

Temporary amendments to the Standing Orders and the Rules for the Conduct of Proceedings of the Assembly for the duration of the 43rd 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 3 October 2022 general election shall constitute a parliamentary group. For the purposes of parliamentary committee proceedings, the Members of the Third Opposition Group shall be considered independent Members.

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

16. House leaders – The leader of each parliamentary group, with the exception of the Third Opposition Group, shall designate a member of his 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.

CHAPTER II ORGANIZATION AND CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS

SECTION 1 SUMMONING, SESSIONAL PERIODS, AND HOURS OF MEETING

20. Ordinary hours of meeting – In periods when the Assembly may meet during ordinary hours it shall meet as follows:

- (1) On Tuesdays from 10.00 o'clock a.m. until 6.30 o'clock p.m., the proceedings being suspended from 12.00 o'clock noon until 1.40 o'clock p.m.;

(2) On Wednesdays from 9.40 o'clock a.m. until 6.30 o'clock p.m., the proceedings being suspended from 1.00 o'clock until 3.00 o'clock p.m.;

(3) On Thursdays from 9.40 o'clock a.m. until 4.30 o'clock p.m., the proceedings being suspended from 1.00 o'clock until 2.30 o'clock p.m.

The Assembly may also resolve, on motion without notice by the Government House Leader, which motion may not be debated, to meet on a Monday during the hours provided in subparagraph (1) of the first paragraph.

Whenever it may be expedient to do so in order to give effect to Standing Orders 271 or 278, and upon request to the President of the Assembly by the Government House Leader, a sitting may continue. The President shall inform the Assembly of such request at the earliest opportunity, and the proceedings shall accordingly be suspended at the time appointed for adjournment of the sitting, until 7.30 o'clock p.m.

SECTION 5 MEETINGS

52. When Routine Proceedings to be taken — Every sitting of the Assembly shall commence with the Routine Proceedings.

However, in periods when the Assembly may meet during ordinary hours, it shall conduct Routine Proceedings at 1.40 o'clock p.m. during the Tuesday sittings.

SECTION 8 ADJOURNMENTS

105. Motion by Government House Leader – A motion for the adjournment of the proceedings may be made only during the Orders of the Day following the Routine Proceedings, when no other business is before the Assembly. Such motion must be moved by the Government House Leader, shall require no notice, and may not be amended.

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;
- (3.1) the deputy House leaders of the parliamentary group forming the Government;
- (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 that shall consist 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 the whips of the parliamentary groups;
- (3.1) the deputy House leaders and one assistant whip of the parliamentary group forming the Government;
- (4) three committee chairmen, one of whom shall be a member of a parliamentary group sitting in opposition;
- (4.1) one Member designated by the Leader of the Third Opposition Group.

If the President is absent or unable to act, or at his request, a Vice-President of the Assembly as he may designate shall substitute for him.

A deputy House leader or an assistant whip 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) ten permanent members, who shall be apportioned as follows:
 - (a) six Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;
 - (b) four Members sitting in opposition, three of whom shall be from the Official Opposition and one from the Second Opposition Group; and
- (2) eight temporary members, who shall be apportioned as follows:
 - (a) five Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government; and
 - (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 twelve permanent members, who shall be apportioned as follows:

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

117.4. Participation of independent Members – Any 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, and they 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.

117.7.1. Virtual meetings – Committee proceedings may take place virtually, by decision of the steering committee.

During these meetings, except deliberative meetings, the Member who chairs the committee as well as the committee secretariat staff shall be present at the Parliament Building.

The other Members as well as the individuals and organizations summoned to participate shall do so by video conference.

During these meetings, all decisions of the committee must be unanimous.

117.8. Quorum – The quorum of the committee shall be one third of the number of its permanent members, including its chairman.

The quorum of any subcommittee thereof shall be a majority of its permanent members, including its chairman.

Members who participate in a meeting by video conference shall be included for the purpose of calculating quorum.

SECTION 3 MEMBERSHIP

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

(1) six Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;

(2) three Members from the Official Opposition; and

(3) one Member from the Second Opposition Group;

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

(1) seven Members from the parliamentary group forming the Government;

(2) three Members from the Official Opposition;

(3) one Member from the Second Opposition Group; and

(4) one independent Member.

128. Allocation of chairmanships failing consensus – Failing consensus on the manner in which the chairmanships of the several committees are to be allocated, the parliamentary groups shall select, in the following order, the committees they wish to be 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 without the right to vote –An independent Member who has not been appointed to serve on some committee of the Assembly may take part in the proceedings of any of its committees; but he may not vote therein.

A Member who has been appointed to serve on some 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.

Leave shall not be required when such committee is to consider estimates of expenditure.

133.1. Participation of independent Members – An independent Member may not take part in a parliamentary committee meeting if another independent Member, sitting under the same political banner, has already taken part in it.

An independent Member may serve as a member of only one committee at a time.

An independent Member may not become a member of another committee before the end of a period of one year following the date of his designation as a committee member.

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, if applicable, a second vice-chairman, and they shall hold office for two years.

The Committee on Citizen Relations 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 members from each parliamentary group.

137. Election of vice-chairmen – The chairman of each committee 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 chairman of any committee 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 – If a committee chairman is absent or unable to act, or at his request, a vice-chairman of that committee shall substitute for him, 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 CONVENING OF MEMBERS AND HOURS OF MEETING

143. Ordinary hours of meeting – In periods when the Assembly may meet during ordinary hours, committees may meet:

- (1) on Mondays from 2.00 o'clock until 6.00 o'clock p.m.;
- (2) on Tuesdays from 9.45 o'clock a.m. until 7.15 o'clock p.m., the proceedings being suspended from 12.30 o'clock p.m. until the end of Routine Proceedings;
- (3) on Wednesdays from the end of Routine Proceedings until 6.30 o'clock p.m., the proceedings being suspended from 1.00 o'clock until 3.00 o'clock p.m.;
- (4) on Thursdays from the end of Routine Proceedings until 4.30 o'clock p.m., the proceedings being suspended from 1.00 o'clock until 2.00 o'clock p.m.;
- (5) on Fridays from 9.30 o'clock a.m. until 12.30 o'clock p.m.

145. Number of committees that may meet – When the Assembly is sitting, no committee that is to meet in the precincts of the Assembly or virtually shall do so during the Routine Proceedings, with the exception of committees hearing witnesses, which may meet immediately after the end of

the Notices of Proceedings in Committees. During the Orders of the Day, up to four committees may meet concurrently.

When the Assembly is not sitting, up to five committees may meet concurrently.

SECTION 6 MEETINGS

156.1. Quorum with virtual participation – Members who participate in a meeting by video conference shall be included for the purpose of calculating quorum.

SECTION 7 CONSULTATIONS

§ 0.1. – GENERAL PROVISION

165.1 Virtual meetings – During any period outside the sessional periods provided in Standing Order 19, Members may take part in hearings by video conference, by leave of the committee.

The Member who chairs the committee as well as the committee secretariat staff shall be present at the Parliament Building.

TITLE V **PARLIAMENTARY POWERS OF SURVEILLANCE AND SUPERVISION**

CHAPTER I **FINANCIAL PROCEDURE**

SECTION 1 SUPPLY

282. Timetable for committee consideration— The committees shall consider the estimates of expenditure that fall within their areas of competence.

Such consideration shall begin not less than fifteen days after the estimates have been laid upon the Table of the Assembly and shall continue for six consecutive sitting days, from Tuesday to Thursday, at the hours

when committees may meet pursuant to the provisions for ordinary hours of meeting. If necessary, it may also take place on Wednesdays from 7.30 o'clock p.m. to 9.30 o'clock p.m.

During the weeks set aside for consideration of the estimates of expenditure as provided in the second paragraph, the Assembly shall conduct only the Routine Proceedings, no interpellation may be held and, except as otherwise provided by Standing Order 286, no committee may meet on Monday or Friday.

282.1 Participation of independent Members – Prior to the tabling of the calendar for examination of the estimates, the independent Members shall indicate to the House Leaders of the parliamentary groups the components they will participate in.

The independent Members may not thereafter modify their choices.

283. Duration of committee consideration – The time allowed for considering the main estimates of expenditure in committee shall not exceed one hundred and twenty hours, of which one hundred hours shall be for exchanges between ministers and Members sitting in opposition, and twenty hours for exchanges between ministers and Members of the parliamentary group forming the Government.

The time allowed for considering the estimates of any single government department shall not exceed twelve hours.

286. Organization (continued) –If one hundred and twenty hours have not elapsed at the end of the six sitting days allotted therefor, the committees shall, as necessary, conclude their deliberations in the ensuing days, including Mondays and Fridays, and the same rules shall apply. The consideration of the estimates for the government departments having once been completed, a meeting of the committee of the whole shall be held to consider those for the National Assembly, and this matter shall have precedence.

CHAPTER III **INTERPELLATIONS**

301. Time limits on speeches; alternation – The members of the committee may thereafter speak for up to five minutes at a time, and there shall be alternation between those from the parliamentary group forming the Government and those sitting in opposition. The minister shall be permitted to comment after each Member in opposition has spoken.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, an independent Member sitting under the banner of a political party, who is not a member of the committee, may take part in the proceedings of the committee during an interpellation. If such a Member takes part in the proceedings, his speaking time is deducted from the speaking time of the Members of the parliamentary group forming the Government. A Member who wishes to avail himself of this measure must notify the committee secretariat no later than 5.00 o'clock p.m. on the Monday preceding the interpellation.

CHAPTER V **DEBATES UPON ADJOURNMENT**

309. Announcement; when held –The President shall announce to the Assembly at the earliest opportunity any matter or matters that are to be debated upon the adjournment of a Tuesday or Thursday sitting. Such debates shall be held beginning at 6.30 o'clock p.m. on Tuesdays and 1.00 o'clock p.m. on Thursdays, and the suspension or the rising of the Assembly shall be accordingly delayed.

RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS IN THE ASSEMBLY

CHAPTER I PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

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

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 substitute for the chairman.

[...]

SECTION 2 VIDEO CONFERENCING

16.2. Video conference –Witnesses shall be heard by video conference unless they expressly request to be heard in person.

The notice of convocation must indicate that a request may be made to be heard in person.