



# **AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

## **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

**(modified and adopted on 08 November 2016 by the 39<sup>th</sup> Conference)**

**Part I : THE CONFERENCE**

**Part II : THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Part III : THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT**

**Part IV : GENERAL PROVISIONS**

## **PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS**

### **Rule 1**

These Rules shall govern the structure and functioning of the organs of the African Parliamentary Union, that is : the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments (herein the Conference), the Executive Committee and the General Secretariat.

## **PART I : THE CONFERENCE**

### **SECTION 1 : COMPOSITION**

#### **Rule 2**

1. The Conference shall be composed of the Presiding Officers of National Parliaments or their representatives, accompanied by Parliamentarians who shall attend the Conference as delegates, in conformity with article 8 of the Statutes.
2. In accordance with Article 8 of APU Statutes, women parliamentarians must be included among the delegates to the Conference.

#### **Rule 3**

1. Representatives of the Union non-member African countries provided or not with parliamentary institutions, as well as of regional, inter-regional and international organizations, may be invited by the Executive Committee to follow the proceedings of the Conference as observers.
2. Observers may be invited by the President to take the floor.

### **SECTION 2 : SESSIONS**

#### **Rule 4**

1. The Conference shall meet every year in ordinary session. It can be convened in extraordinary session either on the proposal of the Executive Committee or at the request of 2/3s of National Groups.
2. The convocation of an ordinary session shall be sent out by the Chairperson of the Executive Committee to National Groups at least two ( 2 ) months before the opening of the Conference. In case of an extraordinary session, this time limit shall be reduced by half.
3. Any convocation of an ordinary session or an extraordinary session must include the agenda for the session.

### **Rule 5**

The Union and the National Group of the country where a Conference is held shall be responsible for the material organization of the Conference, according to an agreement concluded with the General Secretariat acting in the name of the Union.

### **Rule 6**

The Conference shall be presided over by the Presiding Officer of the Parliamentary Assembly of the host country, in conformity with the provisions of article 11 of the Statutes.

### **Rule 7**

1. In conformity with the provisions of article 11 of the Statutes, the bureau of the Conference shall be composed of the Presiding Officer of the National Parliament of the host country, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, and other Parliamentary Assembly Presiding Officers attending the Conference as Vice-Presidents.

2. The bureau assisted by the Secretary-General shall see to the smooth functioning of the Conference proceedings.

### **Rule 8**

The proceedings of the Conference shall be directed by its President who shall appoint one of the Vice-Presidents to replace him/her in case of absence from one or several sessions.

## **SECTION 3 : MEETINGS**

### **Rule 9**

The Conference shall meet in public, unless 2/3s of the members present at the Conference decide otherwise.

### **Rule 10**

1. The President of the Conference shall open, conduct proceedings, adjourn and close the meetings.

2. The President of the Conference shall have the Rules observed, call upon speakers, put questions to the vote, make known the results of voting and declare the Conference closed.

3. The President of the Conference shall maintain order in the hall.

## **SECTION 4 : AGENDA AND DEBATES**

### **Rule 11**

1. The Conference shall meet on the basis of an agenda proposed by the Executive Committee. It shall close as soon as the agenda is over.

2. The Secretary-General shall communicate the agenda to National Groups at least three (3) months before the opening of the Conference.

### **Rule 12**

1. Any national Group may request the inclusion of a supplementary item in the Conference agenda. To be admissible, such a request must be submitted at least two (2) months before the session and receive in its favour the simple majority of the members present.

2. Nevertheless, no time-limit condition shall be required for a request for an item whose urgent and exceptional nature is justified. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in its favour in order to be accepted.

3. The Conference shall hear first the sponsor of the request for a supplementary item and a contrary opinion.

### **Rule 13**

Any National Group may submit a memorandum, a motion or a draft resolution on a subject included in the agenda.

### **Rule 14**

1. Any item on the agenda that should be dealt with by a resolution shall be referred to the competent Committee.

2. The Conference may decide to debate an item on the agenda first in plenary session before referring it to the competent Committee.

3. Any supplementary item on the agenda can be referred to the competent Committee without debate in plenary session.

### **Rule 15**

1. No speaker may take the floor without the authorization of the President. A speaker shall not keep the floor for more than 10 minutes.

2. Nevertheless, this time limit shall not apply to the Rapporteurs who give accounts of the questions entrusted to them.

3. Other speakers shall take the floor in the order in which they have requested to speak. The President may call to order the speaker who departs from the question under discussion and, if necessary, withdraw the floor from him.

4. The sponsor of a motion shall be invited by the President to justify it briefly. A decision shall be made immediately without debate, unless the Conference decides otherwise.

5. Discussions shall turn only on the items on the agenda.

### **Rule 16**

The draft resolutions and the amendments relating to the items on the agenda must be put at the delegates' disposal immediately in order to permit discussion at the meeting during which the related questions are considered.

### **Rule 17**

When a question on the agenda has already been treated by the competent Committee, the debate shall be about the text submitted by this Committee.

## **SECTION 5 : AMENDMENTS**

### **Rule 18**

Amendments shall be relevant to the text.

### **Rule 19**

1. In the discussion of amendments and motions of procedure, the author of the initiative, the Rapporteur of the Committee and, if necessary, a speaker with a different opinion shall be the only ones to be heard, unless the President decides otherwise.
2. Nobody shall be allowed to explain his vote on the motions of procedure.

### **Rule 20**

1. If two or more amendments the vote of which is required in plenary session apply to the same words in a draft resolution, the one that departs most from the text shall have priority and shall be put to the vote first.
2. If two or more amendments are mutually exclusive, the adoption of the first shall involve the rejection of the other amendment or amendments bearing on the same words. If the first amendment is rejected, the next in order of priority shall be put to the vote, and so on for each of the other amendments.
3. In case of doubt regarding the priority, the President shall decide.

## **SECTION 6 : VOTING**

### **Rule 21**

1. Each National Group shall have a single vote.
2. No vote may be taken if the number of the National Groups present is less than the absolute majority of the National Groups represented at the Conference.

## **Rule 22**

Unless provided otherwise, the decisions of the Conference shall be taken by the absolute majority of valid votes.

## **Rule 23**

1. Voting shall take place either by roll-call, show of hands or by acclamation.
2. However, for personal appointment voting shall be by secret ballot.
3. Voting may take place by secret ballot if the majority of represented National Groups so request.

## **SECTION 7 : STANDING COMMITTEES**

### **Rule 24**

1. In application of article 10 of the Statutes, the Conference shall set up the following standing committees :
  - a) the political committee;
  - b) the economic and sustainable development committee.
2. The National Groups participating in the Conference shall be represented in the committees.

### **Rule 25**

Representatives of non-member African countries provided or not with parliamentary institutions and of international organizations may be invited by the bureau of the Conference to follow the work of committees as observers. They may speak only with the authorization of the Chairperson of the committee.

### **Rule 26**

1. The committees shall elect at every Conference on a rotating regional basis their bureaux composed each of a Chairperson and a Rapporteur.
2. A National Group may not simultaneously hold more than one post as Chairperson or Rapporteur within committees.

### **Rule 27**

1. The Chairperson shall open, conduct proceedings, adjourn and close the meetings.
2. The Chairperson shall direct the work of the Committee, see that the Rules are observed, call upon speakers, put questions to the vote, make known the results of voting and declare the sessions opened and closed. The decisions on these matters shall be final and shall be accepted without debate.

3. The Chairperson shall decide in all cases not covered in the present section, taking inspiration from the general rules of procedure contained in the present Rules.

**Rule 28**

During the consideration of the issues submitted for deliberation, the committees may have themselves assisted or ask the advice of any extraparliamentary persons or bodies capable of enlightening them on the subjects under discussion.

**Rule 29**

The Committees shall prepare reports and/or draft resolutions on the questions referred to them by the Conference.

**Rule 30**

The Committee shall draw up a draft text without opening a debate on the substance of the question which was the subject of a debate in the plenary session of the Conference.

**Rule 31**

For the final drawing up of a draft text, the Committee shall set up within it a drafting committee composed of six members at most. This composition shall take into account equitable geographical and gender distribution.

**SECTION 8 : COMMITTEE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE AFRICAN  
PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

**Rule 32**

The Committee of Women Parliamentarians shall have the following objectives:

- a) Increase Women Parliamentarian's participation in the sessions of the Union with a view to promoting the parity between men and women in all areas;
- b) Promote contacts and consultation among women parliamentarians on all issues of common interest;
- c) Arouse the interest of women in general and that of women parliamentarians in particular for the proceedings of the Conference of the APU;
- d) Propose recommendations relating to women or certain issues included in the agenda of the Conference.

**Rule 33**

1. The Committee of women parliamentarians shall meet on the occasion of the conference.



2. The women parliamentarians participating in the Union’s sessions take part in the meeting of the committee.

**Rule 34**

1. The committee of Women Parliamentarians shall elect, from among its members, a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and a Rapporteur. The members of the Bureau shall be elected for a period of two years on a rotating basis taking into account an equitable geographical distribution.

2. Any other provisions relating to the structure and functioning of the Committees of the Conference shall be applicable to the “Committee of Women Parliamentarians of the Union”.

**Rule 35**

The Committee of Women Parliamentarians shall present a report of its deliberations to the Conference.

**SECTION 9 : REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS  
AND RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCE**

**Rule 36**

The report of proceedings shall be published in the six months that follow the Conference.

**Rule 37**

At the close of the Conference, the President shall enumerate the different resolutions or recommendations passed by the Conference.

**Rule 38**

The National Groups shall make all necessary arrangements for the effective implementation of the resolutions and recommendations passed during the meetings of the Union and shall inform the Secretary-General of such arrangements.

**PART II : THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**SECTION 1 : COMPOSITION**

**Rule 39**

The Executive Committee is composed of three (3) members per National Group including at least one woman.

#### **Rule 40**

1. The members of the Executive Committee shall be elected by the Conference on the proposal of National Groups for a two-year term.
2. The new members of the Executive Committee shall elect the other members of the Executive Committee bureau : three Vice-chairpersons and a rapporteur. The Chairperson of the Committee of Women shall be an ex-officio member of the Bureau, in conformity with provisions of article 14 of the Statutes.
3. The new members of the Executive Committee shall designate among them an APU regional representative for each of the five regions of the continent.

#### **Rule 41**

A member of the Executive Committee who is unable to participate in a session may be replaced by another member from his National Group.

### **SECTION 2 : SESSIONS**

#### **Rule 42**

1. The Executive Committee shall meet normally in two ordinary sessions each year.
2. The first session shall take place in the four (4) months that follow the end of the calendar year. It shall take place in a member country which proposes in advance to host it, or in Abidjan, the Union's headquarters. The chairperson of the Executive Committee may propose to host that session in his or her country.
3. It shall be mainly devoted to the examination of the Management Account and the Auditors' report as well as to the drawing up of the draft agenda for the next Conference. The Executive Committee, during that session, may consider and adopt declarations on topical issues;
4. The second session shall precede the Conference immediately.
5. It shall be devoted particularly to the adoption of the annual work programme as well as to the discussion and vote of the budget for the next financial year.
6. The Executive Committee may be convoked in extraordinary session if 2/3s of National Groups so request.

### **SECTION 3 : MEETINGS**

#### **Rule 43**

The Executive Committee shall meet in public, except contrary decision taken by 2/3 of the delegates present at the Conference.

**Rule 44**

1. The Executive Committee may not deliberate validly unless the majority of its members are present.
2. The decisions of the Executive Committee shall be taken by the simple majority of the members present. In case of a tie, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.

**Rule 45**

Each National Group shall have a single vote.

**Rule 46**

The votes of the Executive Committee shall be taken by roll-call , show of hands or by acclamation. They may be taken by secret ballot if the majority of represented groups so request. Nevertheless, if the vote aims at individual appointments, then it must be by secret ballot.

**Rule 47**

The results of the votes shall be reported by two tellers appointed by the Chairperson.

**SECTION 4 : AGENDA**

**Rule 48**

The Secretary-General shall establish the draft agenda for each session, in agreement with the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

**Rule 49**

The Secretary-General shall communicate the draft agenda to the members of the Executive Committee at least two months before the opening of the session.

**SECTION 5 : CHAIRPERSONSHIP AND SECRETARIAT**

**Rule 50**

1. The Chairperson shall open, conduct proceedings, adjourn and close the meetings; he shall direct the work of the Executive Committee, have the Rules observed, call upon delegates to speak, put questions to the vote, proclaim the results of ballot and declare the sessions opened or closed. The decisions relating to these issues shall be final and must be accepted without debate.
2. The Chairperson shall decide in all cases not provided for in this part, basing himself on the general rules of procedure contained in the present Rules.

**Rule 51**

1. The Secretary-General of the Union shall attend the meetings of the Executive Committee and its bureau.
2. He or she shall assist the Chairperson in the conduct of proceedings.
3. The Secretary-General may comment on any matter under consideration and shall answer the questions put to him on that occasion.

**Rule 52**

1. The Secretary-General of the Union shall receive or prepare all the documents necessary for the deliberations of the Executive Committee and shall distribute them to its members without delay.
2. The Secretary-General shall draw up a report of proceedings which must be addressed to the Committee members at least within two months after the close of each session.

**PART III : THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT**

**Rule 53**

The General Secretariat shall be the administrative link between National Groups and the Union, on the one hand, and between the Union and international organizations, on the other hand. It shall be run by a Secretary-General.

**Rule 54**

The General Secretariat shall be provided with administrative, financial and technical services that ensure the implementation of all requisite tasks for the smooth running of the Union.

**Rule 55**

The administrative, financial and technical services of the Union shall be placed under the authority of the Secretary-General. He shall be accountable for their smooth running before the Executive Committee and the Conference.

**Rule 56**

The Secretary-General shall be assisted by Directors. In case of absence or impediment, a Director shall replace him on decision of the Secretary-General or the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, according to the case.

### **Rule 57**

1. The Secretary-General, each year, shall give the Conference an account of the activities of the Union. The Report of the Secretary-General shall be accompanied by a summary of the reports submitted by National Groups.
2. The Secretary-General may, at any time and at the invitation of the President of the Conference, submit reports on any question under discussion to the organs of the Union.
3. The Secretary-General may also be invited to comment on any question under discussion.

### **Rule 58**

The Secretary-General shall see that the working papers are in possession of National Groups at least two months before the session.

### **Rule 59**

1. For the choice of the Secretary-General, the Executive Committee shall examine the applications and submit its choice to the Conference, following the criteria of competence and experience.
2. The Secretary-General shall be appointed by the Conference for a 4-year term. The Secretary-General may be only once re-appointed.
3. The Secretary-General shall work under the supervision of the Executive Committee of the Union.

## **PART IV : GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **SECTION 1 : FINANCING**

#### **Rule 60**

1. The setting up and operating expenses of the Union's organs shall be assumed by the National Groups according to the budget prepared by the General Secretariat and approved by the Executive Committee. The National Groups shall be responsible for the travelling charges and the accommodation costs of their delegations.
2. A National Group which fails to pay its annual contribution for two financial years shall have its rights suspended in accordance with Article 24 of the Statutes.
3. These rights pertain to participation in sessions, voting and presenting candidates to positions on the permanent and temporary organs of the Union.

## **SECTION 2 : WORKING LANGUAGES**

### **Rule 61**

Arabic, English, French and Portuguese shall be the working languages of the African Parliamentary Union. The acts and documents of the APU shall be drawn up in these four languages.

## **SECTION 3 : MODIFICATION OF THE RULES**

### **Rule 62**

1. These Rules may be amended upon written proposals by any National Group submitted to the Executive Committee which shall approve them by a two-thirds majority of the members present.
2. The Conference shall adopt and modify the Rules on the proposal of the Executive Committee by a 2/3 majority of the votes.
3. Proposals for the modification of these Rules must be made in writing and sent to the Secretary-General at least two months before the meeting of the Executive Committee.
4. These proposals shall be sent urgently to National Groups.

## **SECTION 4: ENTRY INTO FORCE**

### **Rule 63**

These Rules shall come into force on the date of their adoption by the Conference.

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