

**Proposed temporary amendments to the Standing Orders
and the Rules for the Conduct of Proceedings
of the National Assembly regarding the concept of
parliamentary group and the conduct of proceedings in the
Assembly and in parliamentary committees
for the duration of the 42nd Legislature**

STANDING ORDERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**SECTION 2
PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS**

13. Definition – Each political party represented in the National Assembly following the 1 October 2018 general election shall constitute a parliamentary group.

With the exception of the President, Members who do not belong to a group shall sit as independent Members.

16. House leaders – The leader of each parliamentary group shall designate a member of that group to be its House leader. The House leader of the parliamentary group forming the Government shall be known as the Government House Leader. The House leader of the parliamentary group forming the Official Opposition shall be known as the Official Opposition House Leader. The House Leader of the Second Opposition Group shall be known by this title of office. The House Leader of the Third Opposition Group shall be known by this title of office.

**CHAPTER III
COMMITTEES**

**SECTION 1
COMMITTEE ON THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

115. Members – The Committee on the National Assembly shall consist of:

- (1) the President of the National Assembly, who shall be its chairman;
- (2) the Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly;
- (3) the House leaders and whips of the parliamentary groups, if there be any; and
- (4) the chairmen of the standing committees, once they have been elected.

117. Subcommittee on parliamentary reform – The Committee on the National Assembly shall also have power to examine matters relating to parliamentary reform. To this end, it shall have a standing subcommittee consisting of:

- (1) the President of the National Assembly, who shall be its chairman;
- (2) the Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly, who may not vote;
- (3) the House leaders and whips of the parliamentary groups, if there be any; and
- (4) three committee chairmen, one of whom shall be a member of a parliamentary group sitting in opposition.

In the unavoidable absence of the President or whenever asked by him to do so, a Vice-President of the Assembly as the President may designate shall take the Chair.

A deputy House leader may substitute for the House leader of a parliamentary group.

The standing subcommittee may, on a motion by one of its members, consider any matter relating to the powers of the Assembly or its committees and the conduct of their proceedings. It shall make at least one report to the Committee on the National Assembly each year.

SECTION 1.1 COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

117.1. Members – The Committee on Public Administration shall consist of:

(1) thirteen permanent members, who shall be apportioned as follows:

- (a) seven Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;
- (b) four Members from the Official Opposition;
- (c) one Member from the Second Opposition Group;
- (d) one Member from the Third Opposition Group; and

(2) eight temporary members, who shall be apportioned as follows:

- (a) five Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;
- (b) three Members from the Official Opposition.

117.1.1. Additional members – Notwithstanding Standing Order 117.1, any independent Member may serve as a member of the Committee on Public Administration. Such committee shall accordingly consist of fifteen permanent members, who shall be apportioned as follows:

- (1) eight Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;
- (2) four Members from the Official Opposition;
- (3) one Member from the Second Opposition Group;
- (4) one Member from the Third Opposition Group; and
- (5) one independent Member.

117.4. Participation by independent Members – An independent Member may take part in the proceedings of the committee; but he may not vote or move any motion therein.

117.5. Chairman and vice-chairmen – The committee shall, at the opening of the first session of every Legislature and, as the necessity may arise, during the course of a Legislature, elect one of its permanent members to be chairman and two others to be vice-chairmen, who shall hold office for two years.

The chairman shall be chosen from among the Members of the Official Opposition, one of the vice-chairmen shall be chosen from among the Members of the parliamentary group forming the Government, and the other

vice-chairman shall be chosen from among the Members of the Second Opposition Group.

117.7. Convocation at chairman's request – Unless it is to consider an order of reference from the Assembly, the committee shall meet upon notice that its clerk shall send to the committee members at the request of its chairman. Such notice shall state the purpose, the day, the time, and the place of the meeting, and a copy thereof shall be sent to the President of the Assembly, to the chairmen of the other committees, and to the House leaders and the whips of the parliamentary groups.
(See R.C.P. 3.1)

SECTION 3 MEMBERSHIP

121. Members – Each committee shall consist of thirteen Members, who shall be appointed for two years and shall be apportioned as follows:

- (1) seven Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;
- (2) four Members from the Official Opposition;
- (3) one Member from the Second Opposition Group; and
- (4) one Member from the Third Opposition Group.

122. Additional members – Notwithstanding Standing Order 121, any independent Member may serve as a committee member. Such committee shall accordingly consist of fifteen members, who shall be apportioned as follows:

- (1) eight Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;
- (2) four Members from the Official Opposition;
- (3) one Member from the Second Opposition Group;
- (4) one Member from the Third Opposition Group; and
- (5) one independent Member.

126. Allocation of chairmanships – Six committees shall be chaired by Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government and three shall be chaired by Members sitting in opposition.

128. Allocation of chairmanships failing consensus – Failing consensus on allocation of chairmanships of the committees, the parliamentary groups shall, in the following order, select the committees they wish to see chaired by one of their Members:

First choice: group forming the Government;

Second choice: group forming the Government;

Third choice: Official Opposition;

Fourth choice: group forming the Government;

Fifth choice: Official Opposition;

Sixth choice: group forming the Government;

Seventh choice: Official Opposition;

Eighth choice: group forming the Government;

Ninth choice: group forming the Government.

132. Participation by other Members – A Member who has not been appointed to serve on a given committee of the Assembly may take part in the proceedings of any of its committees; but he may not vote therein. However, this rule does not apply to a Member who belongs to a parliamentary group.

A Member who has been appointed to serve on a given committee of the Assembly may take part in the proceedings of any other committee, by its leave; but he may not vote or move any motion therein.

A Member who has not been appointed to serve on a given committee of the Assembly may take part in the proceedings of any of its committees examining the estimates of expenditure; but he may not vote therein. A Member who has been appointed to serve on a given committee of the Assembly may also take part in the proceedings of any other committee; but he may not vote or move any motion therein.

SECTION 4 CHAIRMEN, VICE-CHAIRMEN, AND CLERKS

134. Elections – Each committee shall, at the opening of the first session of every Legislature and, as the necessity may arise, during the course of a Legislature, elect a chairman, a vice-chairman and a second vice-chairman, who shall hold office for two years.

The Committee on Labour and the Economy shall elect from among its members a second vice-chairman from the Second Opposition Group.

135. Organization – The committee chairman and vice-chairmen shall be elected by a majority of the committee members from each parliamentary group.

137. Election of vice-chairmen – Each committee chairman shall preside over the election of the vice-chairman or vice-chairmen of his committee.

Committee members who belong to the same parliamentary group as the chairman shall not be eligible for the office of vice-chairman.

140. Vacancy - Whenever the office of committee chairman becomes vacant, a vice-chairman of that committee shall take the Chair, perform the duties of the chairman and exercise his authority. The committee shall, within thirty days, elect a new chairman.

141. Absence or inability to act - In the unavoidable absence of a committee chairman or whenever asked by him to do so, a vice-chairman of that committee shall take the Chair, perform the duties of the chairman and exercise his authority.

Whenever the chairman and the vice-chairman, or both vice-chairmen are absent or unable to act, the clerk shall so inform the committee, which shall take the appropriate measures.

SECTION 5 CONVOCATION OF MEMBERS AND HOURS OF MEETING

148. Convocation at chairman's request – Unless it is to consider an order of reference from the Assembly, a committee shall meet upon notice that its clerk shall send to the members thereof at the request of its

chairman. Such notice shall state the purpose, the day, the time, and the place of the meeting, and a copy thereof shall be sent to the President, the House leaders and the whips of the parliamentary groups.

(See R.C.P. 3.1)

SECTION 6 MEETINGS

157.1 Equality of numbers– At any time, if the number of votes is equal, if all Opposition Members are present and have voted, the Presiding Officer shall suspend committee proceedings for not more than ten minutes. Following the suspension, a Member belonging to the parliamentary group forming the Government who was absent when the question was put or a Member designated to replace him shall be entitled to vote. Notwithstanding Standing Orders 130 and 131, this replacement is announced by the clerk of the committee when the meeting continues. It is valid only for the current vote and may be repeated.

The suspension or rising of the Assembly provided for in Standing Orders 143, 143.1 and 143.2 shall accordingly be delayed.

RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS IN THE ASSEMBLY

CHAPTER 1 PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

SECTION GENERAL RULES

3.1. Parliamentary Group without a whip – When a parliamentary group has no a whip, it shall designate a Member to exercise the powers invested in the whip under this section and to receive the notices set out in Standing Orders 117.7 and 148 and in section 23 of the Rules for the Conduct of Proceedings.

(See S.O. 117.7 and 148 and R.C.P. 23)

4. Steering committees – A committee shall, at the request of its chairman, establish a steering committee consisting of the chairman, vice-chairman or vice-chairmen, and clerk.

The steering committee shall plan committee proceedings and submit this plan to the committee. The steering committee shall, between committee meetings, make any decisions it may deem necessary. Steering committee decisions must be unanimous.

6. Absence or inability to act – Whenever the chairman, vice-chairman or both vice-chairmen are absent or unable to act, another committee member may take the Chair.

(See S.O. 141)

11. Member absent when question put – No Member shall be entitled to vote unless he was present when the question was put. Standing Order 157.1 shall apply.

(See S.O. 157)

23. Notice of convocation – The committee clerk shall, not less than fifteen days before the committee is to hold a meeting to examine financial commitments, forward to the committee members as well as to the House leaders, the whips, and the research services of the parliamentary groups the notice of convocation, the order of business for the meeting, and the financial commitments to be examined. He shall also forward a copy of the notice of convocation to the chairmen of the other committees.

By leave of the committee, without any dissentient voice, the notice of convocation, the order of business, and the financial commitments may be forwarded to the interested parties upon shorter notice.

(See S.O. 117.6 and R.C.P. 3.1)