



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Chairperson:
Speaker of the National Assembly

Committee Secretary:
A Mbanga x 3218

DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 13 January 2022 [Virtual]

Present:

N N Mapisa-Nqakula (Speaker)

S L Tsenoli (Deputy Speaker)

Boroto, M G (House Chairperson)	Mente, N V
Dlakude, D E (Deputy Chief Whip of the Majority Party)	Mkhaliphi, H O
Frolick, C T (House Chairperson)	Mulder, Dr C P
Gwarube, S	Ntombela, M L D (House Chairperson)
Jafta, S M	Shivambu, N F
Koornhof, Dr G W (Parliamentary Counsellor to the President)	Singh, N
Lesoma, R M M (Programming Whip)	Swart, S N
Majodina, P C P (Chief Whip of the Majority Party)	Wessels, W W

Staff in attendance:

Acting Secretary to Parliament Ms P N Tyawa, Secretary to the National Assembly Mr M Xaso, Mr N Bell (Constitutional and Legal Services Office) and Adv M Tau (Committees).

1. Opening

The Speaker opened the meeting at 08:30 and welcomed everyone present. She said that the meeting was taking place against the backdrop of the fire that engulfed the National Assembly Chamber. This notwithstanding, it was the members as representatives of the people who were the cornerstone of what constituted Parliament. The Speaker added that she had held various meetings with political parties to discuss various options on how to continue with the work of Parliament. Such discussions included issues around appropriate spaces for the President's State-of-the-nation Address (SONA) as well as future sittings of the National Assembly. The purpose of the meeting was therefore to consider the immediate issues that would enable the Assembly and Parliament at large to stay the course in order to ensure that its oversight mandate was not compromised.

2. Apologies

There were no apologies received.

3. Consideration of draft agenda

On the proposal of Ms Mkhalihi, it was AGREED that a report on the status of developments around the fire in the Parliamentary precinct on 2 January 2022 be added to the draft agenda.

The amended draft agenda was adopted.

4. Consideration of minutes of meeting of 2 December 2021

On the proposal of the Chief Whip of the Majority Party, seconded by Mr Singh, the minutes of 2 December were adopted.

5. Matters arising

The Speaker highlighted the following matters arising in the Minutes of 2 December 2021.

Constitutional Court deadline for the Electoral Act, 1998 (Act No. 73 of 1998)

The Speaker advised that the Electoral Amendment Bill had since been introduced and referred to the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs on 10 January 2022.

Mr Swart expressed concern on the looming Constitutional Court deadline of 6 June 2022 and requested that a report on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to consider the complexity of the Electoral Act as well as the timeframes involved be made available in the next meeting.

Report on second language texts of Acts

The Bills Office had provided a report on the second language text of Acts which had been circulated to members.

Security in Parliament

The Speaker indicated that the establishment of the security task team, proposed at the end of 2021, would be fast-tracked.

Mr Swart indicated that, in hindsight, the security task team could have avoided the incident in Parliament if it was established on time but that was historical. Mr Singh concurred with Mr Swart indicating that the composition of the task team needed to be finalised as soon as possible and to comprise members of all parties. The administration could suggest the process or way forward. Mr Xaso requested clarity on whether the task team would still comprise six members as was initially indicated, or if there was agreement that all parties be represented on the task team. The Deputy Speaker suggested that the task team proceed with more members due to current immediate issue but to be reduced at a later stage. The work of the task team could be finalised within three months.

On the proposal of the Speaker, it was AGREED that the task team would initially consist of all the political parties and as its first task, it must formulate terms of reference. Once the terms of reference were formulated, the task team the composition would then be six members (4 NA and 2 NCOP).

6. Report from Committee Section

Adv. Tau presented a comprehensive overview on all matters before committees.

Mr Singh requested that important matters should be highlighted, with an alternative method devised to share information regarding other matters before Committees. He said that it appeared that there was no progress being made on several bills. Mr Shivambu requested information on the report on statutory appointment for the National Lotteries Commission. He said that the Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry had published its report in 2021, but that it wasn't clear if it was considered. He also proposed that bills that were not considered during 2021 should be prioritised for finalisation.

Mr Xaso said that the Report of the Committee on the appointment to the National Lotteries Commission had lapsed at the end of the 2021 annual session. For it to be considered by the House, it would have to be revived.

It was AGREED that to the extent possible bills that were not dealt with in 2021 should be prioritised for finalisation.

7. Report by Bills Office

Mr Bell presented a report on legislation before Committees and indicated that three Bills that were before the Assembly lapsed at the end of the 2021 annual session. He reported that the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) had rejected the National Gambling Amendment Bill, which was to be referred for mediation. Furthermore, the National Forests Amendment Bill, National Environmental Laws Amendment Bill and Local Government: Municipal Systems Amendment Bill had been returned to the National Assembly due to proposed amendments from the NCOP.

Ms Mkhalihi requested an update on the report of the repeal of 'Apartheid laws'. The report would be made available in the next meeting.

8. Report on the Fire in the Parliamentary precinct on 2 January 2022

The Deputy Speaker proposed that since the information requested would be of interest to the Joint Programme Committee (JPC) meeting, that was scheduled to take place later that morning, that the matter be deferred to that forum for consideration.

It was AGREED that the matter would be deferred to that meeting and that House Chairperson Mr Frolick would lead the report-back.

9. Consideration of draft Parliamentary programme

The Programming Whip presented the Parliamentary Programme for the First Term and reported that there were no changes since it was last presented to the Programme Committee.

Mr Swart requested feedback on the arrangements for the lock-up provision that usually takes place on the morning before the Minister delivered the Budget Speech be made available in the next meeting.

The Chief Whip of the Majority Party affirmed that members would remain focused on doing their work, as they constituted the National Assembly, despite the devastating effect caused by the fire in the NA Chamber. Members would not be deterred but would continue with their work as there was a clear plan on the work of committees, which were the engine room of Parliament. She requested that the programme also reflect the debate on Human Rights Day in March as it was quite important when evaluating the past 25 years of human rights.

The Deputy Speaker requested inclusion of the training organised for members in the programme as that was a crucial component as there were certain aspects that needed to be prioritised, as far as training was concerned. The Programme Whip replied that the training arranged for members had been affected by the fire, as far as venues and logistics were concerned but that the matter would be reconsidered.

In response to Mr Singh, Mr Xaso explained that dates for questions to the President and the Deputy President had not yet been received. Mr Singh also requested that a report on physical capacity of all the venues that would be used to be made available in the next meeting.

The Parliamentary Programme for the First Term was accordingly adopted.

10. Announcements

The Deputy Speaker reminded the members that the meeting of the JPC would take place at 10:30 on the same day.

11. Closure

The meeting adjourned at 09:45.