

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Wednesday, 10th April, 2024

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

PRAYERS

(THE HON. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE HON. SPEAKER

APOLOGIES RECEIVED FROM MINISTERS

THE HON. SPEAKER: I have the following apologies from the Executive: Hon. K. Coventry, Minister of Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture; Hon. T. Mnangagwa, Deputy Minister of Tourism and Hospitality; Hon. O.C.Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri, Minister of Defence; Hon. F. Shava, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Hon. S. Chikomo, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade; Hon. K. Kazembe, Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; Hon. Z. Ziyambi, Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Hon. Mazungunye, Deputy Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; Hon. Z. Soda, Minister of Mines and Mining Development; Hon. P. Kambamira, Deputy Minister of Mines and Mining Development;

Hon. A. Gata, Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education,
Hon. M. N. Ndlovu, Minister of Industry and Commerce and Hon. V.
Haritatos, Deputy Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and
Rural Development.

COLLECTION OF CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS
DOCUMENT

THE HON. SPEAKER: May I inform the House that there are hard copies of the Code of Conduct and Ethics document for Members of Parliament. These are now available in the Journals Office No. 104 for collection by Hon. Members. You are duly advised to please get a copy for yourselves.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

***HON. NYABANI:** Good afternoon Hon. Speaker. I want to find out from the Leader of Government Business that when an offence of stock theft has occurred, those that steal cattle are the ones that are spending ten years. Now, thieves have realised this and they are now stealing smaller livestock and they are fined or given community service work. What measures is Government going to put in place to ensure that

stiffer penalties are imposed on those thieves that are stealing goats and chickens because goats and chickens all fall under livestock?

***THE MINISTER HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION,
INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

DEVELOPMENT (HON. PROF. MURWIRA): I would like to thank Hon. Nyabani for the question as regards stock thefts. We are aware that if you steal cattle, you will spend nine years in prison but for a goat and other types of livestock, a fine is imposed. He wants to find out what Government policy is. What he suggested is a good idea.

It will also give us a chance to look at the law and see if we can bring it before the august House for amendments so that culprits are sentenced to stiffer sentences. If you have goats, you treasure them just as cattle. All livestock owners should be protected in terms of the law. We are not against what he has suggested. We will bring the amendment to this august House. Thank you.

***HON. S. ZIYAMBI:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My supplementary question to the Hon. Minister is, the stealing of small animals has been going on for a long time and we are losing that type of

livestock. Therefore, there are people who are being used to steal the small livestock. What is government policy concerning those who use hired vehicles to transport stolen livestock? Thank you.

***HON. PROF. MURWIRA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. We talk of one who helps a criminal and if you have helped a criminal, you have also stolen. So, if a report has been made, it becomes a case and if no case is reported, then there is no case. As we speak, those who assist thieves are in complicit with offenders. If you assisted a thief, you are a thief. Thank you Hon. Speaker.

+HON. A. MPOFU: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker Sir. My question is directed to the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development. What measures are being taken to assist 15% of people living with disabilities? Is there a database of how many of them have been given land? Thank you.

THE HON. SPEAKER: What is Government land policy concerning 15% of people living with disabilities?

**THE MINISTER OF LANDS, AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES,
WATER AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. DR. MASUKA):**

Mr. Speaker Sir, I thank the Hon. Member for the timely question. The land policy is guided by legislation and the Constitution. Of course, first we have 20% for veterans of the struggle. We also have a policy where 20% is reserved for the youths and we discriminate positively for people living with disabilities. Ordinarily, 10% of the land is reserved for allocation to special circumstances. In the past, I have liaised with the Office of the Special Advisor to the President on Disabilities, to get lists of people living with disabilities across the country to avail them land. So if there are any specific issues relating to people living with disabilities who have been discriminated against Mr. Speaker Sir, I would appreciate if the Hon. Member could avail additional information. I thank you.

***HON. DR. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. On the issue of people who live with disability in terms of land being apportioned to them and the issue about others who have been oppressed in terms of that issue, I categorically want to state that no one, nationwide, has specifically catered for those who live with

disabilities. It is an issue that needs to be looked into so that it will not be a talk show...

***THE HON. SPEAKER:** Hon. Member, you are now giving an explanation. May you ask the question please?

***HON. DR. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA:** My question therefore is, are there any that were allocated because we require the database for those that were allocated, who live with disability, who were issued with land?

***HON. DR. MASUKA:** Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the question. Yes, we may provide them with names of people living with disabilities who were allocated land. I have also requested the Hon. Member to provide information on those who may have been discriminated against and this will add to the numbers of people living with disabilities who have already been allocated land.

I have already said that we are able to provide those lists and also want them to submit names of such persons so that they may be included in the database.

***THE HON. SPEAKER:** When are you going to bring this evidence?

***HON. DR. MASUKA:** Mr. Speaker, I will send the evidence this evening. Thank you. – [HON. MEMBERS: *On WhatsApp!*] –

***THE HON. SPEAKER:** Not on WhatsApp because it will be recorded in the *Hansard*.

***HON. MASHONGANYIKA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My supplementary to the Hon. Minister is, as you issue land to people that are living with disabilities, are you also giving them the startup implements to ensure that they will be able to start farming? Are you giving them any other form of assistance so that they are able to till the land?

***HON. DR. MASUKA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. This is quite a good question. At the moment, we do not have anything in place to empower those who are given land. What we simply do is to give them the programmes that are in place and what exactly they can start on including tractor that can be acquired from AFC, Women's Empowerment Bank, CBZ Bank and other Government programmes

that are in place. That is what we have in place and what we disclose to all farmers in terms of forms of assistance. If there are any other bright ideas that you can use to assist these people, I would be more than grateful to receive them. I thank you.

HON. TSVANGIRAI: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My question is in connection with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion. What assurance can the Minister give this House and the nation at large that the new currency (ZiG) will succeed, given the history of excessive printing of money at the Central Bank and the confidence deficit that we have in the market? I thank you.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Were you in the House yesterday Hon. Tsvangirai?

HON. TSVANGIRAI: Yes, I was in the House Hon. Speaker.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Do you recall the request for a ministerial statement?

HON. TSVANGIRAI: Yes, I do.

THE HON. SPEAKER: So, why are you jumping the gun? That question will arise once the ministerial statement is tabled. Every Member of Parliament will have time to ask such questions in that context.

HON. TSVANGIRAI: Thank you Hon. Speaker, but I would also like to know when...

THE HON. SPEAKER: There is no 'but' when you tell me, I act accordingly – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] – I do not want to hear *nyaya dzekunzi gara pasi*, you are not in the Chair.

HON. NDUDZO: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Leader of Government Business. What are the policy measures in place to make sure that when taxpayers' money is expended by Government departments, agencies, and other arms of Government on foreign trips and travels, there are tangible and measurable benefits that can be achieved by the nation through such trips to avoid having money spent on trips that do not bring anything to the general public? I thank you.

THE HON. SPEAKER: That question is ruled out of order because, in terms of our Standing Orders which the Hon. Members should be aware of, every external trip is supposed to be reported on officially in the House. Such reports have been tendered in the House with recommendations of what has been learnt from the trips.

***HON. P. ZHOU:** Good afternoon Hon. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Local Government and Public Works. How far have you gone in ensuring that provincial councils become functional? Are there any difficulties that you are encountering so that they can start working?

***THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS (HON. KABIKIRA):** Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir. As we speak, our legal officers in conjunction with the Attorney-General, are finalising the Bill elsewhere so that it can be brought to Parliament. We are expediting the process so that it comes to Parliament and that the provincial councils can quickly start working. I thank you.

HON. P. ZHOU: What does the law say in terms of their remuneration? Are they being remunerated or not?

HON. KABIKIRA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. We envisage a situation where they will start working in the following month so that they can be remunerated once they start meeting.

HON. MADZIVANYIKA: My supplementary question to the Minister of Local Government is, when do you think that the Bill can come to Parliament?

HON. KABIKIRA: Mr. Speaker Sir. We expect to bring the Bill to Parliament in the next three months. I thank you.

HON. ENG. MHANGWA: The Minister has mentioned that they will start having their meetings in a month. The Bill is only coming in three months. What is the basis of the meeting, and is there a necessary provision for them to meet, and under what circumstances?

HON. KABIKIRA: Maybe I can repeat. There is a workshop currently underway whereby lawyers from the Ministry and the Attorney-General are seized with clear directives that they should finish

that Bill so that it comes to Parliament as soon as possible. I will get proper feedback next week in terms of how far they are. That is why I said within three months because at this stage, without getting the feedback from that workshop, I cannot give definitive timelines but it is a matter that is high on the agenda and we want to bring the Bill to Parliament as soon as possible. Probably, the Hon. Member did not hear me correctly when I said they would start sitting in next few months.

HON. M. NKOMO: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My question, is directed to the Minister of Youth Empowerment Development and Vocational Training Centres. What initiatives are in place to promote vocational training and skills development for youths in rural areas?

THE HON. SPEAKER: Vocational institutions fall under the Ministry of Youth Empowerment Development and Vocational Training Centres.

**THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES (HON.
MUPAMHANGA):** Thank you Hon. Speaker. The Ministry of Youth

Empowerment Development and Vocational Training Centres is seized with the matter of upgrading and upscaling our vocational training centres as well as vocational outreach programmes in areas where there are no centres. So currently yes, there is a comprehensive programme for vocational training for skills transfer to young people as well as an initiative to reach out to communities where training centres do not exist at the moment. Thank you.

HON. MAVHUNGA: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I wanted to ask the Minister, in light of upgrading the vocational training centres across the country, what is your position in moving towards information communication technology, especially when you look at artificial intelligence, some of the programmes are obsolete. So what is your position in terms of ICT in vocational centres?

THE HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, can you rephrase your question again?

HON. MAVHUNGA: The Hon. Minister said that they are in the process of upgrading vocational centres across the country and I am asking the Minister what their position is when it comes to information

communication technology, especially artificial intelligence in those vocational training centres?

THE HON. SPEAKER: Yes, in the process of upgrading, are you taking that into account Hon. Minister?

HON. MUPAMHANGA: We are also considering ICT and we are in liaison with the relevant Ministry as well as encouraging our VCTs to form partnerships with the private sector in order to speed up the process of bringing ICT and other technologies to our vocational training centres. Thank you.

HON. MUWODZERI: My question Mr. Speaker goes to the Minister of Health and Child Care. Mr. Speaker Sir, 97% of Government employees are members of the Public Service Medical Aid Society, but as those members try to seek medical attention, they are turned down due to nonpayment by the Public Service Medical Aid Society and they are asked to pay cash up front. We wanted to know what steps are being taken by the Minister to make sure Government remit to the Public Service Medical Aid Society on time. Also, we have seen a number of funeral assurance companies charging us in USD.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Stick to one question.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE

(HON. DR. KWIDINI): Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. Let me thank the Hon. Member who has asked the question. Yes, as the Ministry, we appreciate what he is saying about the remittances of the monies being paid by the civil servants in terms of their medical aid. As for now, there are some mechanisms which we have put in place to make sure that all the medical services which are being rendered by PSMAS, there is a board which has been set up such that it can resume to make sure all the services are provided by PSMAS and the Government is remitting the money to PSMAS, such that everyone will receive the proper service. I submit.

HON. MUTSEYAMI: My supplementary question to the Hon. Minister, I just have to put it to him that from last year up to now, PSMAS has not been giving any service. Now that the board has been put in place and the presentation that has just been done by the Hon. Minister, when are they going to give the services to the civil servants

including myself? I am suffering the fate as well as my grandmother.

Thank you.

HON. DR. KWIDINI: Thank you. Yes Mr. Speaker Sir, PSMAS was offering services as from last year. It is only that some of its facilities were not offering, but some members were receiving services from Government hospitals, especially the private side of the Government hospitals. Also, some of its facilities were not fully functional, but most of them were receiving the services.

HON. KARENYI: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My supplementary question is, at the moment, they are also taking money from these civil servants. Are they going to compensate all these monies because these people are not receiving the service?

HON. DR. KWIDINI: On this one I think I need to go back and check such that we approach the other stakeholder, the Ministry, which is also responsible for that – [HON. MEMBERS: *inaudible interjections.*] –

THE HON. SPEAKER: I think it is a fair response. Allow the Minister to go and do his research and give you a properly researched response.

I have just cross checked with the Government Chief Whip *vis-a-vis* the request about the new currency and the Hon. Minister is ready to give a statement on how it works, but it will have to be after our question sessions.

***HON. S. TSHUMA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. My question goes to the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development. As we face a drought this year and more so when the people in the communal lands make a living out of selling their livestock whenever there is a drought, the Government does not adequately provide food to them.

There are certain areas where livestock movement is banned because of diseases a short while ago. What measures has the Ministry put in place, as Government, to allow the movement of such livestock to see if there are still diseases that will necessitate the banning of

movement of livestock from certain areas so that farmers can sell their livestock and buy food to feed their families?

***THE MINISTER OF LANDS, AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, WATER AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. DR. MASUKA):** Thank you very much Hon. Speaker. Before I respond to this question, let me state that we did not have adequate rainfall. A lot of areas are going to experience food shortages this year until the next rain season. The Government has put in place, together with the Ministry headed by Minister July Moyo, a programme to ensure that all households countrywide are provided with adequate food stuffs until next year.

Coming to his question on the issue of livestock movement, it is because we want to contain the disease in a small area. We have diseases such as Januya or tick-bone diseases, we confine them so that the disease is not spread to other areas. The best we could do to ensure that we contain the disease is that our veterinary experts will give 30 days in one area or three months in other areas that livestock, could they be pigs or any other livestock with such a disease be contained. That is

the best method that we can use for ensuring that other areas cannot continue selling their livestock. With the confinement being made to that small geographical area, they should stick to the stated days, but I would want to find out if he has a place where this has taken place, where there are no veterinary scientists who can look into that area so that we can assist the people once the ban is over.

We only allow movement of livestock once the period of the ban has expired because if we allow this, we may fail to contain the disease. A month ago, it was said if you want to buy cattle for movement from one area to another, those that are disease infected should not attempt. That livestock which is not yet affected can be moved from the red zone to safer zones. However, we were told in terms of which areas were red zones and we assisted them.

***HON. MAPIKI:** My supplementary question to the Minister is, what measures has Government put in place to ensure that we have cattle sales locally so that cattle are not transported over long distances.

***HON. DR. MASUKA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his question, which is pertinent. In

different places, we have observed that farmers are busy now destocking because they are worried about the quantities of the feed that they have, for instance in Matabeleland South, the cattle that are sold from January to February, we observed that the quantities have gone up by 43%. So, the majority are selling their cattle.

As the relevant Ministry, we urge farmers to stop rushing to sell their livestock. They should only sell those old oxen and cows. The heifers and other young cows, we should keep them in stock so that we can use artificial insemination to ensure that we have pastures for the calves so that they cannot sell their cattle. In the past, we used to have the Cold Storage Commission (CSC). We used to have the market days that will be published. We had 287 selling places countrywide. When CSC failed its operation, that was lost. This is the arrangement now with the district councils. We are in the process of trying to revive such activities so that farmers can be able to buy and sell cattle. We have allowed the Agricultural Marketing Authority to do that process. They have been to Zvishavane, hoping that this time they would go to Matabeleland South to try and revive such areas. We also have

programmes to ensure that with the Presidential Rural Development Programme, where we say this year we would want to have two villages on line where water is easily accessed, we should have a place where the cattle can have access to food so that we do not just sell cattle and realise very little in return. I thank you.

***HON. MUROMBEDZI:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My supplementary to the Minister is, why there has been bans for movement of cattle is because of the diseases. What measures did the Government put in place to ensure that we have dipping places so that the diseases would not affect the cattle countrywide?

***HON. DR. MASUKA:** The issue of dip tanks - since 2016 up to 2022, we lost 500 000 cattle because of diseases. In 2020, in the agricultural transformation strategy, we started to come up with two programmes. The first was to revive the issue of dip tanks. We have more than 4 000 dip tanks. Then, we came up with boreholes and we desilted those so that every household where there are cattle, we give tick grease for them to apply on the ears, backs and tails of the cattle. It lessened the cattle affected with skin diseases. We had 49% decrease

and the following year, it was 23% downward effects on the number of cattle affected. We have now revived 3 000 dip tanks out of 4 000. We believe that this year we can be able to revive 500 more dip tanks.

***HON. CHIGUMBU:** My question is directed to the Minister of Local Government. What is the Government's Human Settlement Policy pertaining to the invasion of sites left for school construction, especially in the urban areas? Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS (HON. CHITANDO): The blue print which was launched by His Excellency on the 1st of November is very clear and it states very categorically that all illegal occupation of land is not allowed and where there is such information, I would request that the Hon. Member brings it up and the requisite follow up would be done. I thank you.

HON. CHIGUMBU: Thank you for the response. I would want to know because we have school spaces which were invaded by land barons and houses were built yet you find that in most urban areas, kids are crowding in classes. A school which is supposed to accommodate less than 800 kids is now accommodating more than 3 000 kids. What

are you going to do and what is the Government policy pertaining taking back those areas such that they are given back to the communities so that they can build schools to cater for the children in those particular communities?

THE HON. SPEAKER: Your question Hon. Chigumbu titivates towards specific problem areas and the Hon. Minister indicated that if you have such instances, why not give that information to the Hon. Minister? The Government policy has been pronounced already in the call for action among local authorities and perhaps, the Hon. Minister of Local Government, if you can spare some copies of that policy statement by His Excellency, the President, you can send it to the Hon. Members on soft copies so that they can read for themselves. Is that possible Hon. Minister?

HON. CHITANDO: It is very possible and we can send the copies tomorrow morning.

***HON. MAKUMBE:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My question is directed to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. What is Government policy on the transportation of maize from GMD

going to the wards? People are saying the MP should ferry the maize from GMB to the wards, but most MPs are not able to do that and this means some of the areas will be left behind in getting the maize. Thank you.

***THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO):** Thank you Hon. Speaker.

On the question raised by the Hon. Member in connection with ferrying maize from GMB to the community; the Government can do that from GMB up to the ward where the maize is distributed to the people, but nowadays, the problem was that most of those people who ferry the maize from GMB are failing to do so because they do not have money. There is nothing wrong if an MP is able to assist and there is nowhere where it says the MP must assist, but there is nothing wrong if he is able to assist his constituents and we encourage that and people will be happy. Thank you.

***HON. MAKUMBE:** Thank you Hon. Speaker and I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for the response. Social Welfare people are saying it is a must that the MP should ferry the maize to the wards. An

MP can assist with USD200 or you can assist with fuel. If you have so many wards, for example 15, and each ward requires 30 tonnes to be ferried to their ward, how can the MP assist in such a case?

***HON. J. MOYO:** Hon. Speaker, I would want to reiterate that when one is a Member of Parliament and is capable, he can assist the people even other people who are in a position to assist the ordinary people should do so. It is the Government's obligation to ferry the grain, but at times, we do not pay the transporters timely. As a result, they will end up suffering. So, the point is if anyone is able to assist in alleviating the challenges that we are facing, we should not just look at the Government to provide the solution. More so, as Government, we do not encourage the habit of asking the vulnerable people to pay for the transport cost.

HON. CHIDUWA: I would like to find out from the Hon. Minister as to who is responsible for the ferrying of maize meal from the depots to the distribution centres? I say so because your department of social welfare now requires that the ordinary vehicles that we have in the communal lands should have bulk insurance. Is it policy that even small

trucks secure bulk insurance since it is affecting the transportation of maize?

***HON. J. MOYO:** My understanding Hon. Speaker is that all public service vehicles are required to be insured. Therefore, they must be insured and beyond that, public service vehicles at law are required to be insured. Therefore, there cannot be any separation between insurance being required for urban public service vehicle operators and non-insurance for rural public service transporters. Let me make a research on this issue and I will come back and give the feedback.

***THE HON. SPEAKER:** The Hon. Minister said he is going to make a research on this issue and after the research, he will come back and give us feedback and we will take it up from there.

HON. DR. MUTODI: My point is outside what you have said. I wanted to know because the first person who asked the...

THE HON. SPEAKER: No, if you want clarity, you ask your supplementary question to clarify. I will not allow it because the Chief Whips agreed that not more than two supplementary questions from either side. I am so guided by the Chief Whips.

HON. KANGAUSARU: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir and good afternoon.

THE. HON. SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

HON. KANGAUSARU: My question is directed to the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. My question pertains to the ongoing transition towards the paperless judiciary, a laudable initiative aimed at improving efficiency and access to justice. However, I am deeply concerned about the technological divide plugging our rural communities where significant sections of the population lack access to the internet and basic technology...

THE. HON. SPEAKER: Your question Hon. Member?

HON. KANGAUSARU: The question is, can you outline the steps being taken to ensure inclusive access to the paperless judiciary for communal communities? What measures are being implemented to bridge the divide access gap in the rural areas? I submit.

**THE MINISTER OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY
EDUCATION, INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEVELOPMENT (HON. PROF. MURWIRA):** Thank you Hon.

Speaker Sir. I wish to thank Hon. Kangausaru for the question relating to the digitisation of our judiciary services case management systems.

Yes, we subscribe to the policy of a smart Zimbabwe where we will be able to digitise our systems but in doing this, we know we cannot build the wall in one day. The policy is very clear that we want to reach every corner of the country, but we will do it brick by brick and with a policy of leaving no place and no one behind in relation to Section 13 of the National Constitution. So, in terms of the law and our policies, we are moving brick by brick and we will be able to cover all areas. It is a process, there is no policy conflict, it is only a matter of process and the time that the process takes. I thank you Mr. Speaker Sir.

HON. KANGAUSARU: Thank you very much for such a detailed account but considering the potential for increased cost associated with internet access and technology, my supplementary question is; how will the Ministry ensure the affordability and accessibility of the paperless system for low-income individuals and communities? Are there financial assistance programmes for subsidy access points invisible?

HON. PROF. MURWIRA: Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir. Our aim as a Government, under the leadership of Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa, is to provide access and affordable access to information and our policy there is very clear. The issue that we are talking about is the process and the time that it takes to cover our aspirations. There is always a gap between aspiration and the process of reaching that aspiration. We are narrowing that gap Hon. Speaker Sir. I thank you.

HON. CHIGUMBU: I want to ask the Hon. Minister, according to what you have said. I think the electronic system has already been rolled out. What are they doing to make sure that those areas which are not connected are accessing that system? Do we have the dual system that is working, or we are now depending on the E-system that is in place?

HON. PROF. MURWIRA: Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir. I wish to thank the Hon. Member for seeking clarification. The systems always work in dual mode so that if one is not working the other one is working, especially for areas where there is no access. There is no way we can enforce an electronic system where there are not transmitters. So, the

policy is very clear. We are talking about the issue being dealt with within the fullness of time. I thank you.

HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA: Supplementary Mr. Speaker Sir!

THE HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, you have forgotten. I said I am guided by the agreement between the Chief Whips that we should allow not more than two supplementary questions.

HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA: This one is very important Mr. Speaker Sir.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Appeal to your Chief Whips to change policies.

HON. TOBAIWA: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker Sir.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Good afternoon.

HON. TOBAIWA: My question is directed to the Minister of Health and Child Care. What is the Government policy with regards to the provision of drugs in Government hospitals to treat the occupation or health hazard of silica which is affecting and has claimed the lives of so many young people in most mining towns? I thank you.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH AND CHILD CARE

(HON. DR. KWIDINI): Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir. Thank you Hon. Member for asking the question. The Government policy is such that everything is now in place. We start by detecting the most challenges that cause those diseases.

Now, of course, the drugs provision with the Ministry or Government at large, is now in a position such that all the drugs that are supposed to treat those diseases are in place. I thank you. –[HON.

MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*]–

HON. GUMEDE: Thank you very much Hon. Speaker. My supplementary question is, what are the Government plans to reduce the incidents levels of these occupational health related diseases?

HON. DR. KWIDINI: Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir. The Government plans and policies is to make sure before licencing the mining companies that are operating and causing the diseases are made to undertake all preventive measures to ensure that those diseases and health problems do not arise. Then if those diseases are to come up in big numbers, then there will be need to revisit the company or

organisation such that we make sure that our people are protected. I thank you.

HON. KAPOIKILU: Hon. Speaker, is it mandatory in these mines to do lung function tests on these workers regularly to check for FEV1, FVC, Proximal Interruption of the Pulmonary Artery (PIPA), FEV, over AVC to detect the diseases early and to monitor the disease process?

HON. DR. KWIDINI: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir, I would like to thank also the Hon. Member with the supplementary question. It is very true as each and everyone knows that it is mandatory for anyone who is working where there is exposure to have a routine check-up so as to prevent all these complications. So, the Government is to make sure that all these mandatory check-ups are done every six months or so. I thank you.

HON. CHIDUWA: My question is directed to the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion. Over time, we have seen quite several companies de-listing from the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange and some preferring to the list on the Victoria Falls

Stock Exchange (VFex). So, I wanted to find out from the Hon. Minister what is Government policy regarding the regulation and management of the cannibalism of the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange by VFex?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON. PROF. NCUBE): I thank Hon. Chiduwa for the question Madam Speaker Ma'am. He is correct, some companies have been de-listed from the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange and then listed on the VFex, the Victoria Falls Stock Exchange. There is a specific criterion that they have to meet, is quite a rigorous process and there is a Committee that considers all the applications and it goes to the board under the Stock Exchange of VFex on whether that specific company qualifies or not. There are rules and guidelines, so they do not just list, they have to satisfy those guidelines. Those guidelines are driven by policy and the policies that the companies ought to demonstrate are that they have a strong component in their revenues that is export-oriented, that is hard

currency oriented because we want to make sure that we promote companies that export in terms of listing on VFex.

We also want companies to be able to show that they will be able to raise capital globally and abroad because we are trying to encourage foreign direct investment through the listings on VFex. So, I will say their criteria are quite strict. I do not think any company has managed to list on Vfex without having to satisfy those very strict criteria. I thank you.

HON. DR. MUTODI: Hon. Minister, the market conditions in general do not support the efficient functioning of stock markets and these include money supply growth, exchange rate movements, inflation and interest rates and the positive correlation between inflation and interest rates. What is the Government policy towards stabilising the stock markets?

HON. PROF. M. NCUBE: While I appreciate his question, it is a different question, it is not a supplementary question. If you allow me to answer it, I am happy to do so.

What is going to happen is as follows: - with the introduction of the new currency, ZiG, you will notice that the volatility in terms of prices and the currency itself is going to change, and that volatility is going to come down sharply. This will go a long way in stabilising all prices including asset prices being the stock market prices. So, the currency change in the first place is one such factor that will impact positively on equity price volatility.

Hon. Mutodi mentioned the issue of interest rates, it is certainly true that interest rates are high, they tend to take away capital from equity markets towards the money market where interest rates operate. So now with the introduction of the new currency framework, we have seen interest rates also drop from an average of 130% down to 20% in terms of the policy rate as a guiding rate. Therefore, that interest rate change will also go a long way in creating stability in asset prices. So, I think the Hon. Member will see some changes in the stock market going forward.

There are also certain rules that were put in place such as having to buy and hold for a while for selling to restrict any speculative behaviour

in the equity market. We are reviewing those rules and will make announcements once we have completed our review to make sure that we restore the efficient functioning of this capital market. I thank you.

HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. Before I ask my question, if your memory serves you right, the other time when you were on the Chair, I appealed to the Minister of Health and Child Care on the request of bringing a statement on obstetric fistula in this House. We have been waiting since December up to now and that statement has not come.

THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Hon. Nyamupinga for reminding me. I will ask the Hon. Deputy Minister to take note of that.

HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA: Since the Government is talking about e-governance, what commitment is there to help persons with disabilities to benefit? I would want to know the plans that they have to give them more access to software and gadgets. For example, we have just heard about a monetary policy and deaf people do not even know what was said on the monetary policy. There was no

sign language. Up to now, the deaf community does not know what is happening in terms of the monetary policy. So, if it is the issue of accessibility, how far has the Government gone and what plans does the Government have for the people with disability in terms of accessibility?

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR, AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO): Thank you Madam Speaker.

The Government has a budget item for assistive devices for people living with disabilities. This includes those with hearing challenges as well as those who have challenges in seeing where they are going.

These assistive devices are given to people living with disabilities based on the allocation that we have been given. For this year, I know that we have been given some money to buy those assistive devices, but I cannot be able to tell exactly which devices are going to be bought using the money that has been allocated. I thank you.

HON. KARIMATSENGA-NYAMUPINGA: My question was split where I was saying up to now as we speak, the deaf people have not heard about the Monetary Policy. Is it going to be read again for them

or is there something that they are preparing so that it is distributed to that community so that no one is left behind?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON. PROF. M NCUBE): I have the pleasure of responding to that question. It is a question about communication that we should not leave everyone behind. I agree with the semantic import of the question that we ought to make sure those who are visually impaired or those who are deaf are catered for as well.

So, the communications team in the Treasury is working with the Ministry of Information and Publicity and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to put together a communication strategy that will cover everybody and leave no one behind. It is worth doing a summary of the Monetary policy statement in Braille. I will inform the Reserve Bank Governor to move with speed on that one. I thank you.

HON. MHETU: Madam Speaker, what is Government policy on import duty of assistive devices used by people with disabilities like sunscreen applied by people with albinism, wheelchairs and clutches?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON. PROF. M. NCUBE): The assistive devices for those who are disabled are imported duty free, whether it is the creams for those living with albinism, hearing aids, wheel chairs and so forth. The import duties are waived there. If there are areas where we need to extend further provision to make sure that those who are disabled are assisted, I am happy to receive those to make sure that everything that they are able to bring in, is duty free, and they are supported so that they can compete with some of us who are abled. I thank you.

HON. MHETU: I would want to ask the Hon. Minister, when did this law come that the assistive devices are duty free because as of last year, I remember of a certain organisation where their sunscreen was confiscated by ZIMRA due to non-payment of duty which was to the tune of 150 000? If you could check the article in the *Chronicle* of 7th March, 2023.

HON. PROF. M. NCUBE: I thank the Hon. Member for that very important question. This was done three years ago in this Parliament. We passed, in the Finance Bill, a provision that the creams should not pay any duty. So, I am very surprised by this case. I am happy to investigate it to make sure that those who need these creams are assisted accordingly. I am very surprised actually by this example but there it is. I will check on it. Thank you.

HON. S. TSHUMA: On that same follow up note, I wanted to find out from the Minister, what is Government policy pertaining to the importation and the payment of duty for donated items from the underprivileged or for people who seek to donate to people in Zimbabwe? We always have ZIMRA demanding duty for things that are donated. What is the Government policy on that?

HON. PROF. M. NCUBE: Madam Speaker, it depends as to what is being donated. If someone is donating some highly valuable equipment which is going to compete with what is locally produced and we have a duty to protect local industry, you may find a slightly tougher

ZIMRA as you approach the border, but if you are donating something that is really meant to support our vulnerable citizens and is not going to compare unduly with what we produce locally, they will be softer.

Let me just say, it depends but we have a list. The code is very clear. Those who work with the Customs code will know what is dutiable and what is not, but I must say I get a lot of these appeals Madam Speaker, and some of them I accept. I support and some of them I do not support. So, there is always room to appeal to the Minister for any of these donations. If the case is strong and we feel that it should be supported, we tend to support it. We are flexible. Thank you.

***HON. MUDUMI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. My question is, what is the Government policy regarding war veterans and war collaborators? They have been vetted before with promises that the Government wanted to look into their welfare. Can the Government not install boreholes because the Government is not showing mercy and also supporting the work that they did during the struggle? Thank you.

***THE MINISTER OF VETERANS OF THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE (HON. SEN. MAVHUNGA):** Thank you Madam President, and I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his pertinent question which shows that he really feels for the liberators. I think you are all aware that there was once vetting which was done on the collaborators and I reported here that there were some who were successful and were supposed to finish the whole process which we think that in this vote allocation this year, we were given money to complete the exercise. If we know that all have been vetted, it will be gazetted and then after that, we would look at how they will be helped on whatever their needs are. We want to empower them in terms of how they are living like what the Hon. Member has alluded to, but we are still in the process of doing that. Thank you.

***HON. HAMAUSWA:** I wanted to ask the Hon. Minister what is Government policy that when they will be vetting, there will be no discrimination, especially looking at our politics that at times I can be a

war collaborator but now I am in the opposition, then they will say that I am no longer a war collaborator?

***HON. SEN. MAVHUNGA:** Thank you Hon. Hamauswa for seeking clarification. When you are in Government, we are not political, we are apolitical. Our vetting is only done with those who we were with during the war, which means that those people who do investigations are people who are not involved in politics. They have guided questions which they ask pertaining to those areas. What it means is that during the war, when you got to a place there were signs that they used. So those questions will be asked. You should do what you used to do during the war, the signs and signals that were used during the war. Thank you.

***HON. NHARI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I want to ask the Minister, there were people who were vetted and were successful but they are late now. They did not get anything. My question is, is Government going to look into their children and their families' needs or because of them passing on, it is a chapter closed?

*** HON. MAVHUNGA:** Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. I would like to thank Hon. Nhari for seeking clarification. When they are vetted or registered, they are given a paper which show that they have been successful. So, everyone is granted their rights. Even in our Ministry, we have war liberators who died but still their families are getting help. In the Ministry, we also look at war victims because some of them are late and they were not vetted whilst they were alive but the law looks into that; as long as they have receipts that show they have been vetted.

***HON. MAPIKI:** Thank you Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Lands and Agriculture. What is the Government policy when it comes to growing maize in winter and also small grains, considering that we are faced with a drought?

***THE MINISTER OF LANDS, AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, WATER AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (HON. DR. MASUKA):** Thank you Madam Speaker. The question is on how the small grains and maize, can be grown in winter, since we are faced with

drought. The last time I came here, I talked about four things that we should be aware of, so that we know what we are supposed to do.

Firstly, the small amounts that we have in our granary. Secondly, the few produce that we are going to harvest. Thirdly, we look at where we can import maize. Then fourthly, what can we grow in winter and in that is where his question is based on, on the fourth item.

We saw that if we grow wheat and small grains, farmers will get a lot of money by growing wheat instead of growing small grains in most areas of Zimbabwe. There are very few places like in Kanyemba, Bulawayo, Beitbridge and Chiredzi, where we can have about 3 200 hectares, which we have identified that people who can grow maize and small grains. They can harvest more than those who grow wheat. Those are the small areas that we are targeting but the big hectares are going to be designated for wheat growing. Those who have irrigation which are complete or almost complete, can use it in winter because we really want to grow large so that our country will have enough food. We have plans with AFC cold ped-stock, who specialise in ped-stock. They have a small fund which can help the farmers but those farmers should rush

there now because we are seized with the farming for winter crops.

Thank you.

***HON. MAPIKI:** My supplementary question to the Minister is that as the Ministry of Agriculture, do you have any plans with ZESA, because many water bodies do not have electricity? Are you engaging the Ministry of Energy so that they provide transformers for irrigation?

***HON. MASUKA:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the supplementary question. I think the Minister of Energy and Power Development is here. He can answer for himself. Thank you.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND POWER

DEVELOPMENT (HON. E. MOYO): If I got him well, the issue is of transformers, that there are certain areas where there are no transformers to facilitate irrigation. We have an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture to provide electricity. We know that our infrastructure is dilapidated but we are in a process to revamp most of our infrastructure. If there are areas where there are no electricity and transformers, just let

us know which areas, then we see what we can do, since we are faced with a national catastrophe of hunger, we need to irrigate. I thank you.

HON. M. SIBANDA: Thank you Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Public Service. What is the Government policy with regards to Government employees who are office holders in other institutions like council after the 2023 Harmonised Elections?

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. J. MOYO): The Constitution is very clear in terms of holding office after winning in an election in any political party while you are a Government employee. The policy does not deny such Government employees to be office holders in other institutions after they won in an election. They are citizens of Zimbabwe they belong to political parties.

HON. M. SIBANDA: I think this one matters because the service delivery is being compromised as the person will be engaged in other duties like one is a councillor at the same time is a Government employee.

HON. J. MOYO: Hon. Madam Speaker, I was just saying the Constitution is clear but if the Hon. Member has a specific place where service delivery is compromised because of that, he should put it in writing so that we can look into it.

***HON. ZEMURA:** Thank you Madam Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Mines. There are about two or three years when our President, Hon. Mnangagwa said that minerals are no longer being mined and exported in raw form without beneficiation. I want to particularly speak about the road from Macheke to Mutare. There are a lot of trucks using that road carrying granite. Up to now, those stones are still being carried, going to Mozambique. At first, we thought it would come to an end.

THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Zemura, please ask your question.

HON. ZEMURA: My question is, is it Government policy that what the President talked about is not being followed? People are exporting granite stones outside the country?

***THE MINISTER OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY
EDUCATION, INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEVELOPMENT (HON. PROF. MURWIRA):** Thank you Madam
Speaker. I thank you Hon. Zemura for your question. Your question is in
line with the issue of beneficiation so that they can be used here in
Zimbabwe and not leave us here with open pits. This is the policy which
was talked about by the President, and we are following it especially
when he talked two years ago when he was referring to lithium. There is
no lithium which is going out raw.

It can be referring to other minerals, but what is known is that there
is no policy that our minerals should go as ore. They should be exported
after beneficiation, but this was in line with minerals which are known
like when it comes to granite. We have granite companies, but if there
are special circumstances, they should be known and investigated so that
we would be able to clearly say how this precious stone was taken as ore.

***HON. MUCHEMWA:** I want to ask about corporate social
responsibility which is done by our mining companies in the rural areas.
We heard that starting from now, communities are now being given 2%.

I want to find out when the community is going to benefit from the 2%.

Thank you.

***THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** This is not a new question. It is in line with the damage that is being done on the roads and the mining companies should rehabilitate those roads.

***HON. PROF. MURWIRA:** Thank you Madam Speaker and I want to thank the Hon. Member for the supplementary question. I want to say that our Constitution on the Mines and Minerals Act, I think it was brought into this House so that this should be dealt with once and for all by you Hon. Members. We are waiting so that all these should be rectified through that law, and we are looking at you Hon. Member so that you take up this and we finalise it once and for all.

HON. MADZIVANYIKA: My question is directed to the Minister of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion. On the 15th March, 2024, the Government introduced S.I. 51, adding more companies to the Mutapa Investment Fund with the intention to make them profitable and recoup to support Government programmes as well as to benefit future generations. My question is one of the

companies that we saw was ZESA Holdings. Looking at the nature of this company and the type of production, what was the rationale of adding ZESA on the Mutapa Fund to make it profitable? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON. D. K. MNANGAGWA): Thank you Madam Speaker. I would like to highlight to the Hon. Member that the Mutapa Investment Fund does not fall under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance, but rather under the ambit of the Office of the President and Cabinet. With that being said, we will take this inquiry and present a paper on behalf of this institution so that we give you the rationale so that if there are any more questions on Mutapa Investment Fund, if they can put them on paper, we will come back with a composite response to that. I thank you.

THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Hon. Minister. Hon. Madzivanyika, please may you put your question in writing.

***HON. HAMAUSWA:** My question is directed to the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. Hon. Minister, looking at access to local staple food, Members of Parliament in other areas are

being asked to transport maize from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and we are hearing it again in this august House. What is Government policy, so that all Members of Parliament are aware of what is happening in our country, especially when it comes to the distribution of maize so that we are equally troubled that we should transport maize to our constituencies?

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE (HON. JULY MOYO): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member. I think we have devised a system in this record assessment that we are doing together with the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, but it will be centred at the village. Every village head is required by law to call a village assembly and we have said all the 35 000 village heads should immediately call these village assemblies to preside over who qualifies to have assistance. This is going on right now as I speak, we have given them a deadline that we should have all these papers by the 15th of April this month.

During these processes, all the citizens in a village and those Members of Parliament who come from the rural areas belong to these villages and they have a right to attend to those villages and influence to make sure that no one who deserves is left behind. So that is number one. Number two, once that has been written and we know that the course of this EL-Nino induced drought, we are going to have more people than what we have been having since last year's bumper harvest. We expect that there will be so much demand to carry the food to the people and that demand requires that we have a whole of Government approach, and so we are doing everything to mobilise resources so that we can carry this food.

We also have a whole of society approach that anybody who is able to assist including Members of Parliament, should assist. Now, the Members of Parliament who assist must also say to themselves, the food is going to be distributed by the village heads, supported now this time by Social Welfare Officers, and other Government functionaries because the President has declared it a disaster. All the civil protection systems that start at Cabinet and a Committee chaired by the Minister of Local

Government and Public Works and in the provinces by Ministers of State, in the district by the District Development Coordinators, in the wards and in the villages by either the chief, headman or the village head, but with all of us assisting.

We are trying to do this so that no one can accuse anybody that we have not been approached in order to say what we need. We have been testing this on the ground to see whether it is working. So I have gone to Bubi, Mangwe, Buhera and Zvishavane just to test to see what is happening in regards to people participation. We have even set up, everywhere where we are distributing food, such that there can be a 'complaints desk'. The complaints desk will be manned by the village heads and is manned by women, youths and these people who will have complaints can go to that desk to find out why they have been left out.

In our analysis, where we have gone in the case of Mangwe where World Food Programme (WFP) was distributing, there were some genuine people who had been left out or who had lost their cards and genuinely the World Food Programme was able to correct it. In areas where we were distributing, there were complaints about the numbers

that we were asked to deal with distribution or who were being given food were too few. We asked the village heads how the selection was done and they were able to demonstrate and the Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development was there. They were able to demonstrate that we selected the neediest and we challenged everybody who wanted to be on the list to see whether they had more needy cases than those who were selected and we were very happy with this community-based selection mechanisms, but everyone as we move forward in order to overcome this, we have to say we must support the programme in whatever we want to do. Let us not put the burden of cost to those who are beneficiaries. That is why this issue of who carries the food must be stated very clearly that we cannot ask the beneficiaries to contribute to the carrying of their food. I thank you.

***HON. HAMAUSWA:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I am happy to hear the Hon. Minister saying that the hunger issue has been declared a national disaster. My question is, when he said we did not hear him saying that it is only affecting those in the rural areas, I want to ask the Hon. Minister whether he is aware that there is what is called

ruralisation of urban areas? This means that there is also frightening hunger in the urban areas.

So, with that in mind, what is Government policy that when you visited Bubi, you should come and say that you were in Mufakose and assessing the hungry people there because there are no village heads in urban areas? What are you going to do for the community-based selection to happen in urban areas?

HON. J. MOYO: Thank you Madam Speaker and this is very important question regarding the urban areas. We are distributing in the rural areas following the Zimbabwe Vulnerability Livelihood Assessment (ZMLA), that ZIMLA demonstrated to us what was needed in the rural areas, at 2.7 million people and going forward we are basing it on the ground.

We are aware that there is food insecurity in the urban areas and as I speak, we are finalising, through the Food and Nutrition Council, the ZMLA assessment that is taking place in all urban areas and as in the past instead of distributing food, we sometimes distribute cash for food and that will take place. So, when the President announced a cocktail of

areas where there will be need for assistance, the urban areas are not excluded. As to how the selection process takes place, we know that urban areas are divided into wards and in those wards, there will be Committees that will be selecting people who they think are food insecure and those selection processes have been going on, and we will continue to use the wards as selection processes based on the communities in those wards.

So, everybody again will be involved, but the issue of how and when it will be done is as soon as we have the ZMLA urban assessment which is taking place. I thank you Madam Speaker.

***HON. NYABANI:** My question to the Hon. Minister is based on the issue of well-wishers. Certain wards may not be able to get assistance, so, how can people in these wards be assisted in terms of collecting their maize?

HON. J. MOYO: Thank you Madam Speaker. Let me emphasise again on the responsibility to carry food from an area which is designated that is GMB to areas designated for the collection of maize, that responsibility is of the Government. However, any responsible

Government will appeal to its people, we have done that with Cyclone Idai, and COVID-19 assistance; the Government is going to do it but there is nothing wrong with appealing to our people to make sure that we participate in any disaster that would have taken place.

Once the President declares disaster; we normally also ask those from outside the country but obviously, you start with your people. All we are saying is the people of Zimbabwe are going to help their Government to alleviate the plight of those who are vulnerable but it does not mean that if there is nobody in that area who can carry the food, the Government folds its hand, we will do our duty but if we can get help, we will accept that assistance. I thank you.

Questions Without Notice were interrupted by **THE DEPUTY SPEAKER** *in terms of Standing Number 68.*

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

CONSTRUCTION OF A SCHOOL IN LUVEVE WETLANDS

1. **HON. BAJILA** asked the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife to inform the House whether State land opposite the Luveve Zimbabwe Republic Police Station where a school is being built is not a

wetland and if so explain whether no Government policy is being violated by such construction?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. NYONI): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I

would like to thank Hon. Bajila for a very important question.

HON. HADEBE: On a point of order! I am noticing a mass exodus of Ministers and they have always disappointed us. As I am speaking, a lot of them are moving out. May you allow me to go to the main entrance and block all the Ministers and bring them to the House?

THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Permission is granted.

HON. DR. NYONI: I greatly appreciate his interest and concern about sustainable environmental management and I urge other members to do the same to be as positive as possible in trying to protect our environment.

My Ministry through the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) has inspected the site and carried out an ecological assessment which brought out the following results: -

1. Wellspring Primary School, a private school under Musawenkosi Education Trust acquired the land in 2002 and was given a development permit by the City of Bulawayo in 2023.
2. The land in question is 6.4 hectares in extent. An ecological assessment done by EMA indicated the following results: -
 - (a) 48.23% (2.736) of the land in question is not a wetland
 - (b) 57.77% (2.937 ha) is a wet land
3. The structures that have been built by the school are confined to the non-wetland area and are 100 metres away from the edge of the wetland.
4. Upon enquiry from the local authority, it was highlighted that the school was allocated more land (6.4 Ha) than the usual 3.5 Ha for schools. This area is in consideration of the ecologically sensitive part of the stand which is not to be built on.
5. The school was advised that part of their school premises is within a wetland and that there should be no development in the wetland area.

Madam Speaker, the way forward is that wetland areas should be left undisturbed or be considered for low-impact projects such as sports fields. Secondly, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) will continuously monitor the site to ensure compliance with environmental laws and regulations of the land. I thank you.

HON. BAJILA: I would like the Minister to clarify whether she said the school is built on 2,9% of the land or 2,9 hectares of the land. The broader part of the question is that building a school of that kind, 100 metres away from a wetland in terms of what the Minister has said, the kind of risks that they put learners into in the event of a Cyclone or heavy rains, building a school in such an area. What is the Government's position on that?

HON. DR. NYONI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Usually, the schools are given over 3 hectares to build their schools but in this case, they were given over 6 hectares. Only 2,736 hectares are out of the wetland and then the rest is wetland. The school was then instructed that they should only put buildings within the 48.2% of the land and not

encroach into the wet land. My Ministry through EMA will supervise this. If they encroach into the wet land, we will stop that. Thank you.

HON. MUTSEYAMI: My supplementary question to the attention of the Hon. Minister is, what is the reason of giving access to the school a wet land. What is the rational because by virtue of them having the land as theirs own, it warrants issues? Why would the Ministry not allocate a certain part which is not wet land? Why has the wet land been allocated to the school? Thank you.

HON. DR. NYONI: Thank you Madam Speaker. I am sure the Hon. Member did not hear when I said the school bought the land from the Bulawayo City Council. The allocating of land has nothing to do with us. We only came in when we saw that they were very close to wet land. So, it was not our responsibility to sell this land to the schools. I thank you.

COMPENSATION OF COMMUNITIES LIVING AROUND

HWANGE NATIONAL PARK

2. HON. BONDA asked the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Wildlife to explain to the House the Ministry's plans to

compensate communities living around Hwange Parks who lost domestic livestock and human lives due to human wildlife conflict.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. NYONI): I would like to thank the Hon. Member for this very important and pertinent question that my Ministry is seized with, and is in a process of establishing human wildlife conflict relief fund. A point of emphasis to the Hon. Members is that there can never be any compensation for any lost life. I commiserate with the loss of human life in encounters between humans and wildlife.

Zimbabwe continues to face numerous challenges of increased human wildlife conflict that threaten people's safety and their livelihoods. In 2023 alone, more than 35 people were killed by wildlife and more than 80 were injured. The consequences of human wildlife conflict are more serious in wildlife areas such as communities around Hwange National Parks. People lose livestock and crops and yet these are an important part of their livelihoods and incomes, apart from them themselves losing lives.

In most human wildlife conflict hot spot areas, elephants are second to buffalos in terms of human animal conflict. We derive a lot of benefits from our big five in terms of tourism's revenue. However, the communities that live close to national parks face tragedy from the increased wildlife population. To give you a vivid picture Madam Speaker, in Matabeleland North, the elephant population has increased from 49 310 to 61 531. This was from 2021 to 2022 an increase of 12 221 and this was based on an aerial survey.

Most of the elephants are in Hwange National Park and regularly destroy people's crops. They kill people when they are irritated or encounter people. Government is setting a human wildlife conflict relief fund that will provide relief for the remaining family members of those killed and relief for those injured and maimed. The fund will be managed by ZimParks, our entity with the involvement of the communities. In this regard, we have a programme of community consultation on how they want this fund to be structured, how it will be managed and the design of the necessary modalities for evaluations and technical assessments.

Let me point out Madam Speaker that as we provide this relief, we must not forget the challenges we have as a nation and African States as a whole with the only global biosphere with growing wildlife populations. Otherwise other countries allowed their wildlife to disappear.

I thank the people of Hwange and other areas as they are the reason why we are setting this fund as Government. Zimbabwe has an ivory stockpile of 166 221.18kg from 26 906 pieces from inside and outside the parks and wildlife estate. We have been responsible for keeping these and eliminating poaching at a very high cost which has allowed wildlife to grow. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species CITES banned the international ivory trade in 1989. In 1997 and 2008 recognising that some Southern African Elephant populations were healthy and well managed. It permitted Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe to make a one-off sale of our ivory. However, as I speak, we have a whole pool of ivory with a stock net worth of USD 700 million that we are not allowed to sell.

As an international law abiding country we have complied and are being pushed to keep this stock. I am glad Hon. Speaker that the Parliament of Zimbabwe, the Senate, the Traditional Leaders from Hwange and other areas, civil society organisations and progressive development sector players have joined Government in fighting this unjustified ban from CITES. CITES allow us to trade within the guided international law. If we all do this, we will be able to ensure that people of Hwange and other estates, especially the hot spots are protected while we engage in sustainable wildlife management. I thank you.

HON. BONDA: May I thank the Minister for putting the picture of what is happening in the parks and defined what parks are. I also thank the people of Hwange who are living with the animals for being good custodians of the animals. Also making a follow up on what the Minister has said, that the big five bring quite a lot of revenue *vis-a-viz* the CITES that is blocking the sale of horns. I want to say to the people of Hwange, all what they are asking at the moment is when are you going to provide scholarships for them to live in harmony with the animals.

HON. DR. NYONI: As I said, Cabinet passed that we create a Fund. As soon that Fund is in place, we will begin. I thank you.

+HON. M. SIBANDA: Thank you Hon. Speaker. What are the measures being taken, especially the private safari operators so that they can revive their fences or boundaries that divide their farms or their Game Parks from the areas where people reside? Animals like hyenas and other dangerous animals are a threat to people. These were used as boundaries, but for now they have been destroyed by people. We understand that these safari rangers make a lot of money after selling these animals. So we need them to make efforts to revive their boundaries to avoid human and wildlife conflicts.

HON. DR. NYONI: I would like to thank Hon. Sibanda for the question. He posed a very pertinent question. People in private Safaris have their wish that they could erect the fences that create boundaries between the animals and residential areas. We once had a meeting with them, they are also complaining that people who reside close to Conservancies and National Parks destroy and vandalise these fences. Hence, we need us as a Ministry to go and sit down and create

awareness to people to teach them that if these fences are erected, they are not supposed to vandalise them because people who vandalise these fences are the very same people who reside in the areas. We have people from Sabi, Hwange and from all over the country. We need to have a dialogue with the people who reside close to the Conservatives and traditional leaders so that these fences can be erected. I agree with the Hon. Member. We agree that where there are no fences, these animals move out of Game Parks and Conservatives and create conflicts with residents. They kill people's livestock and also harm people, hence we need to erect these fences and make sure that these fences are not vandalised. I thank you.

COMPENSATION FOR HUMAN LIVES AND LIVESTOCK DUE TO HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT

3. HON SAGANDIRA asked the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife to inform the House the following; - a) What the Government policy is regarding wild animals that stray from National Parks threatening human life as well as livestock; and b) What

compensation plan is being put in place by the Ministry for people who lose their lives and livestock due to human-wildlife conflict.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. NYONI): Thank you Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Hon. Member who asked the question. I thought most of this question, I have already answered, but I will answer. The Government policy in regards to wildlife management places human lives at the highest priority, and where human life is threatened by animals, human life takes precedence.

Wildlife management in Zimbabwe is provided for by the Parks and Wildlife Act, which allows sustainable management and utilisation of wildlife in Parks, Estates, Private properties and Communal areas through rural district councils which are given appropriate authority status. The Government in 1989 launched the Communal Areas Management Programme for indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), which empowered communities living in areas adjacent to Parks Estates and those with wildlife in their areas, to benefit from hunting safaris and

they are issued with hunting quota and the proceeds are shared to the communities or used for development needs in the communities.

In these CAMPFIRE areas, wildlife protection is under the authority of RDCs which also have their rangers who manage poaching and Problem Animal Control (PAC). These rangers are trained by the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority (ZimParks) and also rendered assistance when there is crisis. Allocation of hunting quota also helps in managing the populations of wildlife to minimise encroachment into communal lands as they seek for food. Having water provisions for wildlife in the protected areas as well as in the communal areas to minimise human wildlife interface. Lobbying the international organisation such as Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, is a global agreement among Governments that regulate or ban international trade in species under threat, such that we will be allowed to sell our ivory stockpiles to have more resources to reinvest into conservations and community development.

On compensation to people who lose life, recalling Cabinet's decision of 4th November, 2022 to establish a Human-Wildlife Conflict Fund, (HWCRF) to provide monetary relief to verified and proved victims of Human Wildlife conflict. The current Parks Act does not have any provision of compensation of victims or the afflicted, hence the need to expedite the Parks and Wildlife Amendment Bill, which provides for the establishment of the Human Wildlife Conflict Relief Fund. It was felt that the compensation of life or a limb is not possible, hence the use of the erm relief instead. At the moment, Parks, RDCs and stakeholders are assisting people affected by human wildlife conflict in various ways.

In conclusion, the Human Wildlife Conflict Relief Fund will be financed by the following: Treasury shall allocate resources as may be appropriated by Parliament. The Director General of ZimParks in concurrence with Minister, will allocate a wildlife quota to be utilised for funding the Human Wildlife Conflict Relief Fund account and a portion of Carbon credits revenue from Government. I thank you.

***HON. NYABANI:** You said there is no rule that applies. People

have lost their lives. Why do you not confine animals on their own? This is why wild animals live in the bush and people live in homes, and the two cannot co-exist. Why do you not secure those camps projects so that the two do not stay together?

+**HON. S. MOYO:** Madam Speaker, I believe the same question about fence was asked and I responded to it. I said that those that are in charge of the conservancy of the national parks will erect the fences, but people are destroying those fences. We are prepared to sit down with the people, the National Parks and the people in the conservancies because we want them to live in harmony so that these fences are not vandalised. The Ministry is not the one that is responsible for erecting these fences. Those that are responsible for the fences are the ones who are in charge of the parks and the conservancies. Thank you.

HON. BONDA: Here we are saying the number of elephants have actually ballooned and there are a lot of elephants. Why is the Ministry not increasing the hunting quota so that the HRDC's that are being talked about are short funded? I will tell you Madam Speaker, if I am not mistaken, there are 15 elephants per year and yet we are crying that

CITES have actually banned us from selling our ivory and here we are, we cannot increase the quota. We are being stingy with the elephants yet the number is so big. Why can we not increase the quota so that hunters can hunt? It is not all about CITES where we get the revenue. We also get revenue from the private sports hunters who hunt the elephants for fun. Why can we not increase the quota and that is where my question is and feed our nation during this time of hunger? People can get some meat from that. Thank you.

HON. DR. NYONI: Thank you Madam Speaker. This is a very pertinent question. Indeed, as I said, the elephants in Hwange National Parks alone are increasing in number by over 12 000 a year, which means the population of elephants compared to the space, the food available in the national parks and the water is now over ridden by the number of elephants. I want to commend the Hon. Member because this is what we have also been discussing as a Ministry. Our discussion is this year there is hunger, why can we not add the quota to RDCs so that RDCs will hunt the elephants and feed people that are hungry in the communal areas? We are still negotiating for that and if it passes, I think

your question will then be answered by a yes. We need to increase the quota and the Ministry is working on it. Thank you.

DISCHARGE OF TOXIC CHEMICALS IN DEKA RIVER,
HWANGE

4. HON. BONDA asked the Minister Environment, Climate and Wildlife to inform the House what measures the Ministry is taking to stop mining companies and small-scale miners from discharging toxic chemicals into Deka River in Hwange which has become a hazard to aquatic life, humans and livestock.

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE AND
WILDLIFE (HON. DR. NYONI):** Thank you for raising this crucial question regarding the protection of Deka River in Hwange from the environmental impacts of mining activities. This issue is of grave concern to the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, as it poses a significant threat to aquatic ecosystems, human health, and environment.

Contrary to popular belief, the pollution of Deka River is to a result of the discharge of toxic chemicals by current mining companies,

but rather a legacy issue caused by years of continuous discharge of Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) from the old Hwange Colliery Company (HCCL) workings. There are three distinct AMD discharge points around Hwange and records show that by 1997, AMD was already a considerable problem.

The initial interventions at the first and oldest discharge point started in 2008, involving the construction of a series of holding ponds to increase retention times and acid neutralisation using lime. Records indicate that on average, liming has helped increase the pH from around 2 to 3, and the holding ponds have since developed into an artificial wetland system. The discharge rate at this site is variable, generally averaging about 16 cubic meters per day, with the pattern unrelated to natural seasons, suggesting it is not directly driven by rainwater recharge.

At the second site, the rate of AMD discharge can be as high as about 200 cubic meters per day, with a pH as low as 2.7. The discharge pattern at this site is yet to be established, but it has generally been increasing over the years to the current rate. The third discharge point comprises two plugged exploration boreholes, through which the AMD

is still seeping out, indicating significant pressure underground. There exists a risk of new discharge points following the plugging of current ones, as records show a surge in AMD discharge at the second site after plugging the boreholes at the third.

However, the efforts by the Hwange Colliery Company (HCCL) to mitigate the problem have fallen short. To address this challenge, the Ministry has implemented several measures to ensure mining activities do not compromise the integrity of water bodies like Dekka River. These include:

1. Collaborative Research: An in-depth study of the AMD problem, in collaboration with research institutions is underway to develop a permanent solution. A comprehensive study plan outlining the work, equipment needs, and costs has been established.
2. Strengthened Oversight: Intensified monitoring, enforcement, and auditing of compliance with environmental regulations and permits for responsible disposal of mining waste and chemicals are being implemented.

3. Stakeholder Engagement: Collaboration with the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development, local authorities and community representatives is ongoing to raise awareness, establish joint task forces and act against offenders.
4. Pollution Control Measures: Mandating the implementation of appropriate pollution control measures such as tailings dams, waste treatment facilities and containment systems, as well as comprehensive environmental management plans for mining operations, is a priority.
5. Sustainable Mining Technologies: Promoting cleaner and more sustainable mining technologies that minimise the use of toxic chemicals and reduce hazardous waste generation is encouraged, with guidance provided for environmentally friendly practices.
6. Community Empowerment: Local communities are being engaged through awareness campaigns to educate them about the risks associated with AMD discharge and the importance of protecting water resources. This empowers them to report illegal discharges or environmental violations.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, be rest assured, that the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Wildlife remains steadfastly committed to protecting the environment, safeguarding public health, and ensuring sustainable mining practices in our country. We will continue to take all necessary measures to prevent the discharge of toxic chemicals into Deka River and hold mining companies and small-scale miners accountable for any violations. We are committed to seeing a measurable improvement in the river's health in the near future. Thank you.

HON. BONDA: Supplementary Hon. Madam Speaker Ma'am! Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me be brief with the question. What social responsibility is being done by the mining companies who are polluting the toxic water to try and mitigate this type of environment degradation that is happening in the Deka River?

HON. DR. NYONI: Thank you Madam Speaker. Indeed, there should be social responsibility by those who have polluted the river. I think the point is taken. Let that be followed up and let there be

evidence that their toxins have really done A, B, C damage and I think claims should be made by them. I thank you.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN THE FRINGES OF GAME PARKS AND RESERVES

5. HON. BONDA asked the Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife to inform the House what the Ministry's plans are in so far as establishing Vocational Training Centres to reach co-existing skills with wildlife, to people who live on the fringes of game parks and reserves so that they avoid travelling long distances to access these services.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIROMENT, CLIMATE AND WILDLIFE (HON. DR. NYONI): Hon. Speaker Sir, the education and training of communities who live on the fringes is of priority importance to Government, in the spirit of leaving no one behind. In this regard, we are taking the following measures:

1. ZimParks has Community Extension and Interpretation Officers in the eight (8) regions that are conducting awareness campaigns throughout the country to enhance human-wildlife co-existence.

2. In addition, ZimParks has a Wildlife College, namely the Zimbabwe Institute of Wildlife Conservation (ZIWC) in Masvingo, which is training Rangers for CAMPFIRE areas and private conservancies.
3. Further, the Forestry College under Forestry Commission, has also some modules that relate to community-based conservation.
4. The Vocational Training centre Idea is welcome and further engagements between Zimbabwe Institute of Wildlife Conservation and other training centres in all provinces will be undertaken to enhance wider coverage and provision of wildlife modules
5. Further, the Ministry will consolidate efforts and ensure it assist with parastatals to collaborate with other Government institutions in every province, to ensure local communities are trained in natural resources management to assist with heritage-based conservation efforts. I thank you.

+HON. BONDA: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. People who reside within the vicinity of these animals do not understand this

issue. I think it is better we educate these people on the risks that these animals pose and to know how these animals behave rather than taking to these colleges. They are taken far away to Masvingo, what measures are being taken that these guide lessons can go to Hwange and try to educate and create awareness within the communities in Hwange? People do not need a lot of education, just basic education.

+HON. DR. NYONI: Thank you Madam Speaker. The Hon. Member is saying the truth that people who reside within these areas are the ones who understand these animals better. They need to be educated and to be aware of the behaviours of these animals. I think I made it clear when I started reading that ZIMPARKS has programmes and extensions that are taken to all the regions within the country. I was asking if the Hon. Member might have a specific area he knows within his constituency that he wants people to be educated, so he should contact personnel from ZIMPARKS.

We want these vocational training centres and these Technical Colleges to introduce in their curriculum these programmes of creating awareness of wildlife so that we can help the entire nation.

TEACHING OF LOCAL OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

6. **HON. BAJILA** asked the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education to inform the House about the primary and secondary schools which are teaching the local official languages as provided for in Section 6 of the Constitution province by province.

THE MINISTER OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

EDUCATION (HON. T. MOYO): Thank you Hon. Bajila for such an important question that addresses the fundamental aspect of our Constitution. As a Ministry, we have made a deliberate effort to ensure local languages are taught in all schools. As a result, all our 10 600 primary and secondary schools are offering local indigenous languages.

Some local languages are offered in particular, geographical locations in keeping with where the language is predominantly used for example, Kalanga is offered in schools in the Bulilima and Mangwe Districts, which is in Matabeleland Province. On the other hand, Tshangani is offered in Chiredzi District, which is in Masvingo Province.

I have just provided a snippet of what we are offering since providing the entire list of 10600 schools and the indigenous languages that they offer may be a tedious exercise.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, through the Government Teacher Capacity Programme, we are training more indigenous language teachers to ensure the entrenchment of these learning areas in our schools.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the celebration of identity, diversity and heritage through the development of indigenous languages in our heritage-based curriculum.

The Ministry supports the growth of indigenous languages in this 21st Century era and indigenous languages such as Barwe, Chewa, Nambiya, Ndau, Ndebele, Kalanga, Sesotho, Shona, Tonga, Venda, Tshangani, Xhosa and many others which are used as mediums of instruction at infant level.

The role of indigenous languages and sustainable development has been emphasised from early childhood learning and this culminates in

individuals grounded on knowing who they are, where they came from, and with the capacity to positively impact their own lives and the world at large.

Indigenous languages due to their nature, document community achievements and heritage, therefore the exposure of our learners to them ensures that a vibrant historical database for generating income is stored. Furthermore, our schools promote the revitalisation and maintenance of indigenous languages.

Hon. Members, the beauty of different languages converging in our country is the foundation for future, collaborations and partnerships that will avail a multiplicity of opportunities.

There is a global drive on indigenous languages and multilingualism which is why we have radio lessons that provide the learners with a window to acquire skills to speak more than one language and improve tolerance and peace in the country. I thank you.

Questions With Notice were interrupted by **THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER** *in terms of Standing Order Number 68.*

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

LAUNCH OF A NEW CURRENCY

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON.

PROF. M. NCUBE): Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am, for allowing me to stand in this august House regarding the recent Monetary Policy Statement Announcement which has resulted in the launch of a new currency.

The Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe presented the Monetary Policy Statement on the 5th of April 2024 in terms of Section 46 of the Reserve Bank Act. The major import of the Monetary Policy Statement is to address the exchange rate and inflation volatilities which have largely been driven by factors such as high demand for foreign currency as a store value, reduced confidence due to continued currency volatility seen in recent months, and a widening margin between the interbank and the parallel market exchange rates.

Other factors included the reduced use of the local currency for domestic transactions and finally factors such as the lack of certainty and

predictability on the exchange rate front. These are some of the factors impacting exchange rate and inflation volatilities.

To ensure long-term macro stability, the RBZ announced currency reforms which will be complemented by other fiscal and additional monetary measures to restore currency and exchange rate stability. The new policy framework will be implemented sequentially to ensure lasting stability, certainty and predictability, thereby achieving the desired impact of influential monetary currency and exchange rate stability.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, let me take this opportunity to highlight the summary of the major contents of the Monetary Policy Statement.

Madam Speaker, the Reserve Bank introduced a structured currency which is generally defined as a currency that is pegged to a specific exchange rate or currency basket and backed by a bundle of foreign exchange assets such as gold for example. This means that the Central Bank can only issue domestic notes and coins when fully backed by a foreign reserve currency or foreign exchange assets and that the currency is fully convertible into the reserve currency on demand. The

structured currency is anchored by a composite or basket of foreign currency and precious metals and in our case, mainly gold which is held as reserves for this purpose by the Reserve Bank.

Let me now turn on to the currency swap and conversion mechanism. The new currency known as the Zimbabwe Gold (ZiG) became effective on 5th April, 2024, therefore banks have already begun to convert the current Zimbabwe balances into the new currency. Madam Speaker, the swap rate is guided by the closing interbank exchange rate and the price of gold in the London bullion market as at 5 April, 2024. The local currency is being converted into ZiG or Zimbabwean Gold by first of all converting the Zimbabwe dollar balances as at 5 April, 2024 to USD balances at the end of the day at exchange rate of 1:33 903. So that is the first phase of the process. Then second, converting the equivalent resultant USD balances into ZiG balances at a rate of 1:13.56 ZiG. So, US\$1 per 13.56 ZiG, that is the exchange rate.

If I can pause a little further to explain; 1 ZiG Madam Speaker, is equivalent to 1mg of gold and that amounts to about USD 6c and when

we work that one out, you will see why you end up with an exchange rate of US\$1 to 13.56 ZiG. It all starts from the international London bullion gold price. This rate is being used to make a legitimate conversion of all Zimbabwe dollar deposits in the banking sector, all Zimbabwe dollar loans and advances made by the sector, all Zimbabwe dollar Treasury bills and all outstanding auction allotments, all export surrender obligations, all prices of goods and services in Zimbabwe dollars and any other Zimbabwe dollar denominative obligations.

Madam Speaker, on conversion of all current Zimbabwean dollar balances, banks are renaming all the current Zimbabwe dollar accounts as ZiG accounts. The old gold backed digital coin or token accounts, with the acronym GBDT accounts are no longer called ZiG accounts but are now known as GBDD accounts. All Zimbabwe dollar notes and coins held by account holders are being credited into their ZiG accounts using the applicable conversion factor which I have already described.

The banks will continue to accept these deposits for a period of 21 days after 5 April 2024, but Madam Speaker, I have been made aware that we may even need to extend that period. That is okay so that we

can give our citizens, especially in the rural areas that need to travel and be able to convert their Zimbabwe dollars into ZiG currency.

The Reserve Bank has made special arrangements for those without bank accounts to swap their Zimbabwe dollar notes and coins at POSB and AFC commercial bank within 21 days, obviously after 5th April, 2024. Madam Speaker, in instances where the cash holding to be exchanged is above ZWL100 000, banks shall apply the requisite ‘know your customer or KWC’ and customer due diligence principles.

Let me turn to the issuance of the new notes and coins. The introduction of the new structured currency naturally requires the issuance of new bank notes to facilitate transactions in the economy, specially to cater for small transactions and to ensure the availability of change. ZiG notes and coins shall be issued in denominations made out of 1 ZiG, 2 ZiG, 5 ZiG, 10 ZiG, 20 ZiG, 50 ZiG, 100 ZiG and 200 ZiG which will be distributed through the usual normal banking channels and will be fully covered by the quantity and value of gold and foreign currency held as reserves.

Madam Speaker, ZiG shall at all times be anchored and fully backed by a composite of basket of reserves comprising foreign currency and precious metals mainly gold, I repeat, but there are also diamonds which are received by the Reserve Bank as part of the in-kind royalties and kept in the vaults of the bank.

Foreign currency balances will be accumulated through market purchases, and from the 25% surrender requirements as well as sale of some precious metals received as royalties. As of 5 April, 2024, the bank which is the RBZ had reserve assets of US\$100 million in cash and 2522kg of gold valued at about US\$185 million to back the entire local currency component of reserve money which currently stands at 2.6 trillion as of Friday, requiring full cover of gold and cash reserves amounting to US\$90 000 000.

Let me pause here and explain. Madam Speaker, the reserve money as of Friday last week was ZWL2.6 trillion. Converting this at the exchange rate of 33 000 average which was at the interbank rate, that gives you US\$90 million. So really, the value of the notes and coins in circulation was only US\$90 million. When you compare this to the value

of the cover which is US\$185 million in gold plus US\$100 million that is US\$285 million worth of cover. That is more than enough. So, the gold and cash reserve holdings with the bank represents more than three times cover for the local currency being issued.

Madam Speaker, the intervening exchange rate shall be determined also by the inflation differential between ZiG and USD inflation rates and the movement in the price of the basket of precious minerals held as reserves. The weights will be determined by the composition of reserve assets.

I now turn to interest rates. Madam Speaker, the bank policy rate has been adjusted from 130% per annum to 20% per annum consistent with the new Monetary Policy Framework. The overnight accommodation interest rate has been set at 5% above the bank policy rate, and the bank deposit facility interest rate has been set at 7,5% rate below the bank policy rate, thus giving a starting interest rate corridor of between 11% and 25% per annum. Savings and time deposit interest rates of ZiG are set at 9% and 7.5% below the bank deposit facility rate

of 2.5% respectively while interest rates on FCA deposits remain unchanged at 1% and 2.5% for savings and time deposits respectively.

Let me turn to the issue of bank charges. Cognisant of the calls of bank charges by the public for affordable and reasonable bank charges, with immediate effect, bank charges have been scraped for both FCA and deposit accounts that maintain a consecutive minimum daily balance of USD100 or below and its equivalent in ZiG for a period of up to 30 days. This will avoid instances of low-cost accounts being charged interest fees to the point where accounts reach negative balances...

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Order! Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, let us listen attentively so that when we ask questions, we ask pertinent questions not petty questions that will eat our precious time with the Minister. Please let us converse in silence. You may proceed Hon. Minister.

HON. PROF. M. NCUBE: Thank you Madam Speaker Ma'am. I will take that again. Cognisant of the calls by the banking public for reasonable bank charges, with immediate effect, bank charges have been scraped for both FCA and ZiG deposit accounts that maintain a

consecutive minimum daily balance of USD100 and below or its equivalent in ZiG for a period of up to 30 days. This will avoid incidences of low-cost accounts being charged maintenance fees to the point where accounts reach negative balances, and in the process prejudice depositors and discourage potential savings. With this summary, I hope that Members will appreciate what has been done here in terms of introduction of the new monetary regime. The main issue being the introduction of a new currency, but also seeing the drop in interest rates among other measures. It is also a critical step towards our long term de-dollarisation agenda. It is our hope that this will bring the much-needed currency stability. Thank you.

HON. BAJILA: Thank you Madam Speaker. Thank you Minister for the statement. The statement from the Central Bank indicated that these balances will begin to work from 30th April. Civil servants are expecting their salaries from 18th April, how will civil servants get their monies between that period of 18th to 30th of April? In what current will it be?

HON. DR. MUTODI: I have three or so questions. Hon. Minister, we understand that where currency is backed by gold or any commodity, there may be external shocks. How do you intend to deal with external shocks? Also, you mentioned that banks must apply the know your customer to depositors with 100 000 cash, but look, 100 000 cash is simply \$3. 00 if it is converted to USD. Why doing this Hon. Minister? My last question is that how is the Central Bank going to ensure that lending rates continue to be at par with inflation, given that if they are below inflation, they will cause speculative borrowings.

My last question is that how is the Central Bank going to ensure that lending rates continue to be at par with inflation, given that if they are below inflation, they will cause speculative borrowing. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. CHIDUWA: Thank you Madam Speaker. Hon. Speaker, the Minister said we are going to have complementary fiscal policy measures. I would want to know some of the complementary fiscal policy measures that are going to complement the Monetary Policy Statement that was announced by the Governor. The last one is that the

willing buyer-willing seller ensures a market-based price discovery for the ZiG. What is Government policy regarding the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange counters that were suspended due to implied exchange rate like Old Mutual and PPC? I am asking this because we are really concerned with the way the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange is performing. I submit.

HON. MATEWU: Thank you Madam Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for his Statement. I just have only two questions. The Hon. Minister mentioned that we have in reserve about US90 million worth of Zimbabwean dollar. Does this figure include the money that is being converted, and the Minister said there is enough money to cover that in the reserves? Have you considered that banks are converting Zimbabwean dollars already in people's accounts into ZiG? Is that money covered? How many Zimbabwean dollars do we have in circulation inclusive of that that is in the bank, inclusive of the money that people hold in their bank accounts? Is that all covered by the reserves that we have?

Lastly, are you going to allow citizens to purchase Central Government services such as passports, number plates, such as if you want a licence in ZiG? Thank you.

***HON. P. ZHOU:** What plans are there that will make sure that all the Zimbabweans understand the importance of ZiG which is backed by gold? What plans are there so that all of us understand how it works and how it functions? I am happy that we have come here, we are few, but the whole country needs to understand the medium of communication that you are going to use. When this money was unveiled, the prices of groceries have gone up, especially sugar and all the basics. What plans are there that these groceries should come down to where they were already because we are working with 5 April, but those people have gone further? ZiG will come when the market has been distorted already and its value will not be recognised. I thank you.

HON. PROF. M. NCUBE: First of all, I recognise Hon. Bajila and thank him for his question regarding how things will be handled. He is under the impression that ZiG will only begin to work at the end of the

month, 30th April 2024 and yet civil servants will start receiving their salaries from the middle of the month, around 18th April 2024.

I am happy to say that his understanding is incorrect. ZiG is already effective and civil servants will be able to receive their salaries on time on 18th April, 2024. What RBZ mentioned really was the issue of availability of hard cash being available later, at least by the 30th of April. That is the issue, but in terms of receiving electronic payments into their accounts, civil servants will be able to receive these by 18th April or any time because ZiG is already operational.

Hon. Mutodi posed a very good question on how we will be able to deal with external shocks if a currency is backed by hard assets such as gold. What we have done is that we will build in a mechanism in anticipation of these shocks. What is happening is that our exchange rate is being driven, not just by the price of hard assets like gold but also, we take into account what we call effective exchange rate which is the inflation differentials between our country and other countries. That inflation differential is also known as the purchasing power parity. What happens is that when there is a shock, those shocks usually show up in

inflation shocks. So, by taking into account those inflation differentials, we are able to take into account part of the shocks.

The Z\$100 000 is that not too low – it translates to about US\$3, yes this has been raised from the public and I am pleased that we will look into it and maybe we need to raise the threshold here. It is correct that the 100 000 is on the low side. We should not be bothering depositors. Certainly, that is a good point.

How will we ensure that lending rates remain real, in other words they remain above inflation rate all the time so that they do not end up exacerbating the inflationary pressures. We will make sure that when this happens, the correct way to run a monetary policy is always to ensure that we have a positive real interest rate. The interest rate must always remain above the inflation rate. We will ensure that this is the case. In addition to that, we will apply the design of the structured currency which is that we cannot increase domestic liquidity before increasing the reserves in the first place. That must also be applied in addition to the interest rate policy that Hon. Mutodi refers to.

I now turn to Hon. Chiduwa in terms of the complementary fiscal measures – what measures shall we announce to complement the Monetary Policy Statement. We have a few, but I should not announce them here in Parliament. I will just give an indication. What we have announced for sure is that 50% of the company taxes, corporate taxes will be in ZiG to increase the demand for our currency. We will be very specific when we make the announcement as to which fees and which taxes will be paid in ZiG beyond the request that corporates pay in domestic currency. We will make an announcement in the fullness of time. I will beg for his indulgence on this one and not to make it in Parliament today but we already have an idea.

Coming to another question and a very important one, what we will do with the counters on the Stock Exchange that were suspended because under the Zimbabwe dollar scenario, their prices were contributing to the parallel market activities. This is how we determine things to be and we felt that this ought to be suspended from the market because that fungibility was really creating challenges in terms of managing the exchange rate system. So, we suspended that and also took

away the fungibility characteristics of the stocks. I am happy to say that the issue is under review as I speak and we are making announcements soon on this matter. I do not want to commit specific action but this is under review.

It is an issue because pensioners want to be able to put some value to their pensions from those specific stocks and some of the pensions, these are large holdings and the pensioners are saying look, we need to put some value. The book value that we last entered into the books was when the stocks were publicly trading but since then we have had an opportunity to make any adjustments. So, it is affecting the value of these pensions, but also affecting value of liquidity of the pensions. So, we are reviewing this.

I now turn to Hon. Matewu who asked about - what does the US\$90 million include and secondly, is there adequate cover in a way? The US\$90 million really is the reserve money in circulation which is M-zero. Perhaps if you are referring to issues such as the NMCDs, those are not immediately available because we have quarantined these using long term dated Instrument design where the NMCD would be available

in a year's time but in the interim, we will pay an interest to the bank.

We have quarantined it that way. We have also quarantined the backlogs from the auction as well through a similar mechanism where we are issuing long dated Instruments. That money is not available immediately. It does not mess up the liquidity projection and the design of the currency. We believe that we have enough cover of this US\$90 million without difficulty at all.

You also heard Treasury announcing that in addition to what the RBZ is declaring as reserves of US\$285 million, we have an additional US\$300 in Treasury which we stand ready to assist the Central Bank if there is a shock to the system.

On purchase of goods and services in ZiG, this is similar to the question from Hon. Chiduwa. My answer is similar, which is that in the fullness of time we will announce specific services that can be purchased in ZiG as we seek to promote the demand for our local currency. The statement is coming. If I can request the indulgence of Hon. Matewu and this will be announced. We want you to pay some of the services you

mentioned in ZiG. Just be patient with me and we will make the announcement sooner.

I now turn to Hon. Zhou who wanted to really make sure we do not leave anyone behind when it comes to educating the public about this new currency. People in rural and urban areas must feel that they are receiving adequate information on how this new currency works. I want to assure Hon. Zhou that we are going to do everything to make sure that this is the case. Putting in place a blitz campaign between the Ministry of Finance, RBZ and Ministry of Information, this communication seeks to do that, which is to educate the public and give them the necessary information on how ZiG works. As Government, we would want this to be acceptable that citizens have got confidence and you can only build that confidence if you communicate and explain how it works in simple language.

I was suitably impressed seeing some video that was recorded which went viral and is explaining ZiG in very simple language in Shona. I thought this is exactly how we should be communicating to the public out there about the design of such a currency. It is that type of

communication that we want to promote, especially in our rural folk to ensure that they gain the confidence in this new currency, understand how it works and they are not left behind.

Hon. Zhou also mentioned that there were some issues in terms of pricing just prior to the introduction of the currency. Some prices were pushed up and will this not affect the operation of the ZiG well, we will take a look at these issues to see what is happening here. In fact, I am already aware of a situation where some retailer of bread for example; prior to the introduction of ZIG, a loaf of bread was trading for US\$1, the price of a dollar in ZIG is 13.56, but the price of bread was rounded off to 14. There should be no rounding off as it is not a good idea. That is a price increase and means that the bread is now \$1, 3c or 5c as opposed to just \$1. So, we are quite aware of this issue and we are following up with some of the companies to do a proper translation and not to round up, which is contributing to a price increase. So, I agree with her, it is a statement well-made and we are following up on that. I thank you for the question.

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

HON. HAMAUSWA: I object.

HON. MATEWU: On a point of order Madam Speaker.

Yesterday I raised a point of national interest and the Speaker agreed that all my questions would be answered by the Hon, Minister of Finance. So, we expect the Hon. Minister of Finance to answer the questions of these members and not just of five members. I thank you.

HON. TOGAREPI: Minister, my question is, when I was doing something in town this afternoon, when ZIG and the transformation of the currency was announced, those street people had run away. However, this afternoon they were back. What measures have you put in place to seriously deal with any manipulation or any abuse of our currency as government to defend our currency?

HON. MUSHORIWA: Madam Speaker, the President, on 6 February, indicated that we were going to a structured currency and my first question is that if the President said it was the road map, why is it that the RBZ failed to ensure availability of the notes when the changeover was done. Secondly, why is it that the communication by the RBZ itself was actually so poor to the effect that it has caused

confusion amongst the citizens of this country. Then tied to that Hon. Minister, you had indicated that the fiscal measures that you are going to come up with, you will do them in due course, but if we had followed the pronouncement by the President who had said that both the Monetary and Fiscal Policy were coming up with the complementary, one would have expected that these two statements should have come close to each other and that sort of creates some confusion. Lastly, what is it that government is going to do because as you are aware Hon. Minister, monetary issues are based more on perception rather than reality? There is now a joke going around the country and on social media, what is it that you are going to do to curb the perception that the ZIG will just follow the same consequences faced by the bond note? I thank you.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION (HON. PROF. NCUBE): Thank you Hon. Mushoriwa. I want to thank Hon. Togarepi for his question where he said that he has noticed that some street traders are back in the street corners and they may start attacking

our domestic currency again. I thank him for that information. I received similar information as well as early this afternoon. We are going to send out our law enforcement agency to do their work on a blitz to make sure that these vendors are dealt with. They are cleared off the streets and then the heavy fines are also imposed on those who are caught trading in the parallel market. It is illegal. Therefore, if it is illegal, then the law has to take its course. I am also urging our law enforcement agency to move with speed to deal with this matter. We cannot allow it.

I will now turn to Hon. Mushoriwa regarding the delays perhaps that the notes should have been ready earlier than announced. Well, you know that it is a major exercise of introducing a new currency. Many things have been put in place, and even printing a currency is a logistical nightmare, it is not any easy thing to do. Again, if he could be patient and bear with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, they have really done their best in making sure that everything is ready. For instance, we have to change the system in terms of balances which I described. Some of you are already experiencing that because you have ZiG accounts, you

have to print new money. You have to make sure that the gold in our case is in place, diamonds are in place and there are just so many variables that need to be dealt with to issue a structure of currency.

Madam Speaker, it is not surprising that may be one or two things did not happen as anticipated, and on time. It is just a complex issue but I think that the public will understand and I hope Hon. Mushoriwa will also understand.

I now turn to the second issue that he raised regarding the announcement of fiscal measures that this should have been done simultaneously. Not necessarily Madam Speaker Ma'am. If you notice, we only announced one issue in that Statement which had to do with 50%, the rule that 50% of the corporate taxes should be paid in domestic currency. That is the only thing that was really announced on the fiscal front. There will be more coming through. You know, we have just gone through what I will call a very grueling period Madam Speaker Ma'am since the announcement of the 2024 Budget with various tax measures and so forth, making adjustments, sugar content tax, this and that. We did not want as fiscal authorities, to start announcing further

things on the fiscal front. We have just gone through that. We think the industry is fairly comfortable now. We want to make sure they are accountable so that they can continue to employ more people to grow export and so forth.

Madam Speaker Ma'am, personally, I did not want to start imposing further fiscal measures immediately. We will do those gradually overtime but something is coming. That is the reason why we held back on announcing a few fiscal measures after having gone through fiscal measures through the 2024 Budget.

On the perception of the currency, that perception is very important. He is right, a currency also depends on both fundamentals and perception, how it is and how it is managed. We will do everything to educate the public as to why this currency is strong in the way it is structured. We have reserves that guarantee the notes and coins in circulation. We are saying those notes and coins in circulation which is known as reserve money should never be increased before the reserves are increased in the first place, so that matching mechanism really guarantees the stability that citizens are always looking for. We believe

that this is a very good desire and if you have got gold in there as one of the elements, gold has been stable and citizens believe in the value of gold. It has been stable for a while and in fact, it has been performing strongly in the last few years.

We believe that educating the public about the design of the currency, how it has been put together will give them a level of confidence. I would like to urge Hon. Mushoriwa to be confident about ZiG and use it all the time. It is his currency; it is my currency and it is everybody's currency. We should all be proud of it. After all, a country derives its social pride from the flag, national anthem and also from its currency. I thank you Madam Speaker.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Thank you Hon. Minister for your presentation. I would also like to thank you for answering some of our questions. It is very unfortunate for those who decided to leave the House because this was a very important session. I do not know what they are going to tell the electorate because the electorate is waiting to get answers from Members of Parliament. I hope they are not going to

distort the information –[HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*]–

Order, the Minister will come tomorrow, he will answer your questions.

On the motion of **HON. TOGERAPI**, *seconded by* **HON.**

HAMAUSWA *the House adjourned at Three Minutes past Six o'clock*

p.m.