**Guidelines on committee business**

1. Background

On 1 July 2009, the roles and responsibilities of House Chairpersons were published in the Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports (ATC) document. [[1]](#footnote-1) The roles and responsibilities of the House Chairperson responsible for committees were listed as follows:

1. General responsibilities

Broad responsibility to implement any policy, directive or guideline on the scheduling and co-ordination of committee meetings, as well as the general management of all Assembly committees and subcommittees.

Oversees and reports to the Programme Committee on progress with Bills. Oversees the tabling in the Programme Committee of committee programmes.

Ensures that input/concerns from the public, which are referred to committees, are attended to.

Assesses committee reports with a view to their consideration by the House.

Ensures the provision of agreed level of support to committees.

Assists with co-ordinating committee budgets and business plans. Monitors committee expenditure. Authorises proposed committee expenditure after political approval has been obtained for any proposed activity.

Co-ordinates and facilitates committee training. Provides guidance on best practice in respect of committee reports and oversight functions and assisting in developing an effective oversight model for this purpose.

Chairs the Committee of Chairpersons, which in terms of Assembly Rules, may make recommendations regarding any matter affecting the scheduling or functions of any committee.

Spearheads the formulation, implementation and monitoring of a travel policy for Parliament, but specifically in relation to committee visits internationally and nationally, such as planning and coordination of oversight visits.

2. Oversight and Public Participation

Responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of Parliament’s Oversight Model. Facilitates the development and implementation of a public participation model for Parliament. Oversees Parliamentary Public Participation services.

3. Information and Communication Technology

Monitors the implementation of the Information and Communication policy. Represents Parliament in the Global Centre for Information and Communication Technologies in Parliaments. Collaborates with other Parliaments, international bodies in the pursuit of e-Parliament strategy on how to use ICT to help Members fulfil their responsibilities.

1. Committee programmes
2. Before the beginning of a term as reflected in the Parliamentary Framework, the House Chairperson: Committees, Oversight and ICT issues a memorandum on the focus areas for the upcoming term to Committee Chairpersons. Committee programmes are meant to adhere to the focus areas contained in the House Chairperson’s memorandum.
3. After the focus areas memorandum has been issued, committee programmes are submitted to the House Chairperson for approval.
4. Committee meetings falling outside of the designated time allocated to committees in accordance with the Parliamentary Programme must be submitted to the House Chairperson for approval.
5. Committee meetings
6. After the establishment of committees at the beginning of a new Parliament, the House Chairperson issues guidelines on the scheduling of committees (see Annexure A). According to the schedule, a committee is allocated a specific day of the week on which to meet, ie Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday. Some committees are allocated time to meet on all three days if required. The allocation of a meeting slot on a particular day is meant to limit the number of clashes in membership. The guiding principle is that a member of a committee allocated to meet on a particular day should not serve on another committee allocated to meet on the same day. This principle is, however, not possible for all parties in view of the size of their membership.
7. A committee meeting may only be called by a Committee Chairperson after the House Chairperson responsible for committees has granted approval for such meeting. In some instances, the approval of the Chief Whip of the Majority Party is also required (see item 4 below).
8. The Parliamentary Programme specifies time set aside for committees. Committee meetings scheduled during such committee slots are considered by the House Chairperson for approval.
9. Committee meetings that coincide with a sitting of the National Assembly, a constituency day or constituency period, time set aside for study groups or party caucuses require the approval of the House Chairperson and the Chief Whip of the Majority Party for such meetings to proceed.[[2]](#footnote-2)
10. The list of approved committee meetings is contained in a document called the Meeting of Committees document, which is also known as the z-list.
11. The cancellation of an approved committee meeting requires the approval of the House Chairperson.
12. Committee budgets
13. A committee activity that requires funding, for example an oversight visit or an advertisement calling for written comment on a Bill or inviting nominations of candidates for appointment to a statutory body, must be submitted in the prescribed application format to the House Chairperson for approval.
14. An activity that requires funding and which falls outside the allocated time for committees also requires the approval of the Chief Whip of the Majority Party (see item C4 above).

1. Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports, 1 July 2009, p314. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Manual for Parliamentary Committees, 1st edition, 2011, p18. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)