Correction of Date to Bill Watch 29/2022

The fourth line of the heading to Bill Watch 29/2022 wrongly stated that the Senate had adjourned until 12th July instead of the 19th July.  The copies of the bulletin on the Veritas website have been suitably amended.

**BILL WATCH 31/2022**

[19th July 2022]

In the National Assembly 12th to 14th July

[Only the National Assembly Sat Last Week]

Both Houses Will be Sitting from Tuesday 19th July

Coming up in Parliament this Week

This bulletin’s main focus is on what happened in the National Assembly from Tuesday 12th to Thursday 14th July.  But we start with two important items from the Post-Cabinet Press Briefing on Tuesday 12th July.

Cabinet Decisions of 12th July

Those readers who wish to read more on these two items may do so by accessing the full Post-Cabinet Press Briefing on the Veritas website *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5786)*]*:

Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill approved

Cabinet approved the draft of this long-awaited Bill.  It has been many years since President Mugabe first included a Bill to amend the Mines and Minerals Act in the annual legislative agenda.  A Bill that was gazetted in 2016 was eventually rushed through Parliament, with amendments, in the dying days of the previous Parliament before the July 2018 general election, which resulted in Mr Mnangagwa elected as President for the first time. After the election, President Mnangagwa sent the Bill to the new Parliament to reconsider his reservations about the Bill, including his doubts about its constitutionality. That consideration by Parliament did not take place.  The Government instead decided that the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development should prepare a new Bill.  The present Bill, therefore, is the result of nearly four years of further work, which one hopes included appropriate consultations with all possible interested parties, i.e. not only miners, but farmers and other stakeholders.

*Note: Please do not inundate Veritas with requests for copies of the Bill.  We will only have a copy available once the Bill has been gazetted, which may take some time.*

National Youth Service Policy approved

Cabinet also approved the National Youth Service Policy Guiding Framework and National Youth Service Implementation Matrix: 2021-2025, as presented by the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, chairperson of the Social Services and Poverty Eradication Committee, Hon Mavima.  The policy, according to the press briefing, will inculcate patriotism and provides *a ‘framework for grooming well-disciplined youth, who exhibit Zimbabwean values and identity by 2030*”.  Recruitment will be “*voluntary*” but “*graduates of the National Youth programme will receive first priority into high institutions of learning including Polytechnics, teaching, nursing, the army and employment in the civil service*”.

Bills in the National Assembly This Week

National Security Council Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5704)*]* On Tuesday 12th July the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs presented this Bill on behalf of the responsible Minister, who is the Minister of Defence and War Veterans Affairs.  After presentation, in accordance with Standing Orders, it was given its First Reading and  referred to the Parliamentary Legal Committee [PLC] for its report on the constitutionality or otherwise of the Bill.  The Second Reading stage will not begin until the PLC has reported one way or the other.

Labour Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5355)*]*  On 12th July the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare kicked off the Second Reading stage with a speech explaining the Bill the main provisions of the Bill.  The proceedings were then adjourned to await the presentation of the report on the Bill and the public hearings conducted by the Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare.

No further legislative business was done during the next two days of sittings.

International Agreements Approved

On Wednesday 13th July the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade presented the following agreements for approval in terms of section 327(2)(a) of the Constitution:

1.   General Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Organisation of African Unity [OAU], which came into force in 1965, before Zimbabwe became an OAU member;

2.   Additional Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the OAU, which was approved by the OAU Heads of State and Government in July 1980.

As both agreements have now been approved by both Houses of Parliament – the Senate gave its approval last week – the President is now in a position to accede to the General Convention and the Additional Protocol by having the necessary instruments of accession and ratification lodged with the AU Commission.

Other Business in the National Assembly This Week

Tuesday 12th July

One-minute statements by MPs on matters of public importance

Standing Order 62 allows backbenchers to make one-minute statements on matters of public importance during the first 20 minutes of each sitting.  In practice, this has meant that only three MPs have an opportunity to make such statements.

Zimbabwe’s success at Pan-African Parliament [PAP] elections  Hon Stars Mathe informed the House that, in addition to Senator Chief Charumbira’s being elected the PAP President, other Zimbabwean parliamentarians had been elected to PAP positions at the recent session of the PAP in South Africa.  She herself had been elected Vice-Chairperson of Education, Culture, Tourism and Human Resources in the PAP Bureau [the equivalent of a Cabinet] and Hon Tatenda Mavetera had, at her first appearance at PAP, become Vice-President of the PAP Woman’s League and Young People.

Anti-Corruption Day  Hon Mliswa reminded MPs that it was Anti-Corruption Day.

Drug abuse by children  Hon Mukapiko raised the issue of drug abuse by children at schools, citing three recent suicides at a high school in his Redcliff constituency, and suggested a Ministerial statement from the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education.

The Deputy Speaker told several other MPs that they would have to wait until the next day to raise their points of national interest.

Petition referred to Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care

Medical services for children with heart conditions  On Tuesday 12th July the Deputy Speaker announced receipt on 14th June of a petition from Brave Little Hearts of Zimbabwe requesting Parliament to compel the Government to equip Parirenyatwa and Mpilo hospitals to enable them to officer paediatric heart surgical services, amongst other things, to assist children with heart conditions.  The petition had been referred to the Portfolio Committee on Health and Child Care.

Petitions deemed inadmissible for failure to meet requirements

On Tuesday 12th July the Deputy Speaker also announced that three petitions had been deemed inadmissible for not meeting the requirements of Standing Orders and the petitioners had been informed accordingly: (1) a petition from an individual calling on Parliament to postpone the 2023 elections in order to make reforms to the Electoral Act; (2) a petition from New Ziana workers requesting Parliament to intervene and ensure to a viable turnaround strategy and funding from Treasury; (3) a petition from the Education Union of Zimbabwe asking Parliament to have teachers on suspension to be restored to the payroll to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.

Ministerial statement on minimum mandatory sentencing for rape and other offences

On 12th July the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs made a Ministerial Statement on this subject *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5794)*]* in response to the Report of the Joint Portfolio Committees on Women Affairs, Community and SMEs Development and Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development .  The Minister said he would await the results of the Chief Justice’s Judicial Conference, due in September, before finalising his proposals for any amendments to the law.  The Judicial Conference, he explained, would be held in terms of section 334A of the Criminal Procedure and Evidence Act, and would come up with sentencing guidelines, including guidelines for sentencing those convicted of rape and other sexual offences.  The conference would be attended by representatives of judges, magistrates, the National Prosecuting Authority, the Police Service, the Prisons and Correctional Service, the Law Society of Zimbabwe and other expert or interested bodies approved by the Chief Justice.

Debate on the Presidential Speech [SONA of 8th October 2021

On 12th July in the latest contribution on behalf of a Ministry, the Deputy Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Hon Chombo, delivered a Ministerial Statement. Her statement included the Ministry’s achievements in the Government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic and disaster relief management, and urban transport. On devolution she referred to (1) Cabinet’s approval in February this year of the principles of Bills to amend the Urban Councils Act, the Rural District Councils Act and the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act], which were now being drafted in the Attorney-General’s Office [other Bills for a Disaster Risk Management Act and Municipal Courts and Police Act were still with that office] and (2) the Government’s distribution to local authorities of funds 5% of the National Budget.

Public Accounts Committee Report presented

Also on Tuesday 12th July Hon Sansole presented the Report of the Public Accounts Committee [PAC] on the Non-Compliance re Submission of Financial Statements to the Auditor-General by Some State-Owned Enterprises [SOEs] and Parastatals *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5789)*]*.  The seconder of the motion, Hon Mushoriwa, and Hon Brian Dube made contributions before the debate was adjourned.

Portfolio Committee Report on fact-finding visits to Sable Chemicals, Lancashire Steel and ZISCO

Also on 12th July Hon Mguni wound up the debate on the report of the Portfolio Committee on Industry and Commerce by pointing out that all MPs who had contributed to the debate had supported the report and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce had not reacted adversely.  The House then approved the report.

Wednesday 13th July

One-minute statements on matters  of public importance

Inflation, exchange rates, gold coins etc  Hon Biti used his one minute to describe the latest developments – exchange rate now 1:800, continued arbitrage, retailers now insisting on US dollars for basic commodities like cooking oil, mealier meal and sugar – and asked for a Ministerial Statement from the Minister of Finance and Economic Development on the situation, including an explanation of the logic behind the recently announced issue of gold coins.

Housing backlog  Hon Nunda raised the enormous housing backlog and called for a joint Ministerial Statement from the Ministers of National Housing and Social Amenities and Local Government and Public Works.

MPs on remand incarcerated in Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison  Hon Madzimure asked for an explanation why Hones Sikhala and Hon Sithole were currently held in Chikurubi on remand when the person on remand for the murder of More blessing Ali was in the Remand Prison, which raised a constitutional question of selective and unequal application of the law.  The Deputy Speaker told him to ask the responsible Minister during Question Time, which led to a heated discussion of whether she was taking Hon Madzimure point sufficiently seriously, during which Hon Gonese said she should have directed an immediate Ministerial statement.

*When the Deputy Speaker then moved on to Question Time, Hon Markham protested that he had been deprived of his one-minute slot on Tuesday with a promise that he would have his chance “tomorrow”, which had turned out to be an empty promise.  He reluctantly accepted another promise of “tomorrow”.*

Question Time

In the absence of Hon Ziyambi, Hon Mona was Acting Leader of the House and soon found himself faced with questions on policy matters not connected with his portfolio of Transport and Infrastructural Development ­– such as the absence of bridging finance for schools still waiting for BEAM funds to arrive and whether the Government was indeed capable of rolling out free education as promised in a recent State-controlled Sunday newspaper. The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage surprised  MPs by disclaiming knowledge that members of the police and other security forces had been arrested for committing armed robberies, which led to allegations of police inefficiency by MPs. The Deputy Minister of Local Government and Public Works said she would be presenting a Ministerial Statement on the Belarus fire tenders for local authorities the next day.  The Deputy Minister in charge of Agricultural Colleges, Water Resources, Irrigation Development, Sanitation and Hygiene, Hon Marapira, said that by 2025 the Government would have drilled 35,000 boreholes in rural areas, two for each village, under the Presidential Borehole Programme which had already started; the present focus, however, was on drilling two boreholes for each ward.

Question Time was extended twice, and MPs reverted to bombarding Deputy Minister Chombo with questions about her Ministry’s unconstitutional use of devolution funds for fire tenders and attempts to force Harare City Council to make payments to the contractor under the controversial Pomona Waste Management project; Hon Mliswa stressed the need for her Minister, Hon July Moyo, to come to the House to answer questions about devolution funds.

Report on Petition to amend SI 257/2020 adopted

Hon Dr Murire spoke in favour of the report recommending amendment of the above statutory instrument, citing his personal experience of the pensions and other benefits awarded to war veterans who had retired from the uniformed forces.  The report recommends that SI 257 should be amended [by the Ministries concerned] to remove, with retrospective effect, the unfair difference between the more generous terminal benefits of those war veterans who retired from the uniformed forces after 1st December 2017 and lesser benefits of those who retired between 17th April 1993 and the end of November 2017.  Hon Mayihlome then wound up the debate, pointing out that none of the three Ministries concerned [Defence and War Veterans Affairs, Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage, Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs] and no MPs had objected to the report, which was then approved.

Thursday 14th July

One-minute statements on matters  of public importance

2022 A Level and O Level exam fees now payable in US dollars?  Hon Madhuku raised the point that headmasters were now demanding payment of these fees in US dollars in spite of a Ministerial statement made to the House a few weeks previously by the Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education that they could be paid in Zimbabwean currency.  The Deputy Speaker instructed Parliamentary staff to get the Minister to come to the House.

Failure by hospitals to pay for drugs and other medical supplies  Hon Markham finally made his one-minute statement, which linked the failure by Government hospitals to pay for supplies to the fact that only 14% of the 2022 national budget for the Ministry of Health and Child Care had been distributed to the Ministry by the Treasury by the end of May.  He contrasted this situation with the recent Treasury statement to the House that Ministry requests for budgeted funds were responded to promptly.  He asked for statements from both Ministers explaining the implication that the Health Ministry had failed to submit requests for its budgeted funds.  The Deputy Speaker instructed Parliamentary staff to get the Minister of Health and Child Care to come to the House.

Hon Chikwinya  raised the plight of pensioners whose grossly inadequate pensions who were unable to buy essential food and medicine, a situation he described as calling for a Ministerial Statement from the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare on protecting pensioners “so that tomorrow we may not be blamed for a soft genocide, seeing the elderly dying in our country without doing anything for them”.  The Deputy Speaker gave the necessary instructions.

Presentation of Portfolio  Committee report on Visit to Iran

Hon Shamu presented the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on the visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran.  The delegation that made the visit to Iran found much to admire and duplicate in Iran’s response to the sanctions to which is subject and recommended that the Government and Parliament should urgently prepare for a reciprocal visit from an Iranian delegation and should sign the agreement for a Joint Permanent Commission on Economic, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation between Zimbabwe and Iran by the end of October

Ministerial Statement on the procurement of fire tenders from Belarus

The Deputy Minister of Local Government and Public Works, Hon Chombo, then presented a brief Ministerial Statement on the procurement of fire tenders from Belarus for local authorities around the country.  Opposition MPs found the statement seriously inadequate, and their ensuing attempts to obtain further details and information from Hon Chombo took up most of the second half of the afternoon’s sitting ­– without, it must be said, much success.  Hon Chombo said the Ministry had not breached the Procurement Act because it did not apply because there was a bilateral agreement between the Government and the Government of Belarus.  Hon Biti disagreed with this statement of the legal position and raised constitutional and legal difficulties.  Hon Mutseyami summed things up when he said that if Hon Chombo had found herself in an awkward position, she should have waited for the Minister, Hon July Moyo, to be available.  Eventually, at 5.32 pm the House adjourned until Tuesday 19th July.

*Note on Available Official Documents: Some of the documents mentioned above are not currently available on the Veritas website.  We intend to have them uploaded to the website as soon as we obtain.*

**On the National Assembly Order Paper for This Week**

Insurance and Pensions Commission Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas_d/files/H.B.%206%2C%202021%20Insurance%20and%20Pensions%20Commission%20Amendment%20Bill.pdf)*]* – for continuation of Committee Stage, with clause 4 under consideration, at which point the Minister of Finance and Economic Development proposes the insertion of a new clause allowing the Commissioner of Insurance and Pensions to delegate her/his functions.  Documents available: (1) Bill Watch 5/2022 *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5475)*]* containing Veritas comments on the Bill, (2) the Portfolio Committee’s report on the public hearings *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5636)*]*

Police Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5012)*]* – for continuation of Second Reading stage. A Veritas commentary is available *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5187)*].* Committee Stage amendments proposed by Hon Mayihlome, chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Defence, Home Affairs and Security Services, appear on the Order Paper *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5573)*]* and were summarised in Bill Watch 15/2022 *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5585)*].*

Public Finance Management Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/4891)*]* – for beginning of Second Reading with delivery of Second Reading speech by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development or his deputy.

Health Service Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5172)*]* – for continuation of Second Reading debate.  The Portfolio Committee’s report, already presented *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5702)*],* recommended withdrawal and redrafting of the Bill.

Private Voluntary Organisations Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5325)*]* – for continuation of Second Reading debate.  Veritas has analysed and commented on the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare’s proposed Committee Stage amendments – see Bill Watch 26/2022 of 16th June *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5725)*].* Copies of the amendments *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5706)*]* and a version of the Bill as it would look if all the Minister’s amendments were incorporated *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5715)*]* are available on the Veritas website.

Children’s Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5375)*] –* for continuation of Second Reading stage, with the Minister’s Second Reading speech having been delivered on 22nd June by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs on behalf of the Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare.  The report of the Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare is awaited on the public hearings being held this week, so there is unlikely to be any progress. Comments by Veritas are available *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5688)*].*

Child Justice Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5374)*]* – for continuation of Second Reading stage, with the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs having delivered his Second Reading speech and the Portfolio Committee’s report *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5756)*]* having made numerous suggestions for the improvement of the Bill.  Comments by Veritas are available *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5687)*].*

Labour Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5355)*]* – for continuation of the Second Reading stage.  The Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare’s made his Second Reading speech last week as noted above.

Insurance Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5256)*]* – for continuation of Second Reading stage with the report on public consultations on the Bill by the Portfolio Committee on Budget, Finance and Economic Development.

Institute of Loss Control and Private Security Managers Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5705)*]* – for start of Second Reading stage by Hon Dr Murire with the delivery of his Second Reading speech, this being a  Private Member’s Bill sponsored by him.

**Bills Awaiting PLC Report on Constitutionality**

Judicial Laws Amendment Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5623)*]* – this Bill received its First Reading and was immediately referred to Parliamentary Legal Committee [PLC] on 21st June.

National Security Council Bill *[*[*link*](http://www.veritaszim.net/node/5704)*]* – this Bill received its First Reading and was immediately referred to the PLC last week *[see above].*

**For Your Diary: Mid-Term Fiscal Policy Statement**

The Minister of Finance and Economic Development will deliver the above statement in the National Assembly on Thursday 28th July.

V**eritas makes every effort to ensure reliable information, but cannot take legal responsibility for information supplied.**

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