational Training. We have got a National Youth Service programme which is being done by the Ministry of Youth where the youth are being taken from the rural areas and go for training. I want to know whether there is any Government policy in relation to those who have finished their training so that they will be able to get jobs, especially in Government. If you look at countries like Nigeria and America, when you go to the National

Youth Service, you will automatically qualify for a job in Government. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF YOUTH
EMPOWERMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL
TRAINING (HON. MUPAMHANGA):** Thank you Mr. President.

Let me say the youth service in Zimbabwe which was recently referred to as the National Youth Service has two expectations after training our youth. Firstly, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Dr. E. D. Mnangagwa gave a directive to the Cabinet that youth who have trained must be given first preference for employment in Government if they have the qualifications to be enrolled in that certain job. Secondly, we are not waiting for the youth to be employed only. They do three months orientation on the history and heritage of Zimbabwe and where we are going as a country. From there, they also do another three months skills training in our vocational training centres. Then, they are deployed for attachment on the country's projects like bridges. We also encourage them that after training, they are the first ones to be given first priority for those who are going to further their studies. For

example, this year there were youths who were sent to Algeria through the Presidential Scholarship. Yes, we expect these youths to be employed but we also give them the skills to use if they fail to secure jobs. They can go and acquire loans from the banks and they can make a meaningful contribution in their lives. Thank you.

HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI: My question is directed to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. Currently, there is an operation to remove millions of people from vending in the streets of Harare and other urban areas. We are fully aware that a similar programme happened in 2005 and it was unsuccessful because there was no arrangement to ensure that those who lose their livelihoods could get some sort of a halfway house and social safety nets. What programmes does the Minister have in view of the whole of business approach to make sure that these people who are being removed from the streets and losing their livelihoods do not suffer?

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. E. MOYO): Thank you very much Mr. President and thank you very much to the Hon. Senator for the

question. When he initially posed the question, I was saying this is not my question but then he made an angle, a turn that then rubbed in the welfare aspect. The Government always has in its programmes, a component for social protection. We know that during the operation, as he has indicated, some people might lose livelihoods and maybe some children might be affected here and there but then we are saying that there will be no special programme for them. There will always be that programme which caters for such eventualities. So, should there be people whose livelihoods are affected in such a way, they then qualify for social welfare assistance. We will be willing to assist them in the normal way. Our officers in the district offices will always be alert to those eventualities. So, we have that in place and we do not foresee any problems in that regard.

HON. SEN. ZVIDZAI: One would assume that preceding a massive programme like this, the government would have done an impact assessment on the numbers of people who would be affected. Clearly, I would think the Minister should be aware that if somebody is pushed off their normal vending place, automatically

they have lost their livelihood. As this happened, was there an impact assessment on the social challenges people would face?

HON. E. MOYO: Thank you Mr. President and thank you Hon. Senator for the follow-up question. From the angle of the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, we have not done that assessment. However, let this House be assured that should there be any eventuality where social welfare assistance or social protection measures are required, we are ready to do that. We have the resources, the structures and everything required to handle that kind of situation. I will not speak for the parent ministry that is responsible for the issue that we are discussing currently. Perhaps an assessment was done but I am not very sure. However, we are ready to handle any eventuality that may arise. I thank you.

+HON. SEN. ADV. PHULU: Thank you Mr. President. My question is directed to the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife. Our mountains in Matabeleland South, Matabeleland North and Matabeleland East are being destroyed by mining activities. They are looking for granite and other resources needed there. What programmes are in place to protect our mountains,

especially the sacred ones with history and great importance to our community? What programmes are in place to protect those mountains so that when people wake up they find them still there?

+THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. E. NDLOVU): I would like to thank Hon. Sen. Phulu for his very important question about natural heritage. We know that mountains are one of the things that we found here on Mother Earth and we are supposed to keep them as a creation of God. In the *Bible*, it is written that God created people and after that he said to man, here are the things that I have created and you are supposed to protect them.

Yes, we also have to protect these mountains. We have organisations under us that were formed in this House so that they look after the natural existence of these mountains. The economy sometimes makes us go and look for wealth there but when we apply to carry out mining activities, the Government through EMA, looks at whether you are going to destroy the mountains or you are going to make them dirty. EMA does an assessment and also

engages the community, the villagers so that they can hear what the villagers are saying about this mountain.

When you see that happening, it means that the villagers and EMA are in agreement with the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development that people can start mining there but as the Government, if we see you destroying the mountain, we come in and enforce the law on you. We want the EMA laws to come back to this House and be amended because we have already done something to punish people who have destroyed mountains and people are just coming across that. We respect those mountains a lot. Thank you.

+HON. SEN. ADV. PHULU: I know and I can give you an example. Some mountains have been destroyed and villagers do not know. What should they do and who should they go to because even if they go to chiefs and to EMA, they do not get help. Can we not have another law that will be enforced? When can we look forward to seeing that Bill coming through?

+HON. DR. E. NDLOVU: Thank you Mr. President. I would be very grateful if Hon. Sen. Phulu could give me the list of

mountains that have been destroyed. I will look at it and see why EMA, the law, the chief and the villagers agreed to this and I will ensure that people are punished for destroying our environment. A law is coming. It has not been debated but it is in the National Assembly. I brought it because I saw that the law was not very strong on that issue. We included amendments so that those people who destroy our environment should be severely punished, so that whenever they see that the punishment is severe they will be afraid to destroy the environment. That law is coming.

I am pleading with you, all the lawyers who are here, to also look into this law so that it can be strong and not have loopholes, so that people do not destroy our environment and mountains. Thank you Mr. President.

+HON. SEN. NDEBELE: My supplementary question is, since those mountains are being destroyed, is the soil dumped beside the road not going to disturb the roads since the rainy season is coming?

+HON. DR. E. NDLOVU: Mr. President, I will be grateful if the Hon. Senator could tell me where exactly those soils are so that

tomorrow I can send people from EMA to go and check to see if our roads are not blocked because the rainy season is just around the corner.

I would be happy if the Hon. Sen. can give me the name of the mountain that is being affected because Senators are the eyes of the Government, you can look into these things. That is why the President enabled us to be here so that we can act and work and make sure that things go accordingly.

We are going to wait for that list so that I can send people to the ground in order for us to fix this so that when the rainy season comes, the roads safe. Thank you Mr. President.

THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE (HON. SEN. KAMBIZI): In the House, we have been joined by two other Ministers. We have Hon. Minister Mavhunga responsible for the Veterans of the Liberation Struggle Affairs and Hon. Minister Matuke, the Leader of Government Business and Minister of State for National Security.

HON. SEN. CHAKABUDA: Thank you Mr. President. My question is directed to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and

Social Welfare. With the high cost of living, many civil servants and pensioners are struggling to earn a decent living. What is the Government's position on reviewing these salaries and pensions in line with inflation? When can the public workers expect a decent or next meaningful adjustment? Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. E. MOYO): Thank you Mr.

President and Hon. Sen. Chakabuda for the question. On civil servants' salaries, these come through a cycle of collective bargaining sessions. We are currently going into the seasonal bargaining session towards the end of the year, where civil servants and the employer meet to discuss their conditions of service. Salary is also included in those discussions. I may not at this point have a guess as to when those salary negotiations will be concluded but I am aware that these are always ongoing.

Government pensioners are indexed to the salary of the serving officer in the grade where the pensioner retired. If you retired, maybe as a teacher or as a nurse, their pension is indexed to the serving member's salary as a percentage of that salary. There are

no special negotiations for pensions. It comes through what is paid to the serving members as a percentage.

Pensions like the NSSA are subject to actuarial evaluations, which in this case are done every three years. The third year has been this year and the actuarial evaluation was completed at the end of July. The reports are being put together for submission to the NSSA Board. If adopted, they will be announced publicly. I can assure you that these are being done actuarially.

The Hon. Senator has indicated that the cost of living is rising. It is very true and it is one of the reasons why these actuarial evaluations have to be done. However, they have to be done in such a way that the funds remain sustainable so that we do not overrun the fund where the fund may collapse. We have seen in other jurisdictions where funds have collapsed and we do not want that to happen with these funds. I thank you.

HON. SEN. KATUMBA: Thank you Mr. President. Hon. Minister, enlighten us; is the TNF still functioning? My understanding is, most of the negotiations are being guided by the TNF where you announced the minimum wage which we see for

now is 270. I think that is where the problem is hence we are talking of poverty. What are you doing as Ministry to raise the minimum wage?

HON. E. MOYO: Thank you Mr. President. First of all, I want to point out that minimum wage only applies to what we call these unclassified jobs. These are, for example, domestic workers and farm workers. That is where minimum wages are announced. This year, I did make an announcement; I think it was in May this year, on the minimum wage for those trades.

Now, when it applies to other professions that are classified, those are subject to collective bargaining processes. In the private sector, you have what are called NECs, National Employment Councils, which bring together workers' representatives and employers' representatives. Depending on the nature of the trade, agreements are made, approved and sent to the Attorney General's Office for gazetting to become law.

The TNF, the Tripartite Negotiating Forum is not a collective bargaining forum. It is a forum that brings together Government, labour and employers to come and work on parameters ensuring

that there is economic growth and that demands by workers do not overrun what employers can afford. Also, the Government's regulatory powers are discussed there. It is a broader parameter for economic growth and development and harmony in the labour market.

Collective bargaining processes are done in different chambers. For the civil service, we have the National Joint Negotiating Forum. For the health service sector, there is the Health Services Board and the Commission which deal with those specific issues. The minimum wage is announced for the unclassified jobs. I thank you.

HON. SEN. ADV. PHULU: How about the pensioners?

HON. E. MOYO: As long as those are Government pensions, they are indexed and the transmission is automatic. I thank you.

***HON. SEN. MWANZA:** Thank you Mr. President. My supplementary question is, does the Ministry have a clearly written down timeframe to address the issue of salaries for civil servants? Most of the time when the issue of salaries is being raised, the

Minister always responds that we are going to sit down and resolve the issue. I also want to know how the Ministry will address this salary issue because even us as Hon Members, we are Government employees. I thank you.

***HON. E. MOYO:** These are processes, as I have indicated, in terms of Government workers being negotiated at the NJNC forum. I may not be able to give a timeline on that. The processes are subject to – first, the parameters as given by the Government in terms of its capacity to absorb the demand and secondly, subject to budget processes which we will be dealing with before the end of the year. So, they have to be budgeted for. Therefore, these are processes where I cannot, in this House, indicate a date. However, I can give you a seasonal forecast that we are in the season of collective bargaining and once these agreements are agreed to and signed, depending on the effective date agreed to during the collective bargaining chamber, they can be effected. I thank you.

***THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Hon. Mwanza, were you preparing to work on your budget?

HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: My question is directed to the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife who is also from Matebeleland South. Section 73 of our Constitution gives every person a right to an environment that is protected for the benefit of the present and future generations and specifically requires the State to prevent ecological degradation and secure sustainable use of natural resources. My question is almost the same as that posed by Senator Phulu but my question says; while witnessing a widespread sand poaching and uncontrolled extraction, particularly around our growing rural areas and rural communities, river systems and wetlands, what assessment has your Ministry made of the long-term environmental and sustainability impact on this activity? I thank you Mr. President.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. E. NDLOVU): I would like to thank the Hon. Member for proposing that we do an environmental assessment impact throughout the country. Actually, we had not thought about that, so I think it is a good proposal and we are taking it up so that when I leave this House, I will contact the Director-

General to try and come up with a date when they can do an overall assessment. Otherwise the information is there, of who is doing what and where but an overall document which I can show to Parliament that this is the document that we have, we have not yet done that. So, thank you very much for proposing that we carry out an overall assessment especially in the mining areas.

On river systems, we have gone around the river systems and that is why we have looked at how best we can recover our rivers before the rainy season. We have identified companies that are currently signing agreements so that they can rehabilitate our rivers in specific areas that are highly degraded. So, thank you very much for the proposal Hon. Senator. I thank you.

HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: My question is directed to the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife again, EMA itself requires that somebody gets a licence for sand extraction and requires an Environmental Management Plan while the applicable regulations require an Excavation and Environmental Rehabilitation Plan before excavation takes place. Therefore, Minister, if we continue seeing open pits and extensively degraded land from

illegal sand destruction, where is the enforcement? I thank you Mr. President.

HON. DR. E. NDLOVU: I think when it comes to the sand extraction we have got two other players who are the local authorities and EMA. The local authorities give the licences before the operator goes on the ground, then an AI certificate from EMA. This is an assessment from EMA, whether that activity is not going to degrade the land around the area where sand extraction is taking place. However, you will find that most of these extractions are illegal at times but EMA, once advised accordingly, reacts and takes necessary measures. I will give an example; Last week, I had a bereavement for one of our sons. We took a truck from the farm to carry firewood to the funeral place without necessarily asking for permission because it was from our farm but we were punished for that. So, I think Hon. Members, if anyone sees anybody extracting sand without permission, they should let EMA or my office be aware so that we can stop that activity immediately. On the other hand, EMA always insists that before any mining activity takes place, the person must approach EMA's offices so that EMA can go

and assess the impact that is going to take place when this extraction is taking place. I am sure you are talking about areas like Bulawayo where I see a lot of trucks carrying sand into Bulawayo and those people, most of the times are illegal and when we catch them, we punish them. I so submit.

HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: Can the Minister tell this House who is responsible for rehabilitating the abandoned sand poaching sites, what rehabilitation is actually taking place, if any?

HON. DR. E. NDLOVU: Any mining activity or sand extraction that is taking place within EMA's Act, we are amending that these people should take responsibility of rehabilitation. The current Act is saying that they should take responsibility of rehabilitating the area and once EMA is advised that there is something taking place, then EMA will punish the company that has degraded the area to go and rehabilitate while they supervise the rehabilitation of the area. So EMA's responsibility is to supervise the rehabilitation of the area. EMA does not rehabilitate. We are bringing a Bill here to amend the Act so that you can tighten the screws to enable EMA to really put in place punitive laws that will

deter would-be offenders. EMA should actually have a law that is very strict and will make sure that these people feel the pain. At the moment the fines are not very heavy. That is why we are bringing the Act here, to make sure that the fines are heavy. I so submit.

***HON. SEN. MUNZVERENGWI:** My question is directed to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, Hon. Minister Mhona. I want to thank you Hon. Minister Mhona for always coming to this august House and I also want to thank you for a job well done which you are doing throughout the country, where you are rehabilitating the roads in urban and rural areas. My question Hon. Minister is that you really started well at the beginning of the year. Many companies were on the roads doing their work. Some areas have been tarred while some road sections are on the first phase of rehabilitation. However, we have noticed that most of the companies have stopped the rehabilitation work and some have even abandoned their sections as well as the machinery they were using. Do we still have hope that these companies are going to come back and finish the road works which they were doing in different areas because if they fail to come back...

An Hon. Senator having passed between the Chair and the Speaker on the floor.

THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE (HON. SEN. KAMBIZI): Order, you cannot cross between me and the speaker. Right, proceed.

***HON. SEN. MUNZVERENGWI:** So, if the rain season starts without the rehabilitation having been completed, it means that the companies are going to repeat the same process because the roads will be washed away by the rains. Is there any hope that these companies are going to come back and finish before the rain season?

***THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):**
Thank you Mr. President. I also thank Hon. Sen. Munzverengwi for that pertinent question. She has raised a very good question and as a country, we do know that we only have one source where we get money for road rehabilitation, we take money from the same project. All the ministries are taking money from the Ministry of

Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion but in other countries, they are borrowing money at the lowest interest rate for the construction of roads but Zimbabwe is facing illegal sanctions. We do not have banks that are willing to lend us money for road rehabilitation because of these illegal sanctions. Most of the time we pay these contractors and sometimes we face some setbacks in terms of payment. The contractors may decide to demobilise.

As the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development, we are also inviting various stakeholders. We have got a programme to make sure that on our trunk roads, we work together with other companies under Triple P, where people operate and get some money. We are going to get some funding to work on the Harare-Beitbridge Road. When we get to this weekend, you will see that most of the companies are going back to work because we have managed to get some funds to start operations.

There is also another controversial road, which is Bulawayo-Victoria Falls Road. We had about eight contractors. At the moment, we have one or two contractors who are working, but they

are working at a slower rate because they have not been paid yet.

We are happy that we have managed to secure some funds. Yes, we do have many contractors who are working on our roads, but shortly we are going to see contractors going back and start work so that they can finish before the commencement of the rainy season. If we do not do that, we are going to lose a lot because the roads are going to be destroyed if the rainy season starts.

Also, I want to take this opportunity to remind this august House that you must really work with us in making sure that the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructural Development is allocated more money so that we are able to finish most of the works.

***HON. SEN. MAVENYENGWA:** I have a supplementary question. I heard the Minister mentioning that the Harare-Beitbridge -Masvingo Road has taken long to complete. We are seeing other roads are now being rehabilitated, but some of the areas which are rehabilitated are now in a bad state while the road construction is not yet finished. When does the Minister think this road rehabilitation will be completed since it is one of the roads which started to be rehabilitated under the Second Republic?

***HON. MHONA:** Thank you Hon. President of the Senate. I also thank Hon. Sen. Mavenyengwa who is also the Chairperson of the province where he comes from, from the ruling party. I also want to take this opportunity to mention that the stretch which left is from Masvingo to Beitbridge.

I do agree with the Hon. Member. Those who know this road very well will recall that the area that is still being rehabilitated is mountainous. The road is 582 km, that is from Harare to Beitbridge but right now we have managed to rehabilitate 550 km and we are left with 32 kilometres. The 32 kilometres are remaining between Masvingo and Beitbridge. I am happy to announce that this week we managed to get some funding and we are going to pay our contractors so that they resume work. I promise Hon. Mavenyengwa that by the end of the year, these roads will be attended to. We are going to be left with bridges.

In Masvingo, we will be left with some interchanges and some bridges. At Fairfields, we are going to cross the road through the heaped bridge. We will also see another interchange at ZBC and Rothmans and we expect these roadworks to be finished by mid

next year. In terms of road rehabilitation only without mentioning bridges, it will be finished before this year end.

***HON. SEN. ZINDI:** My supplementary question is that the Minister has explained to the august House the challenges he is facing to complete the construction of one road without starting another road rehabilitation programme.

***THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** I also thank Hon. Sen. Zindi for that pertinent question. I can also reiterate that this year we allocated 150 million and for example, if we say we want to rehabilitate Victoria Falls Road, we need \$500 million to complete that road, which means we need about five years to finish that road. The owners of the finances are this august House, so it comes back to us that the money being allocated to the Ministry is the money which is coming from one pocket.

I am not saying we are doing it willingly but right now, every Hon. Member is asking about the road where he or she is coming from. If we agree that every Member must wait until we finish one road, I do not think that will work out. Like what I have already

alluded to, we are not going to sit down and fold our hands. We are going to continue to look for finances so that we can attend to several roads.

***HON. SEN. CHIEF CHIKWAKA (BUNGU):** Mr. President, allow me to pose my question to the Minister of Veterans of the Liberation Struggle Affairs in order to allow the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development take a breath because he has been asked too many questions – [HON. SENATORS: *Inaudible interjections.*] –

***THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** If we do that, we will not be able to go back to those supplementary questions again. I can have the supplementary questions done so that we finish them.

***HON. SEN. MUPFUMIRA:** Thank you Mr. President for giving me the time to ask the supplementary question. I understand and feel for the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. We also have people whom we represent and we are being asked whether we are forwarding their questions or not. Some of the people who are contributing have been left with a few

kilometers. When the issue of the road was started, it was about Beitbridge to Chirundu Road. We had done some launch in Mapinga where the road rehabilitation started from Harare going through Mapinga.

Now, we are going to be hosting a big event in our province. We are going to be hosting the ZANU-PF National People's Conference in Chinhoyi but there are no facilities for people to stay. Therefore, some of the people would be commuting to and from Chinhoyi. Considering the time left for the hosting of the event and rehabilitation of the road, we cannot meet the target because we are only left with less than a month. You started well but now the road works have stopped. It is like we are coming to this august House to play. The road has been abandoned for two years. For example, Kanyange Road is the major road for Makonde. Transport is not viable because transporters are not able to use their cars in that area. We do not want the ZANU-PF National People's Conference to be disturbed because of the bad roads from here to Chinhoyi. We were using Kariba Road or Chirundu Road to go to Victoria Falls from Chinhoyi because it was shorter but the current state of the road

from Karoi to Chirundu is not in good condition. Can you not take measures concerning heavy trucks that are using the road because they are travelling after 6 p.m.?

***THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Hon. Senators, everyone who wants to ask questions about the roads of their respective areas, may we have supplementary questions on policy issues, not specific areas. Thank you.

***HON. MHONA:** Thank you Mr. President. I have noticed the zeal and the passion of the Honourable Senators. May you allow me to come back with detailed information concerning the roads that are under construction and rehabilitation, those that we have partners who are working with us, those that have been funded and those that have not yet been funded? This is to enable Hon.

Members to see which areas are lagging behind and where there is urgent need of rehabilitation. Some of the roads are under concession agreements and we now have got loan facilities including the road she has referred to. We now have partners who are going to assist in the construction of the road. If you may allow

me to bring statistics per province, of how many roads have been constructed and how many we are left with.

***THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE:** Hon. Minister, you have answered comprehensively. I believe all the Honourable Senators in this august House are going to get comprehensive responses. We hope next time when you come, you will bring the list of all roads and funding written down so that we can benefit.

Questions Without Notice were interrupted by THE HON. DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF SENATE in terms of Standing Order Number 67.

HON. SEN. CHIEF CHIKWAKA (BUNGU): Thank you very much Hon. President of the Senate. I move that the time for Questions Without Notice be extended by 30 minutes.

HON. SEN. MLOTSHWA: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

HON. SEN. C. MUTSVANGWA: Thank you Mr. President. My question is about funding of roads and related infrastructure. You have spoken about the constraints coming from our budget

which are valid because the budget has got so many competing claims. If you look at borrowing from outside, particularly in the neighborhood, the road from Bulawayo to Mutare was done by the Development Bank of Southern Africa. As a State, we owe them nothing because we paid our debt. Maybe, it could be time we go back to our neighbouring friends, in light of the recent binational commission, to say South Africa, you have surplus funds, maybe even also their companies. Can you come to Zimbabwe so that we can deepen and widen the pool of funds upon which you can rely to build roads? It is definitely impossible to do it out of the national budget. The demands are too high. I thank you.

HON. MHONA: Thank you Mr. President and let me also thank Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa for that brilliant proposal which I do concur with, especially the road that he has talked about, the Mutare-Plumtree Road. Apparently, we were working on that particular road for the past five years and we are going to be finishing that obligation this coming month, October. We were to reschedule the date. It was close to 200 million in the last five years but we are almost there in terms of paying it up. A similar model

was a loan from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) and we are happy that now the appetite is there for us to continue tapping into external funding.

The South African banks are also amenable to advance because they have seen the capacity of ZINARA to repay. I do agree that as we speak, we have got a bank that we are talking with in terms of extending another facility close to USD500 million. These are some of the initiatives that will then support the fiscus and support the Minister of Finance so that we rehabilitate our roads and also continue dualising some of our trunk roads. I totally agree with Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa that this is the way to go and this is what we are doing in the Ministry. Thank you.

HON. SEN. MLISWA: Thank you Mr. President. My question is to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development, Hon. Minister Mhona. The Government has prioritised infrastructure development under the National Development Agenda and we are very grateful for that. My question to you is, what is the Ministry's current programme for rehabilitating major roads in rural areas, particularly the roads

connecting farming communities, growth points and district centres given that Zimbabwe's agricultural productivity depends heavily on reliable access from farms to markets? What measures is the Government taking to ensure that the rural roads are maintained throughout the agricultural season rather than only being attended to when they become impassable? Thank you.

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

Thank you Mr. President. Let me also thank Hon. Sen. Mliswa and also congratulate her for the appointment to this very important House. She has highlighted a very important question and what we have resolved in the Ministry is for us to also buttress what Hon. Sen. Mutsvangwa said on the composition of our roads in this country. We are talking of 87 000 km road network and 70% are roads in the rural areas that are under rural district councils and under RIDA and 21% are under the Ministry of Transport, under DOR, which is the Department of Roads and 9% are urban council roads. So, you see that 70% are normally earth roads or gravel roads.

We have resolved that since we cannot get enough from the fiscus, we now need to dedicate that funding towards rehabilitating our rural roads. Now the approach is shifting towards re-gravelling some of our roads with whatever this House allocates us because not all roads are supposed to be tarred. We maintain them, we gravel them and at the end of the day, this is the strategy that we are adopting.

I also want to agree with her that surely, most of our rural roads are in a sorry state. If we receive rains again without us attending to them, they will continue to be in that sorry state. So going forward, we are going to be allocating adequate fuel with funding from ZINARA and also capacitate our rural district councils so that they have got equipment to manage their own roads. Thank you.

***HON. SEN. CHIEF CHIKWAKA (BUNGU):** Allow me to pose this question to the Minister responsible for Veterans Affairs. For the past four years, the war collaborators were vetted but to date, they have not received anything. As a Government, are we not hurting the people who left their schooling, work, children, wives

and husbands to ensure that we have the independence that we have today? Furthermore, I would also want to find out from the Hon. Minister, we had ex-combatants who were in transit camps and they brought a petition before Parliament and the Portfolio Committee dealt with it and produced some recommendations. What are they saying about such recommendations? They were vetted by the Defence Commanders and Detachment Commanders who were in the fields supported that these were trained cadres in transit camps. Some of them remained as reserve forces. They were not sure about their independence. They have not received any recognition to date. Some of them are now deceased. Their wives, children and widows are suffering. What is the Government's policy about that? Thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF VETERANS OF THE
LIBERATION STRUGGLE AFFAIRS (HON. SEN.**

MAVHUNGA): Allow me to thank the Hon. Sen. Chief Chikwaka for such a pertinent question. The vetting started in 2022 and the mop-up operation was carried out in 2024. We now have such

names and we have come up with a draft report. We sent the names to the relevant department.

Currently, we are doing consultations with the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion because the Act stipulates that if we are gazetting, it should be with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance so that the beneficiaries can then get their benefits. While we await the gazetting, we are assisting them in terms of accessing what is due to them in terms of land, stands and other things that are being given to other cadres. We are assisting them to acquire those. So, once concurrence from the Minister of Finance is done in terms of the law, will go ahead and gazette. The draft is already in place.

It is correct that we received a report from a petition and its recommendations from this august House. We cannot say that they were not prepared or that they had not been trained but the report says that they were trained in basic military training but they were not fully trained to the level of going through a pass-out. Hence they are not equated to veterans. So, I wanted this to be clear. However, they are recognised as non-combatants or war co-

collaborators. It is permissible within our Constitution and that is the guiding principle that we are going to use in terms of the Constitution. We are continuing to push for the conclusion of this matter. I thank you.

***HON. SEN. CHIEF MAKONI:** My supplementary question is still on the issue of payments for war collaborators. There was a ruling that was made by Justice Mangota that war veterans should be compensated \$2,000. There is that High Court judgement. How far have you gone in the implementation of that particular judgement? War veterans are unhappy about their welfare. Thank you.

***HON. SEN. MAVHUNGA:** Thank you Madam President. I would like to thank Hon. Sen. Chief Makoni for the question that dealt specifically with the war veterans, disregarding the war collaborators. It is a new question but I can answer the question if you allow me. My response is, when there is additional funds. This then removes my Ministry whose duty is to ensure that the war veterans are known. Once the amounts have been decided, the documentation is taken to the Pensions offices and to the Minister

of Finance. So the first part, of course, is for us to say what war veterans require. I would have preferred a situation where a written question was done so that I could be able to pay attention to it and give fuller and more detailed answers, inclusive of the issue of the court. I thank you.

HON. SEN. ZINDI: My question is directed to the Minister of Skills Audit and Development. What is the policy of the Ministry, through the Minister, in as far as having to carry out an assessment with the requirements of the 2030 agenda in terms of industrialisation? Have they done anything along those lines or are they doing something along those lines? Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF SKILLS AUDIT AND DEVELOPMENT (HON. DR. MUSWERE): Thank you Madam President. I also want to thank the Hon. Senator for a very important question. Our vision is to ensure that we have a highly qualified and competent populace that is going to contribute to the industrialisation of our nation.

The Ministry of Skills Audit and Development was constituted in the year 2023 and so far the first audit was with the

Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Resettlement which was then separated into two ministries and it was finalised. I took over in February this year and so far, we have constituted a team with the Public Service Commission, where we are expanding the scope in terms of the skills audit across all Government ministries. We have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce and next week, we are signing another MOU with the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries in order to align our skills with our industry and our heritage.

So far, we have finalised the career guidance policy that is going to align our national strategic thinking and planning in terms of skills as we seek to align education and skills development to our industry, heritage and resources. So, skills audits are taking place across all ministries as soon as the Public Service Commission finalises. We have done the concept note and the whole programme of action just awaits the Public Service Commission to deploy the requisite experts to help us as a Ministry to expedite the audits.

I have already explained that part of the skills audit also encompasses industry and commerce and that we have signed an MOU with ZNCC and work is ongoing. We are signing another MOU with CZI next week so that we can expand the scope and horizon in terms of alignment. So, skills audits are taking place across all ministries. Thank you Madam President.

HON. SEN. ZINDI: Thank you Madam President. My supplementary question is, while they are assessing, is the Ministry also including the end user of those skills which are going to be developed? For example, in agriculture, our economy is agro-based. Are they involving the end user in terms of what they require regarding development?

HON. DR. MUSWERE: Thank you Madam President. I have already responded that this is comprehensive. We have recognised the importance of the primary, secondary and tertiary industries and also the consumers. This is precisely why there is an activation in terms of all forward and backward integration in terms of skills development.

The reason why we also highlighted that as we conduct skills audits across all Government ministries, we are also dealing with the end users. We are also dealing with the millers because precisely Vision 2030 is about an upper-middle-income society by the year 2030 but it requires skills. The whole structure in terms of industrialisation requires a catalyst which is skills development, the intellectual power that is required.

Yes, in the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Water Resources Development, we have concluded a comprehensive framework that also includes consumers and the whole value chain in terms of the agricultural sector. Similarly, as we are conducting the Ministry of Health and Child Care skills audit, it also includes the pharmaceutical industry, retailers and the experts who handle pharmacology and many other skills that are required in order to power the Ministry of Health and Child Care. So, it is all-inclusive and comprehensive.

The preliminary study that we had conducted indicated a shortcoming in that our education was more of supply-driven than demand-driven and that our education did not relate much to our

heritage and our natural resources. So, this is the responsibility of the Ministry of Skills Audit and Development to redirect the energy, effort and investment towards a demand-driven education. A simple analysis is that recently, His Excellency the President presided over the graduation ceremony at the University of Zimbabwe where about 7 000 students graduated. He then moved to Chinhoyi University, another 3 000 graduates and the Harare Institute of Technology, another 3 000. The analysis is, what particular graduates are we generating from these institutes of higher learning? Are the skills and the qualifications academic or professional? Are they aligned to the resources and the demands by industry? Hence, the need to align an industry-driven model in terms of curriculum and an industry-driven model in terms of skills development.

So, there is a lot in terms of alignment and we will continue to undertake these skills audits more surgically and more empirically.

Thank you – [HON. ZINDI: *Ikabuda yakadaro yakanaka.*] –

THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE (HON. SEN. A. DUBE): Hon. Zindi, you are in the House, please.

***HON. SEN. TONGOARA:** Thank you Madam President.

My question is directly to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructural Development. When you give priority to the old road construction, do you use the economic benefits that have to be accrued by the use of such a road, like the one that leads to the Seven Wonders of the World, the road that leads to that destination for us to earn foreign currency? We have always been told that we now have domestic tourism and the local people can now drive to see the Seven Wonders of the World. What measures do you put in place when you repair or attend to these roads? What importance do you place on it? Thank you.

***THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. MHONA):** I want to thank Hon. Senator Tongogara for such a question. We indeed have trunk roads to our neighbours. When we access our neighbours' countries, we have such trunk roads. We have a road that leads from Victoria Falls to Livingstone, Zambia. It is one of the important routes that we use to conduct trade and bilateral relations with other countries. We do have a criteria that we use

when attending to these roads. I promise the Hon. Member that when I talk about these roads next time, I will give full and more detailed information. Thank you.

HON. SEN. BVUMO: I intend to direct my question to the Leader of Government Business in the House. Recent public disputes within Zimbabwe's music industry, including the reported copyright disputes involving musician Fungisai Zvakavapano-Mashavave and Mono Mkundu, raise broader concerns regarding the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights belonging to musicians and other creative artists. Could the Minister explain what measures the Government is taking to strengthen the enforcement of copyright and neighbouring rights, particularly to ensure that musicians receive proper recognition, consent and royalties when their musical works are reproduced, adapted, performed or commercially exploited by others? Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY (HON. SEN. MATUKE): Thank you very much. I think the question was a bit long; maybe I would ask the Hon. Member to put that in writing so that I can liaise with the Minister

of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services. Unless my colleague here, Hon. Muswere who has been the Minister in that portfolio for a long time, can help me to answer that.

HON. SEN. BVUMO: Hon. President, allow me to ask it in a few words; maybe you can understand the question.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Hon. Bvumo, it is a good question; can you put it in writing?

HON. SEN. BVUMO: Normally, specific questions are the ones which we need to put in writing. This is just an ordinary question regarding the copyright issue. Allow me to ask it next week.

Questions Without Notice were interrupted by the
TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE (HON. SEN. A. DUBE) *in terms of Standing Order Number 67.*

HON. SEN. ADV. PHULU: Madam President, I raised this issue last week. Tomorrow is the 11th September; my question will be one year old. The Minister is not coming and these are important questions. I have not been assured whether Parliament did write a letter asking the Minister to come and answer this question and

other questions related to his portfolio. This means he has not been in the House for more than one year.

THE TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF SENATE: Thank you Hon. Phulu. I think you said it last week. The Leader of Government Business is here today and I think he heard what you said. Thank you.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY (HON. SEN. MATUKE): I ask the House to stand over Orders of the Day Numbers 1 to 10 as you rightly indicated. Maybe we can request this House to dispose of Orders of the Day Numbers 11 and 12.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

APPROVAL FOR THE AGREEMENT ON THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA AND THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF MARINE

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY OF AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND
WILDLIFE (HON. DR. E. NDLOVU):** I stand before this House
today that we raise section 327 (2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe
that provides that any international treaty which has been concluded
or executed by the President's authority does not bind Zimbabwe
until it has been approved by Parliament;

WHEREAS Zimbabwe signed the agreement under the United
Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and
Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond
National Jurisdiction, BNJ Agreement on the 5th of March, 2025;

WHEREAS the agreement entered into force on the 17th of
January, 2026, 120 days after the deposit of instruments of
ratification by 60 Member States and whereas to date, 88 States
have ratified the agreement;

NOW, THEREFORE, in terms of section 327 (2) (a) of the Constitution of this House, this House resolves that the aforesaid agreement be and is hereby approved. I so submit.

HON. SEN. ADV. PHULU: I rise to support the motion for the approval of the agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

Madam President, as I always debate, as I always submit, it is encouraging that this procedure, where we come and debate the ratification of international agreements and other instruments that are signed by the Executive, is commonly being used. Hardly debated, but at least it is a mechanism by which we can keep track or those who are interested even beyond this House can keep track of what the Executive is signing and why it is important to us. On this one, at first glance one might ask that since we are a landlocked country, why should we concern ourselves as a nation about an agreement dealing with biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction? The answer is simple. Oceans are part of the global commons and their health affects all of us. They influence climate

systems, rainfall patterns, research and many other opportunities that we do not know which may come in the future. Not knowing what the future looks like, we hope that it is our intention as a nation to also open avenues in terms of where we can do serious research in this area in order to try and see how we can benefit from such an endeavour.

In order to calculate and prognosticate how we might be affected 50 or 100 years from now as was spelt out by the Speaker when he addressed the launch of the Committee of the Future, we really need to seriously look at everything which we might think is not relevant to us now and take it seriously. It shows that Zimbabwe is now in that mode where it is looking at some of these areas. The agreement is therefore, not merely about the sea. It is about responsible stewardship of resources which belong in a broader sense to humanity as a whole.

Madam President, I am particularly attracted by the use of the concept of equity in this agreement in the design of how they intend to go about the many issues that they tackle. I hope the world is now moving towards a world where equity includes all nations and

the driving of this particular area is not merely left to the big superpowers who have historically influenced everything in the country. I hope that recent events that are taking place with the engagements or war in Iran in which Iran is pitted against the USA and in which even the whole world and the economic units around the world have seen that every corner of the world is important and every part of the globe is important.

We have seen an increased trade with countries in the global south. I hope that as we engage on this issue, countries in the global south will begin to be taken more seriously and one is left to wonder what we will see as a result of this agreement. This is not an answer that I am asking for now. It is not an answer that I can even begin to try and ask now but certainly, what we can do is track this agreement to see what frontiers it opens for us, our young people in terms of research and our academia.

It was not fashionable as I studied here locally at the University of Zimbabwe. Even our young people, when they go to study the carriage by law and sea abroad because I come from a landlocked country, it is highly unlikely that I will practice in that

area. However, once we start to sign these kinds of agreements, we are sending shots and communications or telegraphing that our young people should also start to take an interest in these areas as they will become increasingly significant, even here in our country.

I would like to congratulate you, Hon. Minister, on the signing of this agreement and on bringing it to the House for oversight. We hope that you will continue to update us on what happens in this area. I thank you and I move fellow Members to support the adoption of this particular motion.

HON. SEN. GOTORA: There are so many UN conventions in the world and this is just but one of them. I would like to congratulate the Hon. Minister and the rest of the Ministry, for expeditiously bringing this to the House. Some of us have attended CITES and CBD meetings and you will hear somebody talking about an elephant and claiming to be a doctor in elephants when they have never seen an elephant. They make decisions for the suspension of the use of elephant hides and ivory and so on when they have never seen an elephant.

Likewise, there is an animal called the vicuna but I do not know how many of us have seen it. I have tried to look for it. I have never seen it but we sit in those meetings making a decision on the animal called the vicuna. These are UN conventions which affect us all irrespective of where we are. As far as this is concerned, we are just claiming our seat on the table where we have to be treated equally. Therefore, I propose and second Hon. Phulu that we accept this convention so that we sit as equals with the rest of the world.

Talking about the southern part of the world, the majority of the southern part of the world are islands that are affected by this kind of thing. Therefore, we need to support them when they talk about their issues like we also need them to support us when we talk about our things. Nobody owns anything on the earth. If you look at wildlife, they always tell you that there is something called the *res nullius*, which means nobody owns anything. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, we have a stake in this and we should support it and let it pass so that we are treated equally. Thank you Madam President.

HON. SEN. MUPFUMIRA: Thank you Madam President, for giving me an opportunity to contribute to this very important debate. I must say for the first time, as Senators today, we were privileged to be schooled about the marine situation. Whilst we are landlocked, we were informed that we are not locked out, we are part of the international community. It was a very interesting workshop which was led by the Ministry officials from the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife.

As a landlocked nation, ratifying this agreement ensures Zimbabwe fully exercises its legal rights on the global stage. We also were informed that although we are landlocked, 370 kilometers away from the shore or coastline, it is for all of us, not for the individual countries. We are part of those seas. In Zimbabwe, the rivers flowing into Zambezi and into the Indian Ocean, makes us co-owners of the seas, which most of us were not aware of. We just thought that if it is the Indian Ocean, it is those countries which are along the coast but we have been informed that we are co-owners.

Therefore, we have a responsibility to know, participate, contribute and not just get information or sit and listen. We are

supposed to be proactive and participate fully on the tables. Having carefully listened to the discussions we had this morning, I am happy to say more than 50% of the Senators were present, which was an outstanding contribution and they are aware of what we are talking about now.

The Senate should approve ratification of the BBNJ agreement to ensure Zimbabwe formally deposits its instruments of ratification and secures its full voting rights in upcoming decision-making bodies. Upon depositing the instrument of ratification, our Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife should lead an inter-ministerial task force, including the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development to draft a roadmap for taking full advantage of the treaty's capacity building, research funding and technology development and transfer opportunities.

The Ministry should also commit to submitting an annual progress report to Parliament outlining the specific benefits accrued to local researchers, academic institutions and national climate modelling initiatives under the treaty's clearing house mechanism.

The agreement represents a historic step forward in global environmental governance, ensuring that the vast ocean resources belong to all humanity and are protected and shared fairly.

For a landlocked nation like ours, joining this treaty is not merely a symbolic procedure. It is a proactive strategic move that protects our national weather patterns, safeguards domestic agriculture and guarantees our researchers equal access to cutting-edge scientific innovation. However, the treaty imposes no heavy financial implications or liabilities or territorial risks. Approving its ratification presents only benefits to our country. It firmly aligns with our national priorities under NDS2 and Vision 2030 while asserting Zimbabwe's rightful role as an active equal player on the international stage.

I, therefore, move that this august House approves for ratification of the BBNJ agreement. I thank you Madam President.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. E. NDLOVU): I am really impressed by the House's reaction to the agreement and I remember very well that France asked me one day when I attended the Law of the Seas

Conference in Turin. They asked me why Zimbabwe was attending. The answer was simple. Zimbabwe's giant rivers, the Zambezi and the Limpopo rivers contribute to the Indian Ocean Sea. Thereafter, we do not know where that water goes. That water still remains a Zimbabwean source. We also own the waters in the seas.

I am impressed by the positive comments from this House. I take it upon myself the responsibility to make sure that the Ministry will continue to update this Hon. House. We are happy that your approval will facilitate us to posit this instrument before our President goes to the annual general meeting that we have in New York at the shortest time. I am really happy to be here and to hear you support Zimbabwe.

Our research institution will benefit quite a lot. Our medical researchers will benefit a lot from this agreement.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

**APPROVAL OF THE ESTABLISHMENT AGREEMENT FOR
THE INTERNATIONAL MANGROVE CENTRE CONFERENCE
OF PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON WETLANDS**

**THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND
WILDLIFE (HON. DR. E. NDLOVU):** I move the motion

standing in my name that:

WHEREAS section 327 (2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that any international treaty which has been concluded or executed by the President's authority does not bind Zimbabwe until it has been approved by Parliament;

WHEREAS Zimbabwe signed the Establishment Agreement of the International Mangrove Centre during the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (COP15) on 25th of July 2025;

WHEREAS the agreement will enter into force upon deposit of the requisite instrument provided by five signatory states, including the host country, China;

AND WHEREAS to date, 20 states have signed the establishment agreement of the International Mangrove Centre Agreement;

NOW, THEREFORE, in terms of Section 327 of the Constitution, this House resolves that the aforesaid Agreement be and is hereby approved. I so submit.

HON. SEN. ADV. PHULU: Thank you Madam President. I think these motions are similar and I would like to support this agreement particularly, because it presents an opportunity for genuine South-South cooperation. It is too long since developing countries have participated in international environmental arrangements, primarily as recipients of standards, technology and expertise developed elsewhere. I think this is the point that Hon. Sen. Gatora was making, that someone can purport to be an expert on our elephants and transfer to us standards and protocols on how to deal with those elephants without knowing how the outcomes affect us on the ground.

This centre presents a different opportunity where the developing nations which have been listed are cooperating amongst themselves in sharing scientific knowledge, building technical capacity and developing solutions appropriate to their own circumstances. Madam President, our participation however, must

be based on equality. Zimbabwe must not simply be a participant in life, we must benefit meaningfully from the research technology transfer, training and scientific cooperation. We do not have mangroves. We have our own wetlands internally here and there is a way in which we deal with them but there might be an interest in the mangroves.

There might be an interest in the mangroves because the research that we unearthed there might be meaningful in something quite irrelevant to whether you are on the water or not. It might help us in medicine, security or other terms but also our African friends and southern friends who are on the coastal areas should benefit from our insight and also our companionship as they walk on this journey to try and understand their own environment.

It is good that they have taken the first step forward to take this kind of thing into their hands as opposed to waiting to receive technology, knowledge and information. Even initiative from outside would be particularly dangerous in this global setting as we have seen that Western countries are sometimes even willing to wage wars for waters that are next door to you. When we fail to step

forward and take charge of our own affairs, sometimes that allows ill-meaning people to then meddle in the affairs of Africa. If that is achieved Mr. President, then this agreement represents precisely the kind of south cooperation that we should encourage. I, therefore, support this motion.

HON. SEN. MUPFUMIRA: Thank you Madam President for allowing me to speak on this issue of IMC. Again, I want to thank the Ministry for organising a teaching session empowering us all senators. Most of the Senators here today were at the workshop where we schooled and now understand better what is being talked about. I think that is the way to go in the future so that we do not debate things which we do not understand. Thank you very much Minister and your team for allaying our fears about this IMC.

We were informed that there is no compulsory financial burden for Zimbabwe which was a key aspect that would give us worries. The co-operational and staffing costs of the IMC Secretariat are fully funded through baseline operational funds provided by the Government of the People's Republic of China as the worst country. Financial contributions from Member States to

both the regular baseline and the dedicated special fund for conservation pilot projects are entirely voluntary. Zimbabwe will not be required to pay mandatory annual subscription fees. This was informed by the Ministry.

Ratification enables Zimbabwe's research institutions, Non-Government Organisations and Government agencies to submit project proposals to access funds from the IMC special fund. This fund is managed independently by major donors specifically to support practical conservation, restoration and capacity-building projects. The agreement respects national sovereignty. It assigns the IMC full legal personality within Member States to enter into contracts.

Each country designates a national focal point agency to coordinate activities. Should Zimbabwe at any point determine that the partnership no longer serves its national interests, Article 4 allows any Member State to withdraw simply by providing six months' written notice. There are no punitive, legal or financial penalties for withdrawal.

Alignment with NDS 2, Vision 2030 and Beyond: Ratifying the IMC Establishment Agreement provides Zimbabwe with direct tools to achieve key targets under the National Development Strategy 2 and the National Trajectory toward Vision 2030 in line with Vision 2030, commitment to sustainable resource management, membership grants access to modern scientific equipment, technical expertise and advanced monitoring technologies. These resources will directly strengthen the protection of wetlands, forests and grasslands, building climate resilience against drought and extreme weather.

Wetlands serve as natural water purification systems and sponges that prevent flooding and recharge groundwater supply. Restoring degraded wetlands through IMC pilot projects safeguards rural and urban water security directly supporting agricultural productivity and community livelihoods. Participation promotes collaborative research university exchange programmes and specialised training for national environmental management agencies, forestry officers and local research bodies.

Following Zimbabwe's successful hosting of RAMSAR COP15 in Victoria Falls last July, ratifying the IMC Agreement solidifies our position as a global leader in wetland conservation and opens new avenues for international cooperation and resource mobilisation.

Having considered strategic, ecological, financial and legal elements of the establishment as read and discussed today, Senate recommends that we approve the agreement for ratification to maximise the benefits of this partnership.

We make the following recommendations: Parliament should expedite the approval to enable the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife to formally deposit the Instrument of ratification with the Secretariat, securing Zimbabwe's status as a full voting member of the Council. Upon depositing the instrument, the Ministry should immediately designate a competent national focal agency to coordinate all IMC activities, project proposals and information dissemination.

The designated focal point should actively prioritise drafting high-impact projects targeting the restoration and protection of

Zimbabwe's inland wetlands, river basins and sponges to draw resources from the IMC Special Fund. Tertiary institutions and research bodies in Zimbabwe should be linked directly to the IMC network to access technical training, modern scientific equipment, joint research platforms and exchange programmes. The Ministry should submit annual progress reports to Parliament detailing technical capacity gained, pilot funding received and concrete achievements in wetland management resulting from this international partnership.

In conclusion, ratifying the Establishment Agreement of the International Mangrove Centre represents a zero-risk, high-reward strategic opportunity for Zimbabwe. The agreement carries no mandatory financial burden or sovereign risks while unlocking critical international expertise, technical transfer, research opportunities and dedicated funding for wetland and natural resource management.

Furthermore, participation directly reinforces Zimbabwe's leadership in global environmental diplomacy following our successful hosting of Ramsar COP15 in Victoria Falls. By

leveraging this partnership, Zimbabwe can protect its essential water systems, safeguard local livelihoods, build climate resilience and advance the core goals of NDS2 and Vision 2030. The Committee therefore, urges this august House to approve the ratification of the Establishment Agreement of the International Mangrove Centre.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. E. NDLOVU): I would like to thank this House for the support that they have given to the Ministry regarding the approval of these two agreements. We are currently the Chairperson of the RAMSAR Convention after the COP15 meeting in Victoria Falls. This agreement will enable us to benefit from our friends in China so that we can address the land degradation that we were talking about in Mongolia recently with our Members of Parliament and the wetlands that we have in the country.

We will also have more access to research materials that other countries would have undertaken so that our own researchers can go and do research on our own land, in our own wetlands and come up with solutions on how to preserve and conserve our wetlands. I

thank the Hon. Members of the Senate for this approval and assure them that we will come back with reports to update them on the status of these agreements.

Motion put and agreed to.

*On the motion of **THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. E. NDLOVU)**, the Senate adjourned at Twelve Minutes to Five o'clock p.m. until Tuesday, 22nd September, 2026.*