

BILL WATCH 51/2019

[1st October 2019]

The Second Session of this Parliament Opened Today

Ceremonial Opening of Parliament

President Mnangagwa opened the Second Session of the Ninth Parliament of Zimbabwe at a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament in the National Assembly today. At 12 noon, after the customary preliminaries outside Parliament, the President went into the National Assembly chamber to deliver his State of the Nation Address [SONA] [\[link\]](#). The address included the Government's Legislative Agenda for the coming session.

Afterwards both Houses met briefly and then adjourned for three weeks. They will meet again on Tuesday 22nd October...

Bills in Parliament Last Week

Education Amendment Bill stalled by National Assembly's rejection of Senate Amendment

On Wednesday 25th September the Senate received a non-adverse report from the Parliamentary Legal Committee [PLC] on its single amendment to the Bill. [Clause 14(k) of the Bill provided for the "appointment of sexual and reproductive health personnel" in schools, and Senators had objected strongly to and deleted the words "sexual and".] The Senate then finalised the Bill and returned it to the National Assembly. In brief proceedings the following day the National Assembly rejected the Senate's amendment. This disagreement between the two Houses stopped the Bill's further progress for the time being. The Bill, therefore, joins the other uncompleted Bills on the list of Bills lapsing at the end of the First Session. As pointed out in Bill Watch 49/2019 [\[link\]](#), a Bill that lapses at the end of one session can be restored to the Order Paper by vote of the House in which the Bill was last discussed, in which case proceedings can continue from the stage previously reached

No progress on other Bills

No progress was made on the other Bills before the National Assembly: Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency Bill, Money Laundering and Proceeds of Crime Amendment Bill and Coroner's Office Bill, and the three Bills still under consideration by the PLC: Marriages Bill, Freedom of Information Bill and Zimbabwe Media Commission Bill. All these Bills will also need to be restored to the Order Paper in the Second Session.

Constituency Development Fund [CDF] Increased

It was announced in both Houses that following the Supplementary Budget Review the CDF allocation had been revised upwards from \$80 000 to \$175 238. Members were advised to submit projects for funding amounting to the revised figure.

Other Business in the National Assembly Last Week

Debates concluded and motions approved

Condolence motions The National Assembly concluded debates on and adopted condolence motions following the deaths of the late MPs Hon Vimbai Tsvangirai, Hon Obedingwa Mguni and Hon Kaston Gumbwanda. *[Note: All three vacant seats have since been filled by by-elections in the constituencies concerned.]*

Motion of Thanks for the President's Speech opening the First Session This debate was concluded and the motion approved on Wednesday 25th September. In his response to the debate on behalf of Government the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs claimed progress on many of the issues raised during the debate.

Question Time

Question Time took place as usual on Wednesday. The Minister of ICT and Courier Services assured MPs that his Ministry was pushing for abolition of customs duty on all ICT equipment and urged MPs to support the Ministry by lobbying the Minister of Finance and Economic Development. The Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education said the Ministry was prioritising the training of teachers to ensure that all little children are taught in their mother tongue, including Sotho, Kalanga, Tonga and Venda. Other issues raised included water supply problems in Harare and the legality of subdividing agricultural land into residential plots; on the latter the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs advised MPs to await the report of the Uchena Commission of Inquiry into Disposal of State Land around urban areas.

Other Business in the Senate Last Week

Debates concluded and motions approved

The Senate adopted Senator Timveos' motion on the perennial shortages of clean and potable water in towns and growth points. The motion specifically calls on Government to urgently allocate foreign exchange to local authorities for the development of water infrastructure in towns and growth centres and for the purchase of water treatment chemicals.

Question Time

On Thursday Question Time went ahead as scheduled. The Minister of Energy and Power Development dealt with several questions about ZESA and power supply problems. The Minister of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement was faced with several questions about issues at the Grain Marketing Board.

International Standards Organisation Certification Hand-Over Ceremony

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The Launch of Parliament's Institutional Strategic Plan

On Friday 27th September a ceremony was held in the courtyard at Parliament at which:

- the Standards Association of Zimbabwe handed over Parliament's ISO 9001-2015 Certification; and
- Parliament's Institutional Strategic Plan for 2018-2023 was launched.

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