



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE**

Chairperson:  
Speaker

Committee Secretary:  
Razia January x 2623

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**DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

Thursday, 30 May 2013, E249

Present:  
Speaker

Farrow, S B	Kilian, J D
Frolick, C T	Kubayi, M T
Hajaig, F	Motshekga, Dr M S
Kalyan, S V	Schneemann, G D

Staff in attendance:

M Xaso (NA Table), W Matidze (Constitutional and Legal Services Office), N Giba (Committees), M Plaatjies (NA Table), S Letsatsi (Language Services) and R January (NA Table).

**1. Opening**

The Speaker opened the meeting at 08:31.

**2. Apologies**

Apologies were tendered on behalf of Ms N C Mfeketo: Deputy Speaker, Messrs S Z Ntapane and A Watson.

### **3. Consideration of the agenda**

The agenda was amended to include the following: "Interpretation during House debates" and "Feedback on timing during the Extended Public Committee meetings".

The agenda, as amended, was adopted.

### **4. Consideration of minutes of meeting of 23 May 2013**

The minutes of 23 May were adopted as presented.

### **5. Matters arising**

Mr Frolick gave feedback on the request for the committee section to indicate when Bills were to be completed by the different portfolio committees and explained that the programmes of committees had been affected by meetings of Extended Public Committees. He indicated that he had written to all affected chairpersons to revise their programmes and prioritise all bills before their committees. He urged Whips to ensure that members attend committee meetings as poor attendance impacted on the quorum, which affected the finalisation of bills. While committees were able to co-opt members, this unfortunately led to a situation where speeches of members participating in Second Reading debates lacked substance. He indicated that by next week, the Committee section would be able to indicate in its report the "aim to finish" dates.

The Chief Whip of the Majority party indicated that the attendance challenge required coordination between his office and the office of the House Chairperson for Committees. Mrs Kalyan requested the schedule of urgent legislation, in order to ensure that members attend meetings and asked whether committees would be allowed to sit during constituency period.

Mrs Hajaig highlighted that the Parliamentary Group on International Relations (PGIR) also struggled with members' attendance and that had affected the committee's ability to make decisions at the last four meetings. She requested members who were unable to attend meetings to send alternate members in their place. Mr Frolick replied that requests to meet during the constituency period would be considered individually.

The Speaker highlighted the need for rules and policies to be tightened up, as there was no attendance policy for members in place yet, and added that some of the matters raised should be discussed at Chief Whips' Forum.

## 6. Report by the Committee Section

Mrs Giba presented a document containing information on the following issues: bills before NA committees, bills initiated by committees, matters before the Constitutional Review Committee and other matters before committees.

## 7. Report by Constitutional and Legal Services Office (CLSO)

Mr Matidze reported that the *Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Amendment Bill* was ready for a Second Reading, along with six other bills reported the week before.

## 8. Consideration of draft Parliamentary programme

Mr Schneemann presented the draft parliamentary programme. He reminded members that the Budget Vote debate on Rural Development and Land Reform was scheduled for the following day, 31 May 2013 in the morning. He indicated that a request had been received from the Democratic Alliance that Mr R A P Trollip be given an opportunity to bid members farewell as Friday, 31 May was his last day as a member of the National Assembly. It was agreed that Mr Trollip would be given additional three minutes for the debate and other parties would be allocated one extra minute.

Mr Schneemann said that he had received a request for a debate on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the African Union rather than on Africa day, as it had already passed. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party indicated that although there was agreement that members would focus on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OAU, they had now had the benefit of the African Commission Chairperson's opening address, which contained the theme of the Pan-African Parliament: 'Pan-Africanism and African renaissance'. He recommended this theme for the debate.

Ms Kubayi proposed that there be no declarations on the budget vote reports scheduled for 4 June 2013, as members had already debated the budget votes in Extended Public Committees. She added that Parliament had received a request on the appointment of a new Auditor-General who should assume office towards the end 2013. She said that a motion for the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on the Auditor-General would be moved during the following week, and would be circulated to all parties beforehand.

Ms Kubayi explained that the DA's motion, previously scheduled for 6 June was moved to 20 June to accommodate the Minister of Police, who would also participate in the debate.

Mrs Kalyan indicated that the DA was very grateful for the extra time allocated to Mr Trollip to bid farewell to members. She asked for times allocated for the second reading debates on the *Intellectual Property Laws Amendment Bill* and *Gender Equality Bill*, and requested that parties be furnished with the topic for the Debate on Youth Day.

Ms Kubayi indicated that the House had had a Second Reading debate on the *Intellectual Property Laws Amendment Bill* in 2012 and suggested that there should not be another Second Reading debate on the bill.

Mr Schneemann indicated that the topics for the Youth Day debate and Africa Day debate would be communicated to all parties later. The Speaker suggested that the session on Africa Day should somehow involve the Pan-African Parliament. The Chief Whip of the Majority Party replied that there was a meeting scheduled for the following day to discuss the matter and the Speaker's suggestions would be considered.

### **9.1 Discrepancies in Time-Keeping during EPCs**

Mr Plaatjies from the NA Table explained the discrepancies in time that occurred during the Extended Public Committee Budget Vote debate on 29 May 2013. In the first instance it occurred when Ms D Carter, a Cope member, was still speaking when the Chair indicated that her time had expired, but the clock on the podium reflected that she still had a minute left. The second incident took place when Ms M N Phaliso was speaking and several points of order were raised. He explained that the time lost to points of order was manually calculated and added back to the member's speaking time.

Mr Plaatjies indicated that although he had not yet discussed the matter with the Secretary to the NA, the infrastructure available in EPC venues should be considered, which could include installing electronic clocks. The current set of clocks used had the potential to give rise to discrepancies between information available to members at the podium and the clocks used by the NA Table.

Mrs Kilian indicated that she did not understand how the COPE member's clock at the podium reflected that she still had extra time left, if she used all her allocated time. She asked whether the timer used at the podium was faulty and if so, that it placed opposition parties at a disadvantage as they had limited time. She requested that a recalculation of the time spent by the Cope member be done to ascertain whether there was something wrong with the timer or the time-keeping.

Mr Frolick, who presided at the time, reminded the Committee of the role of the presiding officer. He indicated that he had ensured the member concerned spoke for her allocated two minutes before he advised her of the expiry of time. The rules were applied equally to all members without fear or favour. He said he took exception to members not adhering to rulings made by the Chair, adding that this matter would be taken to the Chief Whips' Forum for further discussion, along with other matters such as discipline of members during EPCs. He indicated that he would provide the Speaker with a report on what transpired during the EPC debate on 29 May 2013, from both sides of the House.

Mr Farrow suggested that time-keeping should be more transparent and open to all members. He proposed a long term solution of a movable electronic clock that could be seen by all members.

Mr Jeffrey suggested that the matter be resolved by the Secretary to the NA as there would be no more EPC debates taking place in Old Assembly Chamber or Committee Room E249 for the remainder of 2013. Ms Kubayi supported Mr Jeffrey's suggestion, and urged Whips to communicate with one another on the re-allocation of time, where members of the same party saved time

## **9.2 Quality of interpretation during House debates.**

Mr Letsatsi, the Acting Section Manager: Language Services, indicated that he was in attendance with the Manager responsible for Interpreting services.

Ms Kubayi explained that the Chief Whips' Forum had received a query from the Chief Whip of the Opposition on the quality of interpretation during debates. The interpretation of members' speeches was not always accurate and in some instances resulted in inaccurate points of order being raised. A report on the matter was requested at the Chief Whips' Forum, but the person that was to make the presentation to the Forum did not arrive.

It was agreed that the matter be referred back to Chief Whips' Forum for discussion.

## **10. Announcements**

There were no announcements.

## **11. Closure**

The meeting adjourned at 09:15.