

Motion: Restoration of Democratic Local Government

Hansard, Parliament of Zimbabwe

February 08, 2006

MRS STEVENSON: I move the motion standing in my name: that this House, alarmed by the collapse of infrastructure and services in our cities and towns; further alarmed by the outbreak of cholera in our capital city in December; dismayed by the removal of elected councils and their replacement by appointed commissions which have manifestly failed to improve the running of our cities; demands that the Minister of Local Government and Urban Development immediately cease interfering with elected councils and take immediate steps to restore democratic local government.

MR MUSHORIWA: I second.

MRS STEVENSON: My motion is on the collapse of our cities and towns and the resultant difficulties which the residents of our cities and towns are currently facing in Zimbabwe. I am quite sure that on both sides of the House we are alarmed at how seriously our towns and cities have gone down, particularly in the last eighteen months and over the last several years there has been a trend.

I will just recap some of the evidence of this collapse of both the infrastructure and services. If you walk around Harare, Bulawayo and other towns, the pavements, particularly in the central business area, they are a danger. If you walk between here and First Street there are holes in the pavements. If you do not watch where you are going you can actually disappear in one of these holes. You can possibly break your leg. The holes are very serious. I am quite sure that the City of Harare has been sued by several pedestrians who have injured themselves because of the poor state of our pavements.

Then we have our streetlights, the streetlights either do not work or they are broken. The poles have fallen down even in the roads, they are a disaster.

The drains are blocked. We have sewerage bursts around the place particularly in Chitungwiza but about the sewerage, I will come to it later on. There has been a problem in Chitungwiza long before the MDC came along. Raw sewage is pouring out of the pipes and it is a very serious danger to the health of all residents. If one person becomes ill with a communicable disease like cholera or something, it can affect the whole city. It is a danger.

Water bursts affect the quantity of water that the city has available. Water bursts cause damages everywhere. I have had a burst water pipe just outside my house for the last two years. I have reported it over and over again to the Harare City Council. I even reported it to the Commission when they appeared before our Portfolio Committee and they assured me that that water burst would be resolved within one week. I reported in October and we are now in February after two years of flowing water.

Bridges are falling down. There was a report of a bridge that had become a danger in Glen Norah. Children cannot go to school across that bridge. They have to go a long way round to get to school and that is a serious problem.

Traffic lights are quite a great danger because if the traffic light is not working or working one way you may have serious motor accidents. Indeed the Traffic Safety Board in December called for legislation to force the local authorities to keep the traffic lights working. That is how serious the problem is.

We have potholes which the motorists and drivers of the commuter omnibuses are faced with. The potholes are sometimes repaired but the repairs do not last. Potholes cause damage to your car and they also cause serious accidents. Three weeks ago, there is a young man who is a

student at Harare International School whose family are Mozambican diplomats in Zimbabwe who was driving along the Borrowdale road and hit a pothole and had such a serious accident. His friend and passenger was killed on the spot by hitting this pothole. He himself has been in a coma for nearly three weeks now. That is what happens when you do not maintain your infrastructure.

I am not even going into the general dilapidation of the buildings belonging to our cities and towns. In district offices things do not work properly, the paint is falling off the buildings of the City Councils and towns. The collapse of infrastructure is not only in Harare but all cities.

I come to the services. There is lack of provision of services. We have all noticed most the lack of refuse collection. I was driving along Fourth Street yesterday, right there at the corner of the Catholic Cathedral there is a huge pile of garbage, just by the Cathedral. It is not only visible but it is a danger to the city. In my own constituency there is rubbish all over. In Hatcliffe there is a road into the cooperative where you have to make a huge detour around the huge pile of garbage. Nobody comes to remove the garbage. The same thing happens near the Old Mutual headquarters which is near where I live. A lorry comes and simply dumps garbage. When I call the Harare City Council they say they do not have transport. Meanwhile people are breaking the city by-laws. We are in danger, we are going to have rats all over. They carry fleas which can carry bubonic plague. We will have all those diseases if we are not careful.

We go on to water shortages and cuts. Water shortages in Bulawayo, Harare and other cities are well known. In Harare particularly areas like Mabvuku/Tafara are the worst and also Hatcliffe and part of Highlands. They go without water for weeks and weeks. It is again a danger to the health of residents and also causes serious damages. It happened in Mabvuku a few weeks ago when a woman was fetching water from one of the pipes because she had no water in her house got hit by one of the Municipality Police cars and she died because she had no water in her house. If the services in Harare had been working properly she would not have died.

Clinics: there are some nice clinic buildings in Harare and I am sure also in other cities but when you go to those clinics they have no medicine. They might give you some Disprin or Panadol but they have nothing else. There are nurses who try to help people, they are unhappy because they can not give them anything. That is disastrous.

The provision of housing, we all know there is a lot that has been happening. Operation Murambatsvina has been used to cover up their own inadequacy. If the cities had been providing housing at a proper rate people on the housing list would never have had to live in overcrowded areas in the high densities. They would never have any excuse of houses not being enough, but in housing a serious shortage occurred.

Then we come to the actual cleanliness of the water. I have a cutting here. On the 22nd of December, the Harare City Council itself announced that the Harare water is below standard. So, they themselves recognised that they are not providing clean water and they do not seem to be finding chemicals and we were told that we are drinking raw sewage. This cutting says "raw sewage pours into Manyame dam" and the chemicals are not there. It says there is not enough budget and so on but the fact of the matter is people who are paying their rates and charges are paying to the City of Harare to provide clean water. Clean water is a basic human right and it is not being provided.

So Mr Speaker, what is the result of all this collapse of infrastructure and services? The result is, apart from tragic accidents such as I have mentioned, you get diseases and that is what we have now in Harare and elsewhere. I am sure you remember that in November there was a headline in 'The Herald' that fourteen children under the age of five had died in Harare and Chitungwiza because of diarrhoea which had come from food poisoning and lack of cleanliness around the place. That is a very serious indictment but then, also in December we even had reports of cholera here in Harare.

Harare is the capital city of this nation. We used to be very proud of the City of Harare but now, we have reports of cholera, we have health warnings being given out by the City of Harare workers themselves that there is a danger of cholera in Harare. We have the Association of Zimbabwe Doctors for Human Rights releasing statements about two weeks ago, highlighting the outbreak of cholera and highlighting the danger of further outbreaks of disease in Harare and elsewhere, if we do not do something about our service provision, which is what we are supposed to do.

So Mr Speaker, why is it that we are linking the collapse of the infrastructure with interference by the Minister in the running of the cities and towns? The reason is because, as the Hon Coltart mentioned here before me, there is a link between democracy and prosperity. In local government, people have a right to elect their representatives and their councils which are mandated to run the affairs of our cities and towns. So, when we have interference by government in the affairs of the council elected by the people, then we run into problems.

I have a catalogue of some of the cases of interference but before I do that, I want to point out that there is a pattern. Harare was the first of the cities where the Council was interfered with by the Minister. Then other cities have also been interfered with and the pattern goes like this – you first accuse the mayor and the councillors of either corruption or failure to provide services. Those are the two charges. Then you institute a Commission of Inquiry and you hand pick the people who are going to be in that Commission of Inquiry, so that obviously you choose some people to produce a report which is going to be to your liking. Meanwhile the Mayor and the Council are suspended and when that report comes out, you say: there you are, here is the proof, this Mayor and the councillors are corrupt. So they are dismissed and you install a commission to run the city.

This has happened since the arrival on the scene of councils run by the MDC. Before that, the Ministry was not keen to do anything about the running of the cities.

I will now come to why I am pointing to the pattern. In actual fact, this pattern of accusing councils of corruption and failure to provide service was what the residents of Harare in particular were accusing the Tawengwa Council and they finally, after much fighting in the courts and petitions, they were removed. Then it was the Chanakira Commission that was installed but that was installed before the MDC Councils came into being. But ZANU PF itself was so chaotic to such an extent that its council was removed. But when MDC Councils came along, we find that the same accusations are being brought against the Councils. But, in every case, I can confidently say the allegations are just trumped up allegations and the pattern is as we can see. We are now two years down the line of the Commission in Harare but has Harare improved? Harare has not improved. It is very much worse than it was two years ago and it is under a Commission appointed by the Minister of Local Government.

Just to catalogue some of the interferences in the governance of councils which have been elected by the people, I will show that in November 2003. There were appointed for Harare and Bulawayo, Metropolitan Governors to administer these provinces. In the Urban Councils Act, there is no such a thing as a metropolitan governor. So now in Harare and Bulawayo you have a Metropolitan Governor, a Mayor – so you have parallel structures and you have confusion and that is a recipe for disaster as well. Almost as soon as he was elected, the Executive Mayor of Harare, Engineer Mudzuri started being harassed. He produced a turn around plan but he was finally dismissed in April 2004, having been suspended in April 2003 on the findings of this very biased Commission of Inquiry. You may recall that there were at least two Commissions investigating Engineer Mudzuri. There was the Tomana Commission and there was the Kurasha Commission and there was general confusion as well about the legitimacy of each of these Commissions and their reports and so it went on.

There were six Harare city councillors who were dismissed with the Mayor in April 2003 and then 13 more were dismissed in June 2004. Then we had an Advisory Commission and there was the Kurasha Commission, the Tomana Commission etc. Finally, of course, Mayor Mudzuri was then fired together with them.

Meanwhile, you have the Makwavarara Commission running the affairs of the City of Harare and you now have a situation where the Minister is proposing putting a Deputy Town Clerk – which is not provided for either in the Urban Councils Act. I believe that the candidate is now struggling – according to the report – with the Town Clerk and again you have got different structures struggling.

By the way, in Harare one of the accusations against Engineer Mudzuri was that he had not produced a turn around plan. In actual fact Madam Speaker, he did produce a turn around plan and it is the same turn around plan which I believe Engineer Mahachi has reproduced almost word for word and that is the one which has now been accepted because although a consultant was hired to produce a turn around plan – but the hiring of a consultant is not provided for in the Urban Councils Act. That turn around plan was also rejected. So, you have some considerable confusion in the governance of the City of Harare.

Madam Speaker, I would like to go to some of the other cities. In Masvingo, we have Mayor Abis Chayamiti who was subjected to harassment and accusations of corruption etc, towards the end of his first term. But then, he was re-elected and so he is still now Mayor but he is still being subjected to some considerable harassment.

In Mutare, we have exactly the same pattern which we had in Harare, where you have threats against the Mayor and the Councilors and then eventually you have them suspended, you have a Commission of enquiry and the Commission comes up with a negative report. I have here a letter of the suspension of Mayor Kagurabadza and he was suspended for failing to supervise and coordinate the affairs of the Council and failing to control the activities of the employees and mismanagement of funds and Council affairs and the declining of service delivery. So, the ZANU PF ministry rejoices in using exactly the same accusations as the ones the city of Harare residents used on Mayor Tawengwa a long time ago.

By the way, I would just like to point out that the Commission that was appointed to investigate the Mayor of Mutare – some of the Members of this Commission of enquiry -the chairman of this Commission of enquiry was Mr. Mugadza who was the opponent to Mr. Kagurabadza in the Mayoral elections. Obviously he was an interested party for the opposition. Mr. Mubvumi participated in demonstrations against Mayor Kagurabadza, where they carried a coffin labeled, “MDC rest in peace”, and “Kagurabadza rest in peace”, attacking the Mayor. However, he is also a Central Committee member of ZANU PF and so that does not make him a disinterested party because he is not a member of the opposition.

Then we have Mr. Mubedza who produced a report against the mayor. And then there is Mrs. Mudzingwa who has some problems with ZINWA and was trying to implicate the Mayor of Mutare in that. So, these Commissions were not unbiased, disinterested people. These Commissions were all chosen because they were going to find Mayor Kagurabadza guilty and that is exactly what they did. They were accusing him of corruption when in actual fact they were protecting the previous council which was accused of corruption, found guilty on tender issues, overspending, had allegations of corruption, nepotism etc. However, when it is an MDC council, you get allegations of corruption.

Madam Speaker, I would like to go back to the other councils. In Chegutu, the Mayor was suspended on allegations of corruption after he himself had raised issues of corruption amongst some of the Councilors – ZANU PF Councilors. When he raised those issues, he himself was harassed and then he was suspended.

Then we go to Chitungwiza where Mayor Shoko has been under pressure and threats for at least two years, if not more. Again, he has been accused of corruption over the issue of sewerage etc. Like Mayor Kagurabadza, it was again Mayor Shoko who raised the issue of corruption and the misuse of the funds that had been given to Chitungwiza Town Council by the RBZ to upgrade the sewerage system. He himself found that officials, particularly in the Department of Housing, had misused the money. When he raised that issue, that is when he got suspended. So, if an MDC mayor highlights issues of corruption, he gets fired. So, what is the rationale?

Madam Speaker, in Kariba the mayor has had demonstrations against him for incompetence and so on, when in actual fact he has been trying to draw up plans to attract tourists. In Bulawayo, Mayor Ndabeni Ncube has also been harassed for highlighting problems in the city. It was particularly the issue of people who had died of malnutrition in Bulawayo. That is when the Minister came down on him like a tonne of bricks and also, Madam Speaker, he criticized the Government and he was told to follow the Government line. Minister Chombo was also offended when the Bulawayo Mayor met the UN Representative. Minister Chombo is accusing them of something which is not of their fault. The issue of the shortage of funds, it is a problem of the ZANU PF Government especially of Minister Chombo's ministry in particular. They want to starve the MDC Councils of funds.

Madam Speaker, MDC Councils do not get funds to buy chemicals to purify water. I remember when Mayor Mudzuri was first elected he had an idea of trying to raise funds and loans off-shore because the terms were better. Madam Speaker, the Government interfered with this very good idea. The Government said no, no, you have to go to the Government and as a result they did not get the funds. The Government, has failed to give us funds to purify water. The Government refused to take Mayor Mudzuri's ideas.

Madam Speaker, as I said earlier I want to come back now to why we are talking about the interference. There is a link between democracy and prosperity. If we do not allow our people to elect their own representatives and then to support their representatives and if you get rid of them and you say no, no those are not the people that we like, we will be interfering with the electorate. The residents will say we do not see why we should pay you because we did not elect you. The problem now is that the Commission has no money and so the services have collapsed even further.

Madam Speaker, Minister Chombo has ignored several court rulings on this issue of Harare Commission. There was a Supreme Court ruling in 2002 by Justice Sandura who ruled that no Commission can be renewed after the first six months period. The six months period of the Makwavarara Commission expired on the 9th of June last year. Similarly, in the High Court, the judgement given by Justice Rita Makarau in the Christopher Zvobgo's case, who was the City Engineer for Harare. Engineer Zvobgo was dismissed and he went to court, she also ruled that the Chanakira Commission was in fact illegal and therefore they had no right to suspend or dismiss the town engineer.

Madam Speaker, this Minister continues to ignore court rulings, to try and override them. I noticed that on the 21st of December 2005 the excuse given by the Minister for not holding elections in Harare is that there are no new ward boundaries. Because of that reason he said that the elections were going to be held in 2007. We have city boundaries and if the Government really respects the wishes of the people they should start developing the new boundaries.

Madam Speaker, two or so years ago we had three extra wards added to Harare. There were 42 wards in 2002 and they went up to 45. So, I do not see any reason for not holding any elections. It is insulting to the residents of Harare that we cannot hold elections because we need to draw new boundaries. What kind of reasoning is that, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker, in my view the Portfolio Committee should conduct serious investigations, if only we can have the resources. I want to plead with the Government – if Parliament Portfolio Committees are not given sufficient resources to do our work- so the Committee, much as we might want to do investigations, we do not have resources. Madam Speaker, Parliament should

deal with some of these issues like Local Government issues. Local Government covers every person that is where most people interface with Government. Most people do not interface with Parliament but with their district administrators et cetera.

Madam Speaker, I believe we need to restore democracy at Local Government level. People should choose their leaders. They must have a right to say: "you are not using my money properly so I want to put somebody there who will provide clean water, who will put street lights and so forth". Madam Speaker, there is an obsession in ZANU PF to control people's lives, but people need to be free. The Government should allow people freedom to choose their own Government and also local authority representatives. This will enable our cities to thrive. If we do that we will have tourists, investors and also there will be activity everywhere.

Madam Speaker, I implore members of both sides of this House to help us improve the conditions of our cities and to restore democracy at all Government levels.

MR. MUGABE: I stand to partly agree with the hon. member in terms of potholes, bad lighting systems in all our cities and sewerage running all over in Chitungwiza, Bulawayo, Mutare and those other cities. I agree with her and we have seen it on happening. The solutions for the government is to say who is supposed to be doing this and if these local authorities that are in power and are supposed to be doing this, when they do not do their work you cannot expect the Minister of Local Government to just watch.

The Minister of Local Government has to walk in and act, remove the councils that are not effective or even replace them with commissions so that those commissions can be answerable to the Minister to see to it that service delivery is given back to the people. The typical example is Chitungwiza where we were seeing raw sewage in all the roads and nearly going into the houses until when the Minister acted. When the Minister acted, we saw a decisive decision being taken by the government. Money was put in and the Mayor did not even want to work with those that were bringing in the money. What does the Minister have to do? Now there is no raw sewerage flowing in Chitungwiza.

Madam Speaker, whether it is in Mutare or Bulawayo where you find potholes, the reasons are all similar. There is no foreign currency and there is shortage of this and that. When you look back, the reason is the sanctions called by the other part of the MDC which is the anti- Senate faction of the opposition. It is them that are calling for sanctions for this country. Just yesterday or the other day, they were across the river in Livingstone arranging for more sanctions for our country.

So what we are saying is that the Minister of Local Government must be given more powers even to go and interfere with councils that have not abided by the Reserve Bank Governor's call for turn around programmes. If they do not have a turn around programme, what do they expect the government to do? So they are MDC controlled councils and therefore, they will not listen to the government. ZANU PF is in power and we cannot sit there and see service delivery declining then you say ZANU PF you are in power, you just look when you see that councils are declining. We will not allow that.

We are not there for show but to govern and when you govern you make decisions including removing those councils that are not performing and replace them with commissions that we control so that when we put in the money we see that it is being used for the purpose that it is intended. In the City of Harare we have asked them to put up a turn around programme. They have hired a consultant and there is a turn around programme that is being implemented now. Bad fellows in the City of Harare are being suspended every day. We know that so and so has been suspended because he has not been performing. – (MR. MUTSEKWA: *Inaudible interjections*) - Makwavarara is performing.

She is working and we must applaud it. In Bulawayo, there is an MDC Mayor who has been there and now this is his second term. He is trying his best and he is better than the rest of them around the country. He has tried his best and that is why he is still in power.

If our policy as government was to go after the MDC councils, we would have removed him a long time ago but because he is trying, he has constraints caused by the anti-Senate faction, we can understand that he is suffering just like all other Zimbabweans. Therefore, this is why that Mayor is still in office. The Minister of Local Government sees that this man is trying. The minute he begins to fail, the hammer will come on and the right thing will happen.

In Kariba that Mayor has never been interfered with and the demonstrations that he had, they were genuine because he would have failed to deliver. The people take to the streets themselves and not Chombo, not Ministry of Local Government. It is the people of Kariba that took to the streets to demonstrate against their Mayor who is the person who is failing them. That is a democracy. It is in their own right to go and demonstrate against a failing Mayor. It is proper.

I am not a racist but the Hon. Stevenson honestly took the issue with the Mayor of Kariba. I think it is for one reason and one alone that Mayor is a white man. There are shacks in Kariba and we hoped that there is now a white Mayor in Kariba the shacks are going to disappear in our tourism resort. Unfortunately, Operation *Murambatvina* fell short in Kariba. We wish to go back with the Minister of Local Government to Kariba and deal with the shacks but also perhaps *Garikai* first then *Murambatsvina mumashure*.

There are things that were being raised here by the Hon. Member when she spoke about democracy and of all the people I was shocked that she would stand up and try and preach democracy in this House when she is refusing her own leader that she chose. I am taken aback. This is her own leader and president, the one she fought for in the so called final push, the one that she wanted to be in the State House, now she does not want her. What democracy is that? I beg to differ with the hon. member because she is misleading us. I think in my own opinion that is meant for newspapers and the international community to pick it up, that this is what she said in Parliament. But if she was sincere like *inini na VaMugabe hatisiyane* because that is the leader that we chose.

MR. SIBINDI: I think she is now discussing - [HON. MEMBERS: *Its he and not she*] - because if he was he, he would not discuss – [HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*]

MR. L. MUGABE: Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. members to apologise because that is unparliamentary and he must withdraw it.

MR. SIBINDI: I withdraw.

MR. L. MUGABE: In conclusion, the pot holes, electricity and sewerage that she has talked about, I would like to move that the Minister of Local Government must take immediate action and make sure that all those areas are rectified. If it includes firing a Mayor, I want to urge the Minister to do that. I want to ask the Minister of Local Government to take remedial work immediately and start with the areas and towns that she mentioned from Chitungwiza, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru, Chegutu and Harare. These five are in critical need and Harare has a turn around programme and I hope it will give us a sense of direction.

MR. MUSHORIWA: I rise to support the motion moved by Hon. Stevenson. I do not believe and agree that hon. members duly elected to serve the people of Zimbabwe could come into this august House and trivialise an issue of this magnitude. I am shocked that Hon. Mugabe who stays within my constituency, who knows as he drives to his house for the past 2 years that the road he uses has too many potholes. Instead of driving at 80 km/hr he reduces the speed to 10 km/hr due to the pot holes.

He knows that the sewage system in Harare, especially in Dzivarasekwa has worsened over the past 2 years and this is the period which Harare has been run by a commission appointed by the Minister of Local Government. The hon. member is aware that Harare has deteriorated. As he drives to his house there are heaps and heaps of uncollected garbage which have been there for the past 2 years. The person who is running the commission has done little or nothing at all in terms of improving the welfare of people in Harare.

What the commission has done is to destroy the City of Harare and they have rendered the sunshine city the dirtiest city in the country. All major towns and cities in Zimbabwe are facing a number of challenges ranging from uncollected garbage, pot holes to the sewage system which has gone beyond the state which it was before Mayor Mudzuri left. The problem that we are facing is not about the mayors but it is a question of having the minister who does not know on how to administer local authorities. He specialises in narrow political interests.

It is not the first time that we have had a Minister of Local Government. We have had the Hon. Speaker of Parliament Cde Nkomo and he will go in history as the only minister who took a bold decision against people who were corrupt especially when he fired the late Executive Mayor, Councillor Tavengwa. He took that decision not only for political expediency but for the interests of the residents.

Hon. Mugabe knows that the city close to his constituency is Chinhoyi and you recall that quite a number of residents were treated when raw sewage was discharged from their taps. What did the Minister of Local Government do? He did nothing. He did not even open an investigation or suspend that council. What type of a minister who, inspite of having an MDC Mayor in Chegutu being deputised by a ZANU PF Mayor did unbelievable things. Several reports were made and several investigations were carried out. The Minister of Local Government turned a deaf ear. Why? Because Mariyapera and company were ZANU PF. Hon. Chombo is not interested in serving the people in urban centres but he is interested in entrenching the interests of ZANU PF in urban centres. Hon. Mugabe speaks here and says that the people of Harare, Chitungwiza, Mutare elected people to represent them and to run these cities but what happens? If you go to Mutare, they are all failed politicians. People who we know cannot manage their own personal lives. Mr. Speaker, if we are to do an audit you will find that the amount of money the Commissioners running these cities are getting is a huge amount of money which you find that if that money was channeled to servicing the infrastructure of those cities, I will explain to you the problem that we have. The decay in the urban centres has to do with the Local Government. It is wrong for the Minister of Local Government to come here or to have a Member of Parliament duly elected by people staying in a community where there are people who are suffering because of the behaviour of the unprofessional way Hon. Chombo is running his ministry. It is important that urgent action should be taken. Out there we have a Commission which for more than two years has been headed by somebody who does not even have grade 7 and somebody who cannot even think of a turnaround plan. How do you justify the action by the Minister of Local Government who takes it upon himself to suspend the Mayor of Harare who is an engineer by profession and replacing him with a person who has a grade 7 qualification? Mr. Speaker how many turnaround strategies have we been told of for the past two years? I think if it was a question of turning we have turned for a long time. We have kwashiorkor in the minds of the people running Local Government. As we speak, there is fighting even among the Commissioners. We have so many Commissioners. Can you justify to the people of Harare why they are paying the Director of Works, Commissioners, Strategists and Engineers? We have a situation where all these people that you see running these Commissions, most of them I think have failed primary elections or were told that they would become members of the Senate. What is important for the people of Zimbabwe is that the Minister of Local Government should with immediate effect call for elections for the people to make their choice. It is important and I appeal to members of the ruling party in your caucus, to tell that man to desist from firing those people who are doing their work and desist from working unprofessionally. Once you have a person like Hon. Chombo calling himself a doctor, you start wondering what type of education he has.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Address him properly as Hon. Chombo.

MR MUSHORIWA: I shall not call him Doctor Chombo but Cde. Chombo, because of his actions which have destroyed the Council. Initially we were told that Hon. Chombo was trying to do this to please the President so that he will be given the reigns of this country but what this man has done is completely destroying the Council.

In a discussion with Hon. Mugabe he admits privately that Hon. Chombo is a liability to ZANU (PF).

MR. MUGABE: On a point of order, I really do not like the way he is lying. I have no reason whatsoever to sit with him telling him what he is saying. He must apologise to the House because I have not met him privately or discussed Hon. Chombo with him.

MR MUSHORIWA: Mr. Speaker what this Hon. Member of Parliament is trying to tell this House is that he is trying to hide behind his finger. I pray Mr. Speaker that hon. members in this august House should all be concerned with the people in all parts of the country. Sanity should prevail in the urban centres and Minister Chombo should desist from what he is doing.

MRS MISIHAIRABWI-MUSHONGA: I want to support the motion by hon. Stevenson and I think also to reiterate what hon. Mushoriwa has said just now. The situation that we are facing in most urban areas is really bad and one hopes that the hon. members in this House will take this discussion seriously. I think there is need generally for us here in Zimbabwe to have a paradigm shift in terms of where we put our priorities. When we talk about Local Government in fact we are talking about the generality of the people. You can put as much money as you want in National Government but if you have not dealt with Local Government you have not dealt with the generality of the people and I think that it is important that we acknowledge that fact so that when we discuss this issue, we actually have an understanding so that we do not trivialize the issue. Mr. Speaker I remember President Mbeki when he was campaigning in South Africa over issues about Local Government failing and we have to make sure that Local Government is right on the top of governments because that is where the majority of those developments are whether we are talking about the resources, or running of businesses, it is about how we manage our local governments.

I remember about five or four years ago - I travelled to one African city, which will remain nameless, but as I walked in that city I saw raw sewage going all over the place. As I looked at the amount of pollution that was taking place – the roads and people who were literally driving around the raw sewerage, I kept praying because barely ten years ago, I was actually proud of being Zimbabwean. I prayed that we would never get to a stage where anybody would reduce our city to the levels that we have gone to.

When you now walk in the City of Harare in particular and you find what is going on in the places where people are supposed to be selling food, for example, when you begin to visit places like St. Marys, you can get children in an urban city like Harare, in my constituency of Glen Norah, failing to attend school because it has not been possible for anybody to put up a bridge so that children can go to school - you have failed and failed big time. It is important that you acknowledge that failure.

It does not matter how much we may joke about it and it does not matter how much we have laughed about it but the reality of the issue is that we have a crisis in local government. That, is the spirit that this motion is bringing into this place. If you do not know these things at all, you are not serious because you are worried to go against the principles of what we are talking about. Let us say to ourselves, what is it that has gotten us into this situation? Mr Speaker, I want to ask you about these two things in particular.

The first one, the moment you begin to tamper about representation – is about the moment you will have lost the management of the local government. The reason why in every other place you only have people elected as Councillors was to make sure that there would never be at any stage where you would have a committee in which there would not be anybody who they relate to. The fact that in most of these urban cities we have a situation where those elected representatives in the communities are no longer there is our biggest problem.

In my constituency, people used to say, if there is a burst sewer pipe – they would go to the Councillor. What did you do to them? You wake up one morning and say to them those councillors do not exist anymore. You replace them with a body that has never set foot in any of these constituencies. If you were to ask the Commission of Harare today whether they visited or got to any of these high density areas in Harare – you would wonder from the day that they were appointed – they do not hold consultative meetings and do not know what is taking place in those areas. This is why even when they sit around like that - they have boardroom meetings other than dealing with the real matters on the ground.

Yet you have that particular Minister who is supposed to be in charge of Local Government claiming that he is a revolutionary. As far as I am concerned, when you read history and when we listen to what was happening during the liberation struggle, most of the activities were taking place in townships. It was the black people who were throwing stones and fighting, they were not fighting just for the fun of it but so that they could have a different kind of history.

Now that we have a black government, we are worse off than we were before. People are living like – (HON. MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*)- Mr. Speaker, we have to be honest this time, we want to change the lives of people and not the life of an individual - we are changing a system. The Smith regime was bad not because of his colour but because it gave an institution that treated black people in this country in an inhumane manner. We want the black government that is now in place to treat the black people in a different way. People should be saying to themselves, yes we now get satisfaction from our black government - life is much more bearable now.

What is the point of having a woman in the Glen Norah waking up at six o'clock a.m. to go and fetch water, she is now carrying a bucket to fetch water because the tap that she has at her house is not supplying any water. When we are talking in the Millennium Development Goal today, we claim that we are changing the lives of our people, and want to make sure that women do not walk the kilometers that they walk to fetch clean water. That is the same Millennium Development Goal that our particular government agreed to and yet you are backsliding and have the audacity of coming to this House and want to joke about this particular issue – it is wrong Mr. Speaker. What we should be discussing is that if we were round the issues of representation, how do we correct and make sure that people get their own representation.

The second issue that has created the local government crisis in this country is one of taxation. I chair the Public Accounts Committee, I have yet to see an audited report from most local government authorities – I am talking about generally most of these councils. You are unable to get an audit so may be you are cheating people because you are asking them to pay and yet you are not explaining where that money is going to. In fact, I have always stated that our people are very patient because they would have desisted from making further payments to the Commission. As I speak Mr. Speaker, Sekesai Makwavarara is now staying at that Mayoral mansion – (AN HON MEMBER: *Zvavazve jealous*)- If you look at the amount of money that is spent to look after that place, it is unbelievable.

The other thing I would want to talk about as far as local government is concerned is to do with us seriously gaining as a government to say when we produce a budget in this House and we give a small amount to local government, what statement are we making to the people of Zimbabwe? Our priorities of allocating resources are largely wrong whether we are talking about health. People get health care at primary health centres, you are not expecting people to go and

get help at central government hospitals because they only go there after being referred from local government clinics. For most cases, they are supposed to be assisted at local government level.

If you are talking about schools or about the education of any country, you are talking about those schools being in local government communities. I went to a school in Chembira in Glen Norah, what breaks my heart up until now is that if I go back to my old school, the same desk that I sat in still exists up to this moment – no improvement has taken place.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about HIV/AIDS as an epidemic that we seriously have to put an end to. If you were to go to Botswana right now, they are providing ARVs in the public sector, the reason why the programme has been a success there is because they are being provided at community level. If you start providing ARVs at central government level, you will be unable to go back to verify how the people are doing at local government level. The reason why I am giving this example, is to implore this House that if there is an area that we need to take seriously, it is the area of local government.

In conclusion Mr Speaker, if we believe that it is important to be seen as a country that is in the forefront, there is no-one whom I have seen born and bred in Zimbabwe that enjoys being at the height of destitute in their own country – (HON MEMBERS: *Inaudible interjections*)- If we all unite on this particular issue instead of shouting individuals down, then we say there is a patriotic person who is really concerned about what is going on.

I speak to those who are in the ruling party, when you speak to them about the thing that started going wrong in this country, they agree with you from every point that you raise. It is unfortunate when we come into this House, whether it is because Hon. Chinamasa looks at them with a bad eye and they are afraid that something will happen to them or whatever, they will not then stand up and agree. What has killed this country is not the sanctions that we talk about but it is our inability to be honest to each other. The day we begin to say you can stand up and tell me this is wrong and it does not matter where you are coming from and I will do something about it, then things will improve.

The reality of the issue is that Hon. Minister Chombo has messed up Local Government big time. You may want to argue, you may want to say anything about it, he has lost. We know that there is a problem in firing people but for goodness sake he is the one who is supposed to be given the ministry of Social Amenities. We need to take him out of the Ministry of Local Government because we need someone who is serious there, someone who believes that people are important and someone who genuinely wants to move the city in a different way. We ask that Hon. Chombo I know, he cannot himself resign because of the behaviour he has exhibited but at least for goodness sake we have seen that he has failed and he needs to go.

MR. SIBINDI: I stand to support the motion by Hon. Stevenson. I am a worried man with the behaviour of the Minister of Local Government. He is busy firing people using political things but we need cities to prosper. Now when you go to every city it is a shame. You drive to Botswana anytime, you drive to South Africa and you come back to Zimbabwe, it is like the country is in ruins.

Mr. Speaker, the Local Government is not performing because the government lacks seriousness to support it. We used to have those who supported the Local Government such as the Canadians and USAID who were servicing stands. The Government used to give grants to Local Authorities but now all those organizations have moved out. Do you believe that the municipalities, with the rates that we are paying for water, can run the city with those funds. A man like Hon. Chombo, where does he think the municipality can get the money to purchase water equipment. Where can they get the money if, for example, Chombo gives a budget in Harare, say 14 trillion is given to the city of Harare, if that money is misused then he can fire the council. But now he is firing from nowhere. It is like a misfiring car. He needs a new engine.

The Municipalities are totally collapsing. Why should you continue to put commission after commission? Why don't we budget for the municipality then we blame them if they fail to utilize the funds. This is embarrassing for a country like Zimbabwe. I think Mr. Chombo has over stayed in the local government and he is no longer doing his job. He is a political commissar of Local Government in ZANU PF because all the councilors, even in the rural areas where the ZANU PF claims they have all the councilors, they are also failing there. Those people are suffering but what are you doing as a party to help those people? There are no roads, no bridges but you have a minister who claims to be a doctor. He is a doctor of destruction. I think this man needs to be taken to a Zion church because he needs assistance.

MR. PORUSINGAZI: I rise here to defend the actions of the Minister Chombo in removing those councilors that are not performing well and replacing them with commissions. I will talk for a example about Mutare which recently the minister installed a commission. We have seen a change for the better in Mutare. I am a resident of Mutare. The street which I live, 12 Rekai Tangwena, runs a stretch of 3 kilometres and during the reign of these MDC councilors, there was only one street light left and today when the commission was put, the whole street is now lit. It is a great improvement. We used to go for a period in excess of three weeks without refuse collection but at the moment refuse collection is done on a daily basis. I need to applaud the actions of the Commission running the affairs of Mutare. We used to have some periodic water cuts, everyone here knows that Mutare has a permanent solution for water problems because of the Pungwe Water Programme which was connected to the City but because of these MDC councillors we have water cuts. After this Commission was appointed, there is not a single day when Mutare has gone dry. I also need to applaud the Commission for that good work.

Hon Mushoriwa castigated the calibre of commissioners appointed to run the affairs of Harare and Mutare. I want to talk about Mutare in particular. We have got academics, very highly educated people. For example, the Chairman of the Mutare Commission holds a number of qualifications. He is a University Administrator, he runs ZOU. We have got people like the Deputy Chairman, he is a well known businessman.

The former councillors had destroyed the City of Mutare and when he was appointed, he pumped his money to make sure that the refuse trucks are back on the road. He bought tyres and alternators for the trucks, something which was never done by the former Councillors. The level of education that the former councillors had in Manicaland was quite disturbing. Some of the councillors came from the streets. We had two councillors who were selling "juice" cards by the road side but they won the elections and because of democracy there is no way you can block that councillor if he is elected by the people. One of the councillors was a street kid, he was operating from down town in Mutare. He won the elections, the next thing you find he is a Councillor. How do you expect him to perform because when he gets into the chamber, he is excited with the comfort in the chamber. When the proceedings are going on, he is busy enjoying himself on a swivel chair because he is used to sitting on a stone waiting for customers to buy "juice" cards. Now he is in an air-conditioned office. What do you expect from that person?

Mr Speaker, let us not lose sight of the fact that at the moment we are facing economic challenges. We are under sanctions and these sanctions are felt in every sphere of our economy even in local authorities. If it was my wish, democracy allowing, I think this action should be displayed across the board even to hon members who do not perform.

MR MZEMBI: I rise to put into context the challenges that I think are faced by local authorities and what I perceive to be some of the solutions which we must administer in order to correct and rectify the problems that we are facing. I see the following challenges in the governance of local authorities:

There is the issue of inflation that I am going to bring into context. Secondly, there is the issue of sub-economic rents and levies which are charged by local authorities which are riding on the back of the inflation that I am talking about. We are chasing a moving target and in chasing a

moving target, it is very difficult to zero in on a figure that can recover the kind of challenges that the local authorities are facing.

The third point that I want to zero in on is the issue of the effect of Zimbabwe being under siege, what we commonly refer to as sanctions, what effect it has on service delivery. The fourth item that I would like to discuss about is obviously the managerial capacity in local councils. The previous speaker spoke about the level and quality of people who are seconded and elected to go and serve in councils. The fifth item is obviously too much politicisation of councils and as a result the undermining of the service to the people because of too much polarity that we find in our councils. The sixth item that I will talk about which I will begin to elaborate on is the issue of drought.

This nation has been visited by drought in the last four to five years with the effect of the government focussing most of its resources on the grain import bill leaving very few resources to improve on local service delivery. A lot of foreign currency that we are generating as an economy is going towards the food import bill. It leaves local authorities and municipalities competing equally with other equally critical areas of our economy for the same scarce foreign currency in order to improve service delivery. That is impacting very heavily on the operations of local authorities but I am happy that year 2005/06, we have been visited by a wet season. There is a lot irrigation agriculture taking place. That in my opinion should improve our food provision for our people and perhaps in the very short term, we may realise a saving on the food import bill which can be re-directed towards local governance.

Talking about inflation, if we are sitting on inflation here officially acknowledged as just under 600% - what is happening at the national level will mirror itself even at local government level. If the economy at national level is sick it means even at the very lowest level, at council level, that pin-off effect is felt by local councils. It goes on to link with the rent and rates that we are charging as city councils. The impression that I get is that every council that is elected to serve, its immediate task is to make sure that it protects its consumers because they are elected representing people. That sensitivity to the people's plight, makes councils very jittery about wanting to charge very high rates. You will find that the Mutare example that Hon Porusingazi was talking about – the Commission that has been appointed there will proceed without refuse collection but at the moment refuse collection is done on a daily basis. I need to applaud the actions of the Commission running the affairs of Mutare. We used to have some periodic water cuts, everyone here knows that Mutare has a permanent solution for water problems because of the Pungwe Water Programme which was connected to the City but because of these MDC councillors we have water cuts. After this Commission was appointed, there is not a single day when Mutare has gone dry. I also need to applaud the Commission for that good work.

Hon Mushoriwa castigated the calibre of commissioners appointed to run the affairs of Harare and Mutare. I want to talk about Mutare in particular. We have got academics, very highly educated people. For example, the Chairman of the Mutare Commission holds a number of qualifications. He is a University Administrator, he runs ZOU. We have got people like the Deputy Chairman, he is a well known businessman.

The former councillors had destroyed the City of Mutare and when he was appointed, he pumped his money to make sure that the refuse trucks are back on the road. He bought tyres and alternators for the trucks, something which was never done by the former Councillors. The level of education that the former councillors had in Manicaland was quite disturbing. Some of the councillors came from the streets. We had two councillors who were selling "juice" cards by the road side but they won the elections and because of democracy there is no way you can block that councillor if he is elected by the people. One of the councillors was a street kid, he was operating from down town in Mutare. He won the elections, the next thing you find he is a Councillor. How do you expect him to perform because when he gets into the chamber, he is excited with the comfort in the chamber. When the proceedings are going on, he is busy enjoying himself on a swivel chair because he is used to sitting on a stone waiting for customers to buy "juice" cards. Now he is in an air-conditioned office. What do you expect from that person?

Mr Speaker, let us not lose sight of the fact that at the moment we are facing economic challenges. We are under sanctions and these sanctions are felt in every sphere of our economy even in local authorities. If it was my wish, democracy allowing, I think this action should be displayed across the board even to hon members who do not perform.

The commission does not derive its mandate from the people. It is perhaps right to intervene to bring back our council to its normal operations. They are not sensitive to being re-elected in September in as much they would want to be re-elected in 2010.

We should make the correct decisions that would enable our councils to recover the correct overheads that they would want to recover.

In a country under siege or under sanctions like Zimbabwe – we do not manufacture robots in this country. It is an importable item. If a country is not under a balance of payment support arrangement, it cannot import the number of robots it would want to service its roads users. If you talk about water provision – the chemicals that we use to treat water: that we consume as local authorities and voters - we have to import the chemicals to treat our water. Again, we do not manufacture the water infrastructural systems or pumps or chemicals needed for processing the water. If there is a substitute, it is very minimal in terms of the local content. Otherwise it is wholly imported.

If you are talking about council clinics and about the provision of drugs – it is imported 100%. We hardly manufacture any drugs of any meaningful sense. Any ordinary voter or resident who goes to a clinic is bound to face the same challenges as he would at Parirenyatwa or Harare Hospitals.

If you are talking of refuse trucks – I do not know of any one who has manufactured refuse trucks here. Council refuse trucks are imported. They are specialized vehicles, which need heavy vehicle content to manufacture them or you are going to import them 100%.

If you are talking of waste management at Morton Jaffrey Water Works – the equipment used to treat sewage is imported. I am trying to say that even the port-holes and the bitumen which you need to resurface your roads is also an importable item. I am trying to demonstrate that the solution is not so much as having the Zimbabwean dollar being poured into Zimbabwe. I am glad that the Governor of the Reserve Bank has also realized this. What we need to do is to clearly put our heads together – the opposition and the ruling party so that we can harness the foreign direct investment that we need to flow in.

If you are talking about waste management, there is no one who has got the expertise to treat the waste in excess of 300 000 metric tones generated by Harare alone. Developed countries are recycling their waste. They are producing bio-diesel, electricity, bio-fertiliser, glycerine, cake for stock feeds from that waste. That kind of investment can only come in if we all close ranks – the opposition and ourselves and go to get foreign investments that the nations needs. That kind of investments alone will take care of the waste management problem we have in the City of Harare.

The solution is not in a piece meal budget or in our printing money to re-capacitate the City Council. The solution is in us going together as MDC, NDU, other political parties that may come in future and us ZANU PF who are always here, to seek foreign investments that will improve our country.

I will give an example of Zambia during the time it was being administered by Kaunda. It had very big potholes and its very big infrastructure went to waste. This was due to undeclared sanctions by western countries because they wanted to Chiluba to come in. When Chiluba came in, they all opened up the roads and foreign investments came in. The roads and the potholes were resurfaced. That kind of change might not be coming in our case. What we need to do is to close ranks and begin to source for this foreign investment. We need to talk to our foreign principals and do so with one voice so as to attract that foreign investment back into the country so that we begin to resurface our roads and repair our street lighting.

We can talk and debate about street lighting for days on end but, as long as we do not realize that there is a foreign currency value on every service that council offers, we will be wasting our time. We need to re-engage our foreign principals and talk with one voice so as to attract this foreign investment. Otherwise, we might spend the whole night talking here.

In closing, I just want to talk about the quality of a councillor because it is not an issue that is affecting Harare, Bulawayo or Masvingo City Councils alone. In Masvingo, we had the dishonour after the last council elections of having the Deputy Mayor who is a Security Guard being the Chairman of the Finance Committee. That kind of a councillor - you cannot expect him to think and act at the same level that Hon. Ncube or Hon. Mzembi or Hon. Porusigazi does in order to chart a vision for a city as big as Masvingo. From the desk of a security guard to that of a Deputy Mayor is unbelievable and it does put to us as ZANU PF and MDC to inculcate a culture in our voters so that we pick on quality in order that, that vision is spread from generation to generation. In the absence of that – if they fail to deliver – obviously commissions will have to come in. Even commission will have to be of good quality so that there is quality change.

PROFESSOR NCUBE: I wish to briefly contribute to this debate on this motion. The motion is about the collapse of infrastructure and service delivery in our cities and towns and links this collapse of services to the interference with elected organs of local governments by the Minister of Local Government and his Ministry in general. I have listened very carefully to hon members from the other side of the House speak – surprisingly in disparaging terms about elected officials purely on the basis that they do not hold this or that qualification.

We do not judge by the educational qualifications they hold. We judge them by reference to the things that they are able to do in their elected offices. If education in itself was supposed to be the criteria then the laws made by this Parliament will provide for minimum education for councilors and for Members of Parliament. They do not because these are supposed to be democratic institutions in respect of which the people elect their representatives who make political decisions not technical decisions.

Political decisions only advise on technical staff so that in a local authority you expect that the Town Clerk and his or her staff will be people who are technical, competent to give the politician the various options which are valid so that they can be well informed. Indeed, if we were to tell President Mugabe that he can only appoint Ministers with degrees, one wonders how many on the other side will be left as Ministers. That is not to say anything about the educational qualifications about our cabinet colleagues. We know that so many of them are well educated and they hold Phds but they remain uneducated. If they were, this country would not be in the sorry state that it is today, the collapse of infrastructure, Harare is in a mess, Bulawayo is in a mess, there is no fuel and the country is on its knees but it is managed by highly educated people.

Therefore Mr Speaker, the question of education is not the problem in Local Authorities. The problem is a national problem which is then manifested in the state of affairs in our Local Authorities. Hon. Mzembi speaks passionately about the need for us as a nation to engage in the international community and speak with one voice and once again regain our places, our pride within the committee of nation – very nice sounding words but you can not engage the international community when you refuse to engage each other national? How do you begin to engage the Europeans when you are refusing to talk to your neighbour?

Therefore, if we are serious about it, if Hon Mzembi and others are serious about it, the starting point should be, can we begin to talk to ourselves as Zimbabweans and engage ourselves? What is this which is wrong with our nation, what is this which is wrong with our politics and then when we have engaged each other and have agreed on the rules of the game internally, we can then place them to the rest of the world with one voice. But, you can not do that whilst we are

imprisoning each other, we are beating each other, we are enacting POSA and AIPPA – it is not possible to do that. Let us do first things first.

You need to cross the nearest bridge before you worry about the bridge which is 10 km away. The nearest one is for us to think and reflect on Zimbabwe and see what is this which is wrong in the manner in which they have conducted our politics and our affairs to the last degree? If Hon Mzembi's starting point was, please let us talk to each other, let us address the things which can divide us and let us resolve them. There is no difficulty in saying after that let us then collectively engage the international community so that Zimbabweans can once again be proud as a nation.

But, until we do that I think we can preach as Hon Mzembi said – day in day out - I can not go with Hon. Chinamasa there to engage the international community when he refuses to engage me on my concerns about my right to hold the meeting in Zimbabwe. He must engage me on that and then together engage the rest of the world. That is the point Mr Speaker, in all earnest and sincerity I wanted to make. We can witness the collapse of Local Authorities, service deliveries, our economy and the collapse of anything around us. But, we will not be able to move until such a time that we sincerely, honestly and frankly say as Zimbabwe let us talk to each other.

This is a new year which is 2006 and hopefully my colleagues on the other side of the House – [AN HON MEMBER: Which other side of the House?] - Hon. Chinamasa – [Laughter] - and including those on my right, I do not see anybody else.

THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS: I move that the debate do now adjourn.

Motion put and agreed to.

Debate to resume: Thursday 9 February 2006.