

PARLIAMENT OF ZIMBABWE

Thursday, 17th December, 2020

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

PRAYERS

(THE HON. SPEAKER *in the Chair*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE HON. SPEAKER

ERRORS ON THE *ORDER PAPER*

THE HON. SPEAKER: I have to draw the attention of the House to two errors on the *Order Paper* as follows:

i) The date is reflected as Thursday 18th instead of 17th December, 2020.

ii) The adopted motion on the Memorandum of Understanding on the Harmonisation of Seed Regulatory Framework in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) was erroneously reflected as the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. The error will be rectified in the corrected Votes and Proceedings of the House.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

HON. MUTAMBISI: Hon. Speaker, I move that Orders of the Day, Numbers 1 to 14 on today's *Order Paper* be stood over until Order of the Day Number 15 has been disposed of.

HON. MOLOKELA-TSIYE: I second.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

REPORT OF THE DELEGATION TO THE 75TH SESSION OF THE
CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN HELD IN SWITZERLAND

HON. MADIWA: Mr. Speaker I move the motion standing in my name that this House takes note of the report of the Zimbabwean delegation to the Fourth Interregional, Seminar on the Parliamentary Capacity Building and Achievements of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries, Beijing, China from 11th to 19th June, 2019.

HON. TOGAREPI: I second.

HON. MADIWA: I am going to give a report on the Zimbabwean delegation to the 75th Session of the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women that was held in Geneva.

Introduction

The Zimbabwean delegation attended the 75th Session of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 10 to 28 th February, 2020. The delegation comprised the following:-

- Hon Sithembiso G. G. Nyoni, Minister for Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.
- His Excellency, Ambassador Taonga Mushayavanhu, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Zimbabwe to the United Nations Office in Geneva;
- Hon. Chido Madiwa, Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development;

- Commissioner Tsitsi Choruma, from the Public Service

Commission;

- Ambassador Jonathan Wutawunashe, Secretary to the Service

Commissions; and

- Mr. Melusi Matshiya, the Permanent Secretary for Women

Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development.

The delegation also included representatives from eight (8) related line Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government, who provided assistance during responses to specific questions raised. Hon. S. G.G. Nyoni, the Minister for Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development, presented Zimbabwe's 6th report to the CEDAW Committee.

Background

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on the 18th day of December 1979. Further to that, the Convention entered into force as an international treaty on the 3rd of September,

1981, after twenty countries had ratified it. The Convention was a culmination of more than thirty years of hard work by the United Nations Commission which was established in 1946, dealing with issues on the status of women. The adoption of the UN Commission on the Status of Women was a remarkable milestone in setting the right tone in the advancement of women's rights. The Convention had thirty articles which provided, among others, for the following: -

- Domestic legislation on gender equality;
- Elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- Adoption of special measures to accelerate equality between men and women;
- Women rights to decent work,
- Family planning; and
- Rights and responsibilities during marriage and its dissolution

Suffice to say that at the time of the Conference, over fifty countries had ratified the Convention. However, Zimbabwe which

ratified CEDAW in 1991, is one of the State Parties that had not yet ratified the Optional Protocol on CEDAW and the amendment to Article 20 of the Convention on meeting times for the CEDAW Committee. Although there were no issues with ratifying the amendment to Article 20 of the Convention, the same could not be said on ratification of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW Committee. Issues of concern were mainly on the communication procedure which allows individuals or groups of individuals to submit individual complaints against the State Party to CEDAW Committee. The Committee comprises twenty-three independent members drawn from around the world who serve in their personal capacities and not as representatives of State Parties. These members are mandated to make independent assessment of States' compliance with women rights obligations under the Convention.

The Government of Zimbabwe submitted its first Report in 1995 and later on combined periodic Reports covering the second, third, fourth and fifth cycles in 2016. The Protocol also provided for an inquiry procedure which allows the CEDAW Committee to initiate confidential

investigations where it has received credible information of violations by the State Party of rights established by the Convention.

In terms of Article 18, State Parties are required to submit periodic reports every four years to the CEDAW Committee. The reports outline constitutional, legislative and administrative measures that are undertaken in implementing the provisions of the Convention.

Proceedings

The Opening Ceremony was presided over by I. Salama, a representative of the United Nations (UN) Secretary General. In his Opening remarks, the UN Secretary General's remarks emphasized that the year 2020 was indeed a crucial year in the advancement of gender equality and women empowerment and in as much as it marked twenty five years of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. All Member States that were still to ratify the Convention were urged to do so expeditiously. Further to that, Member States were encouraged to maintain budgets for CEDAW related activities and also to voluntarily make their contributions to support the work of the Treaty Bodies.

Report of the CEDAW Committee

CEDAW Committee Report highlighted the progress that had been made by the one hundred and eighty -nine Member States that had ratified the CEDAW Convention. Further to that, a total of one hundred and thirty Member States were said to have ratified the Optional Protocol on CEDAW while some eighty Member States had ratified the Amendment to Article 20 of the Convention. Reference was also made to the work of the Committee in developing a manual for traditional leaders on CEDAW implementation, the engagement with the private sector on how they can deliver on CEDAW and also the new CEDAW recommendation on trafficking of women and girls.

Shadow Report:Zimbabwe Gender Commission and Civil Society Organisations

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission (ZGC) and the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) presented their reports. Key issues in the ZGC report included concern on the slow pace of alignment of gender laws to the Constitution, inadequate resourcing of key institutions specifically to

promote gender equality, curbing of violence against women and girls in humanitarian situations, failure to fully implement gender balance as reflected in section 17 of the Constitution. The ZGC proposed a Gender Equality Act to partly fulfil Section 17 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe.

The report of CSOs (Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, Pakasipiti, Zimbabwe Sex Workers Alliance, Intersex Women and Girls in Zimbabwe and Human Rights Watch) highlighted, among other issues, persistent gender inequalities in key institutions such as the Cabinet, Parliament and Boards of Parastatals. Deteriorating health institutions and service delivery, violence by security forces during the January 2019 unrests, difficulties in documentation of intersex persons, hate speech against Lesbians, Bi-sexual Trans-gender and Inter-sex (LBTIs) persons, and the trafficking of commercial sex workers were other crucial issues presented by the CSO's.

Zimbabwe 6th Report to the CEDAW Committee

The report was compiled under the auspices of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian

Law, and consultations were also done with various stakeholders, including CSOs and national Human Rights Institutions. The report sought to address concerns and observations with regards to combined 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th report. The report noted that the Zimbabwean Government has addressed discrimination against women and all other forms of gender inequalities as well as promotion of women political participation through incorporating most of the CEDAW provisions into the 2013 Constitution in sections such as 3 (g), 17, 26, 56, 78, 80, 120 (2), 124 (b), among others. The Minister also reported on the ongoing alignment of laws to the new national Constitution. Some of the pieces of legislation vital to advancing women rights lined up for alignment during the life of the 9th Parliament include the following:

(a) Public Entities Corporate Governance Act [*Chapter 10: 31*]

which was promulgated in 2018. Section 7 of the Act gives effect to the Constitutional Provisions in Section 17 on gender balance because it (a) binds a line Minister to ensure that, so far as practicable, there are equal

numbers of men and women on the board of every public entity for which he or she is responsible;

(b) Labour Amendment Bill which address the issue of equal pay for work of equal value for both men and women in line with ILO principles;

(c) Harmonised Marriages Bill, which seeks to harmonise all marriage laws in Zimbabwe and to criminalise all child marriages;

(d) The Guardian of Minors Amendment Bill, Children's Bill and Child Justice Bills, which confer equal rights to both parents with regards to custody and guardianship;

(e) Education Amendment Bill, which provides for the progressive realisation of the right to a basic State-funded education as enshrined in the Constitution;and

(f) Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23] amended to incorporate minimum mandatory sentencing for rape and sexual offences.

The report also referred to the National Programme on GBV Prevention and Response (2016-2020) which succeeded the National GBV Strategy (2012-2015). Through these programmes the following have been established: One Stop Centres (OSCs) and Community Based Shelters for survivors of Gender Based Violence; the development of the GBV Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); capacity building of service providers on survivor friendly approaches; and operationalization of a well-coordinated Victim Friendly System (VFS).

In terms of measures to address discrimination against women in the field of education, the CEDAW Committee was briefed about the following interventions and provisions:

Education Act provides for compulsory education for every child of school going age; Construction of accommodation for female students in tertiary institutions was underway at various A draft Labour Amendment Bill which seeks to address the issue of Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value in line with ILO principles is in place.

The 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey had reported that that the Maternal Mortality ratio had declined from 651/100 000 live births in 2015 to 462/100 000 live births in 2019 and this had been attributed to a robust maternal and new-born health system built around the health systems strengthening framework.

Maternity Waiting Homes (MWH) had been established and maternity fees scraped. The Government of Zimbabwe had introduced measures that empower women economically in the mining, agriculture, tourism and trade sectors and a Financial Inclusion Strategy and the establishment of a Women's Micro Finance Bank, empowerment loans targeted at women, youths and SMEs, was meant to economically empower the targeted groups..

Further, the CEDAW Committee was informed about the challenges faced during the implementation phase which included economic challenges due to the continued imposition of illegal economic sanctions; absence of balance of payments support from the international financial institutions; and limited fiscal space which has affected

Government's efforts to capacitate key institutions for the promotion of gender equality in Zimbabwe. The effect of climate change was also reported to be impacting negatively on the livelihoods of women, particularly those in marginalized areas, by imposing a huge burden on women's access to water, means of production, energy and food.

CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations

The report submitted by the Zimbabwean Delegation was well received. However, the CEDAW Committee, in its response to the report, expressed the need to do more to curb child marriages in the country, as well as to increase the number of women in decision making positions, given the fact that the quota system was coming to an end in 2023. The Committee also emphasized on the need for the Government to put in place more measures to protect women against Gender Based Violence (GBV). The Committee stressed the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see A/65/38, part two, annex VI). It invited Parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the

present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention. Find attached Annexure 1 with concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Zimbabwe which the Portfolio Committee on Women Affairs, Community, SME's Development and other relevant Committees will oversight to ensure government fully implements before the next periodic report is due.

Recommendations

Treasury should, from the 2021 budget onwards avail financial resources for the implementation of CEDAW recommendations and timeous submission of the Report to affirm government prioritization of women economic and political emancipation.

The Government delegation to the 75th Session of CEDAW in Switzerland, Geneva, in February 2020, was too huge comprising of delegates from various government departments. The Zimbabwe delegation had about 20 members compared to other countries with 5 or 6 Delegates. This exerts a lot of pressure on the already strained national budget. There is need therefore from the next meeting to cut the travel

budget by making sure that the CEDAW report compilation is participatory, multi-sectoral and consultative, and that only a small number of delegates submit the report to the CEDAW Committee.

Government is implored to ensure timely submission of CEDAW reports as is required. Delays in the presentation of Reports might portray bad image about the country and consequently undermine successes that have been scored in advancing the welfare of women.

Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, SME's Development should appear before the Committee and submit a comprehensively detailed plan of action for the full implementation of the Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report by end of February 2021.

Conclusion

Mr. Speaker, Sir, following the successful presentation of Zimbabwe's 6th Periodic Report, the Ministry of Women Affairs, Community and SMEs, will have to work hand in glove with the Portfolio Committee on Women Affairs, in the creation of the National

Implementation Plan and also the actual implementation of CEDAW recommendations as mentioned already under recommendations.

HON. MOLOKELA-TSIYE: Thank you Madam Speaker. I rise in support of the motion – [AN HON. MEMBER: *Inaudible interjection.*] – I was not in Geneva but I support the process. My first and most important point is that as Parliament of Zimbabwe, I believe we have done a lot in order to promote gender equality in this country especially this year in the Portfolio Committee that I am part of, the Women Affairs Committee. We are doing a lot but also I accept that more should be done in this regard. As a signatory of CEDAW, since Beijing, we have done a lot as a country to move forward in terms of gender equality.

We need to take cognisance and be proud of the fact that in terms of the 2013 Constitution, as a nation, we moved a great step forward in terms of promoting the rights of women and promoting gender equality in this country by adhering to the 50:50 approach to gender equality as a nation.

As our delegation went to Geneva earlier in the year, it was against the background of the context of the progress that we have made. It does not mean there is nothing more to be done. There is still a lot to be done in terms of the stereotypes that we experienced as a country from religious to cultural issues that continue to consolidate and further patriarchy in this country. At the same time, as Zimbabwe I think we are doing well in terms of pushing the agenda forward as we continue.

In support of the motion, I also needed to highlight that in line with Section 17 of the Constitution, we really need to act and ensure that as Parliament of Zimbabwe and in particular our Committee on Human Affairs, we work hard next year in pushing new legislation, for example Gender Equality Act and other Acts that were cited earlier by my Chairman. In particular, we will also need to do better in terms of alignment of laws. As you have heard from my Chair, we have the Public Entities Act, especially section 7 which talks about ensuring that there is gender balance in line with the 2013 Constitution of the country.

We know that in most boards in Zimbabwe today, women are still under represented and in this regard, I need to congratulate the Gender

Equality Commission because I think in 2020, they have gone out of their way to ensure that they create a data base which is something that we strongly recommended to them last year. Two weeks ago, I saw a public circular from the Gender Equality Commission looking for skilled and experienced women, women experts so that they enrich the database and ensure that where there are opportunities for board appointments women are equally represented in line with the 50:50 approach as envisaged by the 2013 Constitution.

Also the push towards changing the labour laws of this country, in particular when we talk about equal pay. It is very disappointing that as a country, in 2020 with regards to gender equality, there are still many instances in this country especially in the private sector where women do not get equal pay in terms of salaries in Zimbabwe. In most instances, we see women getting lesser pay for similar jobs with men and this new law is meant to promote equal pay for all genders.

So this Labour Relations Amendment that we have been mentioning is something that we should look forward to. Also to

support the progress that Zimbabwe has made, as you might be aware, as SADC, in the last two to three years, we have fought together as a region to end child marriages and I am proud to say that the Parliament of Zimbabwe was one of the institutions in SADC that stood firmly behind this campaign and we have had changes to the law, especially the Marriages Act that was recently enacted and as Parliament of Zimbabwe, we have stood firm in terms of promoting the fight to end child marriages. I know that on the ground, we have got cultural and religious challenges, but at least from a legislative point of view, we have done enough and now the battle has shifted to the implementation aspect. So we need to continue to fight together to end child marriages in this country.

In terms of the other proposed changes that we should look forward to next year, I also want to support the process around minimum mandatory sentencing, especially on cases around sexual harassment and gender based violence. This will help to send a strong message to the rest of the citizens in this country, who are still treating women as

objects and as sub-humans when they are entitled to equal dignity in line with the 2013 Constitution of this country.

In this regard, I think I need to highlight that as a Committee in terms of the Portfolio Committee for Women's Affairs, we are also pushing around a new law on sexual harassment. You might be aware that in Zimbabwe, sexual harassment is not a criminal offence and a lot of instances, those who are perpetrators of sexual harassment get away with a pat on the back. So we really need to be very firm. We must make it a crime to sexually harass a person in this country. It must be a crime that has got a minimum mandatory sentence to ensure that there is a sense of deterrence. In 2021, we want to ensure that sexual harassment becomes one of the topical issues in this country. We must end the silence, we must do it, we must not apologise.

I also wanted to support the report in terms of the progress that has been done on the implementation of support for women especially. For example, the country has tried to invest on one-stop centres and victim friendly court systems and so on. In this regard, we need to continue to

invest more resources to make sure that more women have access to these opportunities on the ground and ensure that they enjoy the right as enshrined in the 2013 Constitution of this country.

Also the proposed changes to other laws including in the Education Act that have been mentioned, we need to push for them next year. So I think in terms of legislative agenda, 2021 is going to be a very important year and I want to rally the Parliament of Zimbabwe to rally the rest of Zimbabwe to ensure that this thing about the 2013 Constitution promoting 50:50 does not continue to be political rhetoric but it becomes an everyday reality to everyone of our citizens, whether they are in a farm, mine, township, university or an office. Wherever they are, everyone should be given 50:50 and equal dignity and this thing of excluding some of us on the basis of gender, as a country, we must take a firm stand.

I also want to applaud the highlights in the report, some of the majors that have been done by Zimbabwe in terms of setting up of maternity homes and also scrapping of the maternity fees. That is part

of the process of giving equal access to the dignity of women in this country. Also before I sit down, I want to say as the Parliament of Zimbabwe, we need to be conscious of the fact that the issue around climate change which the report mentioned is very important because it does affect women more than men. It is important for us to understand that most women earn their livelihoods in the informal sector, farms, in the lands. So with the changes to the weather patterns, rain patterns and climate patterns, it affects them in terms of productivity. We need to make sure that we enact laws that protect our women. Also related to that as we enter into 2021, we must not lose sight of the fact that during 2020, largely as an impact of COVID-19, we might have lost some of the gains we have gotten over the years, especially around gender based violence. There are reports from civil society that clearly highlight that during the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, there was a lot of increase in the number of cases of gender based violence. So as we enter into 2021, we need to be conscious, to defend the losses and also make sure the gains are sustained.

Also something that I am very passionate about, the Treasury or the Minister of Finance and Economic Development has introduced a presumptive tax in the informal sector and I am very particularly worried about that. So in 2021, as the Parliament of Zimbabwe, we need to be conscious in terms of how we are going to implement the presumptive tax because we already know that most of our economy in this country is very informal. We already know that the majority of the people who are controlling that informal sector are women. So we already know that they are the real breadwinners of this country. The way this presumptive tax is going to be implemented to the small business owners, I am very worried and we need to be sensitive to that. So especially the women rights groups in this country, I think you really need to come out with ways to measure the implementation of the presumptive tax, how it is going to affect women who are running their small businesses in this country.

Last but not least, on the recommendations, I think in terms of Treasury they have a very important role to play. I think someone said,

is it the President elect of the United States of America, Joe Biden. I think he said you do not need to tell me what your priorities are, I will just look at your budget. So in terms of gender equality, empowering women in this country and protecting the girl child in this country, we need to see Treasury take the leadership role in terms of funding and making sure that there is an immediate or timely disbursement of funds.

I also like the recommendation around the delegation because it was said that there was concern that Zimbabwe had one of the largest delegations in Geneva. I think we had about 20 plus people while other countries had five to six people and the emphasis was that instead of sending a large delegation on a jamboree in Geneva, we should emphasise more on the local consultation in Zimbabwe. So for next year and the future we need to emphasise on stakeholder alignment here in Zimbabwe and then after we have come up with a national consensus, we send a small delegation in order to align ourselves with the expectation of the fiscus because we know that the country is going through a social economic crisis.

Then in terms of the plan of action, the recommendation is very important to me because Zimbabwe is very good in coming up with plans, new laws, policy changes and so on, but where it is very weak in implementation. So I would really be emphatic on that as Parliament of Zimbabwe, we need to make sure that there is a clear strategy around monitoring and evaluation of progress, there are proper key indicators in place and that there are proper evaluation processes that can be used to measure trends and progress. Also it is important for partnerships. The recommendations around partnerships, the Portfolio Committee on Women's Affairs should work closely with the Women's Caucus, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender Equality Commission and other key stakeholders like ministries such as Primary and Secondary Education where some of the issues happen.

I was in a workshop earlier on gender based violence and one of the things that I am very passionate about is that we need to change our education system in such a way that there is emphasis on citizenship. A lot of Zimbabweans are being schooled in terms of culture and religion

but in terms of citizenship, the State, through education, should play a role, especially at primary school, so that Zimbabweans are more responsible and more accountable as citizens. That is a responsibility that can come through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. That is where the whole debate of gender equality, masculinity, around the girl child is being sidelined, being left behind. It should come out at primary school. By the time we get to adulthood, it will be too late and they say you cannot teach an old dog new tricks.

I pray that as Zimbabwe, in 2021, we continue with the progress that we have made and I look forward to the Parliament of Zimbabwe playing a very crucial role, especially the Committee on Women Affairs. I thank you Madam Speaker.

***HON. ZEMURA:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I want to support the report that came from Geneva. I want to support what was said at that conference and I implore the powers that be to implement all that has been reported. It is worthless to just report issues but there is no implementation. We continue to hear that women are lagging behind;

they are being suppressed and actually we are being pushed backwards, laws are being laid down which support women but there is no implementation.

Looking at CEDAW Law which you went to witness its enactment; looking at what was said by Hon. Madiwa, I am overwhelmed by this and I think this is what is supposed to happen in all countries that when a delegation comes back from a conference, the outcome should be implemented. In Zimbabwe, in my own constituency, no woman is actually encouraged to participate for leadership positions. We just see things happening, whether it is an election or not, no one ever encouraged women to also participate. Even if it is clear that there are no women who participated, they just continue as if it is normal.

Recently we held elections for DCC, no one ever pointed out that women did not come up with the required number so let us do another election so that we have a full complement. We all know that we should be 50/50 with men so that we are applauded by other countries – [HON.

CHIKWINYA: *Inaudible interjections*] – Protect me Hon. Speaker from these people, they are disturbing me.

THE HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Chikwinya, do not disturb Hon Zemura, let her be heard in silence.

***HON. ZEMURA:** Thank you Ma'am. If we look at the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women, if we look closely, a lot is happening even in our VIDCO. In our VIDCO, only when the position says women representative, that is when men start looking for women. If that was not the case, we could see men in such a position. Men could wish to put on dresses so that they pretend to be women for the sake of getting such positions. So we should strongly support Gender Equality Act to be implemented in full force. Some of us who are in top position should be able to advocate for women to be in certain positions.

Even if a woman is pregnant, instead of having a law which compels men to accompany their wives when they are going to register the pregnancy, she goes alone as if she got that pregnancy alone. The

woman suffers during the pregnancy, delivery and in taking care of the child but she did not fall pregnant on her own but there is no law to compel men to take such responsibility. It takes two to be in a marriage. That is why at a wedding, they both sign. We should support this CEDAW legislation. You should not just fly to other countries, learn for free. These are degrees you are getting for free but there is need for implementation. Something that caused a delegation of a country to go to such a conference should show results. We have seen previous delegations going outside this country in relation to this CEDAW but still women are being sidelined.

Even if we look at our universities, men outnumber women. If you feel that women are not that intelligent, it is better to find suitable courses for women to attend so that they also have those degrees so that we also compete with men. We even want this to happen in Parliament, we should be more in this House. That is why we advocate for 50/50 to be real. In this House, there should be 110 females and 110 males. Even in councils, that should happen. It is discrimination if you notice

that women have not done their election properly, you just ignore. You should stop such things and encourage us to do the right thing so that we are 50/50.

Next elections, we do not want to hear lesser women; women's quota, many men. We want 50/50, if it does not happen, our President His Excellency must stop those elections. We can do it better. Women can do it better, they can rule better than men. We want to look at ourselves as we progress; we cannot say men look into our issues. They will never do that. So we should look into our own issues and give each other equal opportunities. Hon. Molokela's explanation was so touching; let us hope he walks the talk. Hon. Speaker Sir, we come up with excuses. It should be done from now henceforth. The delegation has reported, we should be watchful and be aware from education to health. Both husband and wife should go together to hospital for pre and postnatal care. I thank you.

HON. PHULU: On a point of order, from the summary of the report that I have heard, the reported being debated is very important.

Unfortunately, it has not been circulated so that we can do justice to the report. The quality of the debate will continue to deteriorate as long as we do not have all the points that need to be ventilated. I do not know what can be done about that.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER (HON. MUTOMBA): Has that not been circulated to our emails?

I am told that it was circulated but they are checking on the date.
Thank you.

***HON. CHIKUKWA:** Mr. Speaker, I have stood up to support the CEDAW report which was presented by Hon. Madiwa on behalf of the delegation which went to Geneva. I support the issue of GBV which came out of this meeting. This speaks to the violence emanating from homes. This issue should be looked at seriously because most of the women who are violated find it difficult to go back to their homes and they end up being accommodated in safe houses. Musasa is one of these homes. I am pleading with the Government that we should construct safe houses so that the violated women can find shelter. We should not

only rely on Musasa but Government should also do something to help these women.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Justice – they have come up with courts but the places are very far and they do not have transport to get there. If it was possible, the Ministry of Women Affairs should be given transport and accommodation to house women. The transport will take the violated to the police and hospitals because most of the time evidence is no longer available.

The other thing that I want to ask is about 50/50 representation. Our Constitution states that there should be equal representation but for it to be implemented, it is very difficult. When it comes to elections or in our embassies or at boards – women should be chairpersons and men to be vice chairpersons.

***HON. KWARAMBA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker for giving me a chance to debate on this exciting topic which has been brought to this House by Hon. Madiwa from Conference on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The issue is on the

emancipation of women, empowerment and their women. Instead, women are being deprived of their rights. Section 17 and 18 of our Constitution talks about equality of women and men – this is only on paper but it is not being implemented. We kindly request that women be given opportunities because at the moment it is not happening. We request that this organisation grants women their rights and opportunities at the workplace. A few women sit on boards and even in Cabinet, there are not more than two women who sit there. Politically, we are seeing men dominating. Even in DCC that were held recently, we had a few women who took positions.

I would like to thank our Government because we have seen equality on the appointment of Governors. Previously in Parliament we had a few women because they could not compete with men – we would like to applaud on the issue of proportional representation. Thirty-four percent is now women in this Parliament, it is a small figure and we anticipate a 50/50 situation. We should change the legislation so that women can equally participate in Parliament. We want a 50/50 equality

between men and women representation in Parliament. Women should be given enough resources so that they can compete against men.

People will endure their stay as citizens in this country.

It is our wish as women to see women on top also. Let it be vice versa – equal opportunity for women would be a delight to us. The abuse of women should stop. The system should go against gender based violence. Anyone who abuses a woman should be given a stiff sentence. It should be hard on anyone who abuses women.

If you give a task to women, they will do it so well. Women are so hardworking, loving and supportive. My advice to men is that they should look at women with respect. Women wake up early in the morning, do all the chores, go to the fields, do all the domestic duties and even walk children to school. They are the last ones to sleep in the House. There should be an opportunity to say let us look closely at the duties done by women since they are so hardworking. I would like to thank you very much for attending this conference Hon. Madiwa. It is my wish that what we discussed here will be implemented. Thank you.

HON. DR. KHUPE: I would like to also add my voice to the report by Hon. Madiwa on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. It is 41 years since CEDAW came into play but the sad reality is that women are still being discriminated. Mr. Speaker, God created a man and a woman, and they were given equal rights like what the other Hon. Member said. We are all equal in the eyes of the Lord and in the eyes of the law, and we must be equal in the eyes of society.

Mr. Speaker, women constitute 52% of the population, but let us go to the workplaces. When it comes to promotion, even if a woman has got the same qualifications with a man, you find that a woman is discriminated. In the majority of cases, it is because she will fall pregnant and go on maternity leave. Women are discriminated against because of that and they do not get that promotion.

Let us go to mines Mr. Speaker, how many women own mines? Very few women own mines. Why is it so? It is all because of discrimination Mr. Speaker. Going to the farms, half of the food

consumed in this world comes from women's hands but how many women own farms? Very few women own farms, why is it so? It is all because of discrimination. I think it is high time - like I said it is 41 years since CEDAW came into play.

Yes, I would like to acknowledge that a lot has been done in terms of gender equality, but we still have a long way to go. Look at our Parliament, even if women constitute 52%, how many women are in this Parliament? They are very few. Let us go to local authorities, how many women are in those local authorities - very few, but I would like to acknowledge that at least a deliberate move has been done so that women come in through proportional representation. We have the 66 here in Parliament and the Government has extended that to local authorities. For them it is going to be 30%, but it is a good starting point. We hope that going forward, it is going to be more than 30% so that we have 50%.

Mr. Speaker, let us come to politics. Women generally work ten times harder than men and this is the reality. When it comes to

corruption statistics they have shown that women are less corrupt than men. However, when it comes to decision making bodies where people are supposed to be represented equally, women are not anywhere near those positions. When it comes to politics, women are not there.

Women are discriminated all because they are women. At times they are discriminated because of their tribe. This must come to a stop Mr. Speaker.

Like I said, we are equal in the eyes of the Lord, the law and society and therefore, no one must be discriminated all because they are women. Women must be treated just like men. If there is a position, look at that woman based on merit and not based on their gender or tribe. I think this must be inculcated in our culture as Zimbabweans to say let us treat women and men equally. Let there be equitable distribution of opportunities and resources to both men and women.

Even when it comes to Parliament, talking about gender budgeting when debating the budget, the budget must also see to it that interests of both women and men are taken into consideration so that everyone has

a better life. So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the report and I would like to acknowledge that yes, a lot has been done but the truth of the matter is that we still have a long way to go. It is therefore important that as a Government and people, we pull up our socks so that we do more in order for gender equality to be realised. Thank you very much.

+HON. MKANDLA: Thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to air some few points on the CEDAW as raised by Hon. Molekele. I want to start by saying women are people who are looked down upon. If you look at the roles played by women, they are always left to do house duties. There are no women in most influential positions, for example commissions. In the security sector, we normally have men yet as women we should be found in those positions because the country is ours. We want 50-50 quota system as well. Mr. Speaker Sir, women should get their quota in councils. Women in councils do the same job as men. Therefore, we need to make sure that each time men are elevated in Government positions or parastatals women are

also given those opportunities. When we talk of 50:50, we are not only talking of those people that are able-bodied but we are also including those that are disabled. They are also people; disability is godly and no one wished for them to be disabled.

We want to be given opportunities to lead quite a number of constituencies even though we do not have enough resources. We need to make sure that we continue to help people and the same people that we help will elevate us. We want to be given our rights – [HON.

MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] -

HON. SHAMU: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. The report of the 75th Session of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women held in Geneva from the 1st February is indeed a very important report which was discussing a very important topic. When we talk about the need to stop discrimination of women in all its forms, we are not doing so as if we are carrying out an act of charity – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] - It is not an act of charity, it is not as a result of humanitarian or compassionate position. The end to

the discrimination of women in all forms is a fundamental necessity for our revolution to succeed. It is a fundamental necessity for the development of Zimbabwe. Indeed, it is one of the most important pillars that guarantee continuity into the process of ensuring that there is a holistic approach to the liberation of the people of Zimbabwe as we want to end all forms of exploitation of women by men.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the elimination of all forms of discrimination obviously are found in the political scenario, financial sector and culturally. We could go on and on and talk about the effort by many leaders all over the world, but I feel that following the presentation by Hon. Madiwa on this report, what is important to say is the way forward. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recommend that there be established a monitoring committee, a monitoring instrument of ensuring that what we are saying today is actually done.

Mr. Speaker Sir, we have the Anti Corruption Commission. It has a particular task to carry out with many other forms of Commissions and various arms of Government that ensure that certain things are done.

Therefore, for us to be able to say let us not continue to talk about it as a talk show but let us walk the talk. Let us establish a permanent committee that ensures that what we are saying today is a permanent one and ensures that what we are saying today is actually done. They monitor all activities that are negatively impacting on the women so that they are able to fulfill the very objectives of our revolution. I thank you Mr. Speaker Sir.

HON. MISIHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker Sir and let me thank Hon. Madiwa and Molokela for bringing this report and giving us an opportunity to debate. Allow me to start with speaking to the political will. I want to start with a point of political will because I think when we talk about discrimination sometimes it looks like it is difficult to address it.

Let me acknowledge what has just happened in the few months when Hon. Khupe came in as Leader of Opposition. We were struggling in Parliament here because Chairpersons of Committees were largely males and very few were women – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] – It

took a leadership that is sensitive to come and change that picture, not only do we have more women as Chairpersons but we also have young Chairpersons. We want to acknowledge that it is actually very easy to change certain things. We think it is about laws but sometimes it is just political will. So I just wanted to acknowledge that particular issue.

There is also a misconception and I think we want to deal with that especially some of us who have publicly said we are feminists.

Feminism is anti-culture and anti-African. I say so because just last week I did a ritual here where I knelt in front of the Minister of Finance to show my gratitude and not only in this House did I get jabs but also on Twitter and social media, where it was misinterpreted to say any woman who kneels is therefore disempowered. I want to deal with that particular aspect because it is wrong.

Empowerment and issues of discrimination fundamentally are based on choice. If I had been forced to kneel then that would have been a problem but if I decide that I am going to kneel and if I decide that I am going to rub my husband's back, that is not a problem. I do not see

any problem if I decide that I am going to cook for the husband, for my father or for you Hon. Speaker. If I think that you are older than me and I therefore need to kneel, it should never be misinterpreted as not being empowered.

I think those people that say so are people who actually do not understand the origin of our culture. I say so because I think for a long time, African women have thought that if they go to Europe that is when they will learn issues of empowerment. In fact, look at what has happened in those democracies that have tried to preach to us issues of democracy. They have struggled with issues of bringing women into politics. As Africans, we have done much better because even in our cultural traditional way we have been able to ensure that women are put into positions of control.

What has actually been a problem in Africa is not the man or the culture; it has been the bastardisation of our culture by colonialism. It is colonialism that came and started telling our men that they need to live separately from us and therefore got them into small little houses in

cities and left us at the homes\ villages and denied us to be with our husbands. They are the ones that created a sense of separation between us and our men. If you look at our African culture, it does not matter what it is but an African culture has always been very good around issues of treating women including being able to sexually gratify women. It is a conversation that was being done in the African culture. The reason why we are struggling with these men now is because they have taken on the Eurocentric way of dealing with us.

So I just wanted to deal with the issue of Afro-feminism and be very clear that even as we go to this conference, we need to begin to say we are not coming to Geneva because we think white people have a better way of treating their men. If you look at people that do the most gender based violence, the figures are actually higher in Europe than there are in Africa. As we talk about women's empowerment as African women, I think we should always remember that we are doing much better than those countries that are in Europe. We should never

underestimate or put down our culture and equalize anything that we do in our culture as resembling disempowerment.

I want to deal with the issue of politics in the House. Again, I have been very frustrated when I go to meetings and Hon. Madiwa as Chairperson needs to continuously be putting this down. I do not know who went and lied to people that women that came on proportional representation do not speak in Parliament. If we were to look at the *Hansard*, let us tell facts. Let us not just talk about things that do not exist. We must best put figures to what is going on. In fact, the women that have gone up and spoken here are women that are both in constituencies and on proportion representation and they have done extremely well. I have not been unable to speak in this House because I came on a proportional representation ticket. I also have not felt that anyone who has been voted through a constituency is a much better Member of Parliament than the one that came under proportional representation. In fact, the proportional representation ones have a bigger constituency and represent both women and men. I think we

need to deal with that aspect because I am tired of these stories. The proportional representation women are called BACCOSI, and I want to see a man who will dare call me BACCOSI because there are men here who have not said a word; they are the BACCOSIs. The women have been able to speak every other minute, so we need to deal with it. The only problem that I have and I am glad the Chief Whip for Government is here, the Minister is here, the Leader of the House has gone but I see the Minister is here. I want to say that there is no lesser Member of Parliament. We have raised this CDF thing and we will continue to raise it. You cannot allocate resources to another Member of Parliament and deny another without it not being discrimination.

As Parliament, we are talking about CEDAW and all the other things that are guilty of discrimination. We just passed the Budget; it is unfortunate that my baby sister here Hon. Member, we probably lost it somewhere along the way and it got passed in the Budget. You cannot have a situation where we say we are going to create 210 constituency offices. What are you trying to say about women that came on

proportional representation? In fact, that is what becomes discrimination. You want us to go *tonoroja mumaoffice enyu isusu*. If you then start inviting us to come, I have to come and ask for a little table and bench. At the end of the day, if the issue of equality is a principle at law and at international level, you cannot as a Government and as a Parliament do anything that says you are going to do this for this Member of Parliament and you will do that for that Member of Parliament. When we sat here and left this House at 2am, I tried to count; there were more women that were in this House than the men that were busy doing whatever with blue tablets that are sold at the hotels than women that were sitting in this very House debating the Budget.

After we have done what we have done, you then tell us no we are going to do this for this male Member of Parliament and not for a female Member of Parliament - it is a problem. We are actually mobilising ourselves to do a petition. We are going to go and see the Minister of Finance and say this to him. If he refuses, we are taking it to a court of

law and see whether a court in this country will agree that another Member of Parliament is different from the other.

I just want to deal with the issue of gender based violence. It is not just about physically beating somebody up. It is about the language and attitude. When we say to our male colleagues in here, when I am standing up and making a point and you think you want to invisibilise it and you think you want to joke about it, it is actually gender based violence. The basis of human interaction is to be able to engage with me respectfully. We are not saying agree with us; disagree with me but disagree on the basis that I am a human being and that I have an opinion. If you think each time I try and speak you want to heckle, you want to pull me down, you are a violator yourself. You are doing GBV. For those colleagues that do it, we may allow you to do it. We may have gotten a thick skin to do it but we want you to know that you are a violator. You are a GBV person who is doing gender-based violence. We need to put that clean because when you do that, there are young people that have just come into this House, that are trying to find

themselves, that are trying to find their confidence. The moment they try and do that and you do that to them, you are not only destroying the confidence in them and the potential for them to be a better person but you are destroying the confidence of a whole lot of young women who are watching this process and are beginning to say, do I really want to be in a place like that. If you are men who want to encourage your daughter to be something different, start treating your other colleagues in this House differently. We always say that the best gift you can give to your child is the way you treat your wife or your girlfriend because you are creating a whole picture and a perception to how she feels about herself.

I was listening to a radio interview and I thought it was a brilliant one and I would have wanted to record it. The DJ was talking to men on radio and she asked men to answer one question. If you were to be asked this question, would you say your daughter should be married to a man like you? Do you know that there was no man who came back and said yes? They all said aaah no, because they know what they do and

they do not want their child to go through exactly what they are going through but they are putting other daughters of other fathers into exactly that situation. Each time you treat a woman in a particular way, remember that is exactly the same way that your child may be treated.

I then want to deal with the issue around unpaid labour and my colleagues have spoken a lot around it. The one area that was noticed...

HON. TSUNGA: On a point of order.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: What is your point of order?

HON. TSUNGA: I am a gender champion but sometimes when women speak, we must totally respect them all the time, I know.

However, they must also be open to criticism in a manner – [HON.

MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] – Okay, point of order.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Hon. Tsunga! I will give you the floor to debate.

HON. TSUNGA: My point of order Mr. Speaker is gender based violence is both ways. *Kana tichiti varume mumahotel vari busy kutora mablue tablets again, that is abuse to parliamentarians in here. When we interject to kuti aiwa musadaro, which blue tablets are you talking*

about, kwakutonzi musadaro. Let us respect each other both ways and not abuse men *nekuti vakazopindura wozoti igender based violence.* Let us not talk about blue tablets and that, *munopenga* – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] –

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Hon. Member, your point of order has been overruled – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] – Order Hon. Members! Order Hon. Kwaramba. Hon. Tsunga, Hon. Tsunga! Order Hon. Members. I am going to send you out Hon. Tsunga. Hon. Kwaramba! *Hon. Tsunga ndakukusendai kunze manje.* Hon. Tsunga, out!

Hon. Tsunga left the House.

HON. PHULU: Mr. Speaker Sir, we need a ruling on the point of order or withdrawal.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: I have sent him out. That is my ruling. That is the decision I have given. I have sent him out of the House. There is no other ruling – [HON. PHULU: *Mr. Speaker Sir, speaking of the blue tablet, he was not sent out because of the point of order he raised. He was sent out because of his behaviour.*] – I have

ruled according to the way I have seen it. There is no need for you to direct me to do the job that I am supposed to be doing. Please, sit down unless of course you would want to be sent out as well – [HON.

PHULU: *Inaudible interjections.*] You want to be sent out? Please sit down. Hon. Phulu! Hon. Phulu – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] – *Ndinokuburitsa kunze. Ndati ndinokuburitsa kunze Hon. Phulu* – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*] –

HON. MISIHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir for protecting me. I was going to the point – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections.*]-

HON. MISIHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker Sir and thank you for protecting me. I was going to go to the point that the Committee that I lead, the Primary and Secondary Education Committee, when we have been doing visits in schools, we have found a very interesting phenomena and I am just speaking to the issue of unpaid labour that my colleagues were talking about. We have as a nation, brought in the issue around school feeding which in principle is a very good idea but if you look at the amount of work that

women have to engage in to just cook for the children that are in school. Like my Hon. Chair of Women's Caucus was speaking when she said when there is need for support, when there is need for labour even sometimes at funerals, the people that we see there are women.

That is what you also see with school feeding. It would be interesting that men would also come and do the sharing around the cooking to enable that we feed our children, but in the majority of cases, the people that are there are the women. They are the ones that go and look for the firewood, look for the water, bring the relish in most instances and we need to begin to say as a nation perhaps we need to find a better way of doing school feeding that does not force the majority of women to now extend their hours beyond the hours that they spend at the house in now doing work at schools.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER: Order Hon. Member, you now have five more minutes to go.

HON. MISIHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: So Hon. Speaker, I was only just going to say and I think you saw some of the emotions, one of

the things that you have taught us Hon. Speaker, when we come into Parliament, is that you do not call yourself Honourable. I do not stand up and introduce myself as Hon. Misihairabwi, it is other people that see the honour in calling me Honourable. It is exactly the same with the males that call themselves gender champions. You do not say I am a gender champion. We see your being gender champion by your actions, behaviour and by the way you treat us, then we know you are a gender champion. So this 'I am a gender champion' from males needs to stop. We will call you a gender champion when we see the way that you treat us. So some of this behaviour, we will not call you a gender champion and we are not saying do not disagree with us, it is the way you disagree with me, it is the way you say no, I do not think you should have said it in this way that shows me that you are a man and a proper man that I am going to respect. So I thank you very much Hon. Speaker.

***HON. TOGAREPI:** Thank you very much Hon. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to speak in this House, also to contribute to the report brought into this House by Hon. Madiwa. I saw it as a report

that touched a lot on the problems that women and men are facing. It is a very helpful report to us as humans, which teaches us and highlights on the aspect of respecting each other as men and women. That way, there will be development and progress in this country.

I also want to emphasise that women are very important in life as people socially. They are very important to the economy of this country. They have done a very good job by carrying us in their womb for nine months and we should instead honour and respect them. I have a wife and in the absence of my wife, that is when I actually see that there is something missing in our lives as men because everything is in the hands of a woman. They are the only ones who cannot take leave. They do everything at home all the chores. It is a lot of work. They do not have even a single day that they take leave from any duty.

We should, as a nation, fix the mentality that people have. They should be able to respect their sisters and wives and they should understand they are equally important just as they are. Hon. Speaker, I say as a country, we should look at this report where there are gaps in

our Constitution, even that which is happening in our lives in this country, we should try and implement and adopt those points which came out in this report. If we are to implement that women will be respected, they will be honoured.

Looking at the quota system, I would like to thank the Hon President for granting the opportunity to women through proportional representation. This is a manner of compensating them for the work they are doing. I, as the Chief Whip in this House, would like to thank the previous speaker who said that women in this Parliament do a lot of work in this House. They work a lot in this House. I have never had any problem with women Members of Parliament in my work as the Chief Whip. I actually encourage them to come into the House in numbers because they are so much into the development of this nation.

Hon. Speaker, even in the matrimonial home, women do more work as compared to men. Even in this House, if we look at Chairpersons of Committees, they work very hard. They know what

they are supposed to do. I have never done follow ups or made calls for them to do their work. They do their work very well.

We should actually concentrate on the equality of men and women. Looking at the 52% of our population which is women, we should continue to respect them. Even in our presentations in this House, we should respect women. They are hardworking people and they want to develop their country. Men in this Parliament, when you go back home, you have heard that report you have to lead by example by according equal opportunities to our wives so that they can also be proud to take up leadership position seeing the respect we show them. I thank you.

***HON. MPARIWA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker. Let me support the report that was presented in this august House by Hon. Madiwa, which was seconded by Hon. Molokela. I am happy that we agree and have the same viewpoint as Hon. Members of this august House would like to chronicle the path that we have travelled as a nation. Going back to the 1995 Beijing Women's Conference, Zimbabwe was part of that. As women, we were having meetings to discuss such matters so that the

CEDAW issue is resolved and we have seen Ministers coming and going still fighting for CEDAW to become a law that is operational in Zimbabwe.

Hon. Speaker, you always see what happens in this House - the way we speak and the way we criticise issues; these are issues that are spoken about in CEDAW that as a nation we need to respect the fact that women are also able. Let me commend Hon. Misihairabwi who spoke about leadership of this august House, looking at different chairpersons. Chairpersons were there during the budget presentation; women are there but it does not mean that they do not have a role to play. So we need to understand that if things are done properly and if responsibilities are given to women, we would see results. It is important that we have a female Chief Whip. I am happy that we have a female Deputy Chief Whip.

If we do not speak about these issues, those who are responsible for appointing might not know that we appreciate things that are happening. This is what CEDAW talks about that leadership positions

find women being active. For this House to form the Women's Parliamentary Caucus is because female Hon. Members of Parliament had seen that it was crucial to have such a caucus so that issues are discussed at that level.

Hon. Speaker, when you look at different households, gender based violence that is being spoken about and sexual harassment, these are issues that are facing women. Of course, men are also affected but you saw the demonstration that happened in this House during budget debate, Hon. Misihairabwi was not going to continue debating. These are some of the issues that we are saying we must not just stand up to criticise because we do not want to listen to someone. This is gender based violence. I saw it in social media, because the weapon that we were given as women is the voice to sing so that people know that something is not right. So women sing even in this august House if we are not happy with what is happening.

A lot of issues, for example, you would find that our nation takes various issues because they identify different things that are happening

around the globe. At times you find women being beaten up and Government realised that if there are no laws to protect such people, then there was not going to be any prosecution of offenders. – [AN HON. MEMBER: *Inaudible interjections.*] – Hon. Speaker, can I be protected because this is gender based violence that is happening.

When you look at domestic work that is done by women, which is countless, Hon. Togarepi mentioned that, so we want that as citizens of this nation, we need to appreciate these responsibilities because they are not paid for. A woman goes to work; they go back home and carry out their household chores. That discrimination must not found happening upon women's lives. Let me end by saying as leaders in this august House, even in our communities where we reside, we must be seen teaching and guiding because our children and those we lead should be found to be understanding these issues. If they do not understand then we will be found to be going astray.

When we look at funeral gatherings, you will find that mostly there will be women. When they gather you discover that the way they sit is

that women will be given more tasks. When you go to the kitchen, you find that they will be cooking. Even if it is raining, they are pressurized to make sure that they cook as fast as possible. Those who are seated inside the house will be demanding that women prepare food fast despite the fact that they are just sitting and women are working.

I am trying to emphasise that the point that women have a big responsibility. It is difficult to be a daughter in law when you attend a funeral or there is a family gathering. Women are people who easily forget and forgive. These are people who easily accept things. They do not keep grudges. Zimbabwe should continue joining the families of nations. I am happy that Hon. Madiwa came back with the report with recommendations that we need to accept and apply even to different ministries because CEDAW is a mixed bag. I suggest that we accept the recommendations and work on them so that we understand that women live differently from men. I am happy that we are seeing development in the nation in different aspects. I thank you.

***HON. BANDA:** On a point of order. I am very happy that our Chief Whips understand GBV and we noticed that this august House is orderly. I appreciate them for understanding. I thank you.

***HON. J. CHIDAKWA:** I would like to thank Hon. Madiwa for going out to represent us and coming back to present a report. The issue that the Hon. Member brought to this House is critical and it affects everyone. As a nation, we need to take this issue and analyse it and change the way we respond and treat women. I was born of woman, for me to grow up it is because of a woman, the food that I eat at home is prepared by a woman and the clothes that I put on are washed by a woman. Even if I cannot find my socks, I ask a woman; when tired after work, I go back to a woman. Let me emphasise the point that we need to respect and honour women. Let us give women their responsibility and opportunities not only on political positions but even regarding resources and when different activities are being done because women are important in our lives.

We should understand the Bible – if it says the woman is a helper, why then should we abuse and harass a woman? It is not good to abuse a woman because for a nation to exist, it is because of a woman. We are all products of women. Beating or killing women should end.

When a woman falls pregnant, we need to agree that both of us are pregnant as a couple, because we have agreed on that responsibility. This responsibility should rest on both of us until the baby is delivered – we carry the burden together. Men should not only celebrate after nine months.

When Gender Based Violence (GBV) advocacy started, mostly women were being invited to different forums being addressed. Normally, this would mean that the victim is being addressed but the perpetrator is not being engaged in these issues. It is important to engage both men and women so that men also understand issues. At some times men perpetrate GBV because they do not know and do not understand the implication of their behavior. It is important that men understand and be on the same level with women so that there is behaviour change.

I would like to support the issue that was raised by Hon. Chikukwa regarding safe houses for women. I believe that it is important because sometimes when a woman is beaten up and goes to report her case, at times some men are feared in their communities. That fear results in other issues being swept under the carpet. At times some people do not share their plight because they will be afraid but if there are shelters and safe houses, then they will be able to come out and speak about their issues.

We need whistleblowers on criminal offences, but let me say that it is important that we also have these on GBV because there are a lot of issues that are happening in different neighborhoods and people pretend that these issues are not happening despite having observed and seen people being beaten. That is what I believe, so that this issue is resolved and we reach a point where there is gender parity, where men and women have equal opportunities. This is my viewpoint – when we speak of blue tablets, we need to raise such issues. I thank you.

HON. NDUNA: I would like to applaud Hon. Madiwa for bringing up the report on CEDAW. It has been spoken about enough times – the issues to do with the provisions of the Constitution as it relates to protection of women and also gender balance, but I want to touch on a few provisions of the Constitution, in particular as it relates to social and cultural norms.

Section 25 of the Constitution mandates the State and all institutions and agencies of Government at every level to protect and foster the institution of family and to adopt the provisions, measures and provisions of care and assistance to mothers, fathers and other family members who have charge of children within limits and the resources available to them. As long as we do not adhere to the ethos and values of removal of gender based value and also to uphold the dignity of our women, we also undermine the dignity of our children and family values including the fathers. If you want to empower a nation, you want to empower a woman for what men can do women can do better. If you

want to protect human rights, protect women's rights. Women's rights are national rights and are human rights.

Section 80 of the Constitution further mandates Government to ensure that at every level there is equal dignity of all persons, men and women included. So, there is the issue of gender balance also as it relates to the Constitution. Why do I say so Mr. Speaker, because the Constitution centres the family values around women. Sections 120 and 124 of the Constitution further *de facto* speaks to the acceleration of equality between women and men. I say this because our Constitution is not without merit. It has got a lot of merit. It does not have a dearth in terms of protection of women's rights as it relates to the equilibrium and equating them to men's rights.

I want to thank the mover in that she has conscientised us in terms of exactly what it is that we are supposed to do in order that we are also at par with global trends as it relates to protection of women's rights. There are five things that I believe in, that is honesty and earnest if

improved and dealt with expeditiously and also very well, effectively and efficiently.

The issue of water where women have to go far and wide in search of water; I come from a place which has a plethora of boreholes. We need to have good portable safe drinking water so close, in proximity to our houses so that our women are not prone to abuse as they criss-cross the width and breadth of our towns and areas of jurisdiction. It is women who are affected by the deficiency of water provision.

The issue of housing Mr. Speaker, where there is a constricted and confined space where in particular and a good example is N23A in Chegutu West Constituency under the Chegutu Municipality where there are three families living in three rooms of ten people each, the person that gets affected the most is the woman because first and foremost, in that confined space there is no procreation, copulation and conjugal rights to talk about. If there is any of such conduct, there is also child abuse from children who are watching what is happening in the adult world especially the girl-child who gets affected the most.

The issue of deficiency of farming land which should be given as a quota to women for them to be owners of farming land, if they are owners of the matrixes and the economic hub, they certainly are going to shy away from gender based violence because most times than not, gender based violence is because of the deficiency of the economic benefit. Let us empower our women in order to empower our nation.

The issue of mining rights should also reside with the women. If you want to see that you can get undermined, do not have money. If you have money or money is in the wrong hands, it is very dangerous. Money in men's hands is prone to more times in terms of abuse than when it is with the women. If you give money to women you certainly can go a long way in terms of prohibiting gender based violence and the dignity of women can be upheld by just having economic benefits through mining claims.

Last one; just having them have business opportunities and projects like I have done in Chegutu West Constituency for ages between 16 and 35 of the girl-child numbering 7 500, I think we can

empower the women and avoid, avert, annihilate and eradicate the issue of undermining women power and women's dignity. I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to vociferously, effectively and efficiently debate this motion by Hon. Madiwa seconded by Hon. Molekele. I thank you.

HON. MUNETSI: I want to thank Hon. Madiwa for bringing this motion. One thing that has lacked in this debate is that it should have been live on broadcast so that men could hear what we are saying here. I am not equal to a woman in any way. I want you to watch that woman at home. When she wakes up early in the morning she makes the bed where you have been sleeping. She wakes up the children, bath them, prepare some food for the family, washes the dishes and goes to fetch water. She comes back and makes sure the children have gone to school. She starts preparing lunch; there is no firewood at home and she goes to the bush. She gets firewood, prepares lunch, you eat and sit under the tree. She cleans the dishes and goes back to fetch water. I just want us

to watch that woman throughout the day and see if at all we are in any way nearer to what they do. We are not.

After everything has been said, the bottom line is that women are very important. If women were evil, no men would be alive. We harass them, beat them but at the end of the day there is food for you in the home of which she could have just put poison and killed you. You bully women around. Do you want to stay alone on this planet? Would you be able to manage this planet alone without women? There are some things that they do. For example, if we look at the charity work that is done by women men cannot do it. Social work that is done by women; men cannot do it.

Also, women have a degree of respect. Men do not respect each other, “*ndeipi, ndeipi, zvirisei*,” and you pass. Women say, “*maswerasei*” and that is dignity. Men have no time for that and it is true. It is not a campaign; men have no time for that. How often have you got to your home and say to your wife *maswerasei* - you wait for her to say that. It shows a sign of respect in women. If your child messes up

at home, how often have you cleaned the child? When I stop to speak, I want this message to sink in us. How often have we cleaned a messed up child at home? I have never done it and you have never done it; let us agree.

HON. S. BANDA: On a point of order, I just want him to withdraw that no one has ever done it in this House. I personally, my wife knows that I am one of those men who cleans diapers and washes nappies for my child because my wife has taught me to do such good work. I just wanted to correct him to say he should also try to emulate me because a few men do that. I want men to emulate me in what I do with regard to nappies and so on – [HON. MEMBERS: *Hear, hear.*] –

HON. MUNETSI: Thank you. I have come across one man who has testified. I want to talk about maturity in women. I have witnessed that in this Parliament. If the Leader of Opposition Hon. Dr. Khupe stands up to speak, there is a lot of maturity in what she says. You can tell that there is someone speaking there, meaning to say that women are also very mature even in politics. Give them space to exercise their

rights. Women can even force us men to take a bath – [*Laughter.*] – When we do not want to bath, they will tell you to go and bath. I just want to show you how caring women are. They care about your body, clothes and when you leave home, they make sure your hair is combed. When you walk out they make sure you are smart. Women look after everyone at home from the father, to the children and to the extended family. If your relatives come home and you are not there, they see your wife and she looks after them. Overall, I want to say women are very important. Let us give them chance, respect and space so that they exercise their duties. I thank you.

***HON. RAIDZA:** Thank you Hon. Speaker for according me this opportunity to add my voice on this report which has been tabled by Hon. Madiwa. Hon. Madiwa has touched on a very important issue which we face on a daily basis. It is an issue that we should debate because it touches on our daily lives. Many people think that when we talk about gender parity, we are talking about the work place, Parliament or politics but these issues have a beginning.

I want to touch on a few things. Firstly, I would want to touch on the way we speak, our language not here in Parliament but those who do advertising. They use women to advertise their products. At times, they parade them naked or improperly dressed implying that if products are depicted in the picture of a woman, the products will be bought.

However, this is violating the women's rights. We have seen even those who sell food especially in other countries; they use women. I am saying that if we have our products, we should look for other means of advertising, not looking down on other people. We should not put women upfront or use them so that we get things. I think that is not good because that is abuse. We are the same under the law. Even before God, men and women are the same, so we should respect one another.

One other thing that I want to talk about is an issue which has been touched by Hon. Nduna, that when we are looking at what we want as men and women are different. However, at some places you find that things are taken at par and it ends up giving lesser opportunities to

women. For example in the public transport, you find that everyone is asked to stand in a queue. When there is pressure, those who are pushed behind are women. The men get home early and they do not do anything. The women who have been left behind are the ones who get home and do the house chores. So I think that should be looked into so that we know that we are all equal but when it comes to other services which we want to offer to our people; electricity load shedding or water rationing should be taken into consideration looking at the plight of women that when it is towards evening, they are supposed to prepare dinner for the family. So I think preference should be given to women so that they get these services.

As men, we have to be sensitive so that these women will be able to do their duties which are not paid for and which are many. As a Government, even as private companies or as people in general, I think we should help so that we reduce the load of their chores.

The women want to be respected in everything that we do even in our homes. Sometime during our couples meeting at church, my pastor

taught me that there are two categories of men. You can be a father who does not even provide a shelter for your family, you will just be called a man by virtue that you are putting on a trousers. He went on to teach that if we do not want to abuse our women or violate their rights we should provide good shelter for them to stay with our families in order that they are comfortable and free to do their work. In Shona they say *musha mukadzi*.

However, you cannot have such a home if you do not help your wife so that they live comfortably. So, my encouragement is that as men, we should play our role of supporting women in the work place, in the homes and everywhere so that we have a good country.

In Proverbs 31, an illustration of a good woman is given that each and every one who finds a good wife would have done a good thing. If you read verse 10 of Proverbs Chapter 31, it says that he who finds a wife, finds a good thing, a precious thing.

With those few words, I just wanted to encourage that the Bible respects women, so as men we should also respect what God respects. I thank you.

***HON. MUTOMBA:** Thank you very much Hon. Speaker for giving me this opportunity to contribute also to this debate with regards to the motion which was passed in this House – a very important one. A lot has been said in this House. However, I want us to focus on the creation of a human being and how Jesus came so that we see the importance of a woman.

When God decided to send his son, Jesus Christ on earth, he did not do magic with regards to the creation of a man but he send the Holy Spirit to the woman, Mary. God decided that the woman should carry His son to represent himself physically between Him and the Holy Spirit. We are living here because of Christ but the person who carried Jesus Christ is a woman, so, why are we then abusing the women? What are we trying to prove? There are churches who abuse women, who say a women is not allowed to preach, yet the person they are preaching

about is Jesus Christ who is the Lord of all and born by a woman. What exactly are we saying?

If a man is ill, the woman takes good care of him but men gives a lot of silly excuses. If it is the woman who is ill, men look for someone else to assist her. Let us see the good things that are done by these women.

If we are talking about gender based violence, we are living out a lot of things. Let us respect our women because they are doing a very good job. We see men clinching feasts towards a woman because of disagreements in the homes, which is not good at all. If you see women hesitating or showing fear in the homes, it is because of abuse in the home.

Let us look at the definition of a man – did men carry the nine months pregnant? This means these women are very important. They are the ones who carried even the Lord Jesus Christ. We are supposed to be in agreement and understand each other. In fact, these women are supposed to get more shares in any sharing of anything between the men

and the woman because of their hard work and good things they do for us as men.

Its very painful to say traditional leaders' methods are very oppressive to women, there are certain areas where women are not allowed to be traditional leaders according to their culture. What are we trying to say? The air that we are breathing right now is from the Lord, the very people we are oppressing are the one who were blessed to carry the Lord in their womb.

Let us implement the things that we are mentioning in this House. My suggestion is that let it be 52 to 48% because the woman are working extra hard. They are doing a lot; let us give them their proper position. For nine months a man was carried in a woman's womb. Look at all the things that women do. They go an extra mile yet men cannot do anything compared to what these women are doing. The oxygen that we are breathing is coming from the Lord. The very persons that we are oppressing are the ones who carried the Lord. Let us implement the things that we are mentioning in this House. My suggestion is that let it

be 52:48% because women are working extra hard. They are doing a lot. Let us give them their proper position. For nine months, we were carried in their womb. Look at the chores that are done by women, look at all the things that they do, they do extra hard work. Men cannot do anything compared to what the women are doing.

Women concentrated on the upbringing of men. This is how we grew up. Let us respect women and let the quota system be 52:48% so that we respect women because they are doing a lot of work. Jesus was carried by a woman and not a man. I thank you.

HON. CHINYANGANYA: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker for affording me this opportunity to add my voice to the report that was given by Hon. Madiwa concerning CEDAW. Women are very important in our everyday lives. We cannot do without women and as such, we are supposed to give them the respect that they deserve.

Having studied law, I had the opportunity to do a course called Women's Law. At that point I learnt quite a lot on how it is critical to champion women's rights. Let me say I had the opportunity to be raised

by a single mother and I want to thank her because she enlightened me on many aspects of life that I am sure if I was raised by a single father, I would not have been able to appreciate that. I am proud to be the father that I am today because she taught me that there is no job that is for women or men. As a father myself, she taught me how to clean a baby. I take pride when my daughter messes herself up and I bath, feed and put her to bed. All that is because of the teachings of a woman. So, we are supposed to respect women.

There is also need for the Government to look at the issues that affect women's rights. There is need for Government to empower women through various projects, be it mining or self empowerment projects. There is need for local authorities to play a critical role in making sure that there is inclusive service delivery because to have water on the tap, it is the women who go out with buckets and wheelbarrows to fetch water. I implore local authorities to work on their water reticulation so that women would really spend most of their time at home.

There is need for the local authorities to make sure that garbage is collected on a daily basis because it is the women who have to go out especially at night to dump waste and that poses a danger to their lives. I do not have much to say expect to say that we need to champion and respect women's rights. I thank you.

HON. M. KHUMALO: May I join others to defend gender equity. I want to start by saying everyone is talking about women being 52% of the population. That is where women lose it. We have agreed that we want 50:50. In a country like Zimbabwe, women are 52% of the population. If women are 52% of the population, I want to look at elections and recently we had DCC elections in ZANU PF and this weekend we are going to have a congress by MDC-T. I want to show you where you lose it. In ZANU PF, the DDC structures that voted for DCC members are three, they have 40 plus 40 plus 40 which is 120. They were voting for 22 positions. When you look at all of them throughout the country, not one of the districts had 50.

Women in this country are claiming that they raise children and live with children for a long time, which means when we go for elections, women are supported by the children. In the elections, the women's structure had 40 plus the youth who support women, 40 plus 40 it is 80 and out of 120 you are only left with one wing. Why are women losing? There is something wrong.

I remember when I contested primary elections in my party in 2018, I was contesting with 7 candidates. Five of them were men and two were women. When we started, we had encouraged these women to support one another and pick one candidate against 6 men. The voters will split the votes and women will all vote for that one woman and the youth will vote for that woman. We will have candidates winning primary elections to contest the general election and all of them will be women. So, women, you are losing it there. You can cry and come to Parliament under proportional representation but if you do not do it at primary elections down there to use your advantage in terms of 52%, then you will keep crying. I am wondering why women do not support

one another. If you do not support one another down there, remember those men who vote, some of them are your husbands. You have youth, yourselves and your husbands, then why are you losing.

Let me come to the proportional representation role that you have in Parliament. When we crafted the new Constitution, I was one of the supervisors and when we analysed what people said, we discovered that while we created proportional representation, it was not only for women to hold those positions but it was to make sure that we bring them on board so that they are resourced and get used to the system and in future, they can contest with men. What we are seeing today is that women have come to assist men in the National Assembly where they are 60 woman. It is in a province of three in the party and already two will be women and one will be male. Those women who came here 2013 as PR MPS have not doubled their numbers. Some of them even want to contest after they have completed their two terms. They want to come back for the third term though the intention of PR was to make sure that they go to a training school so they are able to stand in those

constituencies with men after two terms. You can also be a model to the youths and they can be encouraged by you, but some of you want to overstay and you are making a lot of noise here when you have not become models.

Let me turn to the MDC-T congress coming this weekend. I am learning that there are four people vying for presidency. Three of them are men and one a woman. Already, that woman has won if women are clever. Those three will split the vote and the women and the youths will vote for the woman so that woman wins. You come here and cry foul that men are undermining you, but here is an opportunity. You can beat us and have a Parliament with women only because you have the numbers. Hon. Speaker Sir, women must go down to basics. Let them not go to congress and cry. They must go down and look at our situation in Zimbabwe. Even on appointments, how do you expect the President to appoint 50/50 Ministers yet when you come here you are few? You all want to be chairpersons in portfolio committees but how many are you? You cannot, but if you do it down there then you are home and

dry. Women must go back to basics and they will run this country. I thank you Hon. Speaker.

+HON. S. NDLOVU: I also want to add my voice on the motion moved by Hon. Madiwa and seconded by Hon. Molekele. In the Ndebele culture we say a home is a fully fledged home when it has a woman. A household without a woman is not welcoming. A man without a woman is not respectable in the community, he gets looked down on by both men and women. Children are also afraid of visiting a home where there is no woman. A woman was created to accept visitors with a warm heart. If you go back to the Bible, you realise that Adam was not complete without Eve as a helper. This is why in each and every home women are helpers of men. Women carry pregnancies and we were all born by women.

HON. I. NYONI: I stand to add one or two words on this very important motion moved by Hon. Madiwa and seconded by Hon. Molekele. It is very true that women are very important in life and society in general. In rural areas in particular most of the hard work is done by women. We all know that it is women who fetch water, get

firewood and cook for the family while men have their own duties.

However, this is quite a task. I cannot imagine a society without women.

The issue of gender equality should start right at kindergarten and proceed through primary school, secondary school, university up to life in general so that our children learn about this issue of equality when they are still young. I am sure it is easier to teach a young person than a person of my age these very important issues.

In politics I heard Hon. Khumalo highlighting some very important facts here. I note that there are constituencies that had women Members of Parliament who passed on. I recall in Lupane East the previous MP in 2018 was a woman but was replaced by a man. The same happened here where we had Hon. Vimbai Tsvangirai in Glenview and she was also replaced by a man. We now have Kuwadzana and the by-elections are still pending. I will not be surprised if she is replaced by a man.

However, it is very important for the various political parties to work hard to promote and support the women candidates, particularly in these constituencies that were for women, that they continue being

constituencies for women. Otherwise, it is clear the number of women in Parliament is going down all the time. In brief Mr. Speaker Sir, thank you very much.

HON. MADIWA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I just want to thank Hon. Members for debating this very important report, in particular I am impressed by the patience that we had. The Minister of Environment was here through and through, listening to the debate. I am sure issues to do with the environment have already been solved by virtue of him being here because he heard everything personally. He was physically here and I want to thank the Minister for that.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I am also glad that we have more champions, Hon. Members who are male champions and who are really for women empowerment and gender equality. After having said all this Mr. Speaker Sir, I now want to move for the adoption of the report that

WHEREAS section 327 (2) (a) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that any international treaty which has been concluded or

executed by or under the authority of the President does not bind Zimbabwe until it has been approved by Parliament;

WHEREAS the Minamata Convention on Mercury, adopted at the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee held in Geneva, Switzerland on 19th January, 2013, is a global treaty whose objective is to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury;

WHEREAS Zimbabwe signed the Minamata Convention on the 19th of January, 2013, in Geneva, Switzerland, and is desirous of becoming a party and a member of the community of nations endeavouring to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury;

AND WHEREAS Article 30 (1) of the Minamata Convention provides that any State wishing to be a Party to may, *inter alia*, deposit an instrument of ratification with the Depositary:

NOW, THEREFORE, in terms of section 327 (2) (a) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe this House resolves that the aforesaid Minamata Convention on Mercury be and is hereby approved.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY (HON. M. NDLOVU): Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I move that the House reverts to Order of the Day No. 1.

Motion put and agreed to.

MOTION

RATIFICATION OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY (HON.

M. NDLOVU): Thank you Mr. President Sir. In this House, I gave notice to move a motion to Parliament on the Ratification of the Minamata Convention that;

WHEREAS Section 327 (2) (a) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe provides that any international treaty which has been concluded or executed by or under the authority of the President does not bind Zimbabwe until it has been approved by Parliament;

AND WHEREAS the Minamata Convention on Mercury adopted at the Fifth Session of the Inter-Governmental Committee in Geneva, Switzerland on 19 January, 2013 is a global treaty whose objective is to protect human health and environment from the adverse effects of mercury;

Mr. President, I will bring the background of the Minamata Convention. The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a global treaty whose objective is to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury. Mercury is a toxic pollutant that can circulate globally through the oceans and the atmosphere for years or

even decades, and can cause significant harm to human health and the environment, sometimes very far from its point of origin. Acute or chronic exposure can be fatal; the World Health Organisation (WHO) lists it as one of the top ten chemicals of major public health concern.

A meeting of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) held in Kenya in February 2009, agreed to develop a legally binding instrument on mercury. Negotiations on mercury resulted in the adoption and subsequent signing of the Convention at the Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee held in Geneva, Switzerland on 19 February 2013, Zimbabwe participated in the negotiations and signed on this date.

To date, 128 countries have signed the Convention while 115 have ratified. Out of the 115 that have ratified, there are 50 African countries and this leaves Zimbabwe among the four. Humans are mainly exposed to mercury through emissions in the air and from eating certain foods mostly marine fish. The United Nations Environment Programme

Estimates that anthropogenic release have increased mercury in arctic marine animals by 1 to 12 times compared to pre-industrial times.

I now turn to the overview of the Convention;

- A ban on new mercury mines and the phasing out of existing mines;
- The regulation of mercury releases from industrial equipment such as boilers, incinerators and power stations;
- A ban on the manufacture, import and export of products that use mercury;
- The need for parties to exchange information on relevant new technological developments, economically and technically feasible mercury and mercury compounds in manufacturing;
- The ability by States to register for exemptions;
- The management of mercury waste in an environmentally sound manner and the ability to cooperate with other States, relevant inter-governmental organisations and other entities in order to

develop and maintain global, regional and national capacity of the management of such wastes;

- The promotion and facilitation of public information dissemination, awareness and education on the health and environmental effects of mercury as well as alternatives; and

The conduct of research and monitoring.

- There are obligations by State parties to provide within their capabilities resources for national activities that are intended to implement the Convention in accordance with national policies, priorities, plans and programmes;
- The State Parties have the responsibility of multilateral, regional and bilateral sources of financial and technical assistance as well as capacity building and technology transfer to, on an urgent basis, enhance and increase their activities on mercury in support of developing country parties in the implementation of the Convention.

Mercury in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's most significant (anthropogenic) mercury sources are from artisanal small scale gold mining (ASGM) production, dental amalgam and waste water treatment. Zimbabwe's mercury use is already strictly controlled under a number of regimes, including the Environmental Management Act [CAP 20:27], Control of Hazardous Substances (S.I. 268 of 2018), Public Health Act [CAP 15:09], and Control of Goods (Open General Import Licence) SI 132 of 2015. This Convention is strongly aligned with the way Zimbabwe deals with anthropogenic mercury. It aligns with other international obligations and takes account of Zimbabwe's existing strong controls of mercury use and release. It could therefore be implemented into Zimbabwe law simply and without needing to create extensive new regimes or specialised agencies.

Reasons for Zimbabwe becoming a party to the treaty:

There are several significant reasons in favour of Zimbabwe becoming a party to the Convention. Primarily Zimbabwe will be

contributing to global efforts to protect human health and environment. As the Convention is reviewed and international rules around mercury are developed, the best way for Zimbabwe to protect its interest will be for it to participate in the negotiations as a party because as a signatory, Zimbabwe attains but only as an observer and our contributions to the discussions are extremely limited. Significantly, we are not allowed to vote on any decision should the need arise. This right will only be available once we ratify the Convention.

Secondly, the Convention complements Zimbabwe's obligations under the Basel Convention (Trans-boundary Movement of Hazardous Waste), Rotterdam Convention (Hazardous chemical and pesticides), Stockholm Convention (chemicals that are persistent organic pollutants), and the Montreal Protocol (ozone-depleting substances) that controls emissions which may also provide co-benefits for climate change mitigation.

Thirdly, global phase out dates ensure that Zimbabwe does not end up as dumping ground for out of date mercury products after the rest of

the world phases it out. During the Third Conference of Parties to the Minamata Convention, it was agreed that a dental amalgam total phase out and ban will be complete by the year 2024. Therefore, for Zimbabwe to participate in the phase out plans, it has to become party to the Minamata Convention.

Fourthly, supporting the Convention will help avoid further risk to the fishery industry where mercury levels have been seen increasing. Mercury circulates in rivers, dams and takes a much longer time than in the air, so immediate action to reduce anthropogenic emissions is needed to avert further potential harm to the dams in the future.

A fifth reason, domestically, Zimbabwe largely uses mercury in the artisanal small scale gold mining (ASGM) sector. However, with the rate at which mercury is being phased out, we foresee the world buying mercury free gold which will even fetch more money and as such, countries that use mercury for their gold production will suffer the consequences. Zimbabwe therefore needs to be prepared before these consequences.

Recommendations:

Taking note that Zimbabwe signed this protocol in October 2013 and considering the need for Zimbabwe to influence the direction and pace of the Convention and also the challenges and dangers posed by uncontrolled mercury use, it is highly recommended that Zimbabwe ratifies the Minamata Convention.

HON. MUSARURWA: Thank you Mr. Speaker.

1.0 Introduction

The Committee on Environment, Climate and Tourism was sensitised on the Minamata Convention from 3rd to 4th July 2020 at Kadoma Hotel and Conference Centre. The Committee learnt that the Minamata Convention on Mercury is an important international environmental treaty that aims to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of mercury and its compounds. It is a UN treaty coming under the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). So far, about 128 countries are signatories to the

Convention and 119 countries are parties to it. It addresses specific human activities that are contributing to large-scale mercury pollution. It is expected that the implementation of this Convention will reduce mercury pollution over the next few decades. The Convention was signed in 2013 and entered into force in 2017.

In support of its objective to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of mercury and its compounds, the Convention contains provisions that relate to the entire life cycle of mercury, including controls and reductions across a range of processes, products and industries where mercury is used, emitted or released. It also includes provisions relating to mercury mining, its export and import, storage and disposal. Minamata Convention also covers areas such as the identification of at-risk populations, improving health care facilities and training health care personnel to better tackle mercury-related ailments and diseases.

2.0 REQUIREMENTS OF THE MINAMATA CONVENTION

The Committee learnt during the workshop that the Minamata Convention requires that party countries:

- Reduce and where feasible, eliminate the use and release of mercury from artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM).
- Control mercury air emissions from coal-fired power plants, coal-fired industrial boilers, certain non-ferrous metals production operations, waste incineration and cement production.
- Phase-out or take measures to reduce mercury use in certain products such as batteries, switches, lights, cosmetics, pesticides and measuring devices and create initiatives to reduce the use of mercury in dental amalgam.
- Phase out or reduce the use of mercury in manufacturing processes.
- In addition, the Convention addresses the supply and trade of mercury; safer storage and disposal and strategies to address contaminated sites.

- The Convention includes provisions for technical assistance, information exchange, public awareness and research and monitoring. It also requires parties to report on measures taken to implement certain provisions. The Convention will be periodically evaluated to assess its effectiveness at meeting its objective of protecting human health and the environment from mercury pollution.

3.0 MERCURY POLLUTION

The Committee also understood that mercury is a naturally-occurring heavy metal that is found in air, soil and water. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), mercury is one of the top ten chemicals of major public health concern. Even small amounts can cause health effects and hence there is no known safe exposure level for elemental mercury in human beings. Mercury is released into the atmosphere through natural processes such as weathering of rocks, geothermal activities and forest fires. Apart from these natural processes, mercury is also released through human activities. Because of its many

unique properties, mercury has been used for various purposes for hundreds of years. Once released, mercury persists in the environment and can be circulated between air, water and the soil. Mercury enters into organisms and converts into methyl mercury which then concentrates up the food chain.

4.0 ZIMBABWE'S PREPAREDNESS FOR RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION

The Committee also learnt that Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Minamata Convention and therefore, attends meetings only as an observer and its contributions to the ongoing discussions on mercury use are extremely limited. It is not allowed to vote on any decision that may negatively impact on our nation and that the right to vote would only be accorded to the Zimbabwe once we ratify the Minamata Convention. However, the Committee observed that the management of mercury waste was being done through Statutory Instrument 10 of 2007, *Environmental Management (Hazardous Waste Management) Regulations* under Environmental Management Act. Furthermore,

Zimbabwe is already party to other conventions under the **chemical and hazardous waste cluster** namely,

- a) **Basel Convention** on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal,
- b) **Rotterdam Convention** on the Prior Informed Consent for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and
- c) **Stockholm Convention** on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

The Committee also observed that the only Convention under the chemical and hazardous waste cluster that Zimbabwe has not yet ratified is the **Minamata Convention**. It was pleasing to note that the country has been pro-active and developed a National Action Plan (NAP) for artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector in Zimbabwe in preparation for the ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The NAP outlines the case studies that were carried out in the country and details all the national sources of mercury emissions.

5.0 MINAMATA CONVENTION RATIFICATION

The Committee was informed that ratifying the Convention will, among other things, allow the country to;

1. Carry out a stocks inventory and alert industry on the need to begin decommissioning of chlor-alkali plants in accordance to article 3 of the Convention.

(The chlor-alkali process is an industrial process for the electrolysis of sodium chloride solutions. It is the technology used to produce chlorine and sodium hydroxide which are commodity chemicals required by industry.)

2. To exercise due diligence required and avoid importing of mercury from sources that are not allowed since Zimbabwe is generally a mercury importing country.
3. To identify mercury added products being manufactured in the country and plan to begin their phasing out in accordance to Article 4 of the Convention.

4. To identify manufacturing processes that are using mercury and plan to begin putting in place the required phasing out of mercury or mercury compounds in accordance to Article 5 of the Convention.
5. To extend the phase out of mercury added products dates from 2020 according to Article 6 of the Convention.
6. To do a thorough assessment and enforcement under the EMA Act to reduce mercury emissions into the atmosphere or releases into water and land in accordance to Articles 8 and 9 of the Convention.
7. To improve the nation's monitoring systems for mercury storage in accordance to Article 10 of the Convention.
8. To be eligible to receive further financial support from the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund and specific international programme to support capacity building and technical assistance in accordance with Article 13.

NB. *Zimbabwe has already received support from the GEF Trust Fund to the tune of US\$125 377 to conduct a Mercury Initial Assessment that identifies mercury sources and US\$350 000 to develop the NAP for the ASGM sector.*

9. To benefit from the development, transfer and diffusion of and access to, up-to-date environmentally sound alternatives.
10. To generally reduce environmental levels of mercury through decreasing emissions and releases and produce substantial health benefits.

6.0 CONCERNS RAISED AGAINST RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION

1. Ratification of the Convention would mean to some, the immediate banning of mercury and mercury compounds. This action would render the ASGM sector redundant.
2. ASGM sector has not been adequately sensitised on the Minamata Convention on Mercury.
3. There are no investments or current researches on alternative technologies for gold processing.
4. Gold production in the country would drastically decline and those communities whose livelihoods depend on artisanal and small scale gold mining would be grossly affected.

7.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is incumbent upon us fellow Hon Members, to approve the Minamata Convention for ratification. Indeed, the world is certainly moving and setting targets for phasing out mercury. Thus, our non-ratification of the Minamata Convention will not be the solution. We will only delay the inevitable. I thank you.

HON. NDUNA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir. I applaud the Minister for bringing this Convention for ratification. I will start at the tail end where it should be noted that I am for the ratification. After this debate, I will just be waiting to add my voice for ratification. The intrepid action by Government tries to eliminate the environment impact associated with mercury use. Although many miners use mercury, in the artisanal gold mining sector and small scale gold mining sector Mr. Speaker Sir. Without it, gold production certainly can get to be low. A mercury free technique is also safer for the miners, their families and local communities. They may also help miners market their gold at higher prices in the world market and the artisanal gold mining sector in

the neighbouring and sub-Saharan countries such as Ghana and Mozambique have achieved high rates of gold recovery without the use of mercury. I thought I should give that as an example.

Mr. Speaker Sir, this also benefits their health and the health of their communities and environment. However Mr. Speaker Sir, the requirement was enforced at a time when generally the Zimbabwean community is not prepared to adopt such methods in the artisanal mining community which is large and needs formalisation and managing.

Banning mercury, in other countries was achieved due to their small mining communities. They are not large as ours. We are endowed with ubiquitous amounts of mineral wealth which includes a lot of gold. Mr. Speaker Sir, in my constituency alone, there is more than 40 gold mines and the cost of mercury which is about \$85 per kg is an encouraging factor to the use of mercury, oblivious obviously of the dangers that come with the use of mercury. Mr. Speaker Sir, there is need, as I have said, to train the artisanal miners. There is more than half a million of them – 500 thousand to a million artisanal miners out there who utilise

mercury are only 10 thousand formerly registered miners but there is more than that. They get about three to five points per day which translates to about US\$25 per day compared to the cost of other means and ways of extracting gold from the gold ore. It is cumbersome and costly if they have to look at other ways. I thought I should make it clear that I support the ratification.

Before ratification of this very important convention, it is necessary to formalise the sector by way of ease regulation. The sector has more than 500 thousand artisanal miners and only 10 thousand registered miners. Of that figure, 2% of the miners that are resident in Zimbabwe are registered. The challenge will be the regulation of the 98% of those that are in the mining sector who are not only artisanal but are also gypsies and nomadic. They hop from one place to another to the other. So formalisation of these is important.

How do you formalise the artisanal miners? First and foremost, you need to bring in the Mines and Minerals Act of 1951 which is archaic, moribund, rudimentary and antiquated. Repeal it, shred it and

throw it into the archives and bring in something new. The current Mines and Minerals Act never recognised the artisanal miner. If at all, the formally marginalised black majority are not there in the annals of that Mines and Minerals Act. Now we need to include the small scale miners in the new Mines and Minerals Act so that the black formally marginalised majority can be recognised.

Gold production is the livelihood of Zimbabwe at the moment. Ratifying Treaty *de facto* ban mercury use Mr. Speaker Sir, I want the ban of mercury but what do I have to say. It also have a potential to reduce as the Chairperson of the Environment Committee has alluded to, it has a potential to reduce the deliveries of gold to Fidelity. There is one time when an operation *chikorokoza chapera* was introduced, the gold deliveries to Fidelity fell from 19 tonnes to one tonne in that year because the police where going after the artisanal miners. I am hoping that this will not have that effect. If the suggestions that I am going to proffer are taken into account, you are going to mitigate this effect and

you can use that as an antidote and panacea for de-goldarisation in the mining sector, in particular, the artisanal gold producing sector.

Artisanal mining sector is a source for livelihood for more than half a million like I have spoken about and benefits both individuals and three million indirect and direct beneficiaries. Banning mercury will destroy the sole source of livelihood in mining communities and exacerbate the poverty levels in already sidelined groups. There is need to have the first mitigating factor, gold funding and capital support in order that we optimally, effectively and efficiently ban the use of mercury. The technology such as gravity concentrators are the other alternative methods of extracting gold in the gold ore and are expensive especially to artisanal miners who are mainly seasonal workers earning marginal figures as I have already said, US\$25 per day and the harmer mill which comprises the issue of gravity concentrators cost nothing less than US\$400. It is my hope that once there was this gold fund which was said to be \$100 million but it benefited only 200 formally registered

miners and did not cascade to the artisanal miners who number the most in terms of production and number.

The way forward is resuscitating communities during these COVID pandemic. Banning the use of mercury without readily available alternative will greatly affect people's livelihoods.

Government should readily avail relief to several communities that solely depend on the mining. Government who is you Hon. Minister, needs to delay the ban of use of mercury at least until they can provide other technologies but this is not an option. It is my view that if you get funding to finance alternative technologies and where am I proposing that you get funding? There is research and development strategy that was launched by His Excellency and he has directed that 1% of our GDP or our National Budget should go to research and development. It is my hope that you can get some of that money to finance other alternative technologies so that we are not seen as being delinquent and diverging from ratifying this globally acceptable treaty. Mind you, you have said we are one of the only four in Africa that are left to ratify. We need to

expeditiously ratify this convention and save the people of Chegutu West constituency who are mining gold enmass. Mercury, Hon. Speaker, is a heavy metal and if you also burn your gold, your amalgam trying to retrieve the gold, there are fumes that are emitted into the air and if they go into your chest, they formulate a lump that could cause cancerous tissues and can also cause cancer. I thank you for giving me this opportunity, Hon. Speaker Sir, to vociferously ventilate the issues that I have been sent to talk about by the people of Chegutu West Constituency. Thank you.

HON. MADIWA: Thank you Mr. Speaker Sir for giving me the opportunity to put my voice on this very important debate. To start with Mr. Speaker Sir, let me applaud the Minister for bringing forward this motion on ratification of the Minamata Convention.

If you are to consider His Excellency the President's State of the Nation Address, in his legislative agenda, the Minamata Convention is high on the Government agenda and I am glad the Minister has brought it forward at the very right time. I am also happy to debate this motion,

Mr. Speaker Sir, especially after debating on the motion on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. For this Minamata Convention, the ratification has a lot of benefits and it is to the advantage of women in particular for after my research or observation, I have realised that most of the people who are into artisanal mining, who are small scale miners and are exposed to mercury are women. So Mr. Speaker Sir, I am sure ratification of this convention is an advantage, so we cannot delay the ratification of the convention.

Mr. Speaker Sir, Zimbabwe signed the convention in 2013 and already as has been mentioned by the Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Environment, Zimbabwe has already signed other protocols on dangerous substances that have been outlined by the Chairperson. So there is no need for us to delay the ratification of the Minamata Convention.

The dangers of mercury cannot be underestimated especially if we look at the dangers to women. In pregnant women, it can actually harm a developing baby's brain. Inhalation of mercury vapour can produce

harmful effects, Mr. Speaker Sir, especially on the nervous system, the digestive and immune system, lungs and kidneys. So to me, the fact that His Excellency has put the Minamata Convention, ratification on our agenda really shows how our President loves his people. He does not want to expose his population to these dangerous substances. So Mr. Speaker Sir, I support the ratification of the Minamata Convention.

The inorganic salts of mercury are corrosive to the skin. I am disheartened, I am sure you have witnessed women who use lightening creams, maybe it is to become more beautiful but the dangers that this has to their health are severe. You see women whose skin becomes very light. That is very dangerous and these are the effects of mercury. All those substances have hydroquinine which goes into the blood stream and goes to the liver which is very dangerous. So Mr. Speaker Sir, I think I cannot overestimate the importance of ratification of the Minamata Convention.

If I am to look at the provisions of the protocol, as has been highlighted by the Hon. Minister, for example Article 14 speaks to

issues of capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfers and calls for cooperation between parties. Having not signed such conventions, we cannot contribute anything to any meetings or debate that would be under discussion. Mr. Speaker Sir, His Excellency is also talking about reengagement and engagement and this is the process. Being a party, being a State that is ratifying international conventions shows that Zimbabwe is not operating in a vacuum. We are operating in an environment with other countries and this shows also the commitment our President has to the reengagement process.

Article 17 as well deals with information exchange and parties will learn from others. Mr. Speaker Sir, we can only learn from others when we are party to such conventions and protocols. So I am really behind the ratification of this protocol. The benefits of ratification, this is a great realisation of human rights, thus the potential to empower the disadvantaged and marginalised and contribute to justice, inclusive and a fair society. So the move by the Minister to ratify this Minamata Convention is his passion for the marginalised, for the just for this is

moving towards really respecting the human rights. Mr. Speaker Sir with this, I thank you.

HON. MUNETSI: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker Sir for giving me this time to support the ratification of the Minamata Convention which Zimbabwe was signatory to in 2013. I have summed up the importance of this convention that it protects the health of both humans and animals over this substance called mercury. The convention seeks to reduce the mercury pollution in both industries and mines, which is a good thing. The convention also seeks to reduce the import, the use and the storage of mercury. If I were to ask today how artisanal miners dotted all over Zimbabwe store their mercury, no one would give an answer. Meaning to say we are at risk if this substance is not stored properly; if not managed. It is a health hazard. If it is managed well, the convention seeks also to ease the tackling of ailments caused by mercury. If now we are talking of ailments, some form of illness that is caused by this substance, do we have the correct medication in the event that an ailment arises because of poor storage?

It is a substance which I believe not everyone can have anywhere in the country, given that it is described as a heavy substance which, if it gets into the body, will form a solid stuff and becomes heavy in someone. Therefore, we cannot have it everywhere; that cannot be. Zimbabwe should not be a backbencher, to just go to meetings where mercury issues are discussed and just become a backbencher, just go there and listen and does not take part. That is where we are at the moment. We just go and listen, we do not vote, we do nothing.

So for us to be part and parcel of this discussion; to be part and parcel of effectively controlling mercury, we should ratify this convention. Ratification of this convention will help Zimbabwe have a lot of benefits. We will be able to carry out some stocks and inventory of this substance. It will allow us to exercise due diligence which is required about this substance so that it will not spread and harm human and animal life. It will allow Zimbabwe also to do some research on some other alternatives other than the use of mercury. What else can we use that is less harmful to human beings and animals but still carrying

out the same process that mercury has been doing? It will also allow us to improve the monitoring systems in the country about the use of mercury.

I liked the idea that if we are ratified, it will also allow some flow of funds to support the reduction of the pollution of this substance and as such, I stand together with those who are for the ratification of this Minamata Convention. I thank you.

HON. BANDA: Thank you Hon. Speaker Maam. There is no gold in Mount Pleasant. So I am taking off the jacket of a Member of Parliament for Mount Pleasant and I am wearing the jacket of a *mukorokoza* today. Allow me to be a *mukorokoza* in this House today, Hon. Speaker. Here lies the problem: we want to remove mercury which is used to process gold by mainly small scale miners. In Zimbabwe, it is a fact that small scale miners produce more gold than the commercial miners. So, the main source of extraction material is mercury. If we go onto the internet, there are no proper alternatives for mercury. Yes, it is dangerous, one of the most dangerous substances in

the world, ranged maybe - I think number 20 of the most dangerous substances you can find on earth.

However, if we just take it off straight and say do not use it, what is the alternative? I heard others talking of sodium or iodine, I have here in front of me a chemical called borax, known as sodium borax. What are they saying about sodium borax, they say it has been used in other states like Tanzania. Yes, it works but to a certain extent. Here insist lies the problem, they say the first one – at the end of the day you are also going to need to heat that borax for it to be effective to extract. It lifts about 90% of the gold that you can find. Now, they say there are two processes that you can use.

The first one involves the use of charcoal. Charcoal involves cutting down of trees, that is already environmental degradation that affects climate change. So it is not really a solution. Actually we are cutting Peter to cut John. Then there is acetylene gas, the way it is produced - you are also accepting climate change. So we are trying to move one devil and replace it with a smaller devil. We go on to the

issue of, like I said today I am a *mukorokoza* – they also have what they call gold cyanidation. I grew up in a mining town. I think some of you know Mvuma, there is that mountain of cyanide. If we are going to say let us stop using mercury and go to cyanide, cyanide also has the same effects, it is slightly better.

I have seen cattle drinking water polluted with cyanide and dying straight away. So we have a problem Hon. Minister. What we need to do, before we ratify, can we not do urgent research. Can Government not have urgent research whereby straightaway, maybe from next week, we tell our scientists and miners to go into the field and find a solution right now for mercury. Now, when we remove mercury we can be able to say we have replaced it with a better solution. I would not want to say let us hurry and ratify before we find a solution, otherwise we are going to ratify on paper but on the ground our small scale miners will continue to use mercury because they do not have a solution. Like cyanidation is more expensive; what does this mean to us? Earlier on I alluded to say small scale miners are the ones who produce the highest quality of gold per year. If we are saying do not produce that kind of gold, it means that

even our per capita income and production levels in terms of mining will go down. The aspect of saying that in 2030 we will be an upper middle income country will also be affected by this. My humble submission is that we should delay for 3-5 months, let researchers go in and find a proper solution which is accepted by miners because at the moment, the artisanal miners are not accepting anything that is not mercury. They know that their gold will be more expensive on the international market and nobody will come to buy it. We will end up stocking tonnes and tonnes of gold.

In short, I am in support but let us delay it until we find a solution based on research. I thank you.

HON. MADHUKU: I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for bringing this issue of the ratification of the Minamata Convention. Let me begin by saying that this issue does not in any way mean that after ratification, everybody in the country ceases using mercury. He is not saying that. It is a process. If we ratify, there are several stages which are going to be taken to ensure that people gradually cease using

mercury, slowly. It is not a once off event to say if we ratify, no mercury will be used in Zimbabwe.

Let me also add and say that to me, the issue of ratification of this convention should be done because by doing so, we are also supporting what the President, His Excellency said when he addressed Parliament. He alluded to this important issue of ratification of the Minamata Convention. I want to believe that the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe brought this issue from an advised position. He would not in any way just bring this issue without having made consultations from scientists. We are just here to support what the President said because he has already done some research.

We are dealing with a very serious and dangerous issue here which if not ratified, is going to be costly to the nation. We are talking of actually having a very huge budget into the Ministry of Health because we would have failed to control the use of mercury in this country. We are also going to lose a lot of lives by failure to conform to what research has already shown globally.

In 1932 and 1968, there was this mercury exposure affecting public health in Japan. It occurred in Minamata where a factory producing acetic acid discharged this waste into the Minamata Bay, with the consequences on people that consumed fish. Research later on showed that people were having health problems as a result of consumption of fish. Some of the dangers of eating this contaminated fish were a lot of abnormalities ranging from cancer, sensory disorders, speech disturbance, hearing impairments, auditory disturbances, tremors and even foetuses were being poisoned. This is a very serious issue which we have to look at with sanity because it will lead to the destruction of the whole nation if we ignore it.

There are a lot of advantages as I have already alluded to. The Hon. Minister has already said that we are also going to get some funding from the global community after ratifying this issue. My colleagues have talked about millions of artisanal miners who are making a living and boosting the economy of the country through gold production, but this should not be at the expense of health. They

produce that gold and tomorrow they are dead. We no longer have producers and we tend to lose as a nation. I am aware that the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe has said that we need to have a gold production target of 20 billion by 2023. We are aware that most of the gold which is produced in this country comes from artisanal miners and if they are done with or if they do not produce gold, we are going to miss the 20 million gold production. However, as I have already said earlier on, it does not mean that if we ratify today, then tomorrow there will not be any artisanal miners in the country. It is done stage by stage. Since the Hon. Minister has said that there is going to be some funding from the global community if we ratify, then I want to believe that there are going to be other methods of mining without the use of mercury.

You are also aware of education 5.0 which the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education has been talking about. We should task him to come up with good alternatives of mining because funding should be there. We need to save lives. There should be a lot of research of

coming up with user friendly, robust methods of mining which are not detrimental to our health.

This needs collaboration with other ministries like the Ministry of Health – he has talked about the dental medicine whereby they use mercury. Having pointed out all these areas, what we are now left with is all the other ministries. They have to make sure that they regulate and reduce the use of mercury. It should be an inter-ministerial problem and not only for the Minister of Environment. More research is needed but the process of ratification has to be here and now today in support of His Excellency. I thank you.

HON. MARKHAM: Thank you Madam Speaker. I am firmly of the view that we must sign the Convention as soon as possible. I agree with the previous speaker where by signing the convention, it is not going to ban mercury immediately. What it is going to do is to phase out mercury as soon as possible. Mercury as metal has major issues with health concerns.

Listening to Hon. Nduna about 10 000 registered miners when we have 500 000 million miners, that is the sign of disaster when only 10 000 people are registered but more than that are using the heavy metal that we are talking about. I equate it to the DDT in tobacco that was phased out after four or five years and it did not affect the output of the industry at all. So I am very much in favour of getting all these things out of the environment.

Two days ago, I was arguing about the environmental budget which is less than the ZUPCO subsidy. The Ministry of Environment has no chance of policing a million people on the current Budget. What we have to do is to sign the agreement as soon as possible and phase out the use of mercury slowly. The easier way of phasing mercury out is two-fold. Firstly, we tax the mercury by increasing the taxes. The second way, you only issue mercury in response to the amount of gold receipts. In other words, in tobacco what they do because I am an agriculturist, they say you can have so much inputs depending on how much tobacco

you deliver. There is no reason why we cannot do it with the artisanal miners. That is my very brief contribution.

My last contribution is, I do not want us signing an agreement when we look for intent of participating. We do not want to do like they did in the wetlands where we signed the land agreement and already we are looking out for clauses and exclusions. We must commit ourselves and we must participate. I thank you.

HON. TOFFA: Madam Speaker, I would like to contribute to this very important debate, something which we should take seriously as a country. I am for the ratification of the Minamata Convention. Most of the speakers have spoken to the fact especially when it comes to health. I am in the Mines Committee and in one of our public outreach visit, we had an opportunity to be given by one of the panners a sample of wheat; one that had been grown through irrigation using borehole water and the other by water from the river channel. You could see the difference and the wheat was contaminated. What does this mean? It means that as citizens of the country we are being exposed to food which is slowly

killing us as a nation. There are alternatives, we are told. We also need to educate the small scale miners who are contributing a huge amount to our GDP. We need to educate them making by them understand and appreciate that there is an alternative, and are not just being dumped. This needs to be done quickly. We also must make sure that we get the small scale miners buy-in.

Madam Speaker, mercury also infects your unborn baby. If it goes into your system and if you are pregnant it affects the foetus. This causes women to give birth to deformed children and their health is affected immensely. I think our Government should make sure that everybody must ratify the Minamata Convention and ensure that we expedite and domesticate it as fast as possible. Thank you Madam Speaker.

HON. TOGAREPI: I just want to contribute a little bit. I think we have no choice as people of Zimbabwe now. Mercury is dangerous. I was reading from the net just now. Some of the most dangerous diseases are caused by mercury. I just imagined if one of us was going to suffer from such diseases, how would those people get help? It is just a

substance that we should distance ourselves from. I want to thank Government for taking this bold stance to ensure that we ratify this Convention.

We have no alternative because we want to save our people. From what the people said during SONA. We have no choice but to save our people. So mercury must just go and go now. Yes, there will be losses but at least they will be losses to people that are living or alive than to have gains but dead. So, who is going to gain? We do not have any choice. We will plead with our intellectuals at the University of Zimbabwe and all these other universities throughout the country to research on cheaper and easier methods for our gold producing communities to be able to extract their gold. We cannot have them extracting gold at the expense of their health and all the people of Zimbabwe.

Already, we have animals dying. Even our image as a country, that we are keeping a substance which the whole world has said is not good for people but we keep using it just for gold. I think we have other

sources of wealth as a country and we can take advantage of those until we have better ways of extracting gold than exposing our people.

Madam Speaker, it is time that we ratify and I plead with Members here to take a bold stance and save our people from mercury. If you look at one research that I saw from the Minister's papers which was done in Kadoma, how a greater part of the population in Kadoma now has been exposed to mercury and its dangers. Surely, we will wake up one day with a health disaster if we do not take action now because the majority of people who are using mercury today do not even know how to handle it and exposing everybody else in a meek – myself I do not want to be a gold panner, I am a farmer. Somebody who is using mercury will expose me. I am also exposed, so why not send mercury packing and we start on a cleaner sheet. Encourage our scientists to look for other ways. I think throughout the world because all these countries that have ratified were extracting gold using mercury. I think researches were already happening throughout the world. I think sooner than later, we will get a

solution to safer ways of extracting gold. So let us ratify this. Let us not delay.

Those people who are involved, the 500 000 my good brother was talking about, Hon. Nduna who are in Chegutu and some other places are already exposed. Those are people who are going to be affected and maybe bear children who are already affected by mercury. Those are people who are already exposed and we need to then have a bigger health budget to look after them very soon because the majority of them will not have ways of protecting themselves in terms of their health. All the money will go and they would want Government to look after them. Let us ratify this one Hon. Members. We do not need mercury in our society at the moment. I am happy it is not going to be as immediate; there will be a process to deal with it but the objective is mercury is not safe for us, let us not keep it. I thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE,
TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY (HON. M.
NDLOVU):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank you and thank the Hon.

Members who have contributed to this very important debate. Hon. Speaker Ma'am, I am very humbled by the level of articulation that I witnessed today. It is clear that Hon. Members appreciate the urgency for us to ratify this Convention. Admittedly, our biggest self-interests as a nation relates to our artisanal small scale mining.

There are a few issues that I would like to just touch on to allay the fears that I have heard from some of the Hon. Members. I was going to start with the background of the Minamata itself but I am happy one Hon. Member highlighted where it originated from, where for more than ten years one factory was discharging into the ocean substances with mercury, indirectly followed it through the consumption of fish. As a community, what they then witnessed Hon. Speaker Ma'am was shocking; deformities, some people suffered paralysis and so many other side effects.

I want to just read one section in the Convention itself, which is Article 7 (2). It says, "each party that has artisanal and small scale gold mining and processing, subject to this article within its territory shall

take steps to reduce and where feasible eliminate the use of mercury and mercury compound in and the emissions and releases to the environment of mercury from such mining and processing. This is quite clear Hon. Speaker Ma'am, that ratification is not equal to banning. We will look at our situation. Of course, the ideal situation or our main objective is to reduce and at best eliminate the use of mercury.

I also want to highlight that our deliberations with the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development has indicated clearly that there are technologies that are available which are mercury free and these technologies are actually more efficient. They are four of them and I think the Hon. Member only mentioned two. There is the borax method which the Hon. Member mentioned. There is one which they call the use of streak, there is the chlorine method and of course the direct cyanidation. All these methods according to the mining experts achieve higher gold extraction than mercury amalgamation and also at shorter processing times. I believe really we have limited reasons, if any at all to want to delay the ratification.

When we look at the balance of rights Madam Speaker Ma'am, surely we want to look at the research which Hon. Togarepi mentioned. One hundred and twenty women and children were studied in 2006 in Kadoma and were found to have high mercury metal content in the breast milk. We have a time bomb which we need to avert as a matter of urgency.

The last issue which I want to touch on which was highlighted by Hon. Nduna is that of formalisation of our *makorokoza*. I want to acknowledge that we have a huge challenge in this regard. The Ministry of Mines is actively involved in this. Currently, they have more than 15 000 applications and the capacity constraints which they highlighted and I also want to thank this House, have partly been addressed through the Budget because they will now get more resources for them to be able to address that.

From the EMA perspective, I am sure Hon. Members are aware that we also have a simplified EIA process, particularly targeting small scale mining, which is also cheaper and I believe Hon. Speaker Ma'am

that it is very important as a country that we ratify the Minamata Convention on Mercury and I so move. Thank you.

Motion put and agreed to.

HON. TOGAREPI: Madam Speaker, I have come here to move for the adjournment but before I do that, I think it is important that I thank Hon. Members for the work that they have done, especially starting with the Budget process. Members did fantastic work. If you look at the research, the reports that came from our Chairpersons were to the point and very informative. When you look at the final budget, you saw a lot of inclusion of our contributions as Parliament. I would want to thank Members for being very constructive.

I also want to thank Members for being here; they stood their ground throughout the budget making process and exhibited a lot of knowledge. It showed that Members know the value of a budget to the people of Zimbabwe. So, I want to thank Members for a job well done and I also want to thank Members; in the past six months we have been working as a team. We contradicted here and there but we were never

antagonistic, we were trying to highlight issues that we think are important for this country.

So, I thought before we end this eventful year, it is critical that I thank Members that I work with. I really appreciate and this comes from me and other chief whips. We are very thankful for the dedication Members of Parliament have shown during this period. I thank you.

THE TEMPORARY SPEAKER (HON. MAVETERA):

Gratitude is a virtue which I think each person should be able to possess. Indeed we really want to thank you for that and also to thank all the Members as well. It is indeed in order.

I would like to say Merry Christmas and a Happy New to the Hon. Members. Since we are going to the festive season, we believe that you have to drive safely and you have to know that God protects you. I thank you.

On the motion of **HON. TOGAREPI** *seconded by* **HON. S.**

BANDA *the House adjourned at Eleven Minutes to Seven o'clock p.m. until Tuesday, 2nd, February, 2020.*