



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE**

Chairperson:  
Speaker

Committee Secretary:  
A Mbanga x 3218

**DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

Wednesday, 25 March 2015, E249

Present:

B Mbete (Speaker)

Bhengu, F	Singh, N
Khubisa, Prof N M	Sizani, P S (Chief Whip of the Majority Party)
Kwankwa, N L S	Steenhuisen, J H (Chief Whip of the Opposition)
Mulder, Dr C P	

Staff in attendance:

M Xaso (NA Table), N Bell (Constitutional and Legal Services Office) and S Tshabalala (Committees).

**1. Opening**

The Speaker opened the meeting at 14:07.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were received from House Chairpersons Ms A T Didiza, Ms M G Boroto and Mr C T Frolick, Ms D E Dlakude (Deputy Chief Whip of the Majority Party), Dr G W Koornhof (Parliamentary Counsellor to the Deputy President) and Mr M Waters.

**3. Consideration of the agenda**

The proposed agenda for the meeting was adopted.

**4. Consideration of Minutes of 25 March 2015**

On the proposal of the Chief Whip of the Opposition, seconded by the Deputy Chief Whip of the Majority Party, the minutes of 25 March were adopted with the following correction:

- The Deputy Speaker, and not the Speaker, opened the meeting at 08:33.

## **5. Matters arising**

The Chief Whip of the Opposition reiterated the concerns he raised in the previous committee meeting on the remarks made by the President during the question session of 11 March when he indicated that he was never asked to come to the National Assembly to answer questions in the last quarter of 2014. He also sought clarity on the nature of the consultations that took place and asked why the President was under the impression that he was never asked to appear before the National Assembly to answer questions.

The Speaker confirmed that she had had interactions on the matter and that her engagements were limited to the Presidency which was not represented in the meeting to explain its case. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party said that he sympathised with the Speaker as an impression may have been created that she had misled the Programme Committee and wondered why the matter continued to be an issue as the dates had since been provided, including an additional date of 16 April. In response to Prof Khubisa's indication that the matter had been overtaken by events, Mr Kwankwa indicated that a recurrence of the miscommunication should be avoided in the future. The Chief Whip of the Opposition explained that he did not want to be accused of making statements about the Speaker only in her absence and that it was important when dealing with such issues, that members could take each others' words at face value. He added that there was indeed no reason to take the matter any further and thanked the Speaker for the clarity given and expressed that the Programme Committee should continue to consult on issues.

In response to Mr Singh's request that dates for Questions to the President in 2016 be also reflected in the Parliamentary Programme Framework for the First Term, the Speaker said the matter had been noted.

## **6. Report by the Committee Section**

Mr Tshabalala presented a document on Bills and other matters before committees and reported that the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries intended to finalise the *Plant Improvement Bill*, *Performing Animals Protection Amendment Bill* and *Plant Breeders' Rights Bill* on 26 May. When processing the *Medicines and Related Substances Amendment Bill*, the Portfolio Committee on Health would also be requesting permission from the National Assembly to amend certain provisions of the principal Act. With regards to the *Medical Innovation Bill*, the committee would receive briefings from research institutions.

Mr Tshabalala also reported that the Portfolio Committee on Communications published progress reports on the recommendations of candidates to the Media Development and Diversity Agency and the South African Broadcasting Corporation.

**7. Report by Bills Office**

Mr Bell presented a report on bills before the National Assembly committees and indicated that he concurred with the report of the Committee Section.

**8. Consideration of draft Parliamentary programme**

Mr Bhengu presented the Second Term programme and highlighted the following:

Questions to the President were scheduled for 16 April, Members' Training and Committee meetings were scheduled for 21 – 24 April. Budget Vote debates were scheduled for 5 – 21 May, however, Vote 1: The Presidency was provisionally scheduled for 26 May and the reply by the President for 27 May. Vote 2: Parliament was also provisionally scheduled for 28 May. The Second Reading debate on the *Appropriation Bill* was scheduled for 2 June.

Joint Sittings on Africa Day, Freedom Day and Youth Day were proposed for 22 May, 28 April and 11 June, respectively. Questions to the Deputy President were scheduled for 10 June and another session of questions to the President for 18 June.

With regards to Questions to the President on 16 April, Mr Xaso explained that the written replies received from the President on the three outstanding questions would be published in the Announcement, Tablings and Committee Reports and the Question Paper. The Committee agreed that the session would ask supplementary questions on questions by Ms H H Malgas, Mr M A Mncwango and Prof Khubisa only and a resolution to that effect would be considered by the House at the start of the session. A resolution for permission for the Extended Public Committees to meet in the mornings would also be put before the House for decision.

The Speaker said that she had a meeting with the Steering Committee of the Multi-Party Women's Caucus and the meeting discussed a range of issues, which included programming of certain matters relating to women activities. She urged the Programming Whips to consider involving a representative of the Women's Caucus to be part of the programming processes as there was a general feeling that there should be more awareness of women's occasions, including consideration of their activities in the programme.

Mr Singh said that there was also a section of the youth of members who requested for the establishment of a multi-party caucus that would represent them as there were specific matters that needed their attention. It was agreed that the matter should be placed on the agenda for further consideration.

The Chief Whip of the Opposition said the Democratic Alliance was concerned about the efficacy of joint sittings that were proposed for the entire year as the previous three sittings were poorly attended and they degenerated as a result of, among other things, members not being familiar with the Joint Rules. Notwithstanding the importance of celebrating such holidays, he was concerned that the business of Parliament could be compromised and requested the programming whips to reconsider the matter. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party said that there was an undertaking in the current Parliament to increase the number of joint sittings and suggested that there should be thorough planning in scheduling them and their content be improved.

The Chief Whip of the Majority Party said that Parliament held the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Freedom Charter in Kliptown. He proposed that the Programme Committee consider scheduling the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Freedom Charter at the same venue in June. It was agreed that parties would consult on the matter and it would be considered in the forthcoming meetings. The National Council of Provinces should also be consulted.

Mr Singh said he was concerned that the Subcommittee on Rules would be meeting during the short recess period. He said he had written to the chairperson without success and enquired if the dates of the meetings could be reconsidered. The Speaker said she would consider the request.

**9. Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**10. Closure**

The meeting adjourned at 14:40.