

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF EAST TIMOR
NATIONAL PARLIAMENT**

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT

**TITLE I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Section 1
(Nature and functions)

These Rules of Procedure shall govern the functioning of the National Parliament.

Section 2
(Sitting location)

1. The National Parliament shall sit in Dili.
2. Exceptionally, the National Parliament may convene at any other location on the national territory, provided that the Plenary so deliberates by an absolute majority of elected Members of Parliament.

**TITLE II
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY PARTY GROUPS**

**CHAPTER I
MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

**Part I
Mandate**

Section 3
(Nature of mandate)

Members of Parliament are representatives of all the people, irrespective of the national or district constituency they have been elected from.

Section 4
(Term of office)

1. The term of office of Members of Parliament, for this legislative term, shall begin with the transformation of the Constituent Assembly into the National Parliament, as provided for under Section 167 of the Constitution, and shall cease with the first meeting following the next election, without prejudice to suspension or cessation of individual term of office.

2. Where vacancies and replacements occur, they shall be filled by the candidate not elected from the list on which the candidate to be replaced was included.

Section 5
(Temporary replacement)

1. A Member of Parliament who is to absent himself or herself for more than three consecutive days on substantiated grounds may, through his or her political party, submit a request for an early justification of absence and temporary replacement of office, as provided for under Paragraph 2 of Section 4.
2. Replacement of Members of Parliament elected from district constituencies, either nominated by political parties or independent candidates, shall be made in accordance with the electoral law.

Section 6
(Resignation from office)

Members of Parliament may resign from office by submitting a substantiated written statement.

Section 7
(Forfeiture of office)

1. A Member of Parliament shall forfeit his or her office if:
 - a) Without a justification, he or she does not take his or her seat in the National Parliament by the fifth plenary session, or he or she fails to attend five consecutive sessions of the Plenary or committees, or he or she fails to attend on fifteen intercalated occasions without justification;
 - b) He or she registers with a political party other than the one he or she was a member of when elected;
 - c) He or she is convicted by a court of law for a crime carrying an effective prison sentence of more than two years.
2. Forfeiture of office shall be declared by the Chair, after facts thereof have been certified.
3. An affected Member of Parliament shall be entitled to be heard and appeal against the Chair's decision to the Plenary within the following ten days. Until the Plenary finally deliberates the appeal by secret ballot, the Member of Parliament shall remain in office.
4. Deliberation of the Plenary of the National Parliament confirming forfeiture of office may be appealed against to the Supreme Court of Justice, without suspensive effects.

Section 8
(Immunities)

1. A Member of Parliament shall not be made liable in civil, criminal or disciplinary matters because of votes and opinions expressed in the exercise or as a result of his or her functions.
2. A Member of Parliament shall not be arrested or placed in pre-trial detention, except for an offence carrying a prison sentence of more than five years, with authorization by the National Parliament.
3. Where criminal proceedings have been initiated against a Member of Parliament and he or she has been formally accused, the National Parliament shall decide whether or not the Member of Parliament is to be suspended for the case to proceed.
4. The suspension provided for under Paragraph 3 of this section shall be requested by the competent judge in a document to be addressed to the National Parliament, and a decision shall be made by secret ballot of an absolute majority of present Members, after consultations with the competent committee.
5. A decision not to suspend a Member of Parliament shall have an automatic effect of suspending the time limitations provided for in criminal laws on the charges.

Part II
Powers and duties of Members of Parliament

Section 9
(Powers)

1. Members of Parliament shall have powers to be exercised individually or collectively in accordance with the Rules of Procedure as follows:
 - a) To submit proposals for constitutional revision;
 - b) To submit bills, proposals on referenda, draft resolutions and proposals for deliberation;
 - c) To submit proposals for amendments;
 - d) To request consideration by the National Parliament of legislative acts as provided for under Section 98 of the Constitution for the purpose of amending or repealing;
 - e) To request urgency in dealing with any bill, draft law or resolution, or a proposal for deliberation and parliamentary examination provided for under Subparagraph d) above;
 - f) To move votes of no confidence to the Government;
 - g) To propose the appointment of special committees and the holding of public hearings;

- h) To submit written requests to the Government or other public entities so as to obtain in writing all information deemed necessary and useful for the exercise of the mandate of Members of Parliament within 30 days;
 - i) To request the Supreme Court of Justice to declare a rule as unconstitutional, as provided for under Subparagraph e), Section 150, of the Constitution.
- 2. Requests made pursuant to Subparagraph h), item 1, of this section, shall be numbered, published and referred by the Speaker to the competent entity, which shall respond with the urgency required by the matter.
 - 3. With a view to ensuring regular exercise of their mandate, Members of Parliament shall also have the following powers:
 - a) To sit in sessions of the Plenary and committees and take the floor in accordance with procedural rules;
 - b) To vote;
 - c) To make petitions;
 - d) To propose amendments to the Rules of Procedure.

Section 10
(Rights and benefits)

- 1. A Member of Parliament shall enjoy the following rights and benefits while exercising his or her functions:
 - a) A special identity card;
 - b) Free access and movement;
 - c) Allowances as provided for by law;
 - d) A special passport for official overseas trips.
- 2. A Member of Parliament shall not be a member of a jury, a witness or an expert without authorization of the National Parliament, which may be granted or not after the Member of Parliament has been heard on the subject matter.

Section 11
(Duties of Members of Parliament)

- 1. The duties of a Member of Parliament shall be as follows:
 - a) To report punctually to and attend sessions of the Plenary and meetings of the committees he or she serves on;
 - b) To exercise the duties and functions as may be given to him or her by Parliament following a proposal by his or her parliamentary party group;
 - c) To participate in voting;
 - d) To sign the attendance register of the Plenary and the committees he or she serves on;
 - e) To give justification for absences from any plenary session or committee meeting within five days after the absence has occurred.
- 2. Furthermore, a Member of Parliament shall also have the following duties while exercising his or her functions:

- a) To respect the dignity of Parliament and of its Members;
- b) To adhere to order and discipline as provided for by the Rules of Procedure and respect the authority of the Speaker;
- c) To contribute, with his or her behaviour, to efficiency and prestige of parliamentary proceedings;
- d) To respect the provisions of the Constitution and laws.

CHAPTER II PARLIAMENTARY PARTY GROUPS

Section 12 (Establishment and organization)

1. Members of Parliament elected from lists of political parties or coalitions of political parties may establish a parliamentary party group.
2. The establishment of a parliamentary party group shall be made by a notification in writing to the Speaker of the National Parliament, which shall be signed by the Members of Parliament forming the group, indicating the name of the presiding member and deputy presiding member, if any.
3. Any change in the composition of a parliamentary party group shall be notified to the Speaker of the National Parliament.
4. The functions of Speaker, Deputy Speaker or Member of the Chair are incompatible with those of a parliamentary party group presiding member.
5. Whenever possible, parliamentary party groups shall be provided with the necessary support services, such as working offices.

Section 13 (Independent Members of Parliament)

A Member of Parliament who does not belong to any parliamentary party group shall notify the fact to the Speaker of the National Parliament and exercise his or her mandate as an independent.

Section 14 (Powers and rights of parliamentary party groups)

A parliamentary party group shall have the following powers and rights:

- a) To participate in committees according to the number of its members, indicating its representatives for that purpose;
- b) To be consulted for the purpose of establishing the daily agenda and determine agendas for a number of meetings;
- c) To request the Standing Committee to promote the convening of Parliament;
- d) To exercise legislative initiative;
- e) To move votes of rejection to the Government programme;

- f) To move votes of no confidence to the Government;
- g) To be informed on a regular and direct basis by the Government about the progress of major public interest issues, where this has been agreed in advance between the Government and parliamentary party groups;
- h) To question the Government;
- i) To request the holding of urgent debates.

**TITLE III
ORGANIZATION OF PARLIAMENT**

**CHAPTER I
SPEAKER AND CHAIR OF PARLIAMENT**

**Part I
Speaker and Chair of the National Parliament**

Section 15
(Status)

1. The Speaker represents the National Parliament, conducts and coordinates its proceedings and exercises control over all employees, agents and security officers serving in the Parliament.
2. The Speaker of the National Parliament shall replace the President of the Republic as provided for under Paragraph 1, Section 82, and Paragraph 1, Section 84, of the Constitution.
3. The Speaker of the National Parliament shall enjoy honours as the representative of the second Organ of Sovereignty.
4. The Speaker of the National Parliament shall be replaced, during his or her absences, by one of the Deputy Speakers on a rotational basis.

Section 16
(Term of office)

1. The Speaker shall be elected for the duration of the legislative term.
2. The Speaker may resign from office by notification to Parliament and resignation shall take effect immediately.
3. Where the provision of Paragraph 2 above applies, a new election shall be held within 5 days.
4. The election of the new Speaker shall be valid for the remainder of the legislative term.

Section 17
(Election)

1. Nominations for the Speaker of the National Parliament shall be endorsed by a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 Members, and presented to the Acting Speaker 24 hours prior to the holding of the electoral act.
2. Election of the Speaker shall be held by secret vote at a plenary session.
3. The candidate with an absolute majority of votes from elected Members of Parliament shall be considered the winner.
4. Where no candidate is elected, a new election shall be held forthwith at the same session.
5. Only the two candidates obtaining the highest number of votes shall be eligible to stand in a run-off election, provided they have not withdrawn their candidacies.

Section 18
(Competencies of the Speaker of the National Parliament)

1. In proceedings of the National Parliament, it shall be incumbent upon the Speaker:
 - a) To preside over the Chair;
 - b) To set dates for plenary sessions and establish agendas in accordance with provisions of the Rules of Procedure, after consultations with the Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups;
 - c) To organize plenary sessions;
 - d) To accept or reject bills and draft laws or draft resolutions, proposals for deliberation and petitions, once it has been verified that these drafts and proposals meet procedural requirements, without prejudice to the right of appeal to the Plenary;
 - e) To receive and refer to standing committees texts of bills or draft laws and draft treaties, as well as petitions addressed to the National Parliament;
 - f) To ensure order, discipline and security in the National Parliament;
 - g) To sign minutes of sessions and documents issued on behalf of the National Parliament;
 - h) To inform the National Parliament of messages, information, explanations addressed to the legislature;
 - i) To promote publication of debates, of all proceedings and acts of the National Parliament;
 - j) To convene and preside over the Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups;
 - k) To exercise other competencies given to him or her by the Constitution, the Rules of Procedure and the Organic Law.
2. At plenary meetings, it shall be incumbent upon the Speaker:
 - a) To preside over plenary meetings, to declare that meetings are open, adjourned or closed, and to conduct the respective proceedings;

- b) To recognize Members of Parliament and Members of Government who want to take the floor and ensure order during debates;
- c) To allow Members of Parliament to be absent from sessions;
- d) To ensure adherence to the Rules of Procedure and deliberations of Parliament in general;
3. The Speaker's decisions may be appealed against to the Plenary.
4. As for Members of Parliament, it shall be incumbent upon the Speaker:
 - a) To grant requests of temporary replacement;
 - b) To receive statements of resignation from office by Members of Parliament;
 - c) To judge justifications of absences submitted by Members of Parliament.
5. To represent the National Parliament and head representations and deputations he or she may be part of.

Part II Chair

Section 19 (Chair)

The Chair of Parliament shall be composed of the Speaker, two Deputy Speakers, one Secretary and two Deputy Secretaries.

Section 20 (Election of Deputy Speakers, Secretary and Deputy Secretaries)

1. The Deputy Speakers, Secretary and Deputy Secretaries shall be elected for the duration of the legislative term.
2. Nominations for the positions of Deputy Speaker, Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the National Parliament shall be endorsed by a minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve Members of Parliament by submission of a complete and nominal sealed list.
3. Nominations for the positions provided for under Paragraph 2 above shall be submitted to the Speaker of Parliament 24 hours before the time scheduled for the election.
4. Election shall be held by secret ballot, and arrangements shall be made to ensure, as much as possible, proportional participation of parliamentary party groups established in Parliament.
5. Candidates on the list that obtains an absolute majority of Members' votes shall be considered elected.
6. Upon closure of the meeting, the Speaker of Parliament shall announce the composition of the Chair to the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister.

Section 21
(Resignation)

1. Members of the Chair may resign from position by submitting a substantiated statement to Parliament, upon which resignation shall take immediate effect, without prejudice to subsequent publication in the Journal of the National Parliament.
2. In case of resignation from position, a new election shall be held within five days.

Section 22
(General competencies of the Chair)

It shall be incumbent upon the Chair of Parliament:

- a) To declare that a Member of Parliament has forfeited his or her term of office;
- b) To ensure adequate performance by Services of Support to the Plenary and the Committees;
- c) To make arrangements so as to meet requests for information and official publication from Members of Parliament;
- d) To exercise any other functions deemed relevant to the smooth running of Parliament's proceedings.

Section 23
(Competencies of Deputy Speakers)

1. Deputy Speakers shall, on a rotational basis, replace the Speaker during his or her absences or inability to act. During the absence of or inability to act by Deputy Speakers, the most senior Member of Parliament shall act as the Speaker.
2. It shall be incumbent upon the Deputy Speakers to read out written matters as may be requested by the Speaker.
3. It shall be incumbent upon the Deputy Speakers to represent Parliament, as may be directed by the Speaker, and to exercise other functions delegated to them by the Speaker.

Section 24
(Competencies of the Secretary)

It shall be incumbent upon the Secretary:

- a) To verify attendance at plenary meetings, to verify the presence of quorum at any time and to register voting results;
- b) To put matters to be voted in order;
- c) To register Members of Parliament and Members of the Government who wish to take the floor;

- d) To prepare summaries of plenary meetings;
- e) To sign, by delegation of the Speaker, outgoing mail on behalf of Parliament;
- f) To co-sign with the Speaker minutes of plenary meetings.

Section 25
(Competencies of Deputy Secretaries)

It shall be incumbent upon the Deputy Secretaries:

- a) To replace the Secretary during his or her absences and inability to act;
- b) To serve as vote-counters.

Section 26
(Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups)

1. The Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups is composed of the Speaker, presidents of parliamentary party groups, or their representatives, and one member of the Government.
2. The Speaker shall hold meetings with the presidents of parliamentary party groups, or their representatives, to examine matters provided for under Sections 47 and 48, and other provisions, of the Rules of Procedure, whenever he or she deems it necessary for the regular functioning of Parliament.
3. The Government shall be entitled to send a representative to the Conference who may take the floor on matters not exclusively related to Parliament.

**CHAPTER II
COMMITTEES**

**Part I
General Provisions**

Section 27
(Specialized standing committees and special committees)

1. Parliament shall have specialized standing committees and special committees.
2. A specialized standing committee may, within the scope of its remit, establish a subcommittee following a proposal from any of the Members of Parliament serving on that committee.
3. A specialized standing committee shall not go beyond the term of the legislature for which it was established.
4. A special committee shall be dissolved:
 - a) Upon completion of its duties;
 - b) Upon expiration of its respective deadline;
 - c) At the end of the legislative session, unless Parliament deliberates otherwise.

5. A special committee that has not completed its task may request an extension of its respective deadline.

Section 28
(Composition)

1. The number of Members of Parliament serving on each specialized standing committee and its distribution over the different parliamentary party groups shall be determined by deliberation of Parliament, following a proposal from the Speaker, after consultations with the Conference at the beginning of each legislative term.
2. A seat in a committee shall belong to the parliamentary party group, which shall request in writing the replacement of an incumbent or stand-in designated by the group under any circumstances or opportunity.
3. A Member of Parliament shall not be designated to serve on more than two specialized standing committees, unless a parliamentary party group cannot have representatives on all committees, because of the number of its Members, and in this case never more than three.

Part II
Specialized standing committees

Section 29
(Listing)

1. The National Parliament shall have the following standing committees:
 - a) Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Liberties and Guarantees;
 - b) Committee on Foreign Affairs, National Defence and Security;
 - c) Committee on Economic Affairs and Finance;
 - d) Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment;
 - e) Committee on Education, Culture, Youth and Sports;
 - f) Committee on Health, Social Affairs, Solidarity and Labour;
 - g) Committee on Infrastructure.
2. The Plenary may, following a proposal from the Chair and after consultations with the Conference, deliberate on the establishment of other standing committees during the legislative term in which such deliberation is adopted.
3. Such deliberation shall indicate the criterion for the allocation of competencies between the newly established committee and those committees that may be affected.

Section 30
(Chair of committees)

At the beginning of each legislative term and in the next five days following designation the of Members of Parliament serving on committees, each committee shall meet under

the leadership of the most senior Member to initiate its proceedings and elect its chairperson, deputy chairperson and secretary.

Section 31
(Competencies of the committee chairperson)

1. It shall be incumbent upon the committee chairperson:
 - a) To arrange and conduct the committee's proceedings;
 - b) To advise on all matters received;
 - c) Designate, from among Members of Parliament serving on the committee, the members of a subcommittee and determine its composition;
 - d) To solve order and discipline issues;
 - e) To promote the publication of minutes of meetings;
 - f) To invite, following deliberation of the committee, experts or specialists and representatives from civil society entities to be heard according to the subject matter;
 - g) To designate rapporteurs.
2. Where the chairperson serves as a rapporteur, he or she shall transfer the chair to the deputy chairperson, while discussing or voting the matter to be reported.

Section 32
(Competencies of the secretary)

It is incumbent upon the committee secretary:

- a) To co-sign with the chairperson minutes of the committee and other general documents;
- b) To register mail and inform thereon at each session;
- c) To take and count votes and inform about results thereof;
- d) To prepare and circulate the agenda of the committee meetings 24 hours in advance.

Section 33
(Reports and rapporteurs)

1. Reports shall contain as much as possible the following data:
 - a) A concise examination of facts, situations and realities relating thereto;
 - b) A background of problems raised;
 - c) Legal or doctrinal framework of the subject under debate;
 - d) Expected consequences after approval and possible financial implications of the respective application;
 - e) A reference to inputs from entities with an interest in the subject matter under consideration;
 - f) Conclusions and opinion;
 - g) A summary of the opinion of parliamentary party groups on the subject matter being examined.

2. Reports shall have an indication of the initiative or subject matter and shall be signed by the chairperson and the rapporteur(s).
3. The chairperson may, for every subject matter to be submitted to the Plenary, designate one or more rapporteurs and may also designate a specific rapporteur for each of the parties whenever the subject matter counsels its separation.

Section 34
(Competencies of specialized standing committees)

The competencies of the specialized standing committees shall be as follows:

- a) To discuss and issue opinion on bills and draft laws, proposed amendments and treaties submitted to Parliament;
- b) To consider petitions addressed to Parliament;
- c) To collect information on political and administrative problems falling within the scope of committees, and to submit to Parliament the necessary elements for consideration of Government acts, whenever such submission is deemed convenient by Parliament;
- d) To hold public hearings with civil society entities;
- e) To call any office holder of the Public Administration to provide information on issues related to the functions of that office holder.

Part III
Ad Hoc Committees

Section 35
(Establishment)

1. Parliament may establish special committees for any specific purpose.
2. The initiative to establish special committees may be taken by a minimum of 10 Members of Parliament or by parliamentary party groups.
3. Where the nature of the subject matter is relevant, special committees may invite specialists to assist.

Section 36
(Competencies of special committees)

An ad hoc committee shall examine issues that caused it to be established and submit the respective reports and opinions within the deadlines set by Parliament.

CHAPTER III STANDING COMMITTEE

Section 37 (Functioning)

During the period following dissolution of Parliament, during recesses and in other cases provided for by the Constitution, the Standing Committee of the National Parliament shall take over.

Section 38 (Composition)

The Standing Committee shall be presided over by the Speaker of Parliament and composed of the Deputy Speakers and Parliament Members designated by every political party in accordance with their representation in Parliament, as provided for under Section 102 of the Constitution.

Section 39 (Competencies)

The competencies of the Standing Committee shall be as follows:

- a) To follow up the activity of the Government and Administration;
- b) To coordinate the activities of Parliament Committees;
- c) To promote the convening of Parliament whenever deemed necessary;
- d) To prepare and organize plenary sessions of Parliament;
- e) To give consent to trips by the President of the Republic, as provided for under Section 80 of the Constitution;
- f) To conduct relations between the National Parliament and similar institutions in other countries;
- g) To authorise the declaration of the state of siege and the state of emergency;
- h) To authorise the declaration of war and the making of peace;
- i) To exercise the powers of Parliament as to the mandate of Members of Parliament, without prejudice to the individual competencies of the Speaker and of the appropriate committee because of the subject matter;
- j) **To promote the convening of Parliament whenever deemed necessary** (cf. Subparagraph c) above);
- k) To prepare the opening of plenary sessions;
- l) To coordinate the functioning of committees when the legislative session is suspended, where such arrangement is necessary for the smooth running of proceedings;
- m) To decide on claims related to drafting inaccuracies in the final text of Parliament decrees and resolutions.

**TITLE IV
FUNCTIONING OF PARLIAMENT**

**CHAPTER I
MEETINGS**

**Part I
Legislative term and legislative session**

Section 40
(Legislative term)

The legislative term shall have the duration of five years, and in case of dissolution the elected National Parliament shall initiate a new legislative term whose duration shall be added to the time necessary to complete the period corresponding to the current legislative session at the time of election, as provided for under Paragraph 5, Section 99, of the Constitution.

Section 41
(Legislative session)

1. The legislative session shall have the duration of one year.
2. The normal functioning period of the National Parliament shall commence on 15 September and end on 15 July, without prejudice to suspensions that Parliament deliberates on by a majority of two thirds of elected Members of Parliament.

Section 42
(Timetable for Plenary and Committee sessions)

1. Functioning of sessions:
 - a) Plenary sessions shall be held on Mondays and Tuesdays;
 - b) Committee meetings shall take place on Wednesdays and Thursdays;
 - c) Contacts between Members of Parliament and constituencies, as well as meetings of parliamentary party groups or between such groups shall be held on Fridays.
2. The regular functioning hours of Parliament shall be from 09.00am to 06.00pm, in two periods: one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, from 09.00am to 12:30pm and from 03.00pm to 06.00pm, respectively.
3. Meetings shall observe a 15-minute break, from 10.45am to 11.00am in the morning, and from 04.15pm to 04.30 in the afternoon.
4. The plenary may deliberate on the extension of sessions for a specific period, following a proposal from the Speaker or at the request of any Member of Parliament.

Section 43
(Quorum for session)

1. The proceedings of the Plenary shall begin at the specified time on the understanding that more than half of elected Members of Parliament are present.
2. A committee shall hold sessions when more than half of its members are present.

Section 44
(Convening outside of regular functioning period)

Outside of the period indicated under Paragraph 2 of Section 41, Parliament may function by deliberation of the Plenary, thereby extending the regular functioning period, at the initiative of the Standing Committee, or whenever compelling reasons of national interest so justify at the request of the President of the Republic in accordance with Paragraph d), Section 86, of the Constitution.

Section 45
(Special committee meetings)

1. Outside of regular functioning period of Parliament and during suspensions, any committee may function whenever such act is indispensable to the smooth running of proceedings, where Parliament has so deliberated in advance, following a proposal from the committee concerned.
2. The Speaker of the National Parliament may promote the convening of any committee during the fifteen days preceding the beginning of the legislative session to prepare the proceedings thereof.

Section 46
(Suspension of plenary sessions)

1. During its actual functioning period, Parliament may deliberate to suspend its plenary meetings so that committees may work.
2. Suspension shall not be of more than ten days.

Part II
Period before the agenda and period of the agenda

Section 47
(Period before the agenda)

1. There shall be a period before the agenda:
 - a) To read out announcements or information deemed relevant by the Speaker, after consultation with the Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups;
 - b) To read and consider summaries of plenary sessions;
 - c) To read and consider reports on representations and deputations;

- d) To discuss and approve motions of congratulation, welcome, solidarity, protest or sorrow moved by the Chair, parliamentary party groups or Members of Parliament;
 - e) To hold urgent debates;
 - f) To make political statements.
2. The period before the agenda shall have the normal duration of one hour, which may be extended to two hours whenever it includes debate referred to under Subparagraph e) of Paragraph 1 above, and time shall be established by the Conference.
 3. It shall be incumbent upon the Speaker, after consultation with the Conference, to organize the period before the agenda in accordance with Paragraph 1 of this section.

Section 48

(Subject matters sequence to be followed in determining the agenda)

For the establishment of a plenary session agenda, the Speaker shall give priority to subject matters in accordance with the following order of precedence:

1. Suspension of constitutional guarantees and a declaration of the state of siege and the state of emergency in accordance with Section 25 of the Constitution, as well as authorization to declare war or to make peace.
2. Matters related to the Rules of Procedure of the National Parliament.
3. Discussion on bills and draft laws in the following order:
 - a) Consideration of bills on the State Budget and Plan.
 - b) Discussion on laws and treaties addressing matters falling exclusively within the legislative competence of the National Parliament;
 - c) Consideration of decrees-laws approved by use of legislative authorization;
 - d) Discussion on laws and treaties.
4. Matters related to monitoring and other political contents, in the following order:
 - a) Elections and ratification of appointments;
 - b) Authorization of trips by the President of the Republic on state visits;
 - c) Consideration of the Government programme;
 - d) Voting on motions of rejection, motions of confidence or motions of no confidence to the Government;
 - e) Deliberation on the progress report of Government activities;
 - f) Deliberation on the report concerning the execution of the State Budget and Plan;

Section 49

(Rights of parliamentary party groups to determine the agenda)

1. Parliamentary groups of political parties not represented in the Government have the right to determine the agenda of one plenary meeting during each legislative session.

2. The exercise of the right provided for under Paragraph 1 above shall be announced to the Speaker, in Conference, by the 15th day of each month so as to take effect the following month.
3. Where a draft is immediately approved at the general debate, the parliamentary party group or the proponent of the draft has the right to obtain a voting at the specific debate and a global final voting within thirty days.

Section 50
(Determination of the agenda)

1. The agenda shall be determined by the Speaker after consultations with the Conference, in accordance with priorities contemplated in the Rules of Procedure.
2. The Speaker's decisions determining the agenda may be appealed against to the Plenary, which shall make the final decision.
3. The program that includes the agenda shall be circulated to Members of Parliament at least twenty-four hours in advance and it shall be made public by posting it on a notice board within the Parliament Building.

Section 51
(Priority to requests from the Government)

1. The Government may request priority to discuss issues of national interest requiring urgent solution.
2. Granting of priority shall be decided by the Speaker of Parliament, after consultation with the Conference.

Section 52
(Urgent debate)

1. Parliamentary party groups and the Government may request the Speaker of Parliament, on substantiated grounds, to have urgent debates arranged.
2. Urgent debates shall take place within the seven working days following the approval of its holding by the Conference.

Part III
Taking the floor

Section 53
(Taking the floor by Members of Parliament)

1. A Member of Parliament shall be given the floor:
 - a) To take the floor during the period before the agenda;
 - b) To participate in debates;
 - c) To present bills, draft resolutions or draft deliberations;

- d) To exercise the right to defence of honour and respect and to defend the good name of his or her party;
 - e) To appeal;
 - f) To request or give clarifications;
 - g) To submit claims and protests;
 - h) To formulate a statement of vote.
2. Speakers shall take the floor in accordance with the order of registration.

Section 54
(Length of taking the floor)

1. The floor shall not be taken for more than 5 minutes the first time, and not more than 3 minutes the second time.
2. The proponent(s) of a bill, draft law or draft resolution shall be entitled to take the floor for 15 minutes to present the proposed document and the rapporteur, if any, shall be entitled to speak for 10 minutes to present the report and opinion.
3. In case of specific debate, the floor shall be taken for 3 minutes at most the first time and 1 minute the second time.

Section 55
(Taking the floor by Members of the Chair)

Where a Member of the Chair wishes to take the floor and actively participate in the debate of a plenary meeting, he or she shall be replaced in the exercise of his or her functions and shall not reassume them before debate or voting, if any, is completed.

Section 56
(Taking the floor by Members of the Government)

The floor shall be given to Members of the Government to:

- a) Present draft laws and draft resolutions;
- b) Participate in debates;
- c) Answer questions from Members of Parliament on any acts by the Government or the Public Administration;
- d) Answer requests for clarification.

Section 57
(Statement of vote)

1. Each parliamentary party group or Member of Parliament shall, on a personal basis, have the right to make, at the end of each voting, a statement of vote orally or in writing to explain how they voted.
2. An oral statement of vote shall have the duration of 1 minute.

Section 58
(Point of order)

1. A point of order shall be raised to invoke the Rules of Procedure or the Agenda.
2. A point of order shall interrupt the sequence of registered speakers being followed, except for a voting.
3. A Member of Parliament who invokes the Rules of Procedure shall substantiate his or her request and indicate the rule violated.
4. A point of order shall not interrupt a person who has the floor.
5. Taking the floor to raise a point of order shall not exceed 1 minute.

Section 59
(Decorum while taking the floor)

1. The floor shall only be taken where it has been given by the Chair and the rules of good manners shall be respected.
2. A person having the floor shall not be interrupted, except if he or she digresses from the subject under discussion, in which case the person shall be warned by the Speaker who may withdraw the floor if there is persistence in that attitude.

Section 60
(Defence of honour and dignity)

1. Whenever a Member of Parliament or a Member of the Government believes that words offensive to his or her honour or dignity have been pronounced, he or she may take the floor to defend himself or herself not for more than three minutes.
2. The person who has pronounced the offensive words may give clarifications not for more than three minutes.
3. The Speaker shall take note of any request for defence of honour and dignity so as to give the floor and permit the respective explanations at the end of the debate under way, without prejudice to give the floor forthwith, when the Speaker deems that the situation so justifies especially.

Section 61
(Taking the floor improperly)

1. The Chair shall warn any person taking the floor if that person, among other things, displays one of the following attitudes:
 - a) To digress from the agenda or subject matter under discussion;
 - b) To surpass time allocated;
 - c) To take the floor without permission;
 - d) To offend the decorum of Parliament and its Members;
 - e) To use improper, insulting or morally offensive language;
 - f) To make threats.

2. If the speaker persists in his or her attitude, the Chair may prevent him or her from having the floor until the end of the session, without prejudice to possible judicial action such conduct may give rise to.

Section 62
(Resources)

1. Any Member of Parliament may appeal against a decision by the Speaker or the Chair to the Plenary.
2. A Member of Parliament who has appealed may take the floor to substantiate his or her appeal not for more than 3 minutes.
3. Where an appeal is filed by more than one Member of Parliament, only one of the claimants may take the floor to substantiate the appeal, either or not they belong to the same parliamentary party group.
4. Where there are several appeals with the same purpose, only one Member of Parliament from each parliamentary party group may take the floor to substantiate their appeal.

**CHAPTER II
DELIBERATIONS AND VOTING**

Section 63
(General rule)

1. Deliberations are taken by plurality of votes, with the presence of more than half of the elected Members of Parliament attending, except in cases provided for by the Rules of Procedure or the Constitution.
2. Abstentions shall not count for the establishment of a majority.

Section 64
(Voting)

1. Each Member of Parliament shall have the right to one vote.
2. A Member of Parliament who is present shall always vote, without prejudice to the right of abstention.
3. Vote by correspondence or proxy shall not be permitted.

Section 65
(Forms of voting)

1. Voting shall be conducted in one of the following forms:
 - a) Ordinary vote;
 - b) Roll call vote;
 - c) Vote by secret ballot;
2. Vote by acclamation shall not be permitted.

Section 66
(Ordinary vote)

1. Ordinary vote shall be the usual form for deliberation by Parliament and it consists of asking who votes in favour, who votes against and who abstains.
2. Voting shall be conducted by raising hands.

Section 67
(Roll call vote)

1. There shall be a roll call vote in the following cases:
 - a) Authorization for a declaration of the state of siege and the state of emergency;
 - b) Authorization for a declaration of war or making peace.
2. For any other matters, there shall be a roll call vote whenever the Plenary so deliberates, at the request of ten Members of Parliament.
3. A roll call vote shall be conducted in the alphabetical order of political parties with seats in Parliament.

Section 68
(Vote by secret ballot)

Vote by secret ballot shall only take place in elections or deliberations as provided for by the Rules of Procedure or the Statutes of Members of Parliament, or where the Plenary so deliberates, at the request of 10 Members of Parliament.

Section 69
(Tie in voting)

1. Where voting results in a tie, the subject matter being voted shall be discussed before going into new voting.
2. A tie at second voting shall be equivalent to rejection.

Section 70
(Setting the time for voting)

1. Voting on bills, draft laws or draft resolutions shall take place immediately after discussion.
2. Without prejudice to Paragraph 1 above, the Speaker may, after consultation with the Conference, set a time for voting on bills, draft laws or draft resolutions. This time shall be announced in advance.
3. Where discussion has not been concluded at the prescribed time, the Speaker shall set a new time for voting.

Section 71

(Voting on amendments)

Voting on amendments shall be conducted in the following form:

- a) Proposed deletions, i.e. proposals intended to delete the provision under debate;
- b) Proposed amendments, i.e. proposals that, while retaining part of the text under debate, may restrict, expand or modify the sense of the text;
- c) Proposed substitutions, i.e. proposals that contain a provision different from the one that has been presented;
- d) Proposed additions, i.e. proposals that, while retaining the original text and sense, they contained added new matter.

**CHAPTER III
COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Section 72
(Notice and agenda of meeting)

1. Meetings of each committee shall be scheduled by the chairperson in accordance with these Rules of Procedure.
2. The agenda shall be determined by each committee and its chairperson, after consultation with the Members of Parliament serving on the committee.

Section 73
(Collaboration or presence of other Members of Parliament)

Any other Member of Parliament may attend a committee meeting and if the committee so authorizes, the Member of Parliament may participate in the debate without the right to vote.

Section 74
(Participation of consultants and specialists)

1. A committee may request consultants, specialists and members of civil society organizations versed in the legislative matter under consideration to participate in its proceedings without the right to vote.
2. Arrangements provided for under this section shall be carried out through the chairperson, thereupon informing the Speaker of Parliament.

Section 75
(Committee powers)

A committee may take any action deemed necessary to the adequate performance of its functions, especially:

- a) To conduct studies;
- b) To request information or opinions;
- c) To request testimonies from any citizen;

- d) To hold public hearings;
- e) To requisition or contract specialists to assist in the proceedings, subject to authorization by the Speaker and deliberation by the Plenary of Parliament;
- f) To conduct information or study missions.

Section 76
(Public hearings)

1. A committee may hold public hearings with public entities and the civil society to discuss legislative matter under consideration, and to address issues of public interest falling within the committee's remit.
2. Decision on the holding of public hearings shall be the exclusive responsibility of the committee, which shall make a decision by an absolute majority of the Members present through ordinary vote.

Section 77
(Minutes of committee meetings)

The minutes of every committee meeting shall be prepared and approved, with an indication of attendees and absentees, a summary of issues addressed, debates, positions of Members of Parliament, result of voting and statements of vote.

Section 78
(Monthly report on committee proceedings)

A committee shall inform on a monthly basis the Speaker about progress of proceedings by submitting reports to the Plenary. These reports shall also be published in the Journal of Parliament.

Section 79
(Technical support)

Committee proceedings shall be supported by administrative officials and enjoy adequate technical assistance as provided for in these Rules of Procedure and in the Organic Law of Parliament.

Section 80
(Application of Plenary norms to committees)

In conducting business within the committees' responsibility, norms that the Rules of Procedure establish for the Plenary shall also apply in what is applicable, in so far as they are not contrary to specific provisions governing conduction of proceedings by committees.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC NATURE OF PARLIAMENTARY ACTS

Section 81

(Public nature of Plenary meetings)

1. Plenary meetings of Parliament are public.
2. Any person shall be allowed to attend sessions from the area reserved to this purpose, on the understanding that the person is unarmed and keeps silent, without giving any sign of applause or disapproval on what happens at sessions.

Section 82

(Public nature of committee meetings)

A committee meeting shall be public, if the committee so deliberates.

Section 83

(Journal of the National Parliament)

The official journal of Parliament shall be the Journal of the National Parliament.

Section 84

(Agenda and news bulletin)

For information of Members of Parliament, the press and the public in general, the Chair shall promote:

- a) Circulation, before every plenary meeting, of the agenda and a news bulletin on parliamentary activities;
- b) Annual publication, in special editions, of reports prepared on the proceedings of the different parliamentary committees.

Section 85

(Publication of Parliament acts)

1. Parliament acts required by law to be published in the Official Gazette shall be referred to the National Printing House by the Speaker of Parliament at the earliest opportunity.
2. Any Member of Parliament or parliamentary party group may request correction to the texts of published acts, which shall be appreciated by the Speaker and, once approved and after consultations with the Chair, such corrections shall be sent to the National Printing House within deadlines compatible with legal provisions on publications.

**TITLE V
FORMS OF PROCESS**

**CHAPTER I
COMMON LEGISLATIVE PROCESS**

**Part I
Initiative**

Section 86
(Power of initiative)

It shall be incumbent upon Members of Parliament, parliamentary party groups and the Government to initiate laws.

Section 87
(Forms of initiative)

1. The original law initiative shall take on the form of a bill when exercised by Members of Parliament and parliamentary party groups, and that of a draft law when exercised by the Government.
2. Subsequent initiative, in a process of consideration, shall take on the form of proposed amendment.

Section 88
(Limits)

1. Bills and draft laws or proposed amendments that violate the Constitution or principles enshrined therein or that fail to define clearly the sense of changes to be introduced in the legislative framework shall not be permitted.
2. Bills and draft laws definitively rejected shall not be renewed during the same legislative session.

Section 89
(Special limit on initiative)

Members of Parliament and parliamentary party groups shall not submit bills or proposed amendments that, in the current financial year, involve an increase in expenditure or reduction of revenue of the State, as provided for in the Budget.

Section 90
(Renewal of initiative)

1. Bills and draft laws not voted during the legislative session in which they were submitted need not be renewed in the subsequent legislative sessions, unless the legislative term comes to an end.
2. Draft laws shall lapse following the dismissal of the Government or at the end of the respective legislative term.

Section 91
(Acceptance and cancellation of initiative)

1. Once a legislative initiative has been submitted, it shall be numbered and, upon certification of adherence to legal requirements, the Speaker shall issue an instruction of acceptance and referral to the competent committee, as the case may be, thereupon making an announcement to the Plenary.
2. Once a bill, draft law or proposed amendment has been accepted, the proponents thereof may withdraw it until voting at a general debate.

Section 92
(Exercise of the legislative initiative)

1. No bill shall be endorsed by more than 10 Members of Parliament.
2. Draft laws shall be endorsed by the Prime Minister and competent ministers in accordance with the subject matter, and a reference shall be made to the fact that they were approved by the Council of Ministers.

Section 93
(Process of urgency)

1. Any bill, draft law or draft resolution may be the subject of a process of urgency.
2. It shall be incumbent upon Members of Parliament, parliamentary party groups and the Government to initiate a process of urgency.
3. A request for urgency shall be sent to the competent committee, which shall appreciate it within 24 hours and prepare a substantiated opinion thereupon.
4. Once the opinion has been prepared, the Plenary shall deliberate on the urgency and the debate shall be organized by the Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups.

Section 94
(Formal requirements for bills and draft laws)

1. Bills and draft laws shall:

- a) Be in writing in any official language and the text in Portuguese shall be the basis to be considered as the original of versions in other languages. Members of Parliament may speak in any working language;
 - b) Be written as sections that may be divided into paragraphs and subparagraphs;
 - c) Have a headline translating the main purpose;
 - d) Be preceded by a brief justification or presentation of reasons.
2. As for Subparagraph d) of Paragraph 1) above, as far as possible and especially with respect to draft laws, there shall be a preamble containing the following elements:
 - a) A description of social, economic and financial situations to which it applies;
 - b) A brief information on the benefits and consequences of its application;
 - c) A summary of legislation in force concerning the matter.
 3. Bills and draft laws that do not meet the requirements provided for under Subparagraphs a) and d) of Paragraph 1 above shall not be accepted.
 4. Requirements provided for under Subparagraphs c) and d) of Paragraph 1 above imply the need to provide them with a headline and a brief justification or presentation of reasons within five days.

Section 95
(Appeal)

1. Once a bill or draft law has been accepted and referred to the competent committee in accordance to its subject matter for general consideration, or once it has been rejected, the Speaker shall announce the fact to Parliament.
2. Until the end of the succeeding plenary meeting, any Member of Parliament may appeal against a Speaker's decision to the Plenary, by written and substantiated request.
3. Once an appeal has been filed, the Speaker shall submit to the Plenary for decision.
4. The appeal shall be read out and submitted to voting. Each parliamentary party group may take the floor for not more than three minutes.

Part II
General consideration by a committee

Section 96
(Referral of bills and draft laws)

1. Once a bill or draft law has been accepted and copies have been circulated to parliamentary party groups, the Speaker shall, by instruction, send the text to the competent committee according the subject matter for consideration and preparation of a report and an opinion.

2. Where a committee deems itself incompetent to deal with the subject matter, it shall forthwith communicate the fact to the Speaker of Parliament to reconsider his or her instruction.
3. Parliament may establish an ad hoc committee to consider the bill or draft law whenever its importance and specialization so justify.

Section 97
(Labour legislation)

On matters of labour legislation, a committee shall promote consideration of the bill or draft law by trade unions, or employers and the Government, and a timeframe shall be set for the purpose of Section 76.

Section 98
(Timeframe for the general consideration of an initiative by a committee)

1. A committee shall give its opinion through a substantiated report within the deadlines determined by the Speaker.
2. A committee may request the Speaker of Parliament to extend the deadline, following a substantiated request.
3. Failure to submit a report and an opinion within the deadlines shall not affect the inclusion of the initiative on the agenda for discussion and general voting by the Plenary.

Section 99
(Bills and draft laws on the same subject matter)

Where other bills or draft laws are presented on the same subject matter, a committee shall consider them jointly.

Part III
Discussion and general voting by the Plenary

Section 100
(Commencement of discussion)

1. General discussion shall focus on the principles and system of each bill and draft law.
2. Discussion shall consist of a presentation of the initiative by its proponent for a period of 15 minutes, presentation of the report conclusions and opinion by the rapporteur for a period of 10 minutes, and a period of questions and answers by Members of Parliament from parliamentary party groups, respectively.
3. Discussion may be shortened or extended by decision of the Speaker, after consultation with the Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups.

Section 101
(Voting)

1. Voting after general discussion shall address each bill or draft law.
2. After approval in general, the bill or draft law may be referred to the competent committee according to the subject matter for specialized consideration and voting.

Part IV
Specialized consideration by a committee

Section 102
(Mandatory nature of discussion and voting by the Plenary)

It shall be mandatory to submit to specialized consideration and voting by the Plenary matters provided for under Paragraphs 2 and 3, Section 95, of the Constitution.

Section 103
(Discussion)

1. Specialized discussion shall focus on each section, without prejudice to the provision of the Paragraph 2 below.
2. There shall be no specialized discussion of a section if no amendment has been proposed.

Section 104
(Voting)

Voting after specialized discussion may focus on each section, paragraph or subparagraph.

Part V
Global and final voting and drafting

Section 105
(Global and final voting)

1. Once voting after specialized discussion by the Plenary has been completed, global and final voting shall take place.
2. If approved after specialized discussion by the committee, a text shall be referred to the Plenary for global and final voting.

Section 106
(Final drafting)

1. Final drafting of approved bills and draft laws shall be the responsibility of the competent committee or, where more than one committee has issued an opinion on the matter, the responsibility of the committee to be determined by the Speaker within five days.
2. The committee shall not modify the legislative thinking and it shall limit itself to improving systematisation and style of text, subject to deliberation.
3. Once final drafting has been completed, the text shall be referred to the Speaker of Parliament.

Section 107
(Claims)

1. Members of Parliament may claim to the Speaker of Parliament against inaccuracies in the text up to the second meeting of the Plenary, following deliberation by the committee, as provided for under Paragraph 2 of Section 106 of these Rules of Procedure.
2. The Speaker of Parliament shall decide within 24 hours and claimant Members may appeal to the plenary forthwith after the decision has been announced.
3. A text on which no claims have been raised or the claims on which have been disposed of shall be considered as a decree.

Part VI
Promulgation and publication

Section 108
(Promulgation)

After the signature by the Speaker of Parliament, decrees shall be referred to the President of the Republic for promulgation and publication.

Part VII
New consideration

Section 109
(Process of new consideration)

1. Where the President of the Republic exercises his or her veto as provided for under Paragraph 1, Section 88, of the Constitution, new consideration of the decree shall take place within 90 days, following reception of a substantiated message, at a meeting called by the Speaker of Parliament at his or her initiative, at the request of ten Members of Parliament or parliamentary party groups.
2. During general discussion only the proponents of the bill or draft law and a Member of Parliament from each parliamentary party group shall be allowed to take the floor once.

3. Voting after general discussion shall focus on confirmation of the decree from Parliament.
4. A specialized debate shall take place if at the end of a general discussion proposed amendments are submitted. Then voting shall only focus on sections addressed by the proposed amendments.
5. A text remaining unchanged after the second deliberation shall not need to be referred to a committee for the purpose of final drafting.

Section 110
(Effects of a new consideration)

1. Where Parliament confirms voting by an absolute majority of elected Members of Parliament, in accordance with Paragraph 2, Section 88, of the Constitution, the President of the Republic shall promulgate the legal instrument within eight days.
2. A two-third majority of the Members of Parliament present shall be required, provided its is greater than the absolute majority of elected Members the of Parliament, for confirmation of legal instruments dealing with matters provided for under Section 95 of the Constitution.
3. Where Parliament proposes amendments, the new decree shall be referred to the President of the Republic for promulgation.
4. Where voting is not confirmed, legislative initiative shall not be renewed during the same legislative session, unless there is a new election of the National Parliament.

Section 111
(Veto on the grounds of unconstitutionality)

1. In case of a veto by the President of the Republic as provided for under Section 149 of the Constitution, provisions of Section 109 and Section 110 of these Rules of Procedure and Section 88 of the Constitution shall apply, barring from exceptions provided for in this section.
2. Voting after general discussion may focus on deletion of a rule or rules deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Justice, or on confirmation of the decree.
3. Where rules deemed as unconstitutional have been deleted at a second deliberation, the respective text shall be returned to the committee for final drafting.
4. Where Parliament deletes rules deemed unconstitutional or confirms the decree, the decree shall be referred to the President of the Republic for promulgation within 8 days.

CHAPTER II
SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESSES

Part I
Declaration of the state of siege or the state of emergency

Section 112
(Parliament meeting)

1. Where the President of the Republic requests authorization from Parliament to declare the state of siege or the state of emergency, in accordance with Subparagraph g), Section 85, of the Constitution, the Speaker of Parliament shall promote its immediate consideration by the Plenary of Parliament or by the Standing Committee.
2. The inclusion of considering the request for authorization on the agenda, as well as the calling of the Plenary of Parliament or the convening of the Standing Committee shall take precedence over any deadline or formality provided for in these Rules of Procedure.

Section 113
(Debate)

1. Debate shall be based on the message from the President of the Republic, which serves as the request for authorization to declare the state of siege or the state of emergency.
2. Debate shall not exceed one day in which priority shall be given, for taking the floor, to the Prime Minister, for 60 minutes, and to a Member of Parliament from each parliamentary party group, for 30 minutes each.
3. The meeting shall have no period before the agenda.
4. Provisions of the preceding paragraphs shall apply, with the necessary adaptations, to the debate of the Standing Committee.

Section 114
(Voting and form of authorization)

1. Voting shall focus on the granting of authorization.
2. Authorization shall take on the form of a law where it has been granted by the Plenary of Parliament, and the form of a resolution where it has been granted by the Standing Committee.
3. Where authorization has been granted by the Standing Committee it shall be confirmed by Parliament at its first plenary meeting.

Part II
Declaration of war and making peace

Section 115
(Parliament meeting)

1. Where the President of the Republic requests authorization from Parliament or the Standing Committee to declare war or make peace, in accordance with Subparagraph h), Section 85, of the Constitution, the Speaker of Parliament shall convene Parliament, or the Standing Committee if the former is in recess.
2. Provisions of Sections 112, 113, and 114 shall apply to the debate process, voting and the form of authorization, with the necessary adaptations.

CHAPTER III
LEGISLATIVE AUTHORIZATIONS

Section 116
(Purpose)

1. Parliament may authorize the Government to develop decrees-laws on matters provided for under Section 96 of the Constitution.
2. The authorization law shall define the purpose, sense, extent and duration of the authorization, which may be extended for a period to be determined by a new law.

Section 117
(Special rule)

1. In addition to provisions of Paragraphs 2 and 3, Section 96, of the Constitution, legislative authorizations shall adhere to the following special rules:
 - a) Original initiative is an exclusive competence of the Government;
 - b) There shall be no examination by a committee;
2. Where the Government has held public consultations on a proposed draft decree-law, it shall, for information purposes, be attached to the draft legislative authorization law, along with positions taken by the different parties interested in the subject matter.

CHAPTER IV
CONSIDERATION OF GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE ACTS

Section 118
(Request to consider a decree-law)

1. A request for Parliament to consider a decree-law for the purposes of suspending effect or amending shall be endorsed by a fifth of Members of Parliament and submitted in writing to the Chair within thirty days following publication, excluding the period when the running of Parliament is suspended.
2. The request shall indicate the decree-law and its date of publication, as well as the respective legislative authorization law, along with a justification of motives.
3. Rules of Section 94 shall apply to acceptance of requests, with the necessary adaptations.

Section 119
(Deadlines to consider a decree-law)

Once a request for Parliament to consider a decree-law, prepared in light of a legislative authorization law, has been accepted, the Speaker shall include it on the agenda not later than the sixth subsequent plenary meeting for its submission.

Section 120
(General debate by the Plenary)

1. A decree-law shall be considered by the Plenary and there shall be no examination by a committee.
2. Debate shall be opened by one of the requesting Members of Parliament and the Government shall have the right to make a statement.
3. Debate shall not exceed two plenary meetings.

Section 121
(Suspension of effectiveness)

1. Upon a request for consideration of a decree-law prepared by force of a legislative authorization, and where proposed amendments have been submitted, Parliament may suspend in full or in part, subject to a resolution, the effectiveness of a decree-law until the law changing it is published or until all proposed amendments submitted are rejected.
2. Suspension shall lapse if after 10 plenary meetings Parliament has not considered the decree-law.

Section 122
(Voting and form)

1. Voting after general discussion shall focus on cessation of effectiveness.
2. Cessation of effectiveness shall take on the form of a resolution.

Section 123
(Cessation of the effectiveness of a decree-law)

In case of cessation of effectiveness, a decree-law shall lapse on the day the resolution is published in the Official Gazette. The decree-law shall not be republished during the same legislative session.

Section 124
(Amendment of a decree-law)

1. Where cessation of effectiveness of a decree-law is not approved, and proposed amendments have been submitted, the decree-law and the proposed amendments shall be referred to the competent committee so that a specialized debate is held, unless Parliament decides to have its examination deliberated by the Plenary.
2. Proposed amendments may be submitted up to the end of general debate by the Plenary, without prejudice to submission of new proposals to the committee for specialized debate and voting.
3. Where suspension of effectiveness of a decree-law has been deliberated, suspension shall lapse if Parliament has not considered the decree-law after 10 plenary meetings.
4. Where introduction of amendments has been deliberated and Parliament has not voted the respective law until the end of the current legislative session, the process shall be deemed lapsed, provided that fifteen plenary meetings have been held.
5. Upon approval by a committee of proposed amendments, the text shall be referred to the Plenary for submission to global and final voting at the succeeding plenary meeting and drafting of the final text subsequently.
6. Where the effectiveness of an act is suspended and all proposed amendments are rejected, the Speaker shall cause the resolution on declaration to terminate suspension to be published in the Official Gazette.
7. Where deadlines provided for under Paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Section have been reached, the process of consideration by Parliament shall be deemed lapsed and the Plenary shall be forthwith informed thereof. The respective resolution shall be sent for publication in the Official Gazette.

CHAPTER V
APPROVAL OF TREATIES

Section 125
(Initiative)

1. Agreements, conventions and treaties (hereinafter: treaties) subject to approval, denouncing and ratification by Parliament, in accordance with Subparagraph f), Paragraph 3, Section 95, of the Constitution shall be the Government's initiative.
2. The Speaker shall cause draft resolutions to be circulated to parliamentary party groups and to be submitted for consideration of the competent committee according to the subject matter and other committee(s), as the case may be.

Section 126
(Discussion and voting)

Debate on a treaty shall take place at a plenary meeting, at the end of which there shall be a global vote on the treaty.

Section 127
(Effect of voting)

1. Where a treaty is approved, or ratified, the resolution and the act text shall be referred to the President of the Republic for the purposes provided for under Subparagraph a), Section 85, of the Constitution.
2. Approval or ratification of acts provided for under Paragraph 1 above shall be made by resolution.
3. The resolution shall contain the text of the act.

CHAPTER VI
PROCESSES OF GUIDANCE AND POLICY MONITORING

Part I
Consideration of the Government Programme

Section 128
(Parliament meeting)

1. A Parliament meeting for submission of the Government programme, as provided for under Section 108 and Section 109 of the Constitution, shall be called by the Speaker of Parliament, after consultations with the Prime Minister.
2. Where Parliament is not in actual running, it shall be convened by the Speaker and attendance shall be mandatory.
3. Debate on the Government programme shall take no more than 5 consecutive days.

Section 129
(Consideration of the Government Programme)

1. The Government programme shall be submitted to Parliament consideration by a statement of the Prime Minister, which shall not last more than 40 minutes.
2. After the presentation, there will be a period of questions and answers.
3. Debate shall be organized by the Conference.
4. During debate, plenary meetings shall not have a period before the agenda.

Section 130

(Rejection of the Government programme and vote of confidence)

1. Until debate is closed, and without prejudice to it, any parliamentary party group may move the rejection of the Programme or the Government may request the passing of a motion of confidence.
2. Upon closure of debate, there will be voting to pass a motion of rejection or a motion of confidence.
3. Before voting, motions may be withdrawn.
4. Rejection of the Government programme shall require an absolute majority of the elected Members of Parliament.
5. The Speaker of Parliament shall announce voting results to the President of the Republic for the purposes provided for under Subparagraph g), Section 86, and Subparagraph e), Paragraph 1, Section 112, of the Constitution.

Part II

Vote of confidence

Section 131

(Parliament meeting)

1. If the Government, as provided for under Section 110 of the Constitution, requests Parliament to pass a motion of confidence on a statement of general policy or any other matter of relevant national interest, discussion shall commence on the 7th parliamentary day following the submission of the request for a vote of confidence to the Speaker of Parliament.
2. Outside of actual running of Parliament, the Government's request shall only determine convening of the Plenary following deliberation by the Standing Committee.

Section 132

(Debate)

1. Debate shall not exceed three days and shall commence with a statement of the Government for not more than 30 minutes.
2. The Rule provided for under Paragraph 1, Section 54, shall apply to debate for a vote of confidence, if the Conference does not decide otherwise.
3. A vote of confidence may be withdrawn by the Government until the end of debate.

Section 133
(Voting)

1. Upon conclusion of debate, voting shall take place for a motion of confidence at the same meeting.
2. A motion of confidence shall be deemed as passed if it secures an absolute majority vote of the elected Members of Parliament.
3. Results of the voting on a motion of confidence shall be reported by the Speaker of Parliament to the President of the Republic for the purposes provided for under Subparagraph e), Paragraph 1, Section 112, of the Constitution.

Part III
Motion of no confidence

Section 134
(Initiative)

Motions of no confidence against the Government may be submitted in connection with the execution of its programme or issue of relevant national interest, in accordance with Section 111 of the Constitution, by a quarter of the Members of Parliament in full exercise of their functions.

Section 135
(Debate)

1. Debate shall be opened and closed by one of the motion signatories.
2. The Prime Minister shall have the right to speak immediately after or before statements provided for under Paragraph 1 above.
3. Provisions of Section 132 shall also apply to debate, with the necessary adaptations.

Section 136
(Voting)

1. Upon conclusion of debate, voting shall take place at the same meeting.
2. A motion of no confidence shall only be deemed as passed if it obtains an absolute majority vote of the elected Members of Parliament.
3. Where a motion of no confidence is not passed, the signatories thereof shall not submit another motion during the same legislative session.
4. The Speaker of Parliament shall report the voting result to the President of the Republic for the purposes provided for under Subparagraph f), Paragraph 1, Section 112, of the Constitution.

Part IV
Questions to the Government

Section 137
(Questions to the Government)

1. Members of Parliament may ask oral questions to the Government at plenary meetings, especially those meetings called to this end, as provided for under Paragraph 2, Section 101, of the Constitution.
2. Questions shall be put in order by the Speaker of Parliament, after consultations with the Conference, adhering to the principle of alternation among Members from every parliamentary party group. Questions shall be made known to the Government at least eight days in advance.
3. Plenary meetings shall be held in accordance with determination of the Conference, ensuring that all parliamentary party groups may at least put one question to the Government.
4. Debate shall adhere to the following procedure:
 - a) Members of Parliament questioning the Government shall do so not for more than five minutes;
 - b) The Government shall reply for a period not exceeding five minutes;
 - c) Any Member of Parliament shall have the right to request additional clarification for a period not exceeding 2 minutes, provided that, however, the first request for additional clarification shall be granted to the Member of Parliament questioning the Government for a period not exceeding 3 minutes;
 - d) Where the provision of Subparagraph c) above applies, the Government may reply at once to a set of ten questions for a period not exceeding 10 minutes.
5. The floor shall be granted for additional clarifications respecting the alternation rule.
6. Maximum global time for each question shall be determined by the Speaker, after consultations with the Conference.

Section 138
(Meeting dates)

Questions to the Government shall be made at monthly meetings to be organized for this purpose by the Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups.

Part V
Calling the Government

Section 139
(Debate on matters of relevant national interest)

1. At the request of 10 Members of Parliament or parliamentary party groups, debates on matters of relevant national interest may be organized.
2. Debate shall take place within 10 days from submission of its request.

Section 140
(Debate)

1. Debate shall be opened with a statement by one Member of Parliament who is a signatory, or by a Member of Parliament from the parliamentary party group calling the Government, or by a Member of the Government.
2. Debate shall not exceed one parliamentary day and it shall not have a period before the agenda.
3. Debate shall be concluded with a statement by a Member of Parliament who is a signatory, or by a Member of Parliament from the parliamentary party groups calling the Government, or by a Member of the Government, who shall close it.
4. It shall be incumbent upon the Conference to define the timing for holding debates.

Part VI
Petitions

Section 141
(Exercise of the right to petition)

1. The right to petition provided for under Section 48 of the Constitution and the law shall be exercised before Parliament through submission of petitions, claims or complaints.
2. Whenever the term “*petition*” is mentioned, it shall be understood as applying to all modalities referred to under Paragraph 1 above.

Section 142
(Form)

1. Petitions shall be reduced to written form and contain the identity of the petitioner and his or her respective residence. The petition shall also be signed by the petitioner or by another person, at the request of the former if he or she cannot sign or does not know how to sign.
2. Petitions shall be intelligible and shall clearly specify its purpose.

3. In a petition submitted by several petitioners, identity and residence of only one signatory shall be enough.

Section 143
(Submission and process)

1. Petitions shall be addressed to the Speaker of Parliament who will refer them to the competent committee according to the subject matter.
2. Petitions shall be numbered and registered by the competent service of the Parliament Secretariat.
3. Upon receipt of a petition, a committee shall examine it to first verify as follows:
 - a) If is the case of a legally prescribed cause determining its outright rejection;
 - b) If requirements provided for under Section 142 have not been observed.
4. Outright rejection shall cause the petition to be sent to the archives and the petitioner or the first of the signatories shall be informed of the decision.
5. Parliament may however set a 30-day deadline for the interested parties to correct any deficiency contemplated under Section 142.

Section 144
(Examination by a committee)

1. A committee shall consider petitions within 90 days, which may be extended, from the meeting referred to under Paragraph 3 of Section 143 and prepare a report indicating the action deemed adequate.
2. Where the case provided for under Paragraph 3 of Section 143 occurs, the determined deadline shall only commence on the date when deficiencies have been disposed of.
3. A committee may move that a petition be submitted to the *Provedor* of Human Rights and Justice. In such case, the Speaker of Parliament shall send the report for the purposes provided for under Paragraph 2, Section 27, of the Constitution.

Section 145
(Consideration by the Plenary)

1. Consideration by the Plenary shall only take place after approval by the competent committee according to the subject matter.
2. The competent committee shall prepare a report that shall be referred to the Speaker of Parliament for consideration by the Plenary. A representative of each parliamentary party group will then take the floor for a time to be determined by the Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups.

Section 146
(Notification to the petitioner(s))

The Speaker of Parliament shall inform in writing the petitioner or the first of the petitioners of the committee report and action to be taken subsequently.

Part VII
Inquiries

Section 147
(Function and purpose)

1. Parliamentary inquiries are meant to ensure respect for the Constitution and laws and consider acts of the Government and Public Administration.
2. Parliamentary inquiries shall be carried out by ad hoc committees specifically appointed for each case by a Parliament resolution.
3. Initiative to appoint an inquiry committee, initiative to inquire and inquiry itself shall be conducted in accordance with the law.

Section 148
(Establishment of a committee)

1. An inquiry committee shall be appointed following a proposal from ten Members of Parliament or parliamentary party groups and its composition shall be a reflection of the principle of proportionality of Members of Parliament comprising the parliamentary party groups.
2. An initiative shall be approved by an absolute majority vote of the elected Members of Parliament.
3. A resolution establishing an inquiry committee shall contain a justification of motives, definition of competencies, the number of Members of Parliament serving on the committee and the deadline to issue a report, which may be extended.

Section 149
(Procedure)

1. The Speaker of Parliament shall request the Prosecutor-General to confirm that there is no pending case in a court of law related to the subject matter of the initiative.
2. Where there is no pending case in a court of law as provided for under Paragraph 1 above, the Speaker shall submit the initiative to the Plenary for deliberation.

Section 150
(Functioning of a committee)

1. It shall be incumbent upon the Speaker of Parliament, after consultation with the Conference of Representatives from Parliamentary Party Groups, to determine the number of committee members, to swear them in and to set the deadline to conduct the inquiry, where the resolution does not set a deadline, and authorize its extension only for the submission of the report.
2. For committee proceedings to commence the presence of more than half the number of Members of Parliament serving on the committee shall be required.

CHAPTER VII
PLAN AND GENERAL STATE BUDGET

Section 151
(Submission of draft laws on Plan and Budget)

Draft laws on Plan and General State Budget related to each financial year shall be submitted to Parliament 90 days before the commencement of the financial and fiscal year.

Section 152
(Dissemination)

1. Once draft laws have been accepted, the Speaker of Parliament shall cause them to be circulated to all parliamentary party groups and to Members of Parliament who so request.
2. Draft laws shall subsequently be referred to the Committee on Economic Affairs and Finance and to other specialized standing committees for the purpose of consideration.

Section 153
(Consideration by committees)

1. Committees shall send to the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and Finance a substantiated opinion on the draft laws within 15 days.
2. The Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and Finance shall prepare the final opinion on the draft laws within 10 days from the day on which the deadline provided for under Paragraph 1 above has lapsed.
3. For the purposes of considering draft laws within the deadlines provided for under Paragraph 1 and Paragraph 2 above, committees shall convene such meetings as they may deem necessary with the participation of the Government.

Section 154
(Inclusion on the agenda)

Once the report and opinion of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and Finance has been received, the Speaker of Parliament, following consultation with the Conference, shall include the draft laws on Plan and Budget on an agenda for discussion, in accordance with Section 155 below.

Section 155
(Discussion and general voting by the Plenary)

1. General debate on the Plan and General State Budget shall not be of less than 3 days, subject to the provisions of Section 100.
2. Debate shall commence and finish with the statements of the Prime Minister.
3. Before closing debate, parliamentary party groups and the Government shall have the right to make a statement on the draft laws for a period of 10 minutes.
4. During debate, plenary meetings shall not have a period before the agenda.
5. Upon conclusion of debate, draft laws on Plan and General State Budget shall be submitted to voting after general examination.

Section 156
(Discussion and voting after specialized examination)

Specialized debate of the Plan and General State Budget shall not exceed 10 days and it shall be organized in such a manner that the budget of each ministry is continually discussed. Members of the Government shall have the right to take the floor in this debate.

Section 157
(Global and final voting)

Once draft laws have been approved after specialized debate, they shall be submitted to global and final voting.

Section 158
(Final drafting)

Final drafting shall be the responsibility of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs and Finance.

**CHAPTER VIII
PROCESSES RELATED TO OTHER BODIES**

**Part I
Process related to the President of the Republic**

**Division I
Inauguration and swearing-in of the President of the Republic**

Section 159
(Parliament meeting)

1. Parliament shall convene in special session for the inauguration and swearing-in of the President of the Republic, as provided for under Section 77 of the Constitution.
2. Where Parliament is not in actual running, it shall be convened by the Speaker for that purpose.

Section 160
(Formalities)

1. Once the session has been opened, the Speaker of Parliament shall suspend it to welcome the President-elect and guests.
2. Once the session has been reopened, the Speaker shall cause the minutes of the election final results to be read out by one member of the Chair.
3. The President-elect shall be sworn in by the Speaker of Parliament and shall be inaugurated at a public ceremony before Members of Parliament and representatives of other organs of sovereignty, taking the oath of office contemplated under Paragraph 3, Section 77, of the Constitution. The National Anthem shall be played thereupon.
4. The act of inauguration shall be signed by the President of the Republic and by the Speaker of Parliament.

Section 161
(Subsequent acts)

1. Upon signing the act of inauguration, the Speaker of the National Parliament shall salute the new President of the Republic.
2. The President of the Republic shall address Parliament and the Nation.
3. After the President has made his or her speech, the Speaker of Parliament shall declare the session closed and the National Anthem shall be played once more.

Division II
Consent for the President to be absent from the national territory

Section 162
(Initiative and competencies)

1. The President of the Republic shall request consent of Parliament, or of the Standing Committee, to absent himself or herself from the national territory by a message, as provided for under Paragraph 1, Section 80, of the Constitution.
2. The message shall be circulated to all parliamentary party groups.

Section 163
(Debate)

1. Debate by the Plenary shall be based on the message from the President of the Republic and one Member of Parliament from each parliamentary party group shall have the right to make a statement for three minutes.
2. Deliberation of Parliament shall take on the form of a resolution.

Division III
Resignation of the President of the Republic

Section 164
(Parliament meeting)

1. In case of resignation of the President of the Republic, Parliament shall convene to be informed of the message provided for under Section 81 of the Constitution, within 48 hours.
2. There shall be no debate.

Division IV
Criminal liability and constitutional obligations of the President of the Republic

Section 165
(Initiative)

1. For the purposes of Paragraph 2, Section 79, of the Constitution, initiative of the process shall belong to Parliament, following a proposal from one fifth and deliberation approved by a two third majority of the elected Members of Parliament.
2. Parliament shall appoint a special committee to prepare a report and an opinion within the deadlines set for this purpose.

Section 166
(Debate and voting)

1. Once the report has been received, the Speaker of Parliament shall, within the following 48 hours, schedule a special meeting of the Plenary to address such report.
2. Upon conclusion of debate, the Speaker of the National Parliament shall put the initiative to vote, by secret ballot, which shall be approved by a two third majority of the elected Members of Parliament.
3. The lifting of the immunities of the President of the Republic shall also be carried out at the initiative of Parliament by a resolution, in accordance with Paragraph 3, Section 79, of the Constitution.

Part II
Criminal liability of Members of the Government

Section 167
(Criminal liability of Members of the Government)

Parliament deliberations provided for under Section 113 and Section 114 of the Constitution shall be taken by secret ballot and an absolute majority of the elected Members of Parliament, following an opinion by a special committee appointed to this end.

Part III
Designation of incumbents of offices external to the National Parliament

Section 168
(Election)

1. Parliament shall, in accordance with provisions of the Constitution or the law, elect incumbents of offices external to the National Parliament whose designation falls within its competencies.
2. In the absence of directly applicable constitutional or legal provisions, provisions of the following sections shall be adhered to.

Section 169
(Nominations)

1. Nominations shall be made by 10 Members of Parliament or by parliamentary party groups.
2. Nominations shall be made to the Speaker until the end of the penultimate meeting before the one at which election shall be held, along with the CV of the candidate and his or her statement accepting the nomination.

Section 170
(Determination of winner)

1. The candidate obtaining more than half of valid ballot papers shall be considered as elected.
2. Where no candidate obtains such number of votes, there shall be a second round, at which only candidates who obtained the highest number of votes shall stand, provided that they have not withdrawn their nomination.

Section 171
(System of proportional representation)

Whenever the system of proportional representation is applied, election shall be held on the basis of a complete list and the Hondt highest average method shall be adopted.

Part IV
Representations

Section 172
(Representations)

1. Representations of Parliament shall respect the principle of proportionality and Members of Parliament shall be designated by parliamentary party groups in Conference.
2. Where representations cannot include representatives of all political parties, the composition thereof shall be determined by the Conference and, where no agreement is reached, by the Plenary.
3. Upon completion of its mission, a representation shall prepare a report to be submitted to the Plenary by the chairman of the delegation or by the Member of Parliament designated by him or her.
4. In case of permanent missions, a quarterly report shall be prepared for the Plenary.
5. Upon completion of the presentation, Members of Parliament may request clarifications whose timings shall be determined by the Conference.

Section 173
(Deputations)

Provisions of Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Section 172 shall apply to deputations from the National Parliament.

Section 174
(Media accreditation)

1. The media may give accreditation to its professionals before the Chair to carry out activities of reporting, informing and disseminating news on Parliament or its Members.
2. The Chair shall provide representatives of the media with texts concerning issues under discussion and statements.

CHAPTER IX
FINAL PROVISIONS

Section 175
(General principles of the legislative process)

1. Legitimacy to develop laws shall be guaranteed by strictly respecting provisions of these Rules, subject to the following basic principles:
 - a) Full and equal participation of Members of Parliament in all legislative activities, respecting procedural limitations;
 - b) Modification of the Rules of Procedure only by competent legislative act, strictly respecting provisions of such rules;
 - c) Nullity of any decision contravening the Rules of Procedure;
 - d) Precedence of special rules over general rules;
 - e) Decision on omitted cases in accordance with analogy and general principles of Law;
 - f) Preservation of the rights of minorities;
 - g) Collegial decision, except for competencies specifically established in these Rules of Procedure;
 - h) Impossibility of making decisions without the quorum established by the Rules of Procedure for this purpose;
 - i) Agenda shall be prepared in advance so that it can be made known to all Members of Parliament in advance;
 - j) Advertisement of decisions made;
 - k) Possibility of broad political negotiation according to provisions of these Rules of Procedure.
2. The breaching of any of these principles may be denounced by a point of order or policy statement.

Section 176
(Institutional relations)

Institutional relations between Parliament and organs of national sovereignty, parliamentary institutions of other countries or other national or foreign institutions shall be conducted through the Speaker of Parliament or delegations of Members or a Member designated by the Speaker.

Section 177
(Amendments)

These Rules of Procedure may be amended by an absolute majority of the elected Members of Parliament, following a proposal of at least one quarter of the elected Members.

Section 178
(Interpretation and integrations of loopholes)

It shall be incumbent upon the Speaker and the Chair to interpret and integrate possible loopholes in these Rules of Procedure, which may be appealed against to the Plenary.

Section 179
(Entry into force)

Once approved by the Plenary and signed by the Speaker, these Rules of Procedure shall enter into force forthwith.

Approved on 18 June 2002
To be published.

The Speaker of the National Parliament,
Francisco Guterres, 'Lú-Olo'