

PARLIAMENTARY ROUND UP BULLETIN



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In the National Assembly this week

This week, the National Assembly met for their usual sitting and the major highlight of the House sitting was the the debate on the State of the Nation Address by the President on 22 October 2020. ZANU PF Chief Whip, Hon Pupurai Togarepi (ZANU PF Gutu South) moved a motion to debate the President's speech before Members of Parliament took turns to deliberate on the SONA. Hon. Togarepi applauded the President's efforts to re-open the economy, reform State Enterprises and Parastals in order to contribute to the socio economic development of the country and to fight corruption. He also thanked the President for the essential Government interventions for the vulnerable and food insecure households.

Debate on the SONA Begins

Of interest was the maiden speech by Leader of the Opposition Hon Thokozani Khupe. She was recently sworn into Parliament with other MPs that replaced those that were recalled by the MDC party. In her initial remarks, Hon Khupe reminded the House that the role of the opposition is to hold Government to account for its actions, adding that the MDC-T party is responsible for challenging Government policies and proffering solutions. She assured Zimbabweans that the Opposition will perform the representative, legislative and oversight roles to the best of their ability. In addition, Hon Khupe urged party members to desist from only seeking positions and power while ignoring the plight of the suffering Zimbabweans. On corruption, Hon Khupe told Parliament that corruption was Zimbabwe's worst enemy and political parties must come together to fight it. The Leader of the Opposition called upon Government to build strong watch dog systems to curb corrupt practices in the country. Speaking on alignment of laws to the Constitution, she urged Parliament to speed up the process of alignment and ensure the law addresses issues around alleged abductions and other violations of human rights. She recommended that the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs ensure that he brings in a Bill to Parliament that provides for an independent complaints mechanism where the public have an opportunity of sending their complaints to that body and their complaints are remedied.

Justice Minister restores Lapsed Bills on the Order Paper

The Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Ziyambi Ziyambi this Tuesday, moved a motion to restore the lapsed Bills and Reports to the Order Paper of the 3rd Session of the 9th Parliament. These include the Report on Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission for the years 2018 to 2019, Report of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, the Forest Amendment Bill, the Cyber Security and Data Protection Amendment Bill and the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No 2 Bill. These lapsed at the end of the 2nd Session of the 9th Parliament last week. According to the Standing Rules and Order of Parliament, any House business or Bills that are not completed at the end of a session automatically lapse. The Bills in question had not been completed when President Mnangagwa opened the 3rd Session of Parliament. However, the Standing Rules and Orders also allow the lapsed business to be restored at the last stage they were when they expired. The Deputy Speaker of Parliament also informed the House that all Committees of the 2nd session would continue to operate as previously constituted until such a time that new Committees are appointed by the Standing Rules and Orders Committee. However on Thursday the 29th October, the Speaker announced that MDC-T had replaced recalled chairpersons as follows:

Hon. Peter Moyo - Committee on Information, Communication and Technology (ICT); replacing Hon. P.D Sibanda

Hon. Yvonne Musarurwa - Committee on Environment and Tourism; replacing Hon. C. Chinanzavana

Hon. Lindiwe Maphosa - Committee on Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development; replacing Hon. M. Tsise

Hon. Sipho Makone - Committee on Information Media and Broadcasting Services, replacing Hon. P.D sibanda.

Parliament Committees will resume sitting on Monday 2 November, 2020.

SAPST holds Accountability Platforms in Matabeleland

This week, the SAPST team was in Bulawayo holding Accountability platforms in three constituencies namely Nkulumane Constituency (Hon. Kucaca Phulu), Lupane East Constituency (Hon. Mbongeni Dube) and Bulawayo Central. The accountability platforms are designed to facilitate citizens' direct interface and interaction with their duty bearers, including, Member of Parliament; Councillor and Senators, traditional leaders as well as other duty bearers. Key stakeholders that were present included the Mayor of Bulawayo, representatives of Bulawayo Residents Association (BURA), Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (BPRA) and Councillors. Delivering his state of Bulawayo address, the Mayor of Bulawayo Hon Solomon Mguni explained the dire water situation in the city and what the Bulawayo City Council (BCC) is doing to alleviate the problem. Local authorities are no longer responsible for the development of water bodies as this is now the responsibility of ZINWA. BCC is drilling boreholes at Epping Forest to augment piped water.

Increase resource allocation for children, MPs told

Through one of its projects supported by Save the Children International, SAPST continues to advocate for increased resource allocation and spending towards the survival, learning and development of children in the Eastern and Southern Africa. SAPST in partnership with the Eastern African Child Rights Network (EACRN) held a virtual training session on Fair Financing and Tax Justice for Children. The primary objective of this session was to build the capacity of the Child Rights Network in Kenya around public investment for children and the role of parliament in promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of children. One major take away from the training session was that child rights CSOs need to engage with Parliament throughout the entire national budget cycle. In the light of the effects of COVID-19 on children, the need for increased resource allocation and spending towards children cannot be over emphasised.

Speaker Of Parliament Meets Chinhoyi CSOs

On the 26th and 27th October SAPST held dialogue meetings between CSO's, CBO's and Parliament on issues affecting marginalised groups as well as to advance the HeforShe Campaign. The meetings provided a platform for CSO's to bring to Parliament's attention issues affecting marginalised groups including women, youth, children and people living with disabilities. A key result was the call for CSO's to submit model Bills that address the challenges raised to Parliament. This call also reflects Parliament's openness to model bills. The Speaker also took the opportunity to encourage CSO's to participate in the legislative process to ensure that the challenges raised are addressed through making submissions at public hearings. The Speaker also took the opportunity to advance the "HeforShe" campaign by facilitating discussion around issues that affect women and encouraging CSO's to bring these issues to Parliament through "HeforShe" champions.

IN THE NEWS...

Apathy hits Party public hearings: Speaker

Speaker of the National Assembly Jacob Mudenda said apathy had hit most public hearings conducted by parliamentary committees amid indications that the public generally thinks their views will not be incorporated into Bills. Addressing journalists and civic society organisations during an outreach programme in Chinhoyi recently, Hon Mudenda said some of the suggestions made by the public were incorporated into the 2019 and 2020 national budgets by Treasury. "I am acutely aware that the disconcerting apathy towards public hearings in general and public hearings on the national budget in particular is partly a result of the unfortunate misconception that your input is ignored and does not find its way into either the Finance Bill or the National Budget purse," he said.

Read more <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/10/apathy-hits-parly-public-hearings-speaker/?cn-reloaded=1>

People with Disabilities demand a user friendly budget

People with disabilities have demanded that the 2021 national budget must be disability friendly and cater for free cancer screening and lotions for people with albinism as many of them were dying from skin cancer. This was said on Monday during a Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) faith leaders' breakfast meeting with the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Budget and Finance. Brenda Mudzimu, the founder of Miss Albinism Trust said: "Most PWDs with albinism are dying of skin cancer because they cannot afford lotions.

Read More <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/10/pwds-demand-user-friendly-2021-budget/?cn-reloaded=1>



Participants during the Parliament-CSO Dialogue in Chinhoyi recently