

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Thursday, 3rd April, 2025

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

PRAYERS

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

***HON. NYABANI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I want to raise a point of national interest that the people of Rushinga Constituency appreciate what has been done in our area. I used to be a troublesome Member of Parliament when I was raising the issue of network. When people wanted to make a call, they would go up the mountain but now I can safely say even when they are in their houses, they can easily make phones call or receive calls. I want to thank His Excellency, the President for that. We now have three boosters in my constituency. On top of that, we also have a Nursing School at Chimhanda and what you call VBU for gardens were put. We have electricity in our schools and the people in my constituency are so grateful for that since the President's mantra is leaving no one and no place behind. I no longer cry for anything because what I wanted was fulfilled. This is why I thought I

should say it in this august House so that you know what I was asking for in Rushinga Constituency has been done. *Mwana asingacheme anofira mumbereko*, so our wishes were fulfilled. Thank you.

HON. M. C. SIBANDA: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am.

I rise on a point of national interest. We are aware and we appreciate His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, for his theme of leaving no one and no place behind. This is meant to ensure that Government programmes and activities are achieved efficiently, effectively and equitably. In this regard, there has been several Presidential Programmes such as the more than USD80 million goat scheme, the Presidential Housing Scheme, the Presidential programme in the agricultural sector and many more others.

We have recently had the launch of the Presidential Solar Scheme that aims to benefit more than 200 000 households. While these are very noble initiatives, they however create a challenge with respect to adherence to good public management systems as envisaged by Chapter 17 of our Zimbabwean Constitution because of the source of these funds and also because of the selection criteria of beneficiaries, where in most

cases, these programmes have been viewed as skewed in terms of selection of beneficiaries, making them difficult to achieve their intended goals and objectives as the President may desire.

Accordingly, I request that the Minister of Finance may come to this august House with a Ministerial Statement to advise the House on the evaluation reports on these Presidential programmes on how they achieve their desired goals and objectives. I submit.

THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Hon. Sibanda.

Your message will be relayed to the responsible Minister. Thank you.

HON. TOBAIWA: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Good afternoon. I rise on a point of national interest. There is a mantra that Zimbabwe is open for business from investors across the globe. Being open for business does not mean that investors should not follow our domestic law. My point of national interest Madam Speaker is on the presence of some foreign nationals and entities who are conducting gold mining activities across Zimbabwe in places such as Kwekwe, Makaha, Shurugwi and other places in total disregard to the environmental

impact, hence heavily destroying both the flora and fauna of our communities.

The same investors are not abiding by the country's labour laws. For example, ZIMASCO was recently acquired by a Chinese company and they retrenched Zimbabwean workers and replaced them with unskilled Chinese workers. We request a Ministerial Statement from the Minister of Mines and Mining Development to explain the Government position on sustainable mining and measures being taken to rectify the massive environmental damage which are seen in the country.

Secondly, we need to know why these foreign companies are not abiding by the laws such as labour laws. We also want a cost-benefit analysis done by the Ministry with respect to these mining entities that are destroying our environment and communities. This issue Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, cannot be addressed as a mere question on Wednesday but requires detailed research from a question-and-answer session as this is a matter of public national interest. I so submit.

***HON. TAFANANA ZHOU:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I would like to raise my point of privilege in connection with the dignity

of former Members of Parliament when they visited the institution where they were working from. We all know that we are now in Parliament but one day we will leave this Parliament. When we leave this Parliament, we will come back to collect some of the things that we would have left here, at this place. Someone who comes here after having left Parliament should be respected because he is known. Nothing changes, the title Honourable, you carry it with you all the time. Now, when they come after that, they are told that they have to wait. They have to phone the offices first then they are told so and so wants to see you. These former Members should just go straight to the offices where they want to go. Thank you Madam Speaker. - [HON.

MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*]

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 1 to 29 be stood over until Order of the Day Number 30 has been disposed of.

HON. C. MOYO: I second.

MOTION

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND POWER DEVELOPMENT ON THE STATE OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Thirtieth Order Read: Adjourned debate on the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Energy and Power Development on the State of the Electricity Supply in Zimbabwe.

Question again proposed.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER
DEVELOPMENT (HON. SIMBANEGAVI):** Thank you Madam Speaker. I rise to respond to the report on the State of Electricity Supply in Zimbabwe. The Ministry of Energy and Power Development acknowledges with appreciation the Portfolio Committee's comprehensive report on Zimbabwe's electricity supply, which assesses generation capacity, distribution challenges and sector inefficiencies. The Ministry commends the Committee's research, including stakeholder consultations and facility inspections, while noting that direct engagement with the Ministry could have provided deeper insights

into ongoing interventions. In this regard Madam Speaker, the Ministry is indicating that while consultations were done with all the other agencies and stakeholders of the energy industry, the Ministry was not directly consulted.

However, we reaffirm our commitment to collaboration and the Ministry welcomes this opportunity to constructively respond to the Committee's observations and recommendations. We recognise the critical need for reliable, sustainable and affordable energy to support national development and the Ministry remains dedicated to addressing these challenges. With these remarks, I now proceed to present the Ministry's response to the findings and recommendations of the Committee.

The observations that were made by the Committee included, among others, the legal frameworks governing the electricity sector, the current capacity of power generation as well as the overall state of electricity supply and distribution. In addition, it also touched on the challenges hindering the efficient generation, transmission and distribution of electricity. There was also a concern over foreign

currency obligations for loan repayments. The format that I will use to respond to these issues is, I will read the observation and then proceed to give the response as it emanates from the Ministry.

The first observation was on the legal frameworks governing the electricity sector. The Committee recommended on the establishment of the Zimbabwe Electricity Regulatory Commission to regulate the sector and to ensure compliance with electricity standards and regulations. However, the Zimbabwe Electricity Regulatory Commission was already established under the Electricity Act, Chapter 13:19 and it was dissolved following the creation of the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority, which is our current ZERA, under Section 3 of the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Act, which transfers the functions of the ZERC to the current ZERA board. ZERA's functions, as outlined in Section 4 of the Energy Regulatory Act, include licencing of generation, transmission and distribution as well as supply of electricity, as provided for under Part 8 of the Electricity Act. Additionally, Section 58 of the Electricity Act empowers this ZERA Board to oversee the development of performance standards for licensees in the provision of electricity supply

services. These may take the form of codes and manuals. Furthermore, ZERA has the authority to develop model standards that are binding on licences.

The second concern was on the inadequacy of legislative provisions for infrastructure modernisation, where the Committee noted insufficient legislative provisions for modernisation and infrastructure expansion. The Ministry acknowledges the Committee's observations and will take measures to ensure that adequate legislative provisions support electricity infrastructure development. Currently, ZERA is the authority under Section 4 of its enabling legislation to promote and encourage the expansion of the energy industry and technological advancement. It also has the mandate to establish or approve operating codes for safety, security, reliability, and quality standards. In collaboration with sector stakeholders, ZERA has developed various codes, including the tariff code, distribution code, grid code, and quality standards for renewable energy equipment and lighting.

These frameworks ensure investors can recover costs and earn reasonable returns fostering infrastructure development. Additionally,

ZERA's competitive fees for power development projects incentivise its infrastructure growth. The other concern was on insufficient promotion of renewable energy in the Electricity Act, where the Committee observed limited legislative support for renewable energy adoption.

The Committee observed limited legislative support for renewable energy adoption. The Energy Regulatory Authority Act mandates ZERA to regulate the procurement, production, transportation, transmission, distribution, importation and exportation of energy from any source. ZERA is also empowered to promote, identify, and support renewable energy development to facilitate the transition towards renewable energy.

Existing policies provide a framework for adoption, including the National Energy Policy of 2012 and the National Renewable Energy Policy. The Government has strengthened these efforts through amendments to the Finance Act, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable renewable development. There is also the issue of incentives, which include duty exemption on solar products and lithium batteries.

This is on Statutory Instrument 147 of 2010, Customs and Exercise Tariff Amendment and Statutory Instrument 13 of 2020, Customs and Exercise Tariff Amendment. Corporate Income Tax Holiday for the first five years for power generation projects and thereafter 15%. This is in the Finance Act Amendment of Indigenisation Act, the Finance Act of 2018.

We also have a duty rebate for renewable energy products, such as solar panels. There is also the Prescribed Asset Status to Renewable Energy Projects, which gives access to insurance and pension funds. There is development and enforcement of equipment standards. There is also reduced licencing fees and the requirements for developers of renewable energy projects. This is in Statutory Instrument 92 of 2021, Electricity Licencing and Amendment Regulations. ZERA is also lobbying for exemption on renewable energy and energy-efficient products and has conducted a study for the same.

Madam Speaker, the other observation from the Committee besides that on renewable energy was also on the issue of tariffs, tariff setting and financial viability of power projects, where the Committee

observed that and raised concerns about tariff structures affecting project sustainability. The Ministry acknowledges the Committee's observation regarding the absence of explicit provisions in the Electricity Act to address tariff-setting mechanisms that may impact the financial viability of power generation projects. In response, the Ministry wishes to highlight that the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority employs the rate of return methodology to determine energy tariffs, ensuring a balanced approach that considers both consumer affordability and project sustainability.

Furthermore, the Committee's attention is drawn to Section 53 of the Electricity Act, which expressly provides for the regulation of electricity tariffs and pricing thereby establishing a legal framework for ZERA's tariff-setting functions. This regulatory framework ensures that electricity providers recover efficiently incurred costs while earning a reasonable return on investment, determined using the weighted average cost of capital. A core principle guiding tariff adjustment is cost reflective, ensuring that all electricity consumers pay a tariff that covers the cost of supplying electricity services.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, there was also the issue of dispute resolution between utilities and customers, where the Committee recommended stronger mechanisms for resolving disputes and the Ministry acknowledges the Committee's recommendation to strengthen dispute resolution mechanisms. The Energy Regulatory Authority Act currently empowers ZERA to define consumer rights and obligations concerning energy provision. While stakeholders retain the option to seek Ministerial intervention where necessary, the Ministry recognises the need for further enhancements in this area to ensure a fair balance between the interests of regulated utilities and their customers.

The issue of investment was also raised, especially investment in power plant upgrades and new projects, and the Committee was urging ZERA to secure investment to reduce reliance on Kariba South. The recommendation is fully welcomed and the Ministry fully endorses private sector engagement as a fundamental pillar of energy sector development under the National Energy Development Strategy. In line with this approach, the Government is actively facilitating private-public partnerships to accelerate sector growth, promoting investment

opportunities in power generation and distribution, and encouraging innovation and efficiency improvements across the value chain.

Through the establishment of ZERA, the Government has instituted an independent regulator to ensure fair competition and a level playing field as well as to maintain sector stability while enabling private participation and balancing investor interests with public energy needs. The Ministry remains committed to fostering an enabling environment where private sector participation complements national energy objectives and drives sustainable development for all stakeholders. The issue of the diversification of the energy mix was also raised, and the Committee recommended balancing the base load, which is thermal and nuclear, with renewable sources such as solar and wind.

The Ministry acknowledges the importance of maintaining a diversified energy portfolio for Zimbabwe's power stability and security. Currently, the Hwange Power Station Units 1 to 8 serve as our foundation for base load electricity supply. To strengthen this critical infrastructure while expanding our energy mix, the Government has

implemented a strategic approach that combines immediate solutions with long-term planning.

We are actively collaborating with private sector partners to develop additional base load capacity through both coal and natural gas generation projects. Looking ahead, the Ministry is carefully evaluating the potential role of nuclear energy in our future power generation matrix, with comprehensive feasibility studies currently underway to assess all technical, economic, and safety considerations. This multi-layered strategy demonstrates our commitment to building a resilient, sustainable energy sector that meets current demand while strategically preparing for Zimbabwe's future development needs.

The Ministry remains dedicated to implementing balanced solutions that ensure a level of electricity supply today while making prudent investments in tomorrow's energy infrastructure. We welcome continued dialogue with all stakeholders as we work collectively to power Zimbabwe's growth and development. The issue of loan servicing and project cost management was also observed where the Committee noted poor loan servicing and inflated project costs. The Ministry

responds that it has taken note of the observation while emphasising that all reference projects were executed through established public procurement tender processes designed to ensure transparency, accountability and optimal value for public funds. The Ministry emphasises Mutapa Investment Fund's pivotal role in ensuring both rigorous oversight and enhanced profitability across national utilities.

On the issue of tariffs again, the Committee raised concerns on ZERA's independence in tariff setting and the Ministry responded that these concerns while reaffirming the Zimbabwe Energy Regulatory Authority's independence, a regulatory mandate under the Energy Regulatory Act, the statutory regulator ZERA, has full authority to balance utility viability with consumer protection through transparent and evidence-based tariff determinations.

Section 53 of the Electricity Act mandates that ZERA consult the Minister when setting prices and tariffs. In this regard, the Ministry exercises strategic oversight to ensure that ZERA's regulatory processes align with its legislative mandate and also adheres to national energy policies and upholds fairness. This oversight ensures that tariff

methodologies equitably consider both utility sustainability and public affordability. This oversight framework carefully safeguards ZERA's operational independence while maintaining accountability to national energy objectives. The Ministry maintains its commitment to support ZERA's technical decision-making process as this collaborative approach ensures careful consideration of both sector sustainability and consumer protection, creating dual priorities that are fundamental to Zimbabwe's long-term energy development.

The Committee was also concerned about the maintenance of transmission and distribution infrastructure noting the need for timely maintenance to prevent failures. The Ministry acknowledges the Committee's valuable observations regarding the critical importance of maintaining transmission and distribution infrastructure to ensure system reliability.

The Committee also observed the issues of debts, especially debt servicing and creditworthiness and urged Treasury to prioritise loan repayments. While the recommendation is noted, the Ministry assures

the Committee that debt restructuring initiatives are already in progress to stabilise utility finances.

Furthermore, cost-reflective tariffs remain a priority to ensure public entities recover operational expenses and maintain service reliability. The Committee was also concerned about whether there is investment in renewable energy projects and recommended increased Government investment in renewables. This has been duly noted and the Government is committed to scaling up renewable energy as evidenced by the 100 million ZiG allocation to the Rural Electrification Fund for Zimbabwe to fund public entities' microgrids.

The Rural Electrification Fund is also building eight mini-grid projects, four of which are already complete. Additionally, the Presidential Solar Scheme aims to electrify 200 000 rural households annually, accelerating inclusive energy access. There was also the issue of strengthening contract management based on the Gwanda Solar Project lessons. The Committee called for stricter contract oversight. The Ministry recognises these past shortcomings, especially in the

Gwanda's project management and emphasises the need for enhanced procurement and contract management systems within utilities.

The Mutapa Investment Fund is expected to strengthen governance oversight, ensuring compliance with the Public Finance Management Act and Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act and improving project management and exception.

The Committee was also concerned about the issue of skills shortages in the energy sector and aged talent retention and diaspora recruitment. The Ministry acknowledges these findings on skills flight within the ZESA group of companies. In response, the Government of Zimbabwe has urged ZESA to implement comprehensive skills retention programmes, including apprenticeship training, postgraduate trainee initiatives gender mainstreaming to strengthen its succession pipeline. The Ministry will continue to engage stakeholders to promote effective skills retention strategies. Additionally, the Government supports a cost-reflective tariff, which enables the utility to offer competitive remuneration to its workforce.

On the revenue collection mechanisms, Madam Speaker, Ma'am, the Committee recommended robust revenue assurance systems. This recommendation is acknowledged. To bolster revenue assurance, the Government is deploying prepaid and smart metering systems to secure upfront payment and to minimise losses. These measures align with broader reforms to enhance financial stability.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, I move on to shed light on the current capacity of power generation. Currently, we have the Kariba South Power Station which has an installed capacity of 1,050 megawatts. However, its current generation is only 350 megawatts due to reduced water allocation. On a normal year Madam Speaker Ma'am, the water allocation is 20 billion cubic metres. In 2024, we only managed to get an allocation of eight cubic metres. Whereas this year, we have slightly improved to 13.5 billion cubic metres which is still below normal.

The concern of the Committee was that the declining water levels threaten sustainability. We also have Hwange Thermal Power Station, which has an installed capacity of 1 520 megawatts. We have the new units, which are Unit 7 and 8 that have helped and added an additional

600 megawatts since 2023, placing the current generation to 1 084 megawatts. These power stations are very important because they reduce Zimbabwe's baseload power supply and thereby reducing electricity imports. No, sorry, they increase Zimbabwe's baseload power supply, reducing electricity imports.

We also have independent power producers, which are contributing 69 megawatts mostly from solar, thereby diversifying the energy mix. The challenges that are hindering the efficient generation, transmission and distribution of electricity include climate change and hydro dependency. The reduced Zambezi's river inflows limit Kariba's output and the solution that we have come up with is to promote captive power plants to reduce hydro reliance. Captive power plants Madam Speaker Ma'am, are those power plants that produce energy for their own consumption, while remaining with surplus to put into the grid.

We also have a challenge of aging infrastructure for both Hwange and Kariba, especially Hwange, where the plants are facing wear and tear as well as engine inefficiencies. The solution that we have come up with to this challenge is we have a repowering and upgrading of old

units and ensuring adherence to maintenance schedules. We also have a challenge of theft and vandalism of copper cables and equipment vandalism which disrupt supply. The counter-measure that we have come up with is to replace the copper with aluminum cables.

We also have real-time monitoring and community awareness. We also have legal frameworks that are in place to deal with this issue of theft and vandalism which include the Electricity Act. It was amended to address issues related to vandalism by imposing stiff penalties for the theft of electrical materials and equipment. This law seeks to deter criminals and protect vital infrastructure. We also have the Copper Act, which was amended to curb vandalism, particularly related to copper theft by regulating the sale and trade of copper and ensuring that it is not diverted from authorised channels. It aims to limit illicit copper activities that fuel vandalism and theft in the power sector.

The issue of skills shortage is also an issue of concern as brain drain affects sector expertise. The solution that we have come up with as a Ministry is we have called for improved salaries, career development and non-monetary benefits for all members of staff.

In conclusion, the Ministry appreciates the Committee's insights and reaffirms its commitment to implementing the proposed measures in collaboration with stakeholders. Through policy reforms, infrastructure investment and private sector engagement, Zimbabwe is on track to achieving sustainable energy security in line with Vision 2030. The Ministry remains open to further engagement with the committee to ensure transparent and accountable progress in the energy sector. I thank you

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

HON. C. MOYO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 8th April 2025.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 31 and 32 be stood over until Order of the Day Number 33 has been disposed of.

HON. C. MOYO: I second

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE ON PAYMENTS BY NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY AUTHORITY

Thirty-third Order read: Adjourned debate on motion on the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare on the petition on meagre pension pay-outs by the National Social Security Authority.

Question again proposed.

HON. MALINGANISO: Thank you Madam Speaker. Let me thank the Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare for entertaining the petitioners and for employing a methodology that allowed for their grievances to be totally attended to and especially for assisting them with understanding that NSSA is a social security measure, not their main pension. Let me also thank the Hon. Minister for her responses that were all in sync with the

recommendations that were made by the Committee. Having said that Madam Speaker, I move that the report be now adopted,

Motion that this House considers and adopts the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare on the petition on meagre pension pay-outs by the National Social Security Authority, put and agreed to.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: I move that we revert to Order of the Day Number 5 on today's *Order Paper*.

HON. C. MOYO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

**REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC WORKS AND NATIONAL HOUSING ON
THE PETITION FROM THE HARARE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
ON LACK OF ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER**

HON. J. TSHUMA: I move the motion standing in my name, that this House considers and adopts the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Public Works and National Housing on the petition from the Combined Harare Residents Association on lack of access to a clean piped water supply in Glenview and Greater Harare.

HON. MAKUMIRE: I second.

HON. TSHUMA J: Thank you Madam Speaker. According to Section 149 of the Constitution, read together with Standing Order No. 191 and Appendix E of the Standing Rules and Orders, every citizen and permanent resident of Zimbabwe has a right to petition Parliament to consider any matter within its authority, including the enactment, amendment or repeal of legislation. To this end, the Committee received a Petition from the Combined Harare Residents Association beseeching Parliament to consider the challenge of clean water supply in Glenview and in Greater Harare. In terms of its mandate, the Committee resolved to conduct an inquiry on the matters raised in the petition.

The objectives of the Committee in conducting the inquiry were:

1. To assess the water supply and treatment capacity of the City of Harare;
2. To have an appreciation of the current efforts being implemented to address the adequate supply of water to residents of Harare;
3. To have an understanding of the challenges affecting water supply and water treatment in Harare, and
4. To come up with appropriate recommendations for addressing the water supply and water quality challenges faced by the Harare City Council.

The Committee received oral evidence from the following stakeholders:

- a) Combined Harare Residents Association,
- b) Harare City Council,
- c) Upper Manyame Sub-Catchment Council (UMSCC),
- d) The Environmental Management Agency (EMA),
- e) The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Fisheries and Rural Resettlement and,

f) The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works.

The Committee further conducted familiarisation visits to Morton Jeffrey Water Works, Prince Edward Water Treatment Plant and to Kunzvi and Muchekeranwa Dams from 11 – 12 July 2024. The oral evidence received from the different stakeholders and the familiarisation visits provided the Committee with enough information to come up with a comprehensive report on the issues raised by the Combined Harare Residents Association.

Status of Water Rationing and Management.

The Committee gathered that Harare Water Works had the responsibility of supplying water to Harare, Chitungwiza, Ruwa, Epworth, Norton, and Inkomo Barracks. The Committee noted that western suburbs (Glenview, Glen Norah, Southerton, Kambuzuma) have 5 days of water supply per week that is Monday to Friday, while eastern suburbs (Ruwa, Epworth, Tafara, Mabvuku) have water during weekends. The northern suburbs (Mt-Pleasant, Dzivarasekwa, Marlborough, Bluff-hill) have water from Monday to Thursday, while the CBD and the industry were exempted from the water demand

management schedule. The Committee found out that the western areas were getting more water compared to other places because of their susceptibility to waterborne diseases which usually stems from the consumption of water from untreated sources such as boreholes and wells. Glen View, the area referred to by the petitioner was getting water from Monday at 1000hrs to Wednesday at 1800hrs, then from Thursday 0800hrs to Friday 1600hrs as per the Harare Water Demand Management schedule. The demand management schedule was being implemented to govern the limited supply of water in Harare.

Status of Harare Sewer Municipal Treatment Infrastructure.

Through engagement with the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), the Committee gathered that there was a continued discharge of raw sewage into the environment by Harare City Council which was primarily caused by malfunctioning water treatment plants and sewer pipe collapses at Firle and Crowborough. Furthermore, the sewer management system in Harare was further compounded by the partial operation of the 6 sewerage treatment plants due to power cuts and dilapidated infrastructure. EMA further expounded that the impact of

raw and partially treated sewerage discharge had been tremendous on groundwater, with research findings pointing to 43% of boreholes in Harare being contaminated by sewerage and faecal matter. This discharge of raw and partially treated sewage into the environment had increased water treatment costs for the City of Harare, which was now using nine chemicals to treat drinking water at a cost of US\$0.22 cents per 1000 litres. This increased cost of water treatment places Harare in a vicious cycle of battling waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid.

CURRENT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS WATER ISSUES.

Short to Medium Term Plans.

The US\$7.4million Water augmentation Project Financed by Treasury. To address water access issues, the City of Harare had targeted a water production level of 520 mega litres per day by 31 December 2024. In order to reach that target, the city required a total of US\$7,479, 980, 00 in capital works. This initiative was born out of City of Harare engagements with the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and

Investment Promotion for the disbursement of the funds in three phases to cover the US\$7,4 million capital fund. However, to date, the city has not received the funding.

Phase 1: The first phase required US\$ 1,313,470, which was supposed to be disbursed by 30 March 2024. This allocation was expected to cover the isolation of Darwendale intake works, the initial works on clarifiers, filters and the initial payments for the replacement of pumps 7 to 10 and Letombo pump station among other works necessary to prepare for phase 2. Phase 1 accounted for 18% of the total project cost.

Phase 2: The second phase of the project required a disbursement of US\$2,390,640 by June 30, 2024. This was mainly the cost of rehabilitating clarifiers at Morton Jeffrey Water Works, supply of filter sand and the rehabilitation of the chemical dosing plant. It was further indicated that the rehabilitation of Letombo pump station would also require a 40% disbursement during this phase. Phase 2 accounted for 32% of the total project cost.

Phase 3: The third phase of the project required a disbursement of US\$ 3,775,870 by the 30th of September 2024. This allocation was earmarked for the rehabilitation of filters at Morton Jeffrey. This phase accounted for 50% of the total project cost. The city further highlighted that the submissions for the first phase of the project were made to Treasury and the City still awaits the disbursement of the same.

Muchekeranwa Pipeline Project.

The Committee gathered that the Government had embarked on the construction of the Muchekeranwa pipeline project to alleviate Harare's water shortage by transferring bulk raw water from Muchekeranwa Dam to Wenimbi Dam and finally to Seke dam near the Prince Edwards Water Treatment Plant. This temporary initiative is crucial amidst the city's water crisis. The project plans to construct three booster pump stations and a 26km, 600mm diameter pipeline to Wenimbi Dam, with the first pump house currently under construction. The clearing and marking of the pipeline route have been completed, and trenching will commence once the pipes are in place.

It was noted that a further 23km pipeline was needed to connect Wenimbi Dam to the Manyame tributary, enabling natural water flow to Seke Dam for treatment at the nearby Prince Edward Water Treatment Plant. The project was budgeted at US\$19 million and fully funded by the government. The project had so far received only US\$2.4 million (12.5%), sufficient for completing 4.5km of the pipeline. It was further gathered that the supplier Makomo Engineering had already purchased the pipes for the pipeline and was awaiting the delivery of the consignment from a South African supplier.

The project's goal is to supply 30 mega litres per day from Muchekeranwa to Wenimbi during the dry season, enabling the Prince Edward Plant to operate at its full capacity of 90 mega litres per day. However, delays in treasury disbursements are impeding the progress, threatening the project's timely completion. The Muchekeranwa pipeline project holds promise as a critical interim solution for Harare's water supply challenges.

Long Term Solution

The Kunzvi –Musamhi project: The Committee gathered that; the Government has earmarked the Kunzvi Musamhi project to provide adequate water supply to all areas in Harare. The water infrastructure project is divided into two phases: Phase 1 includes the construction of Kunzvi Dam, the Kunzvi-Harare Water Treatment Plant, and the Kunzvi-Harare Pipeline. Phase 2 involves building Musami Dam and then integrating it into the Kunzvi water supply system. The estimated cost of the project is broken down as follows: Kunzvi dam (US\$108m), Kunzvi Water Treatment Plant (USD53m), the Kunzvi-Harare Pipeline (USD51m) and the Musami dam is estimated at US\$200m. Once completed, the project will not only benefit the City of Harare but also surrounding communities, including Village Business Units (VBUs) in Goromonzi and Murehwa.

The Kunzvi Water Treatment Plant is expected to produce 235 mega litres per day. When combined with Musamhi Dam, the total output will be 498 mega litres per day. The treated water will be transported through the 33 km Kunzvi-Harare pipeline to the New Donnybrooke Reservoir and then pumped to Old Donnybrooke and

Greendale Reservoirs respectively. The project aims to supply water to areas such as Calidonia, Sally Mugabe Heights, Crowhill, Shamva and Mutoko road households. However, the construction of the dams necessitates the need for the reorganisation of some families affected by the project. The Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Fisheries, and Rural Resettlement, along with the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, were collaborating to ensure that the affected families are resettled appropriately. The families are expected to be incorporated into farms within their respective districts. This comprehensive approach aims to mitigate the negative impact of the project on local communities while enhancing water supply infrastructure for the region.

None-punitive efforts by EMA to regulate Harare City Council. The Committee gathered that EMA had served Harare City Council with 20 orders, handed over 50 tickets, brought the city to court twice and summoned the city to appear before the Environmental Management Board twice. Despite all these approaches, the pollution and environmental damage caused by the city has continued unabated. The Committee observed that these punitive efforts were not addressing the

challenge of water pollution, as the council was finding it cheaper to pay fines than adhering to environmental regulations. Measures that are more stringent are needed to decisively address the scourge of pollution by the City of Harare.

Construction on wetlands.

The incessant and rampant construction on wetlands across Harare was seemingly increasing in the presence of the City of Harare and regulators such as EMA. This was in turn preventing natural water seepage and the filtration process of raw sewer deposited into the environment. The Committee observed that despite the existence of the 2021 Wetland Master Plan and the gazetted strategic wetlands, the encroachment and proliferation on wetlands has continued thereby amplifying the dire water quality issues in Harare.

Nature of the relationship between Upper Manyame Sub-Catchment Council, EMA and ZINWA.

The petitioner had raised concern over the uncomplimentary relationship between the Harare City Council, Upper Manyame Sub-Catchment Council, EMA and ZINWA concerning the management of

water resources in Harare. However, through the protracted and rigorous engagements with the agencies, the Committee concluded that the relationship between the three entities was complementary even though more could be done in as far as data sharing and cooperation is concerned. This gap in data sharing was creating a challenge in the governance of gazetted wetlands and the management of ever sprouting un-regularised settlements.

Obsolete infrastructure at water treatment plants. The Committee identified significant challenges at the Prince Edward and Morton Jaffrey Water Treatment Plants. The Morton Jaffrey Plant, with a capacity of 704 ml/day, falls short of the daily demand of 800 mega litres required by the city. The demand for water for greater Harare will rise to 1200 mega litres per day once un-serviced areas are connected to the system. The Committee was alarmed that repairs and maintenance had reduced the water treatment capacity at Morton Jeffrey to 454 ml/day, with actual production at 320ml/day due to financial constraints affecting chemical procurement. The Committee also noted that the Morton Jeffrey Plant was designed to expand at a 20-year interval but

the last expansion of the treatment plant was in 1994, representing a 30-year time lag without expansion. Raw water at Lake Chivero was being polluted by raw sewage from Chitungwiza Municipality which does not have a single sewer treatment plant. This excessive pollution was placing the city in a perpetual, rehabilitation exercise of intake valves and other infrastructure repairs. Illegal mining activities were another factor threatening the Chivero tunnel and vandalism had also affected the Manyame intake works and Darwendale pump station, with both needing significant upgrades.

The Prince Edward Water Treatment Plant, with a capacity of 90 ml/day, operates below capacity with only one operational water pump out of a total of four. It provides water to Chitungwiza, Robert Mugabe International Airport, Hatfield, Waterfalls and Letombo flats. It was further noted that the silted Seke Dam now only supports the plant for 6 to 8 months a year. In addition, the outdated clarifiers increased backwashing frequency, and financial constraints inhibited modern equipment procurement. The rehabilitation of the Morton Jeffrey Water Treatment Plant was estimated at US\$22million.

Idle waste water treatment infrastructure at Morton Jeffrey. The Committee also found out that the Odyssey Wastewater Treatment Plant which was built through the help of the Government of Israel at Morton Jeffrey Water Treatment Plant, has been lying idle and has never operated since its installation in 1996. It has the capacity to augment water supplies by 40 mega litres per day. The unused plant represents a significant amount of sunk capital expenditure while at the same time providing the potential of significantly contributing to the treated water output through the wastewater to portable water model.

Funding gaps to complete pump station rehabilitation. The US\$7.4 million finance package intended to upgrade the Morton Jeffrey Water Treatment Plant by increasing its capacity from 320 ml/day to 520 ml/day, had not been disbursed by Treasury. Despite proposals and an agreement on a three-phased funding model, Treasury made no disbursements towards the project. This lack of funding has limited the plant's capacity to 320 ml/day, an output that is significantly below the total demand of 750-800 ml/day.

Diminishing water level at Prince Edward Pump Station. The Committee found out that the city faced an impending crisis with its raw water supply. Information gathered in July 2024 indicated that the Prince Edward Water Treatment Plant was scheduled for decommissioning in August 2024 due to inadequate raw water supply from Seke and Manyame Dams. This decommissioning would result in a significant shortfall in water supply for areas that include Hatfield, Chitungwiza, Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport, and Waterfalls.

Raw Water Quality Issues.

Lake Chivero's raw water supply is severely polluted due to direct sewage effluent entering the lake, coming from Chitungwiza Town Council, along with illegal fishing nets which also cause frequent breakdowns of the intake valves. Similarly, Darwendale Dam is affected by raw sewage effluent from Norton Town Council. These pollution sources require intensified chemical treatment of the water, leading to increased production costs.

Non-revenue water losses.

Of the 320 mega litres produced per day at Morton Jeffery Water Treatment Plant, 60% is lost due to dilapidated infrastructure, aged metering and illegal connections. Some meters have been in use for over 40 years, contributing to these losses. The city faces significant challenges in accessing critical infrastructure development, exacerbated by an urgent need to upgrade its 5,800km water distribution network and new meters installation, requiring an estimated US\$3.3 billion investment. Aging infrastructure coupled with inadequate maintenance has led to high levels of water losses within the city. Budgetary constraints have further hampered planned maintenance activities for the water treatment plants, bulk water infrastructure and reticulation pipelines.

Expensive water treatment chemicals and debt. The City of Harare faces significant challenges in securing water treatment chemicals, exacerbated by severe pollution from sewage. The treatment process currently requires nine different chemicals due to high contamination levels. For instance, Morton Jeffrey Water Works alone consumes eight tonnes of activated carbon at full capacity per day, placing a substantial

strain on the City's finances. Presently, Harare is burdened with a US\$3 million debt owed to CHEMPLEX Corporation, its domestic chemical supplier. The restructuring plan demands daily payments of US\$50,000. Crucially, essential chemicals like chlorine must be imported from South Africa. However, accessing foreign currency through the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's forex system has proven to be a major obstacle, severely hampering the procurement of these vital supplies.

Non-payment of water rates by Government, commercial and domestic users.

As of July 2024, the City of Harare was owed a debt totalling ZWG 70 million owed by Government, industry and domestic. This outstanding amount severely affected the City's ability to procure essential chemicals and conduct necessary repairs and maintenance at its water treatment plants. Of this total, ZWG43 million was owed by various Government entities, with ZWG19 million specifically owed by the Ministry of Defence. The remaining ZWG27 million was owed by commercial and domestic users. These unpaid debts have further

exacerbated Harare's water supply challenges, intensifying the city's ongoing water issues.

The Committee observed that Harare City Council faces significant challenges in providing safe and clean water to its residents, particularly due to rapid urban expansion and unregulated settlements in areas such as Harare South, Caledonia Farm, some parts of Budiro and Churu among other areas. These sprouting settlements often lack proper infrastructure and planning, leading to difficulties in ensuring consistent water supply and sanitation services. Additionally, the City's water infrastructure is strained by the expanding neighbouring towns of Norton, Chitungwiza, Ruwa, and Epworth, which rely on Harare for their water supply. The Committee gathered that the growing population in these areas was increasing the demand for water, putting further pressure on Harare's ageing and inadequate water treatment and distribution systems. Consequently, the city struggles to maintain water quality and availability, posing health risks to its residents.

The Committee observed that the struggles faced by the local authority (HCC) in addressing water pollution issues were primarily due

to financial challenges. The Committee further observed that EMA was acting only as a regulator and enforcer handing out punitive fines. Instead, EMA should provide a solution in accordance with the Environmental Management Act which speaks to the use of the Environment Fund. The Fund is funded by the carbon tax of US\$0.03 cents per litre of petroleum and diesel, or 5% of the cost, insurance and freight value, whichever is greater as defined by the Customs and Excise Act (23.02) to protect and maintain the environment. Although the provisions of the EMA Act provide for the collection of carbon taxes, the Environment Fund in which the tax revenue is to be consolidated, was non-existent. The Fund has the capacity to raise US\$55 million annually. This impasse, which the Committee observed, was short-circuiting the role of EMA in implementing non-punitive efforts in augmenting effluent and solid waste management in Harare.

The Committee observed that Treasury's delay in disbursing the US\$7.4 million capital injection into the Harare Water Augmentation

Project was undermining the City's efforts towards addressing its water supply problem.

The Committee observed that delays in releasing funding for the Muchekera pipeline project was stalling the progress of completing the project by December 2024 as per its planned timeline of completion. The Committee observed that Harare City Council debts owed to chemical supply companies were affecting the operational capacity of Harare water treatment plants particularly the Morton Jeffrey which consumes 4 tonnes of chemicals (black carbon) per day.

The Committee observed that the government debt of ZWG43 million to Harare City Council for water rates was too much and grossly undermines the City's financial capacity to pay its dues to chemical suppliers. The Committee observed that the lack of sewer treatment plants in Chitungwiza and the direct discharge of raw sewer to Lake Chivero one of Harare's water supply dams was exacerbating the recurrent threat of typhoid and cholera in Harare. The Committee observed that there is lack of private players in the water supply and

management value chain to provide financial assistance to Harare to augment its water supply network and the non-commercial water losses.

The Committee furthermore observed that there is a disjuncture in the laws that govern water resources. The laws such as the EMA Act and the Water Act need amendment and alignment to allow for data sharing and a synchronised approach in environmental protection and water resources management.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Finance, Investment Promotion and Economic Development must release the USD7.4million capital injection in its entirety towards the Harare Water augmentation Project by 31 March 2025. The City of Harare Councillors must consider and adopt a private sector engagement model to finance to modernise the water billing system by 30 June 2025. The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works must conduct a pilot study into the implementation of the prepaid water system implementation by 30 May 2025. The Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investments Promotion must pay the ZWG 43 million owed by the Government to HCC for water rates

directly to the City of Harare water chemical suppliers by 31 March 2025.

The Ministry of Finance and Investment Promotion must ensure the timeous disbursement of the USD19 million allocated for the Muchekeranwa-Wenimbi Pipeline by 31 March 2025 to ensure its completion by the scheduled deadline. The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and the City of Harare must consider transforming Harare Water Works into a semi-autonomous public entity, jointly managed by the Harare City Council, the Government, and private sector stakeholders by 30 June 2025. The Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion must disburse the carbon tax funds to EMA by 30 June 2025 as per the provisions of the EMA Act.

The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works must ensure that the feasibility studies on the Odyssey waste-water treatment facility at Morton Jeffrey and the recapitalisation of sewer treatment infrastructure for Chitungwiza Municipality are completed by 31 September 2025. The Harare City Council must ensure that levies and

rates for effluent and solid waste management are ring-fenced as per the guidelines of the Call-to-Action blueprint by 30 March 2025. The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works and the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Fisheries and Rural Development must ensure that amendments to the Water Act 20:24 and all necessary alignments are done by 31 December 2025. The Ministry of Local Government and Public Works must ensure that the finalisation of the Local Authority Master Plan by the City of Harare is concluded by 30 April 2025 as per the dictates of the 2024 Call to Action Blueprint.

The Committee appreciates the effort of the Harare Combined Residents Association to raise the need to address the behemoth of water supply that has laid siege to Harare for decades. The imperative for addressing Harare's water supply challenges with deliberate and focused efforts cannot be overstated. As a capital City and epicentre of all commercial activity, Harare plays a pivotal role in advancing the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1) and achieving Vision 2030's goal of attaining an upper middle-income status. Tackling the longstanding issues of sewer treatment and access to clean water is long

overdue. The implementation of these recommendations by the Committee must be met with a coordinated response from stakeholders, including government and relevant stakeholders. Together, we can catalyse a transformation that revitalizes Harare City Council into a beacon of progress and prosperity, embodying the true essence of an upper middle-income society by 2030. I Thank You.

HON. MAKUMIRE: Thank you Madam Speaker for giving me an opportunity to add my voice to this report. The Harare water crisis was projected in the late 1980s when the City of Harare was preparing its master plan, which was approved in 1993. There is nothing new concerning the crisis that is ongoing in Harare. The population of Harare rose from 600,000 people in 1980 to 1.4 million according to the Census Report of 2022.

All this change implies that the demand for water was also increasing. The water demand for Harare in 1980 was 341 mega litres per day. Today, the current demand for Harare municipality is 800 mega litres a day. If we are to include the Greater Harare Metropolitan area, the demand is 1,300 mega litres per day yet the current production

capacity at Morton Jaffray Waterworks is 320 mega litres per day. We are producing what was demanded in 1980.

Harare has experienced premature urbanisation. We have allowed the city to grow without adequate infrastructure. The projections made by the City of Harare, of these problems were an alarm to the Central Government that there was a lot of investment that was needed to curb this kind of problem that we are facing today. The off-site infrastructure demands by the City of Harare is something that is beyond the reach of the local authority. What was supposed to happen is that the Central Government was supposed to invest in off-site infrastructure. The projections that were made indicated that Harare was sitting on its catchment area.

Everything that is happening in Harare ends up in our water source, that is Lake Chivero. We are sitting on the upstream of the catchment area. Every time we go to the ablution, to do whatever you do there, you must know that you are doing that exactly in Lake Chivero. – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*]- The master plan which was approved in 1993 made proposals that we need to find an alternative water source

other than Lake Chivero because the pollution levels were already predicted.

If you read your history, you are going to realise that the proposal to construct the Kunzvi Musami Dam is part of the proposals of the Harare 1993 master plan. What was supposed to happen is that this Kunzvi Musami Dam was supposed to be completed in 1996 to deal with these problems. How many years down the line we are still talking about the Kunzvi Musami Dam? Every time we go to elections, we talk about the Kunzvi Musami Dam. Madam Speaker, Ma'am, the off-site infrastructure for local authorities used to be financed by the Bretton Woods Institution. I am talking of the World Bank, IMF and ACTs. When these institutions withdrew their support because we were failing to service our debts, we started to experience serious water problems across all the cities and towns in Zimbabwe. Now that... Madam Speaker, may I be heard in silence.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER (HON. MAUNGANIDZE):

Can you proceed.

HON. MAKUMIRE: I need your protection from the hackling that is ongoing from your right side.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Hon. Makumire, no one is disturbing you, can you please proceed with your debate? – [HON.

MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*]-

HON. MAKUMIRE: Madam Speaker, the current situation in Harare from the statistics that we can derive from the report is that the water deficit for Harare area, is 520 mega litres per day. For the Greater Harare Metropolitan area, the deficit is 908 mega litres a day. Our people are struggling out there. As I said, the local authority is not responsible for the off-site infrastructure but it is the responsibility of the Central Government. If you read the Zimbabwe National Human Settlement Policy, it is very clear. The Central Government is responsible for off-site infrastructure, the dams and the infrastructure at the waterworks. The local authority is responsible only for the conveyancing system - the on-site infrastructure. So, the situation Madam Speaker, portrays a situation where water rationing has become the norm of the day. We find men and women queuing at water points,

walking for kilometres to get water. People are waking up at night, around midnight, to fetch water and this has killed so many families.

If you look at the sewer bays that are happening in Harare, it is the result of these water problems because sewer requires water for it to function effectively. Due to this water crisis, you are going to realise that Harare has experienced cholera outbreaks during the period 2008-2009. Harare also experienced these outbreaks in 2018 and in 2023. It is surprising that we are a country that endeavours to achieve an upper-middle-income economy by 2030 but with this kind of situation where we are experiencing these mediaeval diseases, it is very clear that this vision remains a dream that will never materialise if we do not change the way we are doing business. Harare lost around 6,000 people to these mediaeval diseases, particularly the cholera outbreak. All this is a testimony that action must be taken now.

I am now moving on to the cause of the problem. How have we reached this kind of a situation? What really happened? What is the source of the problem? Like I mentioned before, underfunding of off-site and on-site infrastructure is what has led us to this kind of a problem.

The report Madam Speaker, has highlighted that we have got projects that have been on the cards for a long time. The Muchekera in the pipeline, which is meant to augment the raw water supplies to Seke Dam. The Government is failing to finance that project yet we have so many resources as a country.

The Kunzvi Musami Dam that I have mentioned, the water treatment plant. The design capacity for the Morton Jeffrey Waterworks are no longer capable. It is no longer efficient enough to supply Harare with the much-needed water. If you look at the distribution system, the infrastructure is now aged. There are a lot of burst pipes, a lot of non-revenue water, water that is unaccounted for. Yes, the distribution system is the responsibility of the local authorities but the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Section 301 is very clear that the Government must disburse at least 5% of the revenue that is collected each and every year. Surprisingly, the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion is continuously violating the Constitution. He is not disbursing the required devolution funds. This is the source of our problems.

If you look at the sewer treatment plants, the Crowborough and Firle, they are now malfunctioning. They need funding from Government to ensure that we do not continue to discharge raw effluent into our water bodies. The increase in the discharge of raw effluent into Lake Chivero has increased the cost of producing water in Harare. Other local authorities are using four to five chemicals to treat water but Harare is using nine because of this level of contamination or pollution. The Government must act. The Government must finance off-site infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, the City of Harare engaged the Treasury to source funds to rehabilitate the Morton Jeffrey Waterworks and the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion promised to give the City of Harare USD7.4 million for the Harare Water Augmentation Project. It is there in the report. The fund was supposed to be disbursed in three stages. All this was supposed to happen in 2024 and now we are in 2025. Not even a cent has been given to the City of Harare. How do we expect the City of Harare to solve the water crisis in Harare?

If you look at how we budget for municipal water infrastructure as Parliament, the allocations that we are making are below the required finances. The South African Government our neighbours in their 2025 budget, allocated R156.3 billion to finance municipal water. How much have we allocated to our local authorities?

I will move to the next root cause of the problems that are being faced by the City of Harare as far as water supply is concerned. Central Government interference in the running of local authorities. Madam Speaker, local authorities in Zimbabwe have become theatres of political gamesmanship. The ruling and opposition parties are using the local authorities to score their cheap politics. Today the ruling party is blaming the opposition, the opposition is blaming the ruling party but what is the problem? Our actions and the directives that we make affect local authorities positively or negatively. In 2013, when we were going to elections, the then Minister of Local Government and Public Works made a directive that all debts must be cancelled, yet the Central Government did not come in to cushion this gap. Local authorities suffered a huge blow, Harare lost 30 million United States dollars due to

this directive. Local authorities are not profit-making entities, they only run on a cost recovery basis. Now the City of Harare has lost USD330 million. How do you expect the City of Harare to provide water to the residents? It is not possible. This kind of directive affects how local authorities are being run. This is the source of our problems Madam Speaker Ma'am. This idea of debt cancelling also discouraged the residents and ratepayers from fulfilling their obligations. Now they are no longer paying for their service charges because they are expecting the current Minister to come back again with another debt cancellation. What has been the response, revenue collection in the City of Harare is below 20%. How do you expect the City of Harare to fund its infrastructure?

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER ((HON. MAUNGANIDZE)

Order, you are left with four minutes.

HON. MAKUMIRE: Madam Speaker Ma'am, the other issue is the overpayment of senior managers at the City of Harare. Some people think that opposition councillors are the ones who have introduced these unrealistic salaries and benefits to the City managers

***HON. ZVAIPA:** On a point of order! According to the Hon. Member's debate over the problems in the City of Harare, may the Honourable Member be given ten more minutes because the problems are affecting us...

HON. MOLOKELA-TSIYE: I second.

HON. ZIKI: I object.

***THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER:** Hon. Zvaipa, I get you but please let Hon. Makumire finish.

HON. ZIKI: On a point of order Madam Speaker, we cannot keep quiet when the Honourable Member is lying, it is not good. He must debate facts not lies.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Hon. Makumire, you are asked to debate with facts not rumours or lies.

HON. MAKUMIRE: The issue of senior managers is a result of the Local Government Board Circular, No. 1 of 2011, which sets the conditions of services for senior managers at local authorities. This is the guideline which is being used by all local authorities and it is not the opposition council's creation. The Local Government Board is appointed

by the Minister of Local Government and Public Works – [HON.

MEMBERS; *Hear, hear.*] - Madam Speaker, I will move to the third root cause of these problems and the inconsistent Government policies.

Madam Speaker, in 2008, we devalued our Zimbabwean dollar and we experienced hyperinflation of 89.76 sextillion percent. Later on, we abandoned the Zim dollar and adopted multiple currencies in 2009 when we started afresh. What is the implication of this to local authorities? In 2016, the RBZ introduced the bond note and we said one US dollar is *gedye gedye* to one bond, 1:1 yet it was not *gedye gedye*. What was the effect or impact of this on service delivery? In 2020, we introduced the floating exchange rate. In 2024, Madam Speaker Ma'am, we introduced the ZiG and the currency was devalued in the same way. Local authorities lost revenue by 44%. How do you expect local authorities to survive? Madam Speaker Ma'am...

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Order Hon. Makumire! Your time is up.

HON. G. K. HLATYWAYO: On a point of order Madam Speaker. Thank you, the quality of debate from the Honourable Member

is a marvel to hear. I really want to implore you Madam Speaker, to extend his time. We are being lectured and I think we need to take notes. This is serious stuff that we are hearing.

HON. ZVAIPA: I second.

HON. MUGWADI: I object.

***HON. NYAKUEDZWA:** Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am and good afternoon. I would like to add my views on this motion on the problems that are facing Harare City Council with regards to water .In the past, especially in the 80s, we had various councillors but were led by the Mayors like Mr. Tawengwa and deputised by the likes of Dzawo and work was moving very smoothly in Harare.

The previous speaker said the local authorities are facing poor service delivery because the managers are earning too much on their packages as well as corruption. I agree with that but the cause of the problem is not Central Government but the councillors themselves....

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Order Hon. Member! May you please allow him to be heard in silence? Hon. Nyakuedzwa, you may proceed.

HON. MOLOKELA-TSIYE: On a point of order. The Parliamentary rules are very clear that you are not supposed to debate and respond directly to another Hon. Member. The Hon. Member must stick to his point of view and not respond like a Minister.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER (HON. MAUNGANIDZE):
Hon. Nyakuedzwa is responding to the report which was tabled before us. You may proceed.

HON. MOLOKELA-TSIYE: No, Madam Speaker, no. He is actually responding to the previous speaker. No, he is responding to the previous speaker.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Hon. Molokela, are you the Chair? I am the Chair, I believe...

HON. MOLOKELA-TSIYE: But you are misleading the House.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: I have responded.

HON. MOLOKELA-TSIYE: He is responding to Hon. Makumire.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: He is responding to the report that was tabled before us – [AN HON. MEMBER: *That is not true,*

Madam Speaker.] - Order. Hon. Molokela, can you please put yourself to order and allow us to proceed? Hon. Nyakuedzwa, can you please proceed?

***HON. NYAKUEDZWA:** Thank you Madam Chair for protecting me. It is very true that our citizens in Harare are facing water challenges which we expect is likely to cause various diseases. Our Government, which is being led by His Excellency E.D Mnangagwa, after discovering that there is a misnomer happening, which is being caused by local authorities, he has new plans in place, where he says that every citizen in Harare should have access to clean water so that citizens are not affected by various diseases. I would like to applaud His Excellency for that positive move.

In a report which was tabled by Hon. Tshuma and Hon. Makumire, they were explaining on the issue and paving way forward on what the citizens of Harare should do to ensure that they have clean water. They went on to explain the visit they did to various dams, including dams like Muchekera, where they are expecting to draw water to assist in Harare. After our Government discovered that local

authorities have failed, the Government has a programme whereby they want to avail funds and ensure the safety of the funds so that they will not be exploited by councillors. Honestly, our citizens have a right to clean water in since Harare is the capital city of the country.

We also want to applaud His Excellency, just like what a lot of Hon. Members usually do, those from the right side and those from the left side, to say His Excellency has done justice in availing funds to sustain roads in Harare. If you look at the roads in Harare, people are actually enjoying. As you have discovered that they have tangible results on roads, that is exactly what you want to do about the water crisis.

There was an explanation on the Morton Jaffrey where they said they cannot take water from Morton Jaffrey up to Harare because they are facing challenges. That is actually becoming a challenge to citizens of Zimbabwe. Somebody once mentioned the biggest challenge which has to do with issues of rates and the debt were actually cancelled. It is now difficult for citizens to pay their debts when they never get water supply.

What is it that they will be paying for? Our Government, which is led by Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa, usually says he wants zero tolerance to corruption. Corruption actually disrupts development. For us to operate well, we are kindly asking for the removal of illegal sanctions. Those are some of the hindrances in development.

The issue which was tabled in this august House by Harare Combined Residents Association - invites us all as the whole august House to cooperate and work together. We will end up having development. If you would like to play a blame game, honestly nothing comes out fruitful. Let us work together as a Government to ensure that the water crisis in Harare is solved and ensure that healthy, clean water is provided to citizens.

Before I sit down, I would like to say let us work together. Let us unite in this august House and ensure that we put in place a law which will actually work in assistance of our citizens who are in Harare to ensure that they are assisted because the by-laws they are putting in place are not actually helping these citizens in Harare.

It is actually depriving their rights. Let us ensure that we work together and remove sanctions and ensure that we remove all those factors which are leading people to corruption and everything which is being caused by councillors. I thank you.

HON. TSHUMA: I move that the debate be now adjourned.

HON. C. MOYO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 8th April, 2025.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. KAMBUZUMA: I move that Orders of the Day Numbers 6 to 9 on today's *Order Paper* be stood over until Order of the Day Number 10 has been disposed of.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

LEGISLATIVE REFORMS ON THE IMPORTATION, SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SKIN-LIGHTENING PRODUCTS

HON. MUTIMBANYOKA: I move the motion standing in my name; That this House:

DEEPLY CONCERNED by the alarming use of skin-lightening creams and related products across Zimbabwe, particularly among women, despite growing evidence of their harmful effects;

RECOGNISING that the majority of these products contain toxic substances which cause severe skin conditions, organ damage, increased risk of cancer and other long-term health complications;

DISTURBED that the proliferation of these products is fueled by harmful societal perceptions that equate lighter skin with beauty, success and social acceptance – leading to low self-esteem, identity crises and psychological distress;

NOTING WITH CONCERN that despite regulatory frameworks by the Medicines Control Authority of Zimbabwe (MCAZ) and advice from the World Health Organisation (WHO), the illegal sale and use of banned skin-lightening creams remains widespread due to weak enforcement mechanisms and limited public awareness;

ACKNOWLEDGING the successful measures implemented by

other African states to ban these products and sensitise the public on the initiatives to combat the harmful effects of skin-lightening products;

NOW, THEREFORE, THIS HOUSE RESOLVES THAT:

a) the Ministry of Health and Child Care strengthens monitoring and enforcement of existing laws on the importation, sale and distribution of harmful skin-lightening products;

b) the Government launches a robust nationwide awareness campaign to educate the public on the health risks associated with skin-lightening products;

c) the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, in collaboration with law enforcement agents imposes strict penalties on manufacturers, importers and retailers who distribute banned or unregulated skin-lightening products; and

the Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care conducts a comprehensive inquiry into the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework with a view to proposing legislative reforms that address gaps in the enforcement of the regulations.

HON. MUKOMBERI: I second.

HON. MUTIMBANYOKA: Madam Speaker, I rise to move a motion on an issue that extends beyond mere vanity to a problem deeply rooted in our history, health and collective identity: the growing use of skin-bleaching products in Zimbabwe. We live in a society where beauty standards have evolved, yet the pressure to conform to a single, narrow idea of beauty has led many to make harmful choices. Among these choices is the alarming rise in the practice of skin lightening, which continues to jeopardise the health and self-esteem of many of our citizens.

Before delving deeper into this matter, allow me to define skin bleaching. Skin bleaching is used for legitimate dermatological purposes such as depigmenting darker patches caused by acne scars or age spots. However, in most cases, individuals bleach their skin for cosmetic reasons, using topical products containing corticosteroids, hydroquinone, mercury or other harmful agents. The use of such dangerous substances, particularly mercury is prevalent across Africa and Asia, posing serious health risks to millions.

Skin bleaching is not simply a personal choice but a symptom of colourism, a deep-seated hierarchy that equates lighter skin with beauty, status and power. This damaging mindset, reinforced over generations, thrives today as men continue to uphold the myth that fairer complexions are more desirable. In Zimbabwe, terms like "yellow bone" expose how male preferences pressure women to alter their appearance, often at the cost of their health. The disparity is stark: lighter-skinned women gain easier access to jobs, relationships and social capital, while darker-skinned women face systemic exclusion, branded as less attractive or valuable.

The psychological damage runs deep, with many women conditioned to see their natural skin as a barrier rather than a birthright. Though often treated as a modern trend, skin bleaching's roots stretch back to historical systems that tied privilege to proximity to whiteness. Today, this warped logic fuels a booming industry, profiting from insecurity and perpetuating the lie that self-worth can and should be lightened. The result is a cycle of harm, sustained by male-driven beauty

standards that treat skin tone as currency in a rigged game of social acceptance.

Madam Speaker, the global skin-lightening market thrives on colourism, aggressively marketing these products as a gateway to beauty, success, and social mobility. Alarming, some bleaching creams are sold at exorbitant prices, further exploiting vulnerable consumers. The industry is booming; in 2022, the global skin whitening market was valued at USD8.8 billion and is projected to reach 15.7 billion by 2030. Women of colour make up approximately 80% of total sales, highlighting the racialised nature of this predatory system.

This is not just a Zimbabwean problem; it is a continental crisis. A meta-analysis of studies on skin bleaching found that Africa has the highest prevalence in the world, with rates ranging from 25% in Mali to 77% in Nigeria. Right here in Zimbabwe, studies indicate that over 31% of women actively use skin-lightening products despite the well-documented risks. Even more concerning, an additional 36% of non-users expressed willingness to start if the side effects were minimised.

This tells us that awareness alone is not enough; we must take bold, legislative action.

In a 2018 study by the Zero Mercury Working Group in collaboration with the Biodiversity Research Institute, over 300 skin-lightening products from 22 different countries were analysed. Shockingly, 10% of these creams exceeded the authorised mercury limit, with some containing levels up to 100 times higher than the permissible amount. This is a clear public health threat, demanding immediate intervention.

The use of skin-bleaching products is no longer confined to beauty concerns; it is a matter of life and death. Women who engage in prolonged use of these products are unwittingly exposing themselves to dermatological and systemic disorders, many of which are irreversible. The active ingredients in most bleaching products, hydroquinone, corticosteroids and mercury, wreak havoc on the skin, leading to dermatitis, steroid-induced acne, severe discolouration, and inflammatory skin disorders.

Over time, these harmful substances compromise the skin's integrity, resulting in atrophy, abnormal skin thickening and exogenous ochronosis, a debilitating condition that ironically worsens the appearance users seek to enhance. More alarming is the established link between long-term SLP use and the development of aggressive skin cancers, particularly squamous cell carcinoma. This, Honorable Speaker, is not a beauty regimen; it is a slow march towards self-destruction.

Beyond skin-related afflictions, the systemic ramifications of chronic skin bleaching products use are even more horrifying. The toxic bioaccumulation of mercury, a substance so dangerous that it is banned in many countries, has been directly associated with mercury poisoning, nephrotic syndrome and adrenal insufficiency. Women who apply these hazardous products daily are at risk of Cushing's syndrome, diabetes mellitus, osteonecrosis of the femoral head and even life-threatening postoperative adrenal crises.

These are not abstract medical possibilities Madam Speaker; they are scientifically documented realities. What begins as an attempt to lighten one's skin ends up compromising vital organs, hormonal stability

and even the ability to recover from routine surgeries. The price of so-called “beauty” is being paid in permanent disability and premature death. The dangers do not end there.

Skin-lightening products significantly impair wound healing, rendering the skin fragile and incapable of effective regeneration. Scientific studies confirm that women who bleach their skin experience delayed skin regrowth, reduced tissue support and impaired fibroblast activity, all of which are critical in forming new skin cells. This means that minor injuries become life-threatening, with prolonged healing times, increased bleeding and heightened risk of infection. These effects mimic the complications of long-term steroid abuse, leaving users dangerously vulnerable to chronic wounds and infections. If skin is our first line of defence, then these products are stripping women of their most fundamental layer of protection.

Madam Speaker, perhaps one of the biggest dangers of skin bleaching is that it harms melanin which protects the skin from the sun. Without enough melanin, the skin is more vulnerable to harmful UV rays, increasing the risk of skin cancer. A case in Togo shows just how

serious this can be: a 65-year-old woman who had bleached her skin for over 30 years developed a serious neck tumour and doctors found the cancer had spread to her lungs. This was caused by years of using bleaching products. This case is a stark warning about the risks of skin bleaching and it's something Zimbabwe must pay attention to

The cosmetic industry has preyed on insecurity and misinformation, aggressively marketing these hazardous substances as tools for beauty and success. However, let us be clear: these products are weapons of self-inflicted harm, leading to permanent disfigurement, chronic illnesses and untimely deaths. If we, as legislators, fail to act, we will be complicit in the suffering of countless Zimbabwean women who are being manipulated into poisoning themselves for the sake of eurocentric beauty standards.

Zimbabwe is witnessing a disturbing rise in the underground sale of hazardous skin-bleaching products, with merchants operating in broad daylight, preying on the insecurities of vulnerable consumers. From informal markets to online platforms, these toxic concoctions laden with hydroquinone, mercury and corticosteroids are being peddled without

regulation, oversight or regard for the devastating health consequences. Even more alarming is the role of socialites and influencers, who, with millions of followers, are actively promoting skin bleaching as a pathway to beauty, success, and desirability. Through sponsored endorsements and misleading testimonials, these individuals are glorifying self-destruction, pressuring young men and women to alter their God-given skin in pursuit of a manufactured and dangerous ideal.

The impact is catastrophic, normalising and commercialising a toxic culture that should instead be condemned. Madam Speaker, this crisis has escalated to unimaginable levels, with reports emerging that pregnant women are injecting themselves with skin-lightening chemicals in the misguided belief that their unborn children will be born with lighter skin. This horrific trend is not only a grave violation of medical ethics but also a direct threat to infant health, with potentially irreversible effects on foetal development.

Exposure to mercury and corticosteroids in utero increases the risk of neurological defects, developmental disorders and compromised immunity in newborns. The very womb that should nurture life has now

become a breeding ground for chemical toxicity, all in the name of a colonial-era beauty standard that should have been discarded generations ago. If we do not act swiftly, we are condemning future generations to a cycle of sickness, deformity, and self-hatred.

This House cannot afford to remain silent while unscrupulous traders profit off the suffering of our people, while socialites poison the minds of our youth and while unborn children become victims of this epidemic before they even draw their first breath. The time for decisive legislative action is now. We must criminalise the sale and promotion of illegal skin-bleaching products, enforce stricter penalties on offenders, and hold influencers accountable for glorifying a practice that is mutilating our people.

Failure to act is not just an oversight; it is a betrayal of our duty to protect the health, dignity and future of Zimbabwe. The fight against skin bleaching must begin with a robust and targeted educational campaign aimed at dismantling the dangerous misconceptions fueling this crisis. Consumers must be equipped with accurate, science-based knowledge on the correct use of skin care products and the life-

threatening consequences of misusing those containing corticosteroids, hydroquinone, and mercury.

Furthermore, healthcare professionals, pharmacists and dermatologists must be trained to identify early signs of skin damage, offer informed medical guidance and recommend safe, high-quality alternatives such as affordable sunscreens and non-toxic skincare solutions. Education is the first line of defence, and empowered consumers are better positioned to make health-conscious decisions that safeguard their well-being. In this regard, the Government must launch a robust nationwide awareness campaign to educate the public on the health risks associated with skin-lightening products while promoting self-acceptance and positive body image.

Madam Speaker, awareness alone, however, is not enough. Despite widespread knowledge of the harmful effects of skin bleaching, many continue the practice, driven by deep-seated social and psychological pressures. This troubling reality highlights the urgent need for public health campaigns that do more than just outline risks they must actively dismantle the culture of colourism that equates lighter skin with social

acceptance, career success and false notions of superiority. Until the systemic biases that make darker-skinned individuals feel inferior are confronted, no amount of medical warnings will end this destructive cycle.

If we are to dismantle the skin-bleaching industry, we must redefine beauty standards through strategic advocacy and inclusive representation. This means mainstreaming dark-skinned beauty in media and advertising, ensuring that billboards, television, and fashion industries showcase models and influencers of all skin tones rather than perpetuating Eurocentric aesthetics. Governments and public health institutions must work alongside media houses, influencers and cultural leaders to reshape public perceptions and affirm that all skin tones are equally beautiful. True transformation will only be achieved when diversity is celebrated rather than corrected.

Beyond education and advocacy, this crisis demands strong regulatory action. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared skin bleaching a public health crisis, leading some nations to ban products containing hydroquinone and other toxic agents. Yet, these

hazardous substances remain readily available through informal markets and online platforms, exposing regulatory loopholes and enforcement challenges. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce in collaboration with the relevant authorities, must take decisive action to regulate the skin-lightening product market by imposing stricter penalties on manufacturers, importers, and retailers who distribute banned or non-compliant products, while strengthening monitoring and enforcement of product safety standards.

This should include implementing more rigorous licensing requirements, conducting regular inspections of manufacturing and retail outlets, and collaborating with law enforcement to prosecute violators through substantial fines, import bans and business license revocations. By taking these strong regulatory measures, the Ministry can effectively disrupt the supply chain of dangerous skin-lightening products that continue to endanger public health despite existing prohibitions.

Simultaneously, a comprehensive policy framework must be enacted to hold manufacturers and advertisers accountable, ensuring that they do not mislead consumers or exploit societal insecurities for profit.

This is a defining moment in public health policy. We cannot afford to delay decisive action while millions of women continue to suffer irreversible health consequences in the pursuit of an artificial standard of beauty. The time to act is now. Through education, advocacy, representation and legislation, we must eradicate the skin-bleaching epidemic and restore dignity, health and self-worth to every Zimbabwean.

As I bring this motion to its close, let us recognise that skin bleaching represents not merely a health concern but a profound challenge to our national identity and dignity. The melanin in our skin tells the story of our people, a story no citizen should feel compelled to erase. When we say that "the beauty of black skin is not just a matter of appearance, but a manifestation of our heritage, resilience and pride," we are articulating what must become our national conviction. This Parliament has a solemn duty to protect both the physical well-being and cultural heritage of our citizens. We cannot claim to preserve our sovereignty while allowing foreign beauty standards to colonise the very skin of our people. I so move.

HON. MUKOMBERI: Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I rise to second the motion presented by Hon. Mutimbanyoka regarding the alarming rise in the use of skin-lightening products in Zimbabwe. This issue demands our urgent attention, not merely as a matter of aesthetics or personal choice, but as a critical public health crisis with profound implications for our citizens and national identity. I wish to specifically address the growing and deeply troubling role that social media personalities and influencers play in normalising and promoting skin bleaching in Zimbabwe. As Hon. Mutimbanyoka rightfully pointed out, these individuals with their massive followings have become powerful vectors for spreading harmful beauty standards and dangerous practices.

What makes this particularly insidious Madam Speaker, is the intimate, persuasive nature of social media influence unlike traditional advertising which consumers typically approach with some scepticism, content from influencers consumed as authentic advice from a trusted friend. When a popular socialite with hundreds of thousands of followers showcases their artificial lightened skin and directly links this to their

success, fame and desirability, they are not merely selling a product. They are selling self-hatred, disguised self-improvement. These influencers rarely disclose the horrific health consequences outlined by Hon. Mutimbanyoka. They increase the cancer risks, hormonal disruptions in women and skin damage, and compromise the immune system.

Madam Speaker, Hon. Mutimbanyoka rightfully pointed out that these skin-lightening products target the part of the skin which is called melanin. Melanin is very important in the skin but it is that which is destroyed by these skin lightening products, which is actually a pigment that is produced by the cells in the skin, which are called melanocytes. This melanin is that which is responsible for our skin colour. It means therefore that when one is aiming to lighten skin, the target would be to destroy the very important protective part of the skin, which also plays an antioxidant role to actually protect the skin from oxidative stress and damage caused by free radicals in our skin. I mentioned about influencers on social media and all other platforms. These rarely disclose the horrific health consequences as I outlined.

Instead, they present a carefully curated image of glamour and success, creating a false association between skin lightening and social mobility. Through sponsored posts, testimonials and before and after images, they actively mislead vulnerable followers, particularly impressionable young people who see these figures as role models. Madam Speaker, what compounds this problem is the borderless nature of digital communication where women regulate physical markets, online promotions, transit traditional enforcement mechanisms. A single viral post promoting skin bleaching product can reach millions of Zimbabweans within hours, undoing years of public health education. These digital campaigns are often sophisticated, employing psychological manipulation tactics that prey on existing insecurities about colourism that are deeply rooted in our colonial past.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, the second critical dimension I wish to address is the intergenerational harm and threat to our national identity posed by skin bleaching. As Hon. Mutimbanyoka rightfully noted, pregnant women are now injecting themselves with skin-lightening chemicals in a misguided effort to influence their unborn children's skin

tone. This disturbing practice demonstrates how deeply this form of self-rejection has penetrated our society. The neurological, developmental and immunological risks to these innocent children represent not just a medical emergency but a profound moral crisis. Children born to mothers who use these products face potential lifelong health complications through no choice of their own. Beyond the physical harm these children inherit a psychological burden, the implicit message that their natural skin tone is somehow inadequate or undesirable.

More broadly, Madam Speaker, this practice threatens the very essence of our Zimbabwean identity. Our nation fought valiantly for independence, rejecting colonial domination and asserting our right to self-determination, yet through skin-bleaching, we witness a form of neo-colonialism that operates not through political occupation but through the colonisation of minds and bodies. When our citizens feel compelled to physically alter their God-given appearance to conform to Eurocentric ideals, we must recognise this as a direct assault on our cultural sovereignty and national dignity.

Madam Speaker, the digital promotion of skin bleaching represents a modern public health challenge that requires innovative solutions. By directly addressing the role of influencers in social media driving this harmful practice, while simultaneously working to heal the psychological and cultural wounds inflicted by colourism, we can begin to develop truly effective interventions. In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I join Hon. Mutimbanyoka in calling for robust regulatory frameworks, public education campaigns and cultural initiatives that affirm to beauty and dignity of all Zimbabweans regardless of skin tone. It is not merely our citizens' health at stake but also our cultural sovereignty and the psychological well-being of future generations. I so second.

HON. MUTIMBANYOKA: I do move that the debate be adjourned.

HON. NYANDORO: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Tuesday, 8th April, 2025.

*On the motion of **HON. KAMBUZUMA**, seconded by **HON. NYANDORO**, the House adjourned at Fourteen Minutes to Five o'clock p.m. until Tuesday, 8th April, 2025.*