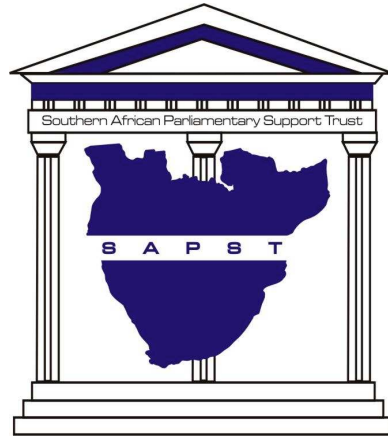




PARLIAMENTARY

ROUND UP: BULLETIN NO. 21 - 2010

Bulletin for Monday 25 October 2010



COMMITTEES ACTIVITIES

Home Affairs and Defence

The Committee conducted a surprise visit to the Registrar General's Offices on Monday 25 October 2010 to assess problems citizens were facing in obtaining national documents such as passports, birth certificates, Identity Cards etc. However, to the Committee's surprise, they found senior management staff waiting for them by the entrance. As a result, this pre-empted the committee's strategy, as Members were taken on a "guided tour".

The Committee is set to meet next week to revise its strategy so that when it visits RG's district offices, it won't find itself a similar trap. The Committee also intends to conduct public hearings on the same issue.

Mines and Energy

The Mines and Energy Committee conducted a stakeholder meeting on the Energy Regulatory Bill yesterday. The Bill seeks to establish an Energy Regulatory Authority and provide for its functions and management.

Stakeholders (NOCZIM, REA etc) that made their representations to the committee were generally in agreement with the principle behind the Bill and informed the committee that they were closely consulted on the Bill. However, private players wanted some areas of detail to be attended to.

Transport, Communications and Infrastructural Development

The Committee interviewed the Air Zimbabwe and Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe on labour disputes between management and workers, retrenchment and recapitalization progress. Dr. Chikumba and Mr. Chaota representing Air Zimbabwe and Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe (CAAZ) respectively, made the following submissions to the Committee;

Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe:

- As at 30 September 2010 Air Zimbabwe owed the Civil Aviation Authority \$11.21 million for which there are no foreseeable prospects of recovery. This has plunged CAAZ in serious challenges.
- The CAAZ is both a regulatory authority and service provider. However, work has commenced to split it into two entities.
- There is an urgent need to rehabilitate all airports and related services as most equipment is past its user life span.
- Presently Zimbabwean airports are under-utilized because of reduced air traffic due to the country's unfavorable economic environment.
- The Public Private Partnerships are meant to add value and risk sharing in order to minimize loss.

- The Zimbabwe air space is adequately manned and the equipment though old is still reliable and therefore CAAZ cannot be blamed for loss of business by the airline.
- The CAAZ operates on a cost recovery and not profit making basis.
- The authority is currently operating on a deficit; capacity utilization currently stands at 20% because of obsolete equipment which cannot be replaced.
- The Authority is sitting on a foreign debt of US\$150million which it inherited from its predecessor.

Air Zimbabwe:

- The industrial action by pilots was and is still regrettable.
- The airline's inability to adequately remunerate personnel has been compounded by under capitalization.
- There is a great need for restructuring of the airline in order to improve services and revenue inflows.
- Air Zimbabwe managed to pay all the outstanding allowances and salaries after the industrial action.
- Operations are back to normal but the airline was left with a huge task to clear its tainted image and reduced customer confidence.
- The airline has submitted proposals to government to beef up its fleet and is still awaiting a response, contrary to media reports that it has already purchased air buses.
- In 2009 the airline was plying local routes in the Democratic Republic of Congo a venture it has since abandoned as it is no longer profitable.
- The retrenchment exercise is targeted at excess staff and no pilots will be retrenched. To date the airline has settled retrenchment packages with 75 employees who were willing to go on early retirement.

Dr Chikumba also raised concerns with the committee that despite appearing four times before the committee in the past, no report had been tabled in Parliament. He urged the committee to table a report in parliament and start addressing the problems bedeviling the national air line.

Forthcoming Committee Activities

Tuesday 26 October 2010 at 1000 Hours

- The Portfolio Committee on Agriculture will receive a briefing from the Secretary for Agriculture on the preparedness of the 2010/2011 summer crop season.
- The Portfolio Committee on State Enterprises and Parastatals will receive a briefing from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) on the operations of GMB.

Thursday 28 October 2010 at 1000 Hours

- The Portfolio Committee on Small and Medium Enterprises will receive a progress report from Ministry Officials on activities that the Ministry is currently implementing.

- The Thematic Committee on Human Rights will receive a briefing from the Human Rights NGO Forum on the role of Human Rights organizations in the promotion and protection of human rights.

[Committee meetings in which committees are receiving briefings from ministry officials or any other stakeholders or public or private organizations, are open to the media and the public.]