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THIRD SESSION – SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

SECOND REPORT

OF THE

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY**

ON

**"THE FEE STRUCTURE, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CADETSHIP SUPPORT
SCHEME AND THE PROVISION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES IN
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING IN ZIMBABWE."**

Presented to Parliament 18 November 2010

S.C.9, 2010

ORDERED IN TERMS OF STANDING ORDER No. 159:

- i. At the commencement of every session, there shall be as many committees to be designated according to government portfolios to as the Standing Rules and Orders Committee may deem fit.
- ii. It shall be the function of such committees to examine expenditure administration and policy of government departments and other matters falling under their jurisdictions as Parliament may, by resolution determine
- iii. The members of such committees shall be appointed by the Standing Rules and Orders Committee, from one or both Houses of Parliament, and such appointments shall take into account the expressed interests or expertise of the Members and Senators and the political and gender composition of Parliament.
- iv. Each select committee shall be known by the portfolio determined for it by the Standing Rules and Orders Committee.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES S.O 160

Subject to these Standing Orders a Portfolio Committee shall:

- 1 Consider and deal with all Bills and Statutory Instruments or other matters which are referred to it by or under a resolution of the House or by the Speaker;
- 2 Consider or deal with an appropriation or money bill or any aspect of an appropriation or money bill referred to it by these Standing Orders or by or under resolution of this House;
- 3 Monitor, investigate, enquire into and make recommendations relating to any aspect of the legislative programme, budget, rationalization, policy formulation or any other matter it may consider relevant of the government department falling within the category of affairs assigned to it, and may for that purpose consult and liaise with such a department;
- 4 Consider or deal with all international treaties, conventions and agreements relevant to it, which are from time to time negotiated, entered into or agreed upon.

On Tuesday, 13 July 2010, the Speaker announced that the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders nominated the following members to serve on the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology.

Hon Chitando, J

Hon Dumbu, F

Hon Khumalo, Martin

Hon Kumalo, Marvellous

Hon Maramwidze, H

Hon Matamisa, E

Hon Matibenga, L

Hon Ncube, S

Hon Ndhlovu, A

Hon Zhuwao, P

Hon Ncube. S to be Chairperson

1. INTRODUCTION

The Portfolio Committee on Higher Education, Science and Technology was concerned with the cost of education in the higher and tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe which has gone beyond the reach of many Zimbabweans given the economic challenges that the country is currently faced with. In the past, funding of students' studies was facilitated through the students grant/loan scheme. This scheme ceased to function in 2006 and paved the way for the introduction of the Cadetship Support Scheme (CSS). To, this end, the Committee, in carrying out its oversight function, resolved to make an enquiry into the fee structure, the implementation of the Cadetship Support Scheme as well as the provision of the scholarship programmes in the higher and tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe.

2. OBJECTIVES

The Committee made an inquiry into the fee structure, the implementation of the Cadetship Support Scheme and the provision of the scholarship programmes to fulfill the following objectives:

- v. To have a complete understanding of the fee structure in higher and tertiary institutions.
- vi. To have an insight into the administration or implementation of the Cadetship Support Scheme (CSS).
- vii. To have an understanding of the fee structure in higher and tertiary institutions.
- viii. To have an appreciation on how scholarship programmes are run in Zimbabwe.
- ix. To appreciate the challenges associated with the administration of both the Cadetship Support Scheme and Scholarship programmes in these institutions in order to find short and long term solutions.

3. METHODOLOGY

The Committee received oral and written evidence from;

- i. The Secretary Higher and Tertiary Education.
- ii. The two factions of Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU)

- iii. The Zimbabwe Congress of Students Union (ZICOSU)
- iv. The Chairperson for the Zimbabwe Vice Chancellors' Association (ZUVCA)

4. COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS

- 4.1 In its quest to have an understanding of the fee structure, the Committee carried out a research to solicit for information regarding the cost of higher education, and used the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) as an example. Table 1 depicts the scenario.

TABLE 1: UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE FEE STRUCTURE FOR 2009/2010 ACADEMIC YEAR

Faculty	Academic Fee per semester	Mandatory/Ancillary fee for those applying for the CSS
Arts and Humanities	US\$300	US\$104
Engineering and Sciences	US\$350	US\$154
Medicine and Veterinary Science	US\$400	US\$274

The Committee was disturbed by the fee structure and the mandatory fee which they perceived to be beyond the reach of many Zimbabweans. The Committee then decided to make further enquiry in order to get a better insight into the fee structure, the funding of students' studies with particular reference to the implementation of Cadetship Support Scheme and the provision of scholarship programmes. The following are findings from the witnesses who gave their oral and written submissions.

4.1.1 MINISTRY OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION - *BACKGROUND TO THE CADETSHIP SUPPORT SCHEME(CSS)*

During an oral hearing session with the Secretary for Higher and Tertiary Education, the Committee was informed that the funding policy for the tertiary students ceased to provide grants and loans in 2006. When the grant and loan scheme ceased, it was realized that more and more students were failing to enroll into the universities and colleges because of the high fees. The government was then compelled to introduce the

Cadetship Support Scheme primarily to assist needy students without capacity to pay fees.

- 4.2.2** The Committee learnt that the scheme was introduced at a time when both the public and private sectors were experiencing high brain drain. Students on the Cadetship Support Scheme are bonded so that their skills may be retained in the country. Thus, the programme covers two areas which are to enable the government to capacitate institutions and to introduce equity so that students from poor backgrounds can have their fees paid through this programme. The Committee was also apprised on the policy framework within which the Cadetship Support Scheme is expected to operate.

4.3.0 CADETSHIP SUPPORT SCHEME'S POLICY FRAMEWORK

To qualify for the government support through the Cadetship Support Scheme applicants;

- i. Should be prepared to undergo training on the Special Cadetship Scheme at specific training institutions recognized by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education
- ii. Must be Zimbabwean citizens
- iii. Must demonstrate that they do not have capacity to pay fees
- iv. May be orphans and those with physical and hearing challenges.

4.3.1. PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION AND BONDING

- i. On admission at a college or when need for funding arises, the student must first pay the mandatory fee and complete Cadetship forms.
- ii. The forms are captured by the institution and a list together with forms is forwarded to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education Head Office for processing.

4.3.2 AT HEAD OFFICE

Forms are vetted for the following:

- i. Citizenship status
- ii. Certified copies of national identity, pay-slip or affidavit and relevant attachments
- iii. Completeness of the form
- iv. Results for returning students

4.3.3 PAYMENTS

- i. For those who qualify, a bulk payment is made to the institution. The current levels of support per semester for university students is USD300 for Arts and Humanities, USD350 for Engineering and sciences and USD400 for those studying Medicine and Veterinary Sciences. All students in polytechnics and teachers' colleges receive USD385 per term.
- ii. The institution will disburse the money to the students upon which they are requested to sign for the receipt of the money.
- iii. Reconciliation of payment and acquittals is done at the institution and these are sent to the Head Office for double-checking the correctness of the reconciliation.
- iv. Unclaimed money is sent back to the Head Office together with the list of names of those students who did not collect the money.
- v. A list of repeating students is compiled and forwarded to Head Office and these are not sponsored for that semester or term.

4.3.4 CADETSHIP SUPPORT SCHEME IN THE CONTEXT OF BONDING

- i. Students whose fees are paid by the government through Cadetship Support Scheme, sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) undertaking, out of their own will and consent, to be bonded for a period equal to the duration of the period they were engaged as cadets.
- ii. During the bonding period students shall serve their country through any form of employment anywhere in Zimbabwe.
- iii. Students do not repay the funds that government pays towards their education. In other words, the repayment is in the form of service to their country.
- iv. During the bonding period, the certificate and transcript of results/qualification is withheld at the institution.

4.3.5 CADETSHIP SUPPORT SCHEME IN THE CONTEXT OF WORKING OUTSIDE ZIMBABWE

- i. Students who wish to work in another country shall remit one third of their salary in forex during the bonding period. No such case has arisen since the inception of

cadetship scheme in 2007. However, the Memorandum of Agreement states that a special agreement will be entered into between Zimbabwe and such employer or country concerned for remittance of the said forex. The Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education shall administer such agreements through the Attorney General's office.

- ii. The Memorandum of Agreement does not have a provision for repayment of any part of the government funds or buying out the bonding period in order to obtain one's certificate/diploma or degree.
- iii. It is important to note that the students' surety binds himself or herself to repay state monies only in circumstances where the student fails to complete his/her course because of lack of serious application on the student's part.

4.4 THE PROVISION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMMES

The Secretary also apprised the Committee on the provision of the scholarship programmes in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe as highlighted below.

4.4.1 The Committee was informed that the national scholarship programmes were run by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education under the department of University Education and these include bilateral programmes, rescue packages for Zimbabweans who would have failed to pay their fees with particular focus on areas of critical skills shortages for example, the field of medicine among others. The national scholarship programmes also sponsor persons who would be absorbed in the country's tertiary institutions and universities through a loan scheme whereby persons have to sign contracts to be employed in institutions and can pay back the loans.

4.4.2 Another scholarship programme is called the Presidential Scholarship, whose Selection is done by its Executive Director. The Ministry only comes in during financing of the programme. In the past the selection was done by provincial

governors while the ministry used to monitor the performance of students, visit them and have documentation on their performance levels, but that function is now being exercised by the Executive Director.

4.5.0 ADMINISTRATION OF THE CADETSHIP SUPPORT SCHEME IN INSTITUTIONS BY UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES AUTHORITIES

4.5.1 After receiving oral evidence from the Secretary of Higher and Tertiary Education on how the Cadetship Support Scheme must be administered, the Committee carried out some investigations to find out if the operational policy was being implemented or administered accordingly in universities and colleges. Thus, your Committee held oral hearing sessions with the two factions of ZINASU representing students in universities and colleges and the Chairperson of ZUVCA representing the universities and colleges authorities. Your Committee also received written submission from ZICOSU, another body representing students in universities and colleges.

4.5.2 THE TWO FACTIONS OF ZINASU

During the oral hearing session, the two factions of ZINASU highlighted the following on the implementation or administration of the Cadetship Support Scheme in the universities and colleges by the responsible authorities.

4.5.2 i. The Cadetship Support Scheme is implemented in a non-transparent manner students do not know whether the government has paid or not. In the event that the students get to know that government has paid them, the amount paid to the institution is not disclosed to the students since students do not sign to show that they have received the money.

4.5.2 ii. The term “cadetship” is scary to students as this seems to suggest some kind of military training.

4.5.2 iii. The scheme is inadequately funded—it can only support a handful of students and does not cater for students' other welfare needs.

- 4.5.2 iv. Institutions do not adequately publicize the scheme to students—at some point the period for collection of the cadetship forms was started while students were on vacation and closed two weeks after the college had opened.
- 4.5.2 v. Cadetship forms are not easily accessed—some institutions are selling them at a cost that ranges from US\$150—\$200. In some cases students go through security check points to access the scheme.
- 4.5.2 vi. Students are asked to first pay the fees in full promising them that they will get re-imbursement from government after it avails the funds to the institutions—students have never received any re-imbursement from the scheme.
- 4.5.2 vii. Government delays in paying or may never pay in some cases—this forces the college authorities to withhold students' results, deferring students' studies, denying them access to library and computer centers. Some students have been barred from writing in-class-tests while in other cases students' assignments were not marked.
- 4.5.2 viii. The Cadetship Support Scheme is unpopular with college authorities because of the delays in paying by government. It is also unpopular with students because of the bonding system that is imposed on them.
- 4.5.2 ix. The criteria for selection is discriminatory—it ranges from political affiliation to faculty preference e.g. a limited number of students from Arts, Social and Political Sciences have benefited while the scheme is open to all students in Medicine and Engineering faculties, and slightly in the faculty of law.

4.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TWO FACTIONS OF ZINASU

4.6.1 The Cadetship Support Scheme is reviewed to suite the circumstances of the beneficiaries and benefactors.

4.6.2 The scheme should be all inclusive and accessible irrespective of political affiliation or Faculty.

- 4.6.3 The scheme should be adequate enough to cater for students' welfare
- 4.6.4 Information dissemination should be clear and communication channels opened to allow dialogue between students and college authorities.
- 4.6.5 Government should do away with bonding system
- 4.6.6 Government should re-introduce the grant and loan system
- 4.6.7 Government should introduce a monitoring mechanism with colleges to ensure that all students who want to utilize this scheme are not deliberately left out.
- 4.6.8 There should be communication between government and college authorities so that students in the scheme are not deferred due to delays by government in disbursing funds.

4.7.0 ORAL SESSION WITH ZUVCA CHAIRPERSON

The ZUVCA Chairperson was also examined under oath on the funding of students' studies with special reference to the Cadetship Support Scheme and how this programme can be improved and he highlighted the following points:

- 4.7.1 The Cadetship Support Scheme was initially meant to support students from disadvantaged families. However, the scheme was expanded to curb brain drain.
- 4.7.2 The Cadetship Support Scheme is a good plan but challenging when it comes to implementation.
- 4.7.3 Funding is inadequate as it covers tuition fee only, leaving out other students' needs.
- 4.7.4 In some cases, students graduate before signing the acquittals because the government would have failed to pay their fees in time and this creates difficulties in tracing them.
- 4.7.5 Students are opposed to the bonding system
- 4.7.6 Selection criteria is administered by government
- 4.7.7 Students who do not complete their forms in full are not considered for the scheme

4.8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS BY ZUVCA CHAIRPERSON

- 4.8.1 Government should come up with a different board for this scheme and not the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education because it is managed by civil servants who are struggling to meet their own needs.
- 4.8.2 Government should come up with a funding formula which will be an incentive for

Universities to increase the level of productivity.

- 4.8.3 Government should come up with a proper students loan scheme such as the one that was operational before 2006.

4.9.0 ZICOSU

From ZICOSU's written submission, the Committee gathered the following points:

- 4.9.1 That ZICOSU appreciates government's efforts in trying to assist underprivileged students through the Cadetship Support Scheme as most of their members benefitted out of this scheme with the exception of those opposed to it.
- 4.9.2 ZICOSU has made efforts to encourage students to be beneficiaries of the Cadetship Support Scheme by popularizing it at colleges and universities and through media.
- 4.9.3 ZICOSU pointed out that the Cadetship Support Scheme falls short of covering all students' welfare needs especially those who live far away from universities and colleges.
- 4.9.4 The Cadetship Support Scheme application forms were in short supply in institutions hence, only few students could access them.
- 4.9.5 Students on the Cadetship Support Scheme are barred from writing their examinations when government fails to disburse funds to the institutions.
- 4.9.6 The mandatory fee is a big hindrance for students who really need to benefit from the Cadetship Support Scheme.
- 4.9.7 ZICOSU recommended that the Cadetship Support Scheme be more encompassing and give full payment to students and remove the mandatory fee payment.
- 4.9.8 It also recommended that the application forms be made available to all colleges in the country and the responsible students union and those students on this scheme should not be barred from writing examinations.

5.0 COMMITTEE'S OBSERVATIONS

- 5.1 Publicity of the Cadetship Support Scheme should be improved.
- 5.2 Late disbursement of the Cadetship Support Scheme funds by government has a negative impact on tertiary administration.
- 5.3 Politicization of the CSS where one student body is benefiting from the scheme at the expense of the other.
- 5.4 Students are against the idea of being bonded after benefiting from the CSS.

- 5.5 Cadetship Support Scheme covers tuition fees only and not other expenses for example mandatory fees.
- 5.6 Tertiary fees are high.
- 5.7 The Ministry portrays a wholesome situation of the CSS.
- 5.8 The Presidential Scholarship is not under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education but however funded by the Ministry.

6.0 COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The CSS should be well known by the public through the print and electronic media.
- 6.2 Government to resort to its old loan grant system which covers tuition and welfare needs.
- 6.3 Independence of student representative bodies from political interference.
- 6.4 Government to revise tertiary fee structures in line with the public service salary structure.
- 6.5 The Ministry should portray a clear picture of what is on the ground.
- 6.6 All Treasury funded higher education programmes, specifically scholarships, should be under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The Committee is of the opinion that government needs to resort to the grant or loan system because the Cadetship Support Scheme has not been transparent in its administration. Freedom of expression should be enhanced in institutions of higher learning for students to better articulate themselves during representation.