



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Chairperson:
Speaker

Committee Secretary:
A Mbanga x 3218

DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 10 September 2015, E249

Present:

B Mbete (Speaker)

Bhengu, F	Sizani, PS (Chief Whip of the Majority Party)
Boroto, MG (House Chairperson)	Steenhuisen, JH (Chief Whip of the Opposition)
Didiza, AT (House Chairperson)	Tsenoli, SL (Deputy Speaker)
Koornhof, Dr GW	Van der Merwe, LL
Matiase, NS	Waters, M

Staff in attendance:

Mr G Mgidlana (Secretary to Parliament), Adv ME Phindela (Acting Deputy-Secretary to Parliament), M Xaso (Secretary to the NA), T Mbata (Constitutional and Legal Services) and S Tshabalala(Committees).

1. Opening remarks

The Speaker opened the meeting at 08:35.

2. Apologies

Apologies were tendered on behalf of House Chairperson Mr CT Frolick, Ms DE Dlakude (Deputy Chief Whip of the Majority Party), Mr N Singh, Prof NMKhubisa and Dr CP Mulder.

3. Consideration of the agenda

The proposed agenda for the meeting was adopted.

4. Consideration of Minutes of 3 September 2015

On the proposal of Mr Bhengu, seconded by the Chief Whip of the Opposition, the minutes of 3 September were adopted.

5. Matters arising

In response to concerns raised at the meeting of the Chief Whips' Forum the previous day regarding the scheduling of the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS) on Wednesday 21 October, the Speaker indicated that the Minister of Finance had requested that the MTBPS be tabled that day and not on 28 October. Some critical stakeholders would not be available on 28 October.

The Chief Whip of the Opposition indicated that members of the Programme Committee were not aware that the Budgetary Review and Recommendation Reports (BRRRs) would continue beyond Wednesday 21 October when they agreed that the MTBPS be tabled on that day. He said that it would be an anomaly to allow committees to meet on the BRRRs after the tabling of the MTBPS and that such arrangement was unsatisfactory and could make the work of committees superfluous.

The Chief Whip of the Opposition asked why members of the Executive would not be available for parliamentary business during that period. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party said that it looked like the problem was with Parliament and not the Executive as committees could start considering the BRRRs as early as possible. He said that Parliament should influence the MTBPS process through the scheduling of committee meetings long before the MTBPS instead of prioritising other work in that period and thereafter clamour at the unavailability of the Executive in Parliament.

6. Report by the Committee Section

Mr Tshabalala presented a document on Bills and other matters before committees. He reported that the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries intended to finalise the *Performing Animals Protection Amendment Bill*, *Plant Breeders' Rights Bill* and *Plant Improvement Bill* in the Fourth Term.

Mr Tshabalala also reported that the Ad Hoc Joint Committee on Probing Violence Against Foreign Nationals held a meeting with the City of Cape Town on 3 September and the Portfolio Committee on Trade and Industry had finalised the international agreement on *Additional Protocol to the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and its member states of the one part, and the Republic of South Africa, of the other part, to take account of the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union*.

7. Report by Bills Office

Ms Mbata presented a report on bills before the National Assembly committees. She reported that the *Protection of Critical Information Bill*, a private member's bill, had been classified as section 76 legislation. Ms Mbata also indicated that the *Defence Laws Repeal and Amendment Bill* had been transmitted to the National Council of Provinces and the *Maintenance Amendment Bill* had been signed into law by the President.

8. Consideration of draft Parliamentary programme

Mr Bhengu presented the fourth term parliamentary programme and said that he would consult with the House Chairperson of Committees after the meeting on the possibility of rescheduling the committee meetings that were scheduled for the following week in order to find a suitable arrangement for the BRRR meetings of 22 and 23 October.

He said that the Minister of Finance would table the MTBPS on Wednesday, 21 October and plenaries were scheduled to commence from 27 October to Friday 20 November. During that period, Questions to the Deputy President were scheduled for 11 November and Questions to the President for 19 November, and Committees/oversight were scheduled for 24 – 27 November.

House Chairperson Ms Didiza said that Parliament should influence the BRRR process by scrutinising the quarterly reports as they give an indication of spending by departments and their strategic plans and what they were focused on. She added that by the time committees consider the BRRRs a lot of work would have been done in those committees. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party added that some committees, such as the Standing Committee on Appropriations, were participating in the process of appropriation when they interact with the departments on the quarterly reports and that the lack of adequate influence on the MTBPS process was as a result of weaknesses on the part of committees.

The Speaker indicated that she also consulted the House Chairperson of Committees on the matter and that there was an understanding that the consideration of the BRRRs was essentially for the finalisation of the Budget Speech in 2016. However, from a parliamentary perspective, it was equally important that all the BRRRs were finalised prior to the tabling of the MTBPS and that Parliament needed to strengthen its own regulatory framework as far as programming was concerned.

9. Announcements

There were no announcements.

10. Closure

The meeting adjourned at 09:00.