



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ZAMBIA

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

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ABSTRACT SERIES

## **ALLOCATION OF TIME AND SELECTION OF SPEAKERS**

## **PREFACE**

This Abstract is part of the Parliamentary Procedure Abstract Series and describes the procedure regarding allocation of the time to various items of business in the House and selection of speakers. It is based on the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Zambian Parliament as contained in the Standing Orders and Members' Handbook of the National Assembly of Zambia.

The information contained here is not exhaustive.

Roy Ngulube  
**ACTING CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

## **BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Business of the House is determined by the House Business Committee. This Committee comprises the Speaker, the Deputy Speakers, Leader of Government Business in the House, Government Chief Whip, Leader of the Opposition, Opposition Whip and three other members appointed by the Standing Orders Committee. The Committee is chaired by the Speaker and the First Deputy Speaker is the Vice Chairperson of the Committee. In the absence of both the Speaker and the First Deputy Speaker, the Second Deputy Speaker chairs the Committee. Similarly, if the Government Chief Whip is unavailable, the Deputy Government Chief Whip may attend the meeting of the House Business Committee.

As indicated above, various items of business to be transacted during Government time, as per practice, are normally placed before the House Business Committee for allocation of time. The suggestions made by Government in that regard are considered by the Committee and the recommendations of the Committee are presented to the House in the form of a report after it is approved by the Speaker or the Member who presided at the sitting of the Committee.

## **ALLOCATION OF TIME TO ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

After the recommendations by the Committee of the business of the House, the Leader of Government Business in the House usually comes to the House and announces this accordingly. An Order Paper or agenda of each day's business is, subsequently issued.

On all days other than Wednesday, Government business takes precedence over Private Members' business. If there is no Government business, the time may be utilised for Private Members' business. On Wednesday, Private Members' business takes precedence over Government business. If there is no Private Members' business, the time is utilised for Government business.

## **SELECTION OF SPEAKERS**

A Member desiring to notify the Speaker of his intention to take part in a debate or discussion in the House uses the well-known parliamentary practice of "catching the Speaker's eye". He or she does so by indicating on the console of the multi-media system in the House. The Speaker has the right to regulate the debate and select Members to take part in a debate. In selecting Members to speak, the Presiding Officer ensures that Members have an equal right to speak taking into consideration the different political representation in the House.

The Speaker ensures that members do not interrupt other Members who

are on the floor debating unless he or she sees the need to:

- call attention to a point of order;
- call attention to the point of a quorum;
- call attention to the presence of strangers;
- move the closure; and
- call attention to a point of order on a matter of privilege on which notice will be given to Mr Speaker.

According to the Standing Orders, a Member is not allowed to speak twice on a matter in the House. However, if a Member needs to reply or explain a part of his or her speech that has been misquoted or misunderstood, he or she may be allowed to speak twice. If a Member is given chance to explain him or herself, he or she is not allowed to introduce a new subject. It is important to also add that Members are also allowed to speak twice in Committee of the whole House. In addition, if an amendment to a question before the House is moved, a member who may have spoken to the main question can be given chance to speak again on the amended question. However, a member moving or seconding an amendment to the main question is not allowed to speak again to the amended question. Furthermore, a member who has spoken to the main question may move or second an amendment.

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