

IFP SUBMISSION

Amendment to current National Assembly Rule 132(2)

In line with the spirit and purport of section 57(2)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which section reads as follows:

57. (1) The National Assembly may—
- (a) determine and control its internal arrangements, proceedings and procedures; and
 - (b) make rules and orders concerning its business, with due regard to representative and participatory democracy, accountability, transparency and public involvement.
- (2) The rules and orders of the National Assembly must provide for—
- (a) the establishment, composition, powers, functions, procedures and duration of its committees;
 - (b) the participation in the proceedings of the Assembly and its committees of minority parties represented in the Assembly, in a manner consistent with democracy;

And in line with the tenets of participatory democracy in general, and minority party participatory democracy in particular, the IFP proposes that in respect of Rule 132(2) of the standing Rules of the National Assembly that a sub-section 'C' be added thereto which extends the power to call a meeting of a portfolio committee as follows:

132. Meetings

- (1) Committees meet whenever necessary and as determined in accordance with these Rules and the decisions, directives and guidelines of the Programme Committee.
- (2) A meeting of a committee may be called in terms of Subrule (1) —
 - (a) by the chairperson of the committee; or
 - (b) by resolution of the Assembly; or
 - (c) by at least one third of its members.

In practice, and in terms of the current 11 member composition of portfolio committees, this would equate to no less than 4 standing (full-time) members of any particular portfolio committee having the power in terms of the proposed Rule 132(2)(c) of the National Assembly to request to the Chairperson of a committee that

a meeting be convened on a particular matter of import, thereby enhancing and ensuring substantive political minority participation within the parliamentary arena.

It is our further submission that the rule would not be abused by minority parties as in terms of the “**by at least one third of its members**” requirement, a minimum of 4 standing (full time) portfolio committee members would be required to invoke the rule, and this equates currently, in minority party participation terms, to all opposition parties having to agree to request that a meeting be convened in terms of the Rule.

Ndileka Manga
Mark
Gilbert Jood