

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Tuesday, 9th January, 2018

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

PRAYERS

(THE HON. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE HON. SPEAKER

APPOINTMENTS TO PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

THE HON. SPEAKER: I have this announcement on the deployment of the following Members of Parliament into various Committees.

Hon. Muponora will go into Transport and Infrastructural Development and Lands and Agriculture Rural Resettlement Committees.

Hon. Eunice Nomthandazo S. Moyo will go to Environment, Water, Climate and Hospitality Industry as well as Foreign Affairs, Industry and Enterprise Development.

Hon. B. Chikwama goes to Environment, Water, Climate and Hospitality Industry and Health and Child Care.

Hon. Mbwembwe goes to Environment, Water, Climate and Hospitality Industry and Foreign Affairs.

Hon. G. Gandawa will serve on the Committee on Higher Education.

Hon. Anastancia Ndlovu will serve on the Committee on Environment, Water, Climate and Hospitality Industry as well as Media, Information, ICT and Cyber Security.

Hon. Madanha goes to Local Government, Public Works and National Housing as well as Transport and Infrastructural Development.

Hon. Kanengoni-Malinga goes to Foreign Affairs and Women and Youth Affairs.

Hon. Chikwinya goes to Mines and Energy as well as Women and Youth Affairs.

Hon. Tongofa goes to Health and Child Welfare and Transport and Infrastructural Development.

Hon. Nyere goes to Environment, Water, Climate and Hospitality Industry.

Hon. Dr. Mombeshora goes to Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement and Health and Child Welfare.

THE HON SPEAKER: I would like to welcome the Hon. Vice President Rtd. Gen. Dr. Chiwenga – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*]- I would want the Acting Clerk of Parliament, to favor the Vice President and I believe our new Minister of Foreign Affairs, with our Standing Rules and Orders so that they acclimatise themselves with the rules and orders of our Parliamentary proceedings.

HON. DR. SHUMBA: Hon. Speaker, it is a point of privilege. Hon. Speaker, you will recall that some time last year, accusations were made in this House against me that bordered on accusations on the Clerk of Parliament and yourself, Mr. Speaker, relating to some corrupt activities by Hon. Mliswa. May the Hon. Speaker favor this House with the progress that he has made or the reports that has since been made to the Hon. Speaker regarding those accusations as they are fundamental. If false, Hon. Speaker, I move that you resolve that some punitive

measures visit the Member concerned – [HON. ZWIZWAI: *Ahh ndezve G40 izvo, gara pasi.*]-

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order, order! Hon. Zwizwai! Hon. Dr. Shumba, I want to advise you that Hon. Mliswa approached me yesterday. He was going to pronounce himself on that matter but unfortunately he has gone to Gweru for a funeral. That situation should be rectified amicably.

HON. DR. SHUMBA: If you recall Mr. Speaker – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjection.*] - when those...

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order! I have ruled.

HON. DR. SHUMBA: Mr. Speaker, I was denied an opportunity to respond by you, Mr. Speaker. If there is a resolve on the matter, that issue must be pronounced in this House – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*]-

THE HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Dr. Shumba, I thought you understood me. I said Hon. Mliswa will pronounce himself on the

matter when he is back in this House. I think the matter will be resolved amicably.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. MATUKE: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 1 to 4 on today's *Order Paper* be stood over until we dispose the rest of the Orders of the Day.

HON. RUNGANI: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR GENERAL

The Deputy Speaker of Finance and Economic Planning Hon. Mukupe having stood up to move the motion. - [HON. MEMBERS: Inaudible interjections.]-

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order Hon. Members, the Hon. Deputy Minister cannot take precedence over the Hon. Minister who is here.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC

PLANNING (HON. CHINAMASA): Mr. Speaker Sir, I had taken the pleasure to delegate. I move that;

WHEREAS, Section 310 (1) (Appointment of Auditor General) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that an Auditor General is appointed by the President with the approval of Parliament;

AND WHEREAS, Section 340 (1) (a) (‘Appointments’) of the Constitution provides the President with the power to reappoint a Public Office holder into such office;

NOW THEREFORE, in terms of the aforementioned Section 310 (1) of the Constitution, this House resolves and approves that Mrs. Mildred Chiri be appointed Auditor-General of the Republic of Zimbabwe for a further term in office effective from the 25th of February, 2017.

In terms of Section 310 (1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Auditor General of the Republic of Zimbabwe must be appointed by the President with the concurrence or approval of Parliament.

It is on this basis that I rise in this august House to move that the Hon. Members of Parliament approve the reappointment of the Auditor General, Mrs Mildred Chiri for a further term in office effective from the 25th February 2017, which reappointment will be carried out by His Excellency the President in terms of Section 340 (1) (a) of the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Hon. Members of this august House are already familiar with the sterling work Mrs. Chiri has carried out to date and throughout her incumbency, but it is for the sake of completeness that I shall proceed to highlight a few of her qualifications and achievements that support her reappointment into office.

Educational Qualifications and Experience

Mrs. Chiri obtained a Bachelor of Accountancy Degree from the University of Zimbabwe in 1983 and thereafter undertook a course on

Public Finance and Accountancy also from the University of Zimbabwe in 1985.

She then qualified as an articled clerk after enrolling with the Institute of Chartered Accountants where she completed serving articles over the period 1999 to 2002.

In 2015, she obtained her Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and became a certified Public Accountant in Zimbabwe (CPA(Z)). She is currently pursuing a Masters in Business Administration with the National University of Science and Technology (NUST).

In 2004, Mrs. Chiri was appointed Comptroller and Auditor General as it was known then, whereupon through her leadership, that office was able to bring up to date the audits of annual financial statements of Government which were in arrears by as much as 5 years at that time – a considerable achievement in its own right.

Mr. Speaker Sir, to this very day, the Auditor General's office remains up to date with its annual audit reports of Central Government

financial statements and parastatals. Hon. Members will recall that the reports for the December 2016 financial year end were tabled in Parliament on June 21, 2017 beating the deadline of June 30.

Mrs. Chiri was pivotal in the development of the Audit Office Act [Chapter 22:18] passed in Parliament in 2011, which saw that department restructure and this led to improved operational efficiencies. Recently, she has developed a three year strategic plan for the office spanning from 2016 – 2018 which aims at strengthening the office in particular areas which are;

- Enhancement of the independence of the institution through appropriate modifications of the legal framework,
- Organisational structure and institutional governance,
- Development of human resources, audit standards and methodology and
- Communication strategies and stakeholder management.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the areas I have just referred to are domains or indicators set by the African organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E), an association of English speaking Auditor Generals' Offices also known as Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) against which all 23 countries in that subgroup are measured against.

Additionally, Mrs. Chiri has spearheaded the professionalisation of the Audit Office by engaging consultants to conduct training of articled clerks since 2010 and there are now three fully qualified chartered accountants in that department.

Furthermore, under her leadership, 45 members of staff have registered with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants or "ACCA" and the office is assisting with tuition fees for their studies. Several of them are now fully qualified members of that institution. The Audit office is also sponsoring its staff to study at the Certified Institute of Public Accountants.

As well as being the immediate past Vice President of the African Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E) sub-regional

grouping, Mrs. Chiri is the past chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Board of Auditors comprising of Zimbabwe, Botswana and Malawi. Her office headed the audit function for three years, whereupon she handed over to the succeeding Board of Auditors in February 2010.

Mrs. Chiri is a board member (representing developing countries) of International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions Development Initiative (IDI), a training arm of all Auditors-Generals' offices based in Oslo, Norway.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker Sir, in conclusion, it is clear that Mrs. Chiri has been a pivotal figure in the public sector of Zimbabwe and an effective Auditor General to date. To this end, I therefore move that this august House approves her reappointment as Auditor General for a further term in office, effective from the 25th February, 2017. I so submit Mr. Speaker Sir.

HON. HOLDER: Thank you Mr. Speaker, - [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*]-

THE HON. SPEAKER: Sorry Hon. Holder. In terms of precedence, can we first have the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee. – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] -

HON. MPARIWA: Thank you Hon. Speaker. First and foremost, let me begin by wishing you a Happy New Year and all the Hon. Members.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Thank you.

HON. MPARIWA: Hon. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Development for having considered and brought this motion to the House in terms of getting Madam Chiri back as the Auditor General for another term, simply because of the reasons that you already know. You know very well that whenever I stood up here in the last year presenting reports of unpacking the behaviour of institutions and Government departments, some Members would be heckling and not wanting me to be heard.

Madam Chiri has brought us pride as women, as a nation and one of the best public performers – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] - If we could have ten people like Madam Chiri in their offices of responsibilities, it will be a different and a better Zimbabwe for us all. Serving the nation in that capacity as Madam Chiri is a bit difficult and she has lost friends including relatives because some may not want to associate with her. When you unpack certain evils...

Hon. Adv. Chamisa having been on the phone.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Chamisa, can you please go outside and finish your call - [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*]- an you please oblige

HON. ADV. CHAMISA: I have cut the call Mr. Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER: Why did you do that, Mr. President? May the Hon. Member please proceed?

HON. MPARIWA: Thank you Hon. Speaker. I was at the point where I was saying Madam Chiri has lost friends and relatives in terms of the business that she does in terms of unpacking evils that happen in different institutions. Nonetheless, she has stood fast. For the Public Accounts Committee to be effective as it has been which you have actually acknowledged that it is one of the best Committees; even in SADC, we have proved beyond reasonable doubt that this is one of the best Committees in the SADC region. SADCOPAC can reveal that the Zimbabwean Public Accounts Committee is a Committee to work with in terms of copying culture.

In Shona they say, whatever is good *chinokopewa* but *chakashata hachikopewe*. People have begun to realise that there is something good...

THE HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, that is not Shona.

HON. MPARIWA: Okay Hon. Speaker. I have been given some words. My Shona is very bad...

THE HON. SPEAKER: Stick to one language.

HON. MPARIWA: *Ndati zvinonzi chakanaka chinokopewa, chakashata hachikopewe.* *What I am saying is, you have to copy what is good and also follow what is good and whenever somebody is doing something good, also follow that. But if somebody is doing something bad, please let it go.* *Handisati ndapedza.*

Hon. Chinotimba is one of those Members Hon. Speaker, who when I would be tabling reports of the Public Accounts, he would start attacking me verbally and I would say this is not a partisan document; it is a document of the Public Accounts Committee, everyone included in that particular Committee. I am alarmed that he is now realises that he has to align himself with the Public Accounts Committee and also second this motion by the Hon. Minister. We must clap hands for him.

I want to believe that for us as Parliament and for us as a nation, whenever a report has been brought by a Parliamentary Portfolio Committee and has facts where we can derive information from, we must acknowledge and align ourselves with that particular report. I stand here as a proud Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee because

we have deliberated on reports that Madam Chiri will have provided information. Without the work that Madam Chiri does in the Ministry, we would not be performing the way we have done. But Hon. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister for his consideration and I want to thank the Members because even when we made noise last year about reappointing Madam Chiri, it was unanimous from all the Members to say we need her to be given another chance.

There is no way you can replace somebody who is performing well and get someone, a stranger that you have not known, but those that can be associated with failure. I want to thank and believe that come this 2018, Madam Chiri will be able to bring us to line in terms of getting the reports of the 2017, because as you may know Hon. Speaker, with 2016 accounts which we appreciate, others have failed to take us through in terms of having the reports ready for tabling in Parliament. With those remarks, I would want to second the Minister in terms of the notion to give Madam Chiri another term of office. Thank you.

HON. HOLDER: Thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this debate. Before I start, allow me to congratulate the Vice President of Zimbabwe, Hon. Nyikadzino, Constantino Chiwenga for restoring legacy in this country. I would like to also thank the Hon. Minister for bringing forward this issue. Remember, all our debates in Parliament come from the Auditor General's reports. Mr. Speaker, you are so passionate with the Auditor General's reports that come here.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order, order, some of the debates, not all the debates.

HON. HOLDER: Thank you Mr. Speaker for your correction but we need to give gratitude where things are good. When Mike Ndudzo's name and his track record appeared here - Mr. Speaker, you remember I contributed towards that. I am actually excited because the Hon. Minister has restored legacy in that department because you can now see that the lady knew what she was doing. Giving her a further term is nothing better than justice, to prove and make sure that everything goes

back on track. Mr. Speaker, I just want to support Madam Chiri to get back into this position. I thank you.

HON. ZINDI: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I will also take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate the Vice President, Hon. Constantino Chiwenga in the House before I get on to make my remarks known in as far as Madam Chiri is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I am an advocate for women's empowerment in leadership and decision making. Even my thesis for my Masters' Degree was based on that. I need to commend Madam Chiri for having demonstrated that women are able to do it and they can do it if given the opportunity. – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] –

Women are a rare species in terms of leadership and decision making positions the world over - but where you would have found a woman appointed and given that position; women work hard. Women work hard in order to demonstrate that they can do it, whereas if it is a man given that responsibility, the society because of its nature which is patriarchal, it is taken for granted, 'it is for us men', period and nobody

scrutinises what that man will be doing in that position, hence I need to congratulate Madam Chiri for her re-appointment. I think it was agreed across the political divide in this House that Madam Chiri should retain her position and I am glad. The whole House is glad that Madam Chiri has been re-appointed.

We know that women make 52% of the total population of this country but we have few women in decision and leadership positions, why, perhaps it is the nature of our society that is patriarchal. If you think of a leader; if you think of any position, always, you think of men other than thinking of women. Therefore, to Madam Chiri, I must say to her, she has made us proud as Zimbabwean women. – [HON.

MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] – I hope she is going to excel even better than what she has been doing in the past few years since her re-appointment as from now onwards. I thank you.

HON. DR. SHUMBA: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Firstly, I would like to identify with the accolades that the Hon. Minister enunciated regarding Mrs Chiri. Parliament is clear that we have on numerous

occasions introspected over the number of audit reports that have been well researched by Mrs Chiri's department and it is on that basis that those accolades about her qualifications and experience are befitting.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs Chiri is not only the best person for this job because she is a woman; she is the best person on this job because she is able – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] – She has continued to deliver and has provided impetuous to this country in terms of issues regarding corporate governance. My issue is Hon. Minister, through you Mr. Speaker, to what extent are we going to be utilising those capabilities that have been driven by her department in ensuring that her reports inform Government policy? It is critical that she just does not churn out audit reports that we commend; to what extent are they measurably being implemented in this country?

Mrs Chiri has on more than one occasions exposed the delinquencies that have existed in the Executive in respect to corporate governance, corruption and to issues that the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning is facing challenges in dealing with National

Budget, especially the huge national deficit; to what extent are we committed to not only pass those accolades to this most able professional woman, to import those findings into Government policy?

Mr. Speaker, it is important that as we celebrate her re-appointment, we remind the Minister that we want consistency in the decisions by the Executive, especially in respect to the re-appointment of professionals into their respective positions. So, I would like to commend the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning that he has repudiated from an earlier position and has pushed forward for this professional lady. Let us all work with this lady; let us work for Zimbabwe; let us unlock value. Thank you.

HON. GABBUZA: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Let me say, I am sure as Parliament we have completely no objection and we have always not had an objection. If we recall from our last debate when she was about to lose her position, we were all against her losing the position. So, as Parliament I do not see us objecting at all. It is actually a welcome relief.

This is a woman that has changed the history of this Parliament, particularly with regards to the way public finance management is reported to Parliament. Traditionally in this Parliament, reports of the Auditor General would come three or four years late – [HON.

MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] – This is a woman who changed that discourse, we were now able to - at the latest, we were able to read her reports a year later. In most cases she had become up to date with her reports, which was never known in this Parliament. This is a woman who was able to give very bold reports critical of ministries and ministers, which was never heard of in the history of this Parliament, even in the previous Audit Reports. So, her reports were very informative and brave.

Perhaps what I need to find out from the Minister Mr. Speaker, the last time the Minister presented the issue of the Auditor General's reappointment or renewal of her contract, there were two issues that he raised; he told us vividly in this House that he had persuaded Mildred Chiri twice to take up the post but she was not interested. Initially she

had made indications that she would think about it but on a later note, she clearly did not want to take up the post. I would be very interested to know from the Minister what exactly happened that suddenly, she is interested? – [AN HON. MEMBER: *Aiwa.*] – this is very important Mr. Speaker because we do not want a repetition of such underground underhands that frighten people that we think are very professional. We need to know.

Secondly, there was an issue where the Minister indicated clearly that he was going to reassign her within the Ministry to an internal audit office, what has happened to that, was she better qualified for this job than the other? So, those are some of the anomalies that we need to understand because this is a public job, we need to know what her fate is so that we guard against it. I thank you Mr. Speaker.

HON. MAJOME: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I want to add my voice in support and indeed commendation of the Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning in bowing to this august House that constitutes the voice of the people of Zimbabwe. In the very recent,

dramatic and historic events in our country that have reshaped our Government, there was a clause that resonated consistently that ‘the voice of the people is the voice of God.’ I am indeed encouraged that the Hon. Minister has that wisdom to recognise that the representatives of the people are by implication the voice of God and it is an honour for this august House to carry that voice. I want to believe that the Hon. Minister will be blessed with long and fruitful life for heeding the voice of God through the representatives of the people who are echoing the voice of God. Thank you Hon. Minister and I of course support the motion wholeheartedly.

I want to congratulate two women in this Parliament, one of them is Madam Chiri, as said by Hon. Zindi, for persisting in her service of the nation under clearly difficult circumstances. It is my hope that the Hon. Minister will ensure that her office is sufficiently funded for her to enjoy the top most security of person and office that there can be because it is not a joke to bravely issue reports that rattle a lot of criminals around certain people as the lingo also goes – [*Laughter.*] –

Secondly, I want to commend our fellow Hon. Member, Hon. Mpariwa, the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Public Accounts for continuing with her Committee Members, they do us proud as Hon. Members of Parliament for persisting and speaking what is called the truth to power.

However, I intend to make two points only regarding the appointment of Hon. Madam Chiri. I am glad the Hon. Minister is here. The first one is that I do hope the Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, in keeping with his very positive and commendable attitude of doing right by the voice of God, which comes through the voice of the people; I do hope that in this budget that we are currently considering, the Hon. Minister now does the constitutional requirement that requires that the Office of the Auditor General is funded directly and independently as the Constitution requires, alongside all the other independent commissions. I want to commend him; I am hoping he does so all the time, heeding the concerns and recommendations of the august House. He did very well about two years ago to delink the

funding – the allocations, the votes of independent commissions including the traditional leaders and independent commissions like the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, Human Rights Commission as well as the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and the Media Commission from the various ministries that were being wrongly called line ministries.

The Auditor General's Office is required also by the Constitution and the Hon. Minister will bear with me because not only is he a lawyer like myself, but he was also one of the leading crafters of the Constitution. You will remember that the Auditor General's Office was also given a status that is similar to that of independent commissions that receive direct allocations.

Secondly and lastly Mr. Speaker Sir, I want to also implore the Hon. Minister – it is a pity that the Hon. Ministers of Justice and of Home Affairs are not here. I want to echo what my colleagues have said like Hon. Holder and other Hon. Members that the frustration of this august House is that the brilliant work that is indeed executed by the

Public Accounts Committee led by Hon. Mpariwa, continues to unearth the shocking extents of criminal activity. While we are in the same spirit of dealing with criminals who are around certain people, may we continue in this case to have the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs – [Laughter.] – Hon. Minister of Justice and the Prosecutor General, to not wait to be begged and asked to go and investigate very clear evidence and allegations of pilfering from the poor Zimbabwean tax payer that Hon. Madam Chiri has tirelessly and unearthed time and time again and also recommendations that the Public Accounts Committee has made.

This august House has echoed that heads must roll, handcuffs must rattle and the remand courts there must have people in them. Can we finally see from the Minister of Home Affairs who incidentally has not, in this current term of Parliament, ever presented a report from the Commissioner General as required by the Police Act, reporting activities and investigations of the police. We have not seen that yet. Can we now see in this hopefully new dispensation see criminals around parastatals and other places – [Laughter.] - and those criminals around

the reports and recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee - can we now see handcuffs rattling around them and may we now see them trooping to the various remand prisons in the country. Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir.

***HON. CHINOTIMBA:** Mr. Speaker Sir, I raised up in order to thank the reappointment of Mrs. Chasi – [HON. MEMBERS: *Haa aaah.*] – of Mrs. Chiri. Yesterday...

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order, order. She is Mrs. Chiri. Thank you.

***HON. CHINOTIMBA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. Just yesterday Mr. Speaker, you were talking of rubber-stamping issues as Parliamentarians, when anything is brought before Parliament, we just accept. This time you have realised the importance of Parliament because Parliament sternly refused the appointment of the Auditor General previously chosen. I am sure now that you have witnessed that Parliament is not here to rubber stamp. I also think that all Ministers should also follow suit on the appointment of board members. That is

where another issue is. We cannot deny Ministers from appointing board members but you realise that when they appoint, there is nepotism. They can appoint their nephews, friends and relatives. In the end, corruption takes place. When Mrs. Chiri comes in to expose such corruption, we now want to protect each other and want to remove here because she has exposed the ills. We want to thank the General who realised that there was a lot of corruption and many thieves.

We do not want these thugs in the new Zimbabwe. We do not want thugs as board members in the boards. This should be a reflection in this country that when people speak, they should listen to the voice of the people because the Bible says, you go to Heaven because of someone else. If people say this is a good person, that person can go to Heaven. If people are debating in this House, exposing the negatives about certain individuals, the Executive should listen to us. I just stood up to say, congratulations Mr. Speaker on this issue and to show that we do not rubber stamp. In this case, we refused and we did not rubber stamp. We want things to be done through you. They should be brought

to this Parliament. If they are not able to bring them here, they should brief us on what is taking place and we will highlight the challenges. Such procedures will help us develop. It will guard against situations whereby girl friends, friends or even relatives end up being in control.

I always say, we did not go to war for a few to benefit but for the populace of Zimbabwe to benefit. What happens is, we are blamed as war veterans and we ask ourselves, why did we suffer? This is not good. I am saying that the appointment of Mrs. Chiri, I believe the whole country is happy with that appointment and I hope that will continue. I stood up to tell you that there is no rubber-stamping. That is what we are going to do, even when it comes to the Budget. We are going to state our position clearly. If it is not done, we will remain like that. I want to thank you Mr. Speaker Sir – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] –

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order, order.

HON. CHASI: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker Sir. I want to start by thanking Hon. Chinotimba for his very kind words. Mr.

Speaker, I want to say that there is no doubt – [HON. MEMBERS: *Asi also tanga watenda General vakakudzora. Handiti wakange wadzingwa.*] – I also want to thank the General – [*Laughter.*] – [HON. MEMBERS: *Iti Vice President kwete kungoti General.*] – for the leadership that he provided during the operation. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that Mrs. Chiri is a highly qualified and very energetic person who is very capable of running the office to which she has been appointed.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, order. Hon. Members at the back there, can you be attentive, including those three who are looking at the back, you were talking. Thank you.

HON. CHASI: Thank you Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt that the illustrious woman is highly qualified and very capable and that over the years, she has delivered very excellent quality of work. I must also take this opportunity to thank the Chairperson of the relevant Committee, Hon. Mpariwa for the hard work that she has exhibited. Mr. Speaker, I want to associate myself with the words that have been

expressed by previous speakers. I want to add an extra point here, which is that this House and the entire country has let down the Auditor-General in that, although she has worked exceedingly well and very hard to unearth malpractices in Government departments, what has lacked is follow through on her recommendations. I want to suggest Mr. Speaker that there is no better time than now for this House to consider the composition of what I would term an execution committee or a committee by any other term that should follow through the recommendations or decisions by this Parliament. I think that is where the chain is breaking because all the reports that she has come up with, she has come up with recommendations but we lack a mechanism to follow up on those recommendations to ensure that the individuals that have acted improperly or committed criminal act, are prosecuted. That is my contribution Mr. Speaker. I thank you.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC

PLANNING (HON. CHINAMASA): Mr. Speaker Sir, I want to thank all Hon. Members who have made their contributions, all in support of

reappointment of Mrs. Chiri. I associate myself fully with the accolades that have been poured in support of this reappointment. I want to say that when her term of office expired, I did not write to her, I called her to my office and had a two hour discussion, persuading her to accept a renewal, she refused in that meeting. I again phoned her, she insisted that she wanted a rest. It was only on that basis Mr. Speaker Sir, that I went to look for a replacement. I am happy that when I came to this House, the contributions of Members made it clear that they would want her to be reappointed. It was Hon. Members here who went to persuade her to accept the appointment, let us put the record straight, which I am grateful about. Clearly, I was very happy with her work. When I came in, I worked very well with the Hon. Chair of Public Accounts and we agreed that we needed to put our systems right in all the lime ministries and parastatals and that we should work together. I also worked very well with her and I was pleased with her work because she cleared all the arrear reports.

Last year, I presented the Public Accounts Report for 2016 in record time. So, I was clearly happy with her reports. I had no reason to want to replace her at all. So, when colleagues or Hon. Members here say or suggest that there was any need to side step her, those statements are wrong. I want to put the record straight. The Ministry and the Government was always eager to reappoint her and I am very happy that she is going to be reappointed, of course with the approval of this august Chamber.

Through our collaboration, I was able to get an Accountant General appointed, whom we poached from the private sector from one of the major accounting firms, who is now the Accountant-General. It is through the Accountant-General that even my responses to the Public Accounts Committee are also now up to date. We are in the process, Mr. Speaker Sir, of setting up an internal audit system which will be headed by someone in my Ministry. He or she will be in charge of all internal auditors in line Ministries so that a lot of what the Auditor-

General reports about, we should know it before hand and if possible, try to prevent it. There is no point to wait until the hoarse has bolted.

It is always important to put in place systems that prevent or that help us to monitor and know what is taking place in the line Ministries, in parastatals, so that what is complained about, what this House has been complaining about, does not take place. I want to say that as we go forward, we should see less and less of negative reports from the Auditor-General.

So, I want to thank all the Hon. Members who have contributed. Hon. Mpariwa, let me take this opportunity, Madam, to congratulate you on your reappointment and I look forward to working closely with you. I want to thank Hon. Holder basically for suggesting that her reappointment restores legacy in the Auditor-General's system. I want to thank Hon. Zindi for mentioning of course that Mrs. Chiri is a woman, but let me give you my philosophy, Mr. Speaker Sir. I appoint or recommend appointment first and foremost on merit. The woman consideration is a secondary matter, but when I am choosing merit, I do

not discriminate, I do not even want to know the names. I want to appoint on the basis of merit. I hope that this is supported. We must never appoint people or women as women because they will do down the cause of women – [AN HON. MEMBER: *Or men.*]- Generally men tend to get away with it. So, Mr. Speaker Sir, I am very clear that she is appointed on merit and I think all the accolades are testifying to her merit and to her capability in the performance of her duties.

Hon. Shumba, I agree, yes, there have been a lot of complaints about corruption and bad corporate governance. My own philosophy and my own approach is that we must work to set up systems that prevent these incidents of corruption or corporate governance from occurring. It is only through systems and not corses factor when issues of theft or misappropriation have been done. People also know that those criminals who want to misappropriate, the first thing they do is to destroy systems because after the systems are destroyed, it is very difficult to know who the culprits or criminals are. So, I want to work

very hard on setting up systems, not only in Central Government, but also in parastatals as well as in local authorities.

I am sure I have already given you the explanation of what happened in the process of suggesting her to be reappointed. Hon. Gabbuza, thank you for your support. Again, the explanation I have given, I am sure you will consider that satisfactory. Hon. Majome, all I can say is you used the words ‘bowing down to the voices of Hon. Members’. If anyone bowed down, it was Mrs. Chiri who after the contribution made by Hon. Members made her change her mind – [AN HON. MEMBER: *You bowed down.*]- No, but you assisted me. You do not want to be supported.

Hon. Chinotimba, I think I have already explained and the issue is basically, the explanation I have given I think stands. Hon. Chasi, thank you very much for the suggestions that you made. What I think I need to emphasise here is, after the many reports here and I advised the Public Accounts Committee, I set up an Audit Committee, a committee in the Accountant-General’s office which is dedicated to reading the auditor’s

reports and to follow up with line Ministries and to give appropriate reports. That already is operational. I also set up a committee under the Accountant General's department to read all the financial statements of parastatals so that we see whether we are having value for our investments in these parastatals and already those are operational and doing quite a good job.

So, if this Parliament should consider going further to create a committee to follow up, we would be quite happy to work with that committee. Mr. Speaker Sir, I accordingly move that the motion to reappoint Mrs. Chiri to the office of Auditor-General be approved. I thank you.

HON. ZINDI: On a point of order Mr. Speaker Sir.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Unfortunately, Hon. Zindi, once I have taken my position you cannot then stand after me.

HON. ZINDI: You cannot have two bulls standing up.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Yes, even cows.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. RUNGANI: Mr. Speaker Sir, I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 6 to 33 be stood over until Order of the Day, Number 34 and the rest of the Orders of the Day have been disposed of.

HON. DR. KHUPE: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

COST OF SANITARY WEAR

HON. MISIHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: I move the motion standing in my name that this House-

ALARMED by the high cost of sanitary wear which has made it almost inaccessible to the majority of girls and women;

CONCERNED that the main producer of sanitary wear is faced with imminent closure;

FURTHER CONCERNED that schools are about to open and parents have to buy sanitary wear for their girl children:

NOW, THEREFORE, calls upon the Executive-

- i) to immediately and urgently give a directive to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe to provide the required foreign currency to the main producer of sanitary wear so as to avert the closure;
- ii) to allow traders to import sanitary wear duty free as a short term solution;
- iii) to allow the dispensation for duty free importation of the material used to produce sanitary wear as provided for in the last budget; and
- iv) to implore upon the non-governmental organisations and the donor community to assist in provision of sanitary wear to the less privileged womenfolk.

HON. DR. KHUPE: I second.

HON. HOLDER: On a point of order Mr. Speaker Sir.

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

HON. HOLDER: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. My point of order is on privileges and immunities. As Members of Parliament, we need to stand guided. Mr. Speaker Sir, first of all, we would want to thank the Hon. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning for giving the Hon. Members CDF. There are challenges that Members of Parliament are facing regarding CDF. The reason why Mr. Speaker...

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order, I had asked for any notices of motions right at the beginning and that is the time when you should have raised the issue. If there are any administrative issues, approach the Clerk's office for correction.

HON. MISHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. Let me also thank the Government Chief Whip for having accorded me the opportunity to get priority in the discussion over this particular matter. I stand to move this motion that speaks on a subject that I have constantly and consistently brought to this House; that subject being on sanitary wear. The reason why I am bringing this particular subject right now is because young girls are now going back

to school and many of them will not be attending classes because they are unable to afford the issues around sanitary wear.

Mr. Speaker, there are two fundamental issues that I am bringing around the issue of sanitary wear. The first one is the issue that is to do with the cost of sanitary wear. The cost of sanitary wear has just gone up so much – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] –

THE HON. SPEAKER: Please proceed.

Hon. Chinamasa having walked out of the House.

HON. MISHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: Unfortunately, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning is also going away; At least, I would have wanted him to stay a little bit because this is a subject that concerns him.

The Hon. Speaker called the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Hon. Chinamasa to approach his Chair and complied and took his seat.

HON. MISHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: Thank you, I am indebted to you Mr. Speaker Sir. So, there are mostly two issues that I would want to raise around this particular issue of sanitary wear. I am

glad that you have been able to get the Minister to come back even if it is for a few minutes. The first thing I want to talk about is to say, in consultation with the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning; from the previous Budget not this one that he presented, we had agreed and he had put in a rebate which was going to facilitate those that are in the production of sanitary wear to bring in the raw materials that make sanitary wear. Unfortunately, for one reason or the other, that particular position that he had put in had not been implemented. It had caused serious problems such that the one main producer of sanitary wear in this country which is Farai was about to close.

I want to thank the Hon. Minister, because in consultation with him and consultations through yourself, we were able to get Farai to have an allocation from the Reserve Bank of US\$136 000 which has averted the crisis that we were going to have where Farai should have been closed. So, I actually want to thank the Minister for having facilitated and understood that it was urgent - [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] –

In doing so Mr. Speaker, I actually want us to create a system where we do not necessarily have to go into a crisis mode for a production company that produces sanitary wear to get something. We know that currently, because of the shortage of foreign currency, what is happening with Reserve Bank is that it prioritizes those that should get foreign currency depending on the necessity of what should be imported. My argument Mr. Speaker, is that sanitary wear should be number 1 on that list. We should not have to negotiate for money for those that are doing production of sanitary wear. If we put in money for fuel so that cars can be driven and yet we think we can put sanitary wear somewhere at the bottom of the list, it makes absolutely no sense.

We have been talking that 52% of the population of Zimbabwe are women and I may hazard to say that about 40% of those women are actually menstruating. So if you look at it every day, there is a number of women that are actually menstruating. It is not accidental and it is not something that you can decide not to have; menstruation comes whether you like it or you do not. So, Mr. Speaker, the issue of sanitary wear and the resources that are applied to sanitary wear should not be an issue

of prioritisation; it should be an issue of necessity. Just like as a nation, we can sit in this country and say we need to import maize because people need to eat, otherwise if they do not eat, they will die.

HON. MARIDADI: On a point of order Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Vice President and the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs are in Parliament to listen to proceedings. I urge Members of Parliament on your right that if they want to congratulate them – and there is nothing wrong with that, I think they can do it elsewhere because the Hon. Vice President will benefit from these debates. He is in charge of the Executive and he would want to respond. I do not see the excitement of wanting to congratulate him now yet these were some of the criminals that were around the former President. I thank you.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order, order! - [HON. MUNENGAMI: *Shumba, hanzi imbomirai kumhorosa. Clinic yestress iya yakazofamba sei?*] – Order Hon. Munengami.

Hon. Maridadi, you need to withdraw the last part of your point of order. You cannot say that those who were congratulating the Vice President are part of the criminals.

HON. MARIDADI: I did not say all of them, I said some of them.

THE HON. SPEAKER: No, no. Withdraw that statement!

HON. MARIDADI: You want me to withdraw it? Alright, I withdraw that those who are congratulating the Vice President were the criminals around the former President.

THE HON. SPEAKER: Some.

HON. MARIDADI: I am withdrawing that some of those congratulating the Vice President were the criminals who were removed by Operation Restore Legacy – that is what I am withdrawing Mr. Speaker.

HON. MISHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: Mr. Speaker, I must say that the amount of noise and the amount of not wanting to listen to this

concerns me because the majority of people that are here are either married or have children. The issue of sanitary wear is actually a serious problem and it concerns me when we actually just deal with it as if it is something that we can joke about.

Like I said, as a Parliament, we need to agree that the allocation that is given to companies that produce sanitary wear is at the top of the list that is not part of the priority. It is actually a necessity because women do not choose to menstruate. It is a natural thing that happens and they cannot be punished for doing so.

Secondly, we also need to acknowledge that we have a real problem in this country. For most countries in Africa in particular, the issue of sanitary wear is given out for free especially in schools because you are dealing with young children that cannot afford. The former Minister of Education came here and gave us detailed information that when they do an analysis of children that attend school, they find that girls do miss school every other month and that is not because of anything. It is because they have nothing to put on when they go to

school. They choose to stay at home and not attend. That speaks to the issues that then happen later in life which we are talking about in terms of gender empowerment and making sure that women will be in the positions that they are supposed to be.

Sanitary wear is not just a frivolous conversation. It speaks to whether you are investing in a young girl or not. I am hoping that when we look at the prices around sanitary wear, we can begin to say – where is it that Government itself can come in around the issue of sanitary wear just like we have the Presidential input where people are given maize and seeds. We need to make sure that there is an input that goes to the issues of sanitary because it is a real problem.

Having said so, I need to just demonstrate to you what is happening around the cost of sanitary wear. This is a box of tampons and it has ten of them. In most instances, for a young woman we are talking about a menstrual period between one to seven days a week. There is no way that she can use this packet where you have ten tampons to be able to go through that particular period. In fact, during her heavy

periods, she can use this particular box of tampons within a day or two. This packet of tampons costs \$4.60. If she is going to buy five boxes of sanitary wear, you are talking about having to spend \$20 for every young woman. It is ridiculous. It is not possible for that particular individual.

If she has to choose a packet of cotton wool, 500g which will take her menstrual periods for about two to three days costs her five dollars. Even if she goes for this option, she will be working around a budget of ten or fifteen dollars. Again, this is ridiculous. If we talk about pads, it is exactly the same thing that I am talking about. A box of pads usually has five pads and it costs five dollars. If we multiply five by seven, we are talking about thirty five dollars. It is not possible.

For every woman or young woman that you are seeing walking on the street right now, she is either using a newspaper, that is if she can afford it. She is either using leaves or something that will cause other illnesses and diseases around herself. As a Government, this is totally unacceptable, which is why for me this motion is so urgent and we need

to talk about it and make serious decisions at this particular point in time.

Having said so, there are new innovations that have come around issues of sanitary wear such that if as Government we were serious about wanting to be helpful, we would use other methods of sanitary wear. I have come to this House with tampons, pads and cotton wool but there is a new innovation that has come in – this is called a menstrual cup and this is a menstrual cup. Basically, what it does is that you put it within yourself and the blood goes into the cup. You just take it off, wash it and you can use it for close to about ten years of this menstrual cup, I am bringing this up now because the cost of this menstrual cup is fifteen dollars. Yes, it is expensive but in reality, if you do the calculations that I have said where somebody is using 35 dollars every month, it is much cheaper. The cup costs fifteen dollars because there is duty that is being charged on this sanitary wear. My request is that in the short term, because we do not have people in the country that are able to produce this cup, we should make sure that the importation of

this particular cup is free of duty. That would reduce the cost of the cup and it would also mean that as Government, we can set aside a particular allocation to be able to give to young girls in schools because if you give a young girl in school you will know that she will use that for ten years.

Like I always say, I am not talking about something that I have not personally used. This cup is safe. I have used it before. It is easy to clean. You do not need loads of water to clean up this particular cup. My request is that as we sit as a House, part of the rebates that the Minister was talking about – you remember we had the whole list for those of us who attended the post budget meeting yesterday, the experts gave us the number of rebates that the Minister of Finance has given that we encourage the Minister of Finance to at least begin to put a rebate on importation of sanitary wear.

Again, the cost that I have given you around the cost of these things in Zimbabwe is exactly half when you get this packet of tampons in South Africa. When you get a packet of Lilets, exactly the same company in South Africa, you buy it for two dollars. It is still a lot of

money but it is less than five dollars. In the short term, if we allowed this importation and were able to bring these things without charging duty, it means a lot of other people would be able to buy these particular products at a lower cost.

So, Mr. Speaker what I am requesting for is that we as the House and I have been here as way back as the year 2000, the first time that I came to this House and have spoken to this issue of sanitary ware. I am about to get to the end of my political career sitting in this House, I beg you Mr. Speaker through the other colleagues as a gift to some of us who may not be able to come back next time, to at least allow that this subject of sanitary wear be the last time that we are speaking to it and bring sanitary wear to the young women who are struggling every other month. It is unfair and not right, and we as a people, mothers and sisters should take a stand, including the fathers that are here to be able to support this motion. I thank you Mr. Speaker Sir.

***HON. MPARIWA:** Hon. Speaker, I want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to first debate Order No. 34 instead of the other

issues. I am also grateful to the honourable who moved this motion Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga who often talks about sanitary wear whenever she addresses the Minister of Finance talking about the scarcity or the expense of the sanitary wear. At times parents cannot afford to buy sanitary wear for their children, especially those who are going to school so that whenever they have their periods, these young girls will be comfortable.

We have heard some people saying can we discard debate on sanitary wear in the august House and we have said we have to bite the bullet and debate it. Hon. Speaker, when a girl does not go through the cycle people will enquire why and sometimes even go to the doctors to ask why the child has not had her periods. Also when people give birth, it is through this process of these sanitary wear and the menstrual cycles. We are glad that the company called Farai which manufactures sanitary wear was given an amount so that it could continue functioning. We are happy that this motion has been introduced at a time when we are talking

about the national budget. We believe that this motion will be given the priority that it deserves.

It may be an unfortunate situation that the motion has been introduced at a time when schools have just been opened and children have gone to school but we are saying when children go back to school for the second term, they will be very happy because sanitary wear will be affordable. When we talk about the support given to the company Farai it has to continue because first of all, it creates jobs or employment and also produces more of the sanitary wear. When people buy these products, they also pay tax which will keep the Government going and the tax so collected can be used to repair our roads and other essential things. As people of Zimbabwe, we benefit a lot from these products. Not only that, when Farai has manufactured the sanitary wear it is distributed and people downstream also benefit from the products.

We have the Ministries of Small and Medium Enterprises, Women and Youth Affairs. If people are empowered and given the knowledge of manufacturing sanitary wear, we can create more SMEs and create jobs

for the youths. When we do that, instead of people flocking down to South Africa they will have jobs in the country and be able to sustain their livelihood. We have had some non-governmental organisations or civic society are who also encouraged to come and be partners in the manufacture of sanitary wear. We have people who have been working in these companies that manufacture sanitary wear and have the experience, if these people are empowered financially as SMEs, they will be able to manufacture these products and they will be affordable –

THE HON. SPEAKER: Order, order Hon. Members!

***HON. MPARIWA:** To conclude my debate, we have a lot of ministries which can help so that the sanitary wear can be distributed free of charge. When distributing the sanitary wear, it should be numbered so that we know the number of people who are benefitting. If they are distributed through the ministries, particularly the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education a lot of people and young girls will benefit because we are going to count the number of beneficiaries to

benefit and the distribution will be done accordingly. As parents, we will also be able to support that project because it will also be to our benefit.

Also when we talk of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, this is a ministry aimed at alleviating problems amongst our people. The Ministry will also be looking at the people who should benefit from BEAM. The young girls who will be going through their cycle will be targeted and will benefit. In so doing, we should try and find ways to fight corruption in the distribution of sanitary wear.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful and also want to urge the Minister of Finance to take note of what has been recommended in this House, especially regarding the manufacture and distribution of the sanitary wear. I also want to thank Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga for bringing up this debate on sanitary wear because she has been very consistent. We need to use these - unlike in the past such as during the war of liberation were we had fighters using leaves, barks and other things.

Times have now changed and I remember when an hon. member debated on this issue talking about the problems faced by women

fighters of the liberation, she really cried because of the memories that were brought back. I am hoping that Members of Parliament will debate this issue and support it so that more money is given to sanitary wear. I believe that it is not too late to bring up this motion. We can correct the situation. I thank you.

HON. MAKARI: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. First of all, I would like to applaud Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga for very noble motion that she presented here in Parliament but before I go further, I would like some clarity. She made a presentation on what you termed the ‘menstrual cup’. As a fairly young Member of Parliament I am very curious to know what side effects the cup could have on issues like the hymen. You know these are issues that are very central to our culture in terms of wanting to get married. I would also like to know in terms of the statistics – has there been research done? So, I would really like to know what research surrounds this innovation because we know that she made a very eloquent presentation where she gave us the prices of the sanitary towels. They are expensive so we are saying that, the ordinary

Zimbabwean woman cannot afford to buy tampons, pads or cotton wool. So, if they have this cup, how are they going to clean it? Is it not an expense and what are the hygienic issues surrounding that cup? So, I would really like to have some clarity around that.

I would also like to really weigh in on this issue. We have a country that is predominantly women in terms of population and we are saying, we are 52% of the population but we are still talking about issues to do with sanitary towels. When our children do not use the correct sanitary wear, they are prone to diseases. I will give you an example of a constituency that I am a Member of Parliament for. In Epworth they cannot afford to pay \$5 or \$7 every three days – it is impossible. So, we are saying that the Government has to step up and give us options of low cost sanitary towels. They need to give us subsidies as well, as a country so that our children are protected from diseases. We are saying that this is going to have a ripple effect. When our children are sick, they do not go to school, and then we have a deprived community and country. So, we are really appealing to the Government of Zimbabwe

and to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning to help us in that regard.

I heard the Hon. Member talk about a particular company that produces sanitary ware, which is Farai. As far as I am concerned, it is the only company that we have. We are saying can the Government help us to get more players on the ground. We do not want monopoly because we cannot just have Farai alone. There are countries like India – we can use case studies from India. They have low cost sanitary towels. We can bring them on board and have ordinary Zimbabwean people running those businesses or companies. So we are saying, let us look outside the box and be able to save our children from diseases and also to make them for a healthy country. I think that is all that I wanted to weigh in. Thank you.

HON. MARIDADI: Thank you Mr. Speaker. The population of this country is 52% women and I wish the mover of the motion would listen very carefully because this is very important. On 52% women, I think it is for this reason that our Constitution made it possible for 60

women not representing any particular constituencies to be able to come to Parliament, because we recognise the importance of women in our country. We also recognise the demography of the country that we have more women than men. But Mr. Speaker, what disappoints me is that, we have this motion which talks about life. This motion is not about economics, but it is about life because it talks about a natural phenomenon. This natural phenomenon occurs to women and it is disappointing that women walk out when this motion is being moved.

Mr. Speaker, women are their greatest enemies - [HON.

MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] - Let us tell each other the truth and let us be honest with each other. Women are your own enemies because when Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga was moving this motion, we had more than 15 women who walked out. It should have been in the interest of women to sit and listen to this motion and women should be stampeding to the podium to speak to this motion, because women experience menstruation and men do not.

Mr. Speaker, I am a father of two daughters and I have a woman. That means in my household, we have three people that menstruate on a monthly basis. I do not experience it and I cannot speak about it with as much knowledge and passion like my wife. Because, when girls start to have their monthly periods, they talk to their mothers. So, it is the mother who is burdened with this information and I am not. If anything, I do not even know. There are fathers in this house that have five daughters and they would not know when one of their daughters is having her periods. The only reason I came to know about my daughter's periods was that, they were so heavy and she had period pains. So, I would have to go and pick her up from school. That is only how I could know about her monthly periods, but the mother knew from day one. The mother actually knew before she even started because she had to take her through what she is supposed to do when she starts seeing blood coming out.

But Mr. Speaker, having said that, I want to say the issue of companies that produce sanitary wear should not be an issue of debate. I

have a message in my phone today where a member of the community in Mabvuku is inviting me on Monday because he wants to hand over sanitary towels to about 52 girls from disadvantaged families but he says, the sanitary towels that I have are only for 52 girls and they will only last for one month. Girls are looking forward to it and this is going to happen on Monday. He has saved money. This guy has brothers in the United Kingdom that have sent him sanitary towels to present to girls in Mabvuku.

Mr. Speaker, we have been running this programme in Mabvuku for as long as I can remember and I am going to talk about women again. There has not been a single woman that we have contacted in the Diaspora who has been forthcoming. All the sanitary towels that are coming to Mabvuku on Monday are coming from men in the Diaspora Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga. They are coming from men in the Diaspora, not because men are making more money in the Diaspora but, because men understand that there is a problem that has to be solved.

Now, let me come to the economic issues of sanitary towels. I was driving in Mutare Road this morning and I saw car sales. I counted up to about I think 36 seven-tonne trucks that are for resale that have been imported and I was saying to myself, if each of these seven trucks is costing \$25 000, that is millions tied in consumer products that are just sitting there, yet a company like Farai was almost closing down because they had no foreign currency. Foreign currency is being given to the wrong people. Actually, what we should be having is a plant in Harare, a plant in Marondera, a plant in Mutare, a plant in Bulawayo and a plant in every major city to produce these things. These things should be mass produced so much that girls must be able to have a choice to say, do I want the cup, do I want the cotton wool or do I want the tampon. Mr. Speaker, we produce cotton in Zimbabwe and why should it be so difficult to get cotton wool for women to use? Cotton is not imported from South Africa, yet if we want to use special cotton wool for this purpose, cotton wool from South African lands in this country at a cheaper price than the cotton that is produced locally. I do not

understand why and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning must be seized with this issue.

Actually, the technology to produce tampons is not a very sophisticated technology. Hon. Makari spoke about it here that we could replicate what is happening in India. The technology is not very sophisticated and it is not very hard. You get technology from India and from China at a cost of less than \$50 000. You can set up a plant in Harare which produces these things in mass production. Actually Mr. Speaker, our Government should adopt a policy where they say, at every Government secondary school, sanitary towels must be available and these must be available to women freely. Girls must be able to walk into the headmaster's office and say headmaster, I am taking these three for myself and for my friends. Actually, they must be available in the toilets just like condoms are available in toilets. I can walk into the gents' toilet today and get a whole box of condoms and tomorrow there will be another supply. I can take that whole box of condoms and tomorrow there will still be another supply. Why can we not have sanitary wear

available in public toilets and not in parliamentary toilets – like the one that is in Africa Unity Square? If you put sanitary towels in public toilets, the only people that will get those sanitary towels are people that are going to use them because a sanitary towel cannot be used for anything else. So, there is no way that a person can get sanitary towels and keep them in his bedroom because you do not use them for anything else. It is like getting somebody's national identity card, you cannot use it for anything else unless you want to throw it away.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I am saying the Minister of Finance, his deputy and the Permanent Secretary must be seized with this matter. When they come here to present the Budget, they must be able to say we have allocated so much money not into importing but into setting up factories that will produce these things locally. One, you are creating employment and two you are dealing with a natural phenomenon. The market is there. Women are there. Girls are there and men who want girls to observe hygiene are there. It is for the benefit of all of us.

I grew up in a family where we had four girls, all older than me. It was such a mess when they were having their periods without sanitary wear. I did not understand it because I was younger and I would just see blood all over the place and I would say what is going on in this household. In 2018, I do not expect what I experienced in 1975 to be experienced in 2018. This is 40 years later. There was Operation Restore Legacy, all the criminals around the former President have been taken out. So why are we not setting up factories? If it were in 2017, the excuse could have been that no, no there are criminals but we suppose all the criminals are gone. So, we must set up factories and produce these things.

Let people go back to their fields and produce cotton that should then be treated and given to girls for free. Schools have opened today, we should have seen truck loads of sanitary wear going to primary and secondary schools distributing those things. I hope this is the last time that we are talking about sanitary wear. I have once staged a one man demonstration and if need be, I am going to stage a one man

demonstration and I will go to the President's office and say please Your Excellency, I have daughters who need sanitary wear, please make them available for free and make them available soon.

Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga, Hon. Majome and all the honourable ladies in this House, I am not going to withdraw that this is a cause for women and we expect all of you to be here to debate this issue. If my wife were listening to the radio now or I am sitting with my wife and we are listening to the radio and there is this debate, if she changes the station to another station, I will be very angry with her because I will say this is a cause for you and daughters, why are you changing the station. Listen to this debate because it is important to all of us. I thank you.

HON. CHIKWINYA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir, for according me this opportunity to debate. Let me also hasten to thank most sincerely the mover and seconder of this motion and those that have spoken before me. Why? When I listened to this motion, I said not again in this House. This is an issue that we dealt with and spoke about two years ago and I

thought those with ears have heard and action has been taken. I am very emotional all the time when this issue is raised because I am a victim. I am a victim because in the days of the struggle, no one thought about me as a young girl that I needed sanitary towels. I had to move wearing my camouflage *ndichisvuuka pakati*. My situation as a woman, I was unable to do what other women did thereafter *kuita vana nekuti ndange ndakuvara*.

Having said that, it affected my entire system. Not just me but several other girls who were out there. Having said that, this must cease to be spoken about at any forum. Action must be taken. Yes, I agree that several companies should come on board. I agree that funding for such a noble cause should not be an issue of debate but an issue of priority. It must not be an issue where it must be spoken about several times but any wise leader should take heed of this.

In the rural areas right now, the same situation that I had when I was a girl – imagine that I am now a grandmother and girls in this era are still having the same problem that I faced many years ago. They are

using cow dung because cow dung can absorb. They are using tissue paper if you come across it. They are using newspapers. Along that, they miss school, 40 days a year. If you want the girl child to develop, how then do you develop a girl child who has missed school for 40 days because she is unable to get sanitary wear? We are talking about STEM as a subject but there she is, she is a good candidate for this country in as far as developing women are concerned but she has missed 40 days and you expect that same girl to do well.

As a Government, our inability to deal with this situation - let me not hasten to say it is tantamount to murder but it is criminal, satanic, and evil. This issue must be dealt with once and for all. Before I get too far, I put my matter to rest. I thank you.

HON. MAJOME: I also want to commend and thank indeed Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga for her persistence, determination and commitment to this cause. I do not say this lightly because I have seen Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga being disparaged in this House sometimes by fellow Hon Members and being mocked and derided by some Hon.

Members who are disgusted by the very subject of a natural process that is the biological process, that is the menstrual flow of blood. It has been said that it is taboo and she cannot say that but I want to salute Hon.

Misihairabwi–Mushonga for not backing down because that is the process through which all of us human beings come from. Men and women in this nation are reproduced because of that particular process.

Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga, thank you very much for persisting. To Hon. Makari, Hon. Mpariwa, Hon. Chikwinya and Hon. Maridadi, I thank you for supporting this motion.

We do have a national crisis right now. I am a little bit disappointed that Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga and Hon. Mpariwa did not go as far as to demand indeed that our new Government, as one of its very deliverables, very accessible low hanging fruits in this 100 days of Government; Government can simply make sure that they provide because they did good moves in the education sector. Right now, they are saying that children shall not be returned from school. Guess what Mr. Speaker Sir, although they say that children will not be sent away

from school at the beginning of this term because of school fees, but they are going to go back home especially the female ones. They are not going to turn up at school because they do not have sanitary wear to cover themselves.

Some will indeed go home because of that. I sympathise with Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga and her seconder that may be they are starting to be weary and feel tired. That is why they did not go the full gourmet and say look Government, just provide sanitary wear in schools. In these 100 days, it can be done and if they want votes, I am sure that this is one thing that will guarantee them votes in the next election because of the numbers that have been said by fellow Members of the august House, that either menstruate or have children or wives or significant others that menstruate. That big proportion of the population will not forget.

This is a low hanging fruit Mr. Speaker Sir and the Government can do this. I want to mention the Kenyan Government. Some of us filled with envy just last year when the President of Kenya Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta announced that his Government was going to provide free

sanitary wear to girls. That was a President who did not have a hundred day mission to achieve, but he did that because he realised the importance of that. I want to also support this motion by asking the Hon. Members to go further and require that the Government provides sanitary wear not only like what Hon. Maridadi says, secondary schools, but in primary schools. Girls are starting to menstruate in Grade 5, 8 years and so on, and by 12 years, most Grade 7's will be in this predicament.

Some of them have parents who cannot afford to buy this. I want to urge them to go even further and require that the Government provides that. As has been said before, in terms of their trade cooperation agreements, our Government has trade agreements and aid agreements with organisations that deal with reproductive health that have caused an avalanche, cyclones and hurricanes of condoms to be pushed into this country. If we go just outside to the toilets, there are condoms in the women's toilets and I see condoms all the time. I am sure there are some

in the men's toilets and in public places. This country is awash with condoms.

As has been said before, I will just say the obvious that the use of condoms and sexual activities are a voluntary affair and it is not a necessity. It is something that is avoidable. If that can be done to flood the country with condoms of all kinds, shapes and sizes, surely sanitary pads because they are also items of reproductive health, that is vital. They can also be brought in if our Government decides that it does not have it as a priority to do it in these hundred days and I repeat Mr. Speaker, low hanging fruit, just provide sanitary wear to girls in primary and secondary schools.

If our Government decides that it is not its priority, let it engage those other organisations that in as much as they are bringing condoms, may be they can just divide them in halves or in quarters and bring sanitary wear instead. I am also encouraging that as part of this whole dispensation of command fisheries and command agriculture, why not

command sanitary wear Mr. Speaker Sir? – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*]-

If we can do it in other spheres of our economy, surely we can do that in the area where the dignity of the girl and of the woman is safeguarded. There is nothing as inhuman and degrading as being in a situation as a woman where you just do not know how to stem the flow of your menstrual blood. It is terrible and it is dehumanising. I also want to support their motion and say that it is even quite sad that we are talking about one as has been said by my colleagues. One company manufactures sanitary wear and that is a scandal. I think in line with also growing the economy, priority must be given to those industries that manufacture even the use of cotton and so on and development.

I want to believe that there are other companies that also manufacture this, but we do not have enough of them. Can I urge that the movers of the motion also seek to amend it so that even the other ones are also supported? At the moment, there is a shortage and you cannot find tampons. I went shopping and if you go to any supermarket

now, the range of sanitary wear is limited apart from this problem of it not being available and expensive.

If you try to look for tampons, there are various brands that we do not manufacture here anymore. There are different sizes, the mini tampons for the light flow, the medium tampon for the medium flow and the heavy one for the heavy flow. In fact, there is a fourth one for the super heavy flow. I challenge you even the men, do not be embarrassed, you can just walk up the aisles and this is a fact here in Harare. Go into any supermarket, you either find the minis which are the least popular because in terms of the exchange control situation, the importation of sanitary wear is a problem. There is a shortage now and even the pads and so on.

So, as we debate the budget, can we support those who are manufacturing it for components, but firstly, can the Government just do a command sanitary wear thing and also encourage those industries like Farai and others. We thank Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga for getting the Hon. Minister to agree to review it but can it be done and make sure that

the Ministry of Health ensures that before we make the capacity to make it ourselves, can all those other sizes and varieties come in because right now, there is a big crisis. I thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. Command sanitary wear; low hanging fruit.

***HON. MATSUNGA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me this opportunity. Let me thank Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga for moving this important motion for the women at large. Let me say that in June last year, we went on a study visit on the cancer disease in Zambia. What really touched me most in Zambia was that there is a Cancer Disease Hospital. Most women were more prone to cervical cancer and most of the cancer came through the use of T-shirts that were infected and the Government worked together to try and find a solution to this problem. So, they decided to provide sanitary wear to women and for that reason, there is no woman who is using T-shirts or tissues or any unsafe material.

If we look at the issue of diseases in our country like HIV/AIDS, it is no longer a death threat as much as cancer especially for women,

cervical cancer has killed a lot of them. We probably got infected during our primary school days and this has developed over years. I want to thank Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga for moving this motion. Some people used to discourage her not knowing that it is an important motion. If we look at the issue of cervical cancer, it is not caused by sexual activities, but it is caused by the unsafe methods that we use when we are having our menstrual periods. What Hon. Majome was saying was that go and visit the supermarkets, you will realise that the pads that were going for a dollar are now going for \$2.99. Pads have become so expensive and it is very difficult for people who are living with disabilities or psychological challenges to afford them. If you want to see how women can lose dignity, it is during their menstrual periods. When I want to stand up and say something, it is difficult for me to stand up if I am not well padded because there is something that happens within me. It is a very difficult moment, especially for the girls who will be entering that stage.

So as we craft the budget, let some of the funding be allocated towards sanitary wear. If you happen to visit the maternity homes, there are some women who are single who do not have partners to buy the sanitary wear for them. It is sad that we have gone as legislators without any sanitary wear and implore the First Lady as well to donate sanitary wear for such individuals since she is visiting hospitals. It is difficult for most women because sanitary wear now ranges from \$30.00 upwards. For some women, it is not affordable because they will not be having any income.

As we craft the budget, we need a command on sanitary wear for all women. It is a painful situation really. If you look at it, you find that even those big men that you see, for them to be there it is through the women. Some women even use old blankets during their cycles. You do not feel comfortable at all and your dignity is compromised. This motion has come into this House over a number of years. I heard Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga saying that since 2000 she moved this motion but no one was taking it seriously. My request is that, gone are the days,

we now need to act. May you please listen to us as women because as men where you came from was through us women; through that blood. If you respect us and restore our dignity by providing sanitary wear, making it available as much as condoms are available, we will be happy.

You go ahead talking about HIV, telling people to use condoms but you are not looking at the sanitary wear that is used by women and girls which affect their health in future. Today if I get cervical cancer, it is difficult for me to be treated but in the event that one contracts HIV, that person is able to live long through the Anti retroviral drugs. What I implore you to do is to avail sanitary wear in the toilets as you do with condoms.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure from the home where you come from, you have sisters, mothers and mother-in-laws who need that sanitary wear. There is nothing new because the generation that we now have is that children get to the menstrual period earlier than we used to do in the past. That girl child begins to feel out of place once that happens. So,

when we talk of 50/50, we are told women are not capable of being part of the 50/50 because their dignity has been lost.

I just stood up to support the motion and that we need Command sanitary wear. Rice and beans is given in the open, why can we not also take trucks of sanitary wear in different areas and that it becomes an awareness campaign for us to help our children. I thank you Mr. Speaker.

***HON. MUKWENA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir for the opportunity that you have given me to support the motion. Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga moved a very important motion that has been seconded by a number of Members. My request Hon. Speaker, is that we request the Minister of Health and Childcare – I think every year we get statistics of diseases such as cancer, so what we request is that the Ministry in this short period of the budget should also go out and should be given funds to conduct study visits. It should come up with best practices to find out how much the machines cost. In this short period of time, we also know that our economy is melting down but we hope that

we can bring in two or three machines in this short period of time that we have. As we progress, we can then have more machines coming in.

Hon. Speaker, I think the clarifications and explanations that came out in this House concerned everyone. No one is not aware of the challenges that women are facing. We are in a period of civilisation and what we want is for this situation that we are in to be in the past. It is not a big challenge in this country as we speak in this House. With these few words, I would like to thank the Hon. Members who have supported the motion raised by Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga. I thank you.

***HON. MAHOKA:** Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir for giving me this opportunity to add my voice to this very important motion. I would like to thank Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga for bringing this motion to this House, which is a painful one. It is painful not only for the women but even for the men and the elderly who are in rural areas. They are pained most because everyone nowadays is looking after orphans and other children who are girls. A grandmother who is looking after grandchildren cannot afford to buy sanitary wear for these children.

They cannot afford because those aged women do not even have money to take a bucket of maize to the grinding mill. So, how can they afford the sanitary wear?

I was thinking that cotton that is grown in Zimbabwe should be encouraged. Also, the Minister of Health and Childcare, as alluded to by Hon. Mukwena, should be allocated funds to ensure that they are able to buy raw materials to produce sanitary wear. What also deeply concerns us is the issue of condoms. Condoms are everywhere; I think it is because condoms are also used by men, that is why they are readily available.

I think it is important that we set aside a certain amount of money like the situation we have under HIV/AIDS. There is also this company that was mentioned by Hon. Misihairabwi-Mushonga that was supported by other Hon. Members, that it should be given forex to ensure that they provide sanitary wear for children in schools. The sanitary wear should be availed in the toilets as we do with condoms. People should be able to access the sanitary wear in the toilets.

In the rural areas, people cannot even afford tissues as a substitute for sanitary wear. What they have are useless pieces of cloths and those pieces of cloths have infections. So, for us to prevent such challenges, let us prevent because if that disease becomes rampant in this country, we end up having so many diseases. If there is a typhoid breakout, you find the Government running around to ensure that they address the situation. I think that same expediency that they use when there is a typhoid break-out should be the same when it comes to sanitary ware. Those are the children who are our future leaders; they are the lawyers and leaders of tomorrow. I think they should be availed with funding. We need a lot of funding that will enable the nation to restore its dignity; especially for women because once a woman is educated in a nation, there is progress. We were talking about the Auditor-General. For a child to have dignity and self esteem, that child would have grown up in a normal family.

If sanitary wear can be availed in toilets, I think the girl child will excel more in school. I think what is affecting their educational

performance is because of diseases such as cancer. The pieces of clothes that they use are infected and that is what then causes cancer. We end up saying cancer cannot be treated in Zimbabwe. When cancer affects people, it requires a lot of funding and the challenge is that children are not being screened to check if they have not been infected with cancer. We have women in this House even those degreed; they are only monitored in terms of their reproductive parts.

I do not know who came up with the idea that women should be deputies. I realise that whenever there is a position, it is given to the male and the woman is given the deputy one. I think it is because men know that women are more intelligent and for that reason, they are discriminating against women. They are not concerned about the fact that they are being affected by cervical cancer. Women make up 52% of the population, even though they are discriminated against by the Government. However, what you forget is that women are the ones who give birth. I think that Government needs to sit down and consider the issue of women. For the men to be well fed and well looked after in the

homes is because the welfare of the women would have been taken into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, if a child gets sick at home, it is not only the mother who is affected but the family. It is important that we avoid cervical cancer and ensure that the girl child is given an opportunity to excel in school. A girl child misses school because she is experiencing her menstrual cycle. She knows that she cannot get a piece of cloth from a bed sheet or an old t-shirt that can only be accessible to her mother. In the rural areas, they end up using the t-shirt and dirty sheets – [AN HON. MEMBER: *Inaudible interjection.*] – You are probably not agreeing with me because you are based in the urban areas.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about this in the absence of the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. The Minister of Finance was supposed to be in this House when this motion is being debated so that he goes, considers and ensures that funding is availed towards sanitary wear.

There is someone who talked about ‘Command,’ because people think ‘Command’ should be in agriculture. I think ‘Command’ for

sanitary wear is good and it will develop the nation because what is known as 'Command' is the funding that will be availed to that area. I think if 'Command' is put in place, it will assist our girl child in the rural areas. I thank you Mr. Speaker Sir.

HON. J. TSHUMA: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker Sir.

Good afternoon. May I please also add my voice and thank the Hon. Member, Hon. Misihairabwi – Mushonga for such a pertinent subject. I might be male but believe you me, I know the difficulties that our girl child goes through when it comes to this particular period when they experience their monthly periods.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I am a Member of Parliament from a very poor community in Iminyela in Mabuthweni where parents cannot even afford a dollar for a loaf of bread. This then practically and automatically means that they cannot even afford sanitary pads at all. I have gone around primary schools where I have seen sewer blockages. When the City Council comes to try and rectify that, they find tissue papers, torn t-shirts being used by these girls to try and stop the blood

from flowing. I actually almost shed a tear one day when I saw a little girl being ridiculed because blood was coming out and nothing could stop it. Her uniform was now stained with the blood. Instead of people having some sort of sympathy towards her, they were laughing at her and you can imagine how uncomfortable that could have been for her.

I stood to say one thing here Mr. Speaker. As a father of my household, I will never leave the feeding of my children or paying of my rentals to chance. I cannot sit down at home and see my daughter or my wife who is not employed coming in with groceries and be happy and think that it is alright and then sit down and eat not knowing where those groceries came from. I will be a very stupid man. Why am I saying so? I want to come back to the point that has been raised by most Hon. Members here; the Government of Zimbabwe should never leave the issue of sanitary pads to anybody for any reason – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] – no matter what.

This is one issue Mr. Speaker Sir, which you do not even need to debate about here. The only thing that we need to do is say, come the

analysis of the budget, if there is not enough money or resources to make sure that sanitary pads are actually brought in and a plant is brought in as well by the Government, not by private players to come and manufacture these things, the budget must never pass-simple! – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] – We are talking of 52%, that is the majority, *saka tirikurasika papi?* We need to say, when the budget comes, let us review it and make sure that we up it for the sanitary pads first and make sure that the Government orders as a matter of urgency, a machine that will come here and do mass production of that thing and also make sure that the budget supports the production of cotton to make sure that next time this thing does not become a debatable issue; it should be automatic.

As much as other people have said that if you visit the toilet you find condoms, let us go into those same toilets and find sanitary pads – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] - as simple as all that. Mr. Speaker Sir, I am going to close this debate by saying, no matter what happens, Government must never leave the issue of sanitary pads to chance or to

NGOs or to private companies. It is our baby, it is our mandate and we need to do it. We need to do it yesterday. *Pamberi ne* 'Command Sanitary.' – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] - I thank you.

+HON. N. NDLOVU: Thank you Hon. Speaker, although it was as if you had forgotten me. I also want to add my word to the issue of sanitary ware. I would like to thank the mover Hon. Misihairabwi – Mushonga and Hon. Mpariwa. This is a matter that has been going on for a very long time. The last speaker said that if we do not come to a conclusion on the matter of sanitary wear, the budget is not going to pass. So, if the Minister had been here to listen-because I know he does not have time to go through the *Hansard*. Mr. Speaker, I am a woman, a mother and I have children. There are people in constituencies – if we agree that sanitary wear will be distributed freely, it has to be said that if someone is found to be hoarding sanitary wear, they should go to prison for a very long time, just like they do with beans and maize. In the President's 100-day project, we want to know if he has heard of the

issue of sanitary wear. Truly speaking, if he fails on the issue of sanitary wear, then we tell him he has failed on everything. I thank you.

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

HON. MPARIWA: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Wednesday, 10th January, 2018.

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

MPARIWA, *the House adjourned at Three Minutes to Five o'clock*
p.m.