

NOTES ON MINI-PLENARIES

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The mechanism of mini-plenaries was included in the 9th Edition of the Rules of the National Assembly when they were adopted by the House on 26 May 2016.
2. Mini-plenaries were included in the rules essentially both to allow more opportunities for the House to discuss business as well as promote debate and exchanges between members.
3. Furthermore, the mechanism was intended to provide for House business to be discussed in a relatively less structured manner when compared with plenary.

B. PROPOSALS ON SPEAKERS' LIST

1. As there is no speakers' list in mini plenary sessions, the presiding officer must, in a balanced manner, allow speakers from all parties to participate in the debate, subject to a time limit as prescribed by the Speaker. Therefore, global time must be allocated.
2. A member may participate in a debate in a mini plenary session more than once if recognised by the presiding officer.

The one option would for the Table staff to assist the presiding officer to manage the use of the global time allocated to parties and parties will be notified in this regard. Parties be required to determine their members participating in the debate prior to the sittings.

Another method of ensuring the fair spread of parties for debates is for the Presiding Officer to use the current template of Speakers' list.

A proposed global time allocation is attached for reference.

C. ELECTION OF CHAIRS FOR MINI PLENARIES

1. Rule 54 requires the Chairperson of a mini plenary session must be taken by an elected presiding officer or by other member appointed by the Speaker. The presiding

officers to chair the mini plenaries must be appointed by the Speaker to chair on a rotational basis.

2. Upon appointment by the Speaker these chairpersons, their names and the duration of their appointment will be published in the *Announcements, Tablings and Committee Reports*.

D. BUSINESS FOR MINI PLENARIES

1. The Speaker refers matters for consideration in a mini plenary session after due consideration of the views and directions of the Programme Committee. A proposal in this regard could be made by the whips that certain matters on the order paper be referred for debate in mini plenaries in a clustered form. One mini plenary could debate more than one matter.
2. Business which could be referred to and discussed in a mini-plenary include: (i) First and Second Reading Debates on Bills; (ii) Committee Reports; (iii) Motions; and (iv) Budget Votes (although these debates differ from other mini-plenaries).

E. DECISION AND DECLARATIONS

1. The Rules provide that no decision may be taken at the mini-plenary session. In relation to budget vote debates decisions must be deferred to be taken at the plenary session of the House, provided that no further debate may be allowed and declarations of vote must be permitted.
2. In relation to other matters, declarations of vote are allowed only at the discretion of the presiding officer. No declaration is permitted if the question is put for decision immediately after the debate on the question has been concluded.
3. In the main plenary matters that have been debated but not voted on, may be dealt with as follows:
 - put straight to a vote without declarations
 - Declarations may be allowed for parties that had not taken part in the debate

- Declarations may be allowed for all, but limited to one minute

PROPOSED TIME ALLOCATION

Total time of debate	60
ANC	10
DA	7
EFF	4
Smaller Parties	3 (x10)

The Member in charge will be allocated 6 minutes to open and 3 minutes to reply. Parties are allocated time in a proportional manner.
