

26 January 2017



INTRODUCTION

Parliament yesterday, convened for the Question and Answer question session where they raised a number of concerns. These included exorbitant bank charges when purchasing using plastic money, rehabilitation of road networks and operations in the mining sector. Some of the issues that were discussed at length are as follows.

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Finance and Economic Development Minister Hon. Patrick Chinamasa yesterday said he will engage the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor Dr John Mangudya over the high bank charges consumers are forced to pay when buying goods using plastic money.

This came out during yesterday's Question and Answer session after Hon. Joseph Chinotimba (ZANU PF-Buhera South), claimed that some banks were charging \$5

for each transaction made using swipe machines regardless of the cost of what was purchased.

In response, Hon. Chinamasa urged members of the public to report such institutions to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor Dr Mangudya.

Turning to the mining sector, Minister of Mines and Mining Development Hon. Walter Chidhakwa said Government is in the process of resuscitating Jena, Sabi and Elvington Mines and these will not be ceded to the private sector. He was responding to Hon. Mthokozisi Mpfu (ZANU PF) Silobela who wanted clarification on Cabinet decision that large scale mines should cede claims lying idle to small scale miners.

Hon. Gift Chimankire (MDC-T) Southerton also asked Minister of Mines and Mineral Development to inform the House on the number of Government projects conducted by ZMDC and to spell out the contribution they have made to the FISCUS in 2016.

In response Hon. Chidhakwa highlighted that ZMDC had a wide array of investment projects covering gold, chrome, graphite, copper, emeralds, tantalite, asbestos, tin and various exploration projects for platinum and energy minerals such as coal, coal- beth methane-gas and uranium. He however said that ZMDC had been experiencing a revenue deficit therefore no dividend was paid to Government since 2016.

POST BUDGET ANALYSIS DEBATE

Hon. David Chapfika (ZANU PF -Mutoko South) in his capacity as the Budget Committee chairperson, presented the budget analysis report. These were some of the recommendations:

- All revenues from all sources should be consolidated into the CRF and then allocated through the main budget as previously recommended in the last few years. This would raise revenues by approximately \$700 million and bring all expenditure under the control of Treasury;
- The Hon. Minister should consider upward review of allocations to the Ministries of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, Health, SME's, Women Affairs, Higher and Tertiary education as well as Tourism through virementing savings from the Ministry of Defence deployments in infrastructure development and technical assistance resulting in release of revenues for this purpose;
- Treasury should review upwards the allocation to Parliament to US\$48 million to enable it to carry out its mandate as already emphasised in this report;
- Government must undertake to adopt and make structural reforms to rationalise the civil service in order to adjust recurrent expenditure to at most 70 % of the budget within the first quarter of 2017 thereby releasing addition US\$700 million to fund other critical areas of the budget;

- Treasury must consider adopting the measures which have the potential to grow the national cake

Hon. Irene Zindi presented the Portfolio Committee on Local Government, Post Budget Analysis Report. Some of the key recommendations included

- The Ministry of Finance to comply with the Constitution and effect the 5% allocation to local authorities in accordance with Section 301(3). It is a very clear section from the Constitution that the provision does not need an Act of Parliament for it to be effected.
- Provincial councils should be appointed and stop being used as a scape goat for the non-allocation of the 5% to local authorities.
- Full alignment of laws with the Constitution should proceed with expediency.

On another note, Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Hon. Lazarus Dokora was asked to prepare a Ministerial statement on the new curriculum while Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare Hon. Prisca Mupfumira was asked to do the same on the state of food distribution in the country.