

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Secretariat General



REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace – Work – Fatherland

STANDING ORDERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Law N° 73/11 of June, 1973 as amended by :

- *Law N° 89/13 of 28 July, 1989*
- *Law N° 92/004 of 14 August, 1992*
- *Law N° 93/001 of 16 June, 1993*
- *Law N° 2002/005 of 2 December, 2002,*
- *Law N° 2014/016 of 09 September, 2014*

CONSTITUTION

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1: This law lays down the Standing Orders of the National Assembly.

SECTION 2: The members of the National Assembly shall be known as “Members of the National Assembly”.

SECTION 3: (1) The term of office of Members of the National Assembly shall be 5 (five) years. It shall commence on the opening day of the statutory ordinary session following the parliamentary elections.

(2) At the beginning of the legislative period, the National Assembly shall meet in a statutory ordinary session on the second Tuesday following the proclamation of the parliamentary election results by the Constitutional Council.

(3) Each year, the National Assembly shall hold 3 (three) ordinary sessions, each lasting not more than 30 (thirty) days.

(4) The legislative year of the National Assembly shall be aligned to the calendar year.

(5) The first ordinary session of the National Assembly shall open in March, the second in June and the third in November.

(6) The opening date of each session shall be fixed by Order of the Bureau of the National Assembly, after concerting with the Bureau of the Senate and consultation with the President of the Republic.

(7) The National Assembly shall meet in extraordinary session for a period of not more than 15 (fifteen) days on a fixed agenda at the request of the President of the Republic or of one-third of its members.

(8) The extraordinary session shall adjourn once the agenda is exhausted.

CHAPTER II
CONDITIONS FOR HOLDING
THE OFFICE OF MEMBER OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

I - VERIFICATION OF CASES
OF INCOMPATIBILITY

SECTION 4: (1) The National Assembly shall ensure compliance with the incompatibility provisions laid down in the Constitution and in the Electoral Code.

(2) The office of Member of the National Assembly shall be incompatible with State-remunerated public duties. Consequently, any public officer elected to the National Assembly shall be immediately replaced. In addition, he shall be placed on secondment at the Parliament where, a month following his election, he does not

indicate that he declines the office of Member of the National Assembly.

(3) However, the provisions of Section 4(2) shall not apply to Members of the National Assembly entrusted with temporary or extraordinary assignments by the Government.

(4) The concurrent holding of the office of Member of the National Assembly and performance of such assignments shall not exceed 2 (two) years. However, after expiry of such period, the assignment may be renewed by decree after consultation of the Bureau.

(5) The Bureau of the National Assembly shall be immediately notified of placement on assignment by the Government.

SECTION 5: After proclamation of parliamentary election results, each Member of the National Assembly shall submit the following documents at the Secretariat General of the National Assembly:

- a certified true copy of a birth certificate or an authenticated document in lieu thereof;
- a certified true copy of the national identity card;
- a document certifying the end or suspension of any activity incompatible with the office of Member of the National Assembly;
- a declaration on honour of the end or suspension of incompatible activity.

SECTION 6: (1) The verification of cases of incompatibility shall be conducted by Boards set up for that purpose. Each Verification Board shall rule on the individual cases of Members of the National Assembly whose names appear on the list submitted to it.

(2) The election of Verification Board members, which should, as much as possible, reflect the political configuration of the House, shall be conducted in plenary sitting through majority list secret ballot. Blank and invalid ballots shall not

be taken into account in calculating the majority. Where the absolute majority is not reached in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be conducted in which a simple majority shall suffice.

SECTION 7: (1) Verification Boards shall be elected for the duration of the legislative period. In case of resignation due to incompatibility established by the Verification Board or by the President of the National Assembly, as the case may be, the resigning member shall be replaced by another candidate presented by his Group or, failing this, his political party.

(2) Each Verification Board shall elect a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and 2 (two) Secretaries.

(3) Verification Boards shall appoint Rapporteurs and immediately start examining the supporting documents referred to in Section 5 above.

(4) Each Board shall prepare a report of its proceedings.

(5) Members of the National Assembly may, on the spot, consult Verification Board reports as well as other documents submitted to them.

(6) At the end of the legislative period, such reports and documents shall be deposited in the Archives of the National Assembly.

SECTION 8: (1) Copies of the reports of the parliamentary election results as proclaimed by the Constitutional Council shall be distributed equitably to the Verification Boards in the alphabetical order in which the candidates declared elected appear.

(2) Complaints shall be submitted to the Eldest Member at the beginning of the legislative period, and to the President of the National Assembly in the course of the legislative period in case of by-elections. The Eldest Member or the President shall forward the complaints to the appropriate Board.

(3) Verification Boards shall report their findings to the Eldest Member or the President of the National Assembly, as applicable, within a maximum period of 5 (five) days. Consideration of their findings shall be automatically entered on the agenda of the sitting following expiry of this period.

SECTION 9: (1) Verification Board reports must be posted up and distributed to Members of the National Assembly.

(a) Where a Bureau report does not mention any case of incompatibility, it shall be adopted without debate in plenary sitting.

(b) Where a Bureau report mentions a case of incompatibility, the National Assembly shall, in plenary sitting, give the elected representative concerned 10 (ten) days to resign from his office as Member of the National Assembly or from the incompatible office.

Where incompatibility persists after expiry of this period, the automatic resignation of the elected representative concerned shall be established.

(2) The Member of the National Assembly whose resignation is established shall be replaced in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Code.

SECTION 10: (1) In the event of disagreement over a case of incompatibility, the National Assembly shall, in plenary sitting, set up a Committee to conduct further enquiry and submit its findings within 72 (seventy-two) hours.

(2) The Committee referred to in subsection 1 above shall comprise Verification Board Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons and Secretaries.

(3) The elected representative under enquiry may designate a Member of the National Assembly to be added to the said Committee in an advisory capacity only.

(4) After conduct of the enquiry requested by the National Assembly, the Committee shall inform it of its conclusions within 72 (seventy-two) hours. A final vote shall then be taken on the case.

SECTION 11: The elected representative whose case is subject to enquiry by decision of the National Assembly may not take part in voting on his case. He may not submit private members' bills, draft resolutions or amendments.

II - RESIGNATION

SECTION 12: (1) Any member whose electoral mandate has been verified may resign from his office.

(2) The resignation of a member before verification of his mandate shall not deprive the National Assembly of the right to proceed with such verification.

(3) Resignations during the legislative period shall be addressed to the President of the

National Assembly who shall accordingly inform the House at the next sitting.

(4) A resignation shall be accepted by the National Assembly, which may not refuse such resignation where it establishes that the Member of the National Assembly is resigning from his office of his own free will.

SECTION 13: Resignation may also be tendered under the conditions laid down in Sections 9 and 101 of these Standing Orders.

CHAPTER III

CONSTITUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 14: (1) At the beginning of each legislative period as well as the opening of the first ordinary session of the National Assembly, the Eldest Member present and the two youngest

members shall form the Provisional Bureau which shall remain in office until the Permanent Bureau of the National Assembly is elected.

(2) (a) With the exception of debate on the verification of cases of incompatibility and the election of the President of the National Assembly at the beginning or in the course of the legislative period, no debate or vote may take place under the chairmanship of the Eldest Member.

(b) However, where, under the chairmanship of the Eldest Member, the National Assembly has to debate an item relating to its Standing Orders, an Ad hoc Committee shall be set up under the conditions laid down in Section 123 below.

SECTION 15: (1) At the opening of the statutory ordinary session of the National Assembly, the Eldest Member shall read out the Constitutional Council report of the parliamentary election results and the names of the candidates declared to have been elected. At least one half plus one of Members of the National Assembly shall attend

the said sitting. Upon verification, the Eldest Member shall inform the National Assembly that the quorum has been reached.

(2) At the opening of each ordinary or extraordinary session, the Eldest Member or sitting President, assisted by the two youngest members or one secretary, as the case may be, and the Secretary-General of the National Assembly, shall first read the Order convening the House pursuant to Section 3(6) above. The President or Eldest Member shall then declare the session open.

(3) Upon confirmation of the presence of Members of the National Assembly, evidenced by their signatures on a register specially kept for that purpose, and after verification of the quorum laid down in Section 47 below, and after the reading of any announcements to the House, the President shall proceed to consideration of the agenda.

(4) At the beginning of the legislative period or of the first ordinary session of the legislative year,

the Permanent Bureau of the National Assembly shall be elected prior to any deliberations, subject to the provisions of Section 14 above.

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CHAPTER IV
PERMANENT BUREAU OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 16: (1) The Permanent Bureau of the National Assembly shall comprise:

- a President;
- a Senior Vice-President;
- 5 (five) Vice-Presidents;
- 4 (four) Questors;
- 12 (twelve) Secretaries.

(2) The Secretary-General of the National Assembly shall be *ex officio* member of the Permanent Bureau.

SECTION 17: (1) The President of the National Assembly shall be elected through a uninominal ballot by absolute majority of the valid votes cast.

Failure to obtain an absolute majority in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be conducted for which a relative majority will suffice.

(2) Two returning officers appointed by the Eldest Member shall count the votes and the Eldest Member shall announce the results.

(3) The Eldest Member shall invite the President-elect to immediately take his seat as President of the National Assembly.

(4) The Senior Vice-President shall be elected through a uninominal ballot by absolute majority of the valid votes cast. Failure to obtain an absolute majority in the first ballot, a second ballot shall be conducted for which a relative majority will suffice.

(5) Two returning officers appointed by the President of the National Assembly shall count the votes and the President shall proclaim the results.

(6) The Vice-Presidents other than the Senior Vice-President, Questors and Secretaries shall be elected at the same time and at the same

plenary sitting by secret ballot through a relative majority of valid votes cast on a common list presented by the political parties represented in the National Assembly.

(7) The election referred to in Section 6 above shall seek to ensure that the Bureau reflects the political configuration of the National Assembly, except some political parties decline to be part of it.

(8) Members of the Bureau shall be elected for 1 (one) year and shall be eligible for re-election.

(9) However, members of the Permanent Bureau elected during the session as of right shall remain in office until the next election of the Permanent Bureau of the National Assembly at the opening of the first ordinary session of the next legislative year.

SECTION 18: The Permanent Bureau of the National Assembly shall be fully empowered to preside over the proceedings of the National

Assembly and to organize all its services. It shall represent the National Assembly at all public ceremonies.

SECTION 19: (1) The President of the National Assembly shall chair Permanent Bureau meetings and the Chairmen's Conference. He shall preside over deliberations in plenary.

(2) Where the President of the National Assembly is unavoidably absent, the Senior Vice-President and the Vice-Presidents shall sit in his stead in the order of precedence established by the Bureau.

(3) The Secretaries shall supervise the drafting of the minutes and shall read them out upon request. They shall keep the speakers list of Members who ask for the floor, supervise the voting process and count votes.

(4) The Questors, under the authority of the Bureau of the National Assembly, shall be responsible for evaluating, auditing and controlling the services of the National Assembly under conditions laid down by order of the Bureau.

CHAPTER V

PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

SECTION 20: (1) Members of the National Assembly may organize themselves into groups according to political party. No Group shall consist of less than 15 (fifteen) members, excluding Members of the National Assembly allied to them.

(2) Members of the National Assembly who do not belong to any group may form an alliance with a Group of their choice, subject to the consent of the Bureau of that Group to have their names appear on its electoral list.

(3) Groups shall be formed after submitting to the Eldest Member or to the President of the National Assembly, a list of their members and the Members of the National Assembly allied to them, as well as a joint public declaration signed by them to serve as a political programme of action.

(4) No Member of the National Assembly may belong to more than one Group.

(5) Allied Members of the National Assembly shall be taken into consideration in calculating the number of seats to allocate to Groups in the various National Assembly Committees provided for by these Standing Orders.

(6) Each Group shall communicate to the President of the National Assembly the membership of its Bureau which shall comprise a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and a Secretary.

(7) The President of the National Assembly shall be informed of any changes in the composition of a Group through notification signed by the Chairperson of the Group, and by the Member concerned and the Chairperson of the Group in the case of membership or alliance.

(8) Such changes shall be announced to the National Assembly by the President and shall be published in the *Official Gazette of Debates* in English and French.

CHAPTER VI

COMMITTEES

I - GENERAL COMMITTEES

SECTION 21: (1) Each year, after the election of the Permanent Bureau, the National Assembly shall set up 9 (nine) General Committees comprising equal numbers of Members of the National Assembly for consideration of matters referred to them. They shall be as follows:

(a) *Committee on Constitutional Laws, Human Rights and Freedoms, Justice, Legislation and Standing Orders and Administration:* constitution, standing orders, legal status of persons, justice, local government, etc.

(b) *Committee on Finance and the Budget:* budget, taxation, financial contributions, currency and credit, budgetary control, etc.

(c) *Foreign Affairs Committee* : treaties, international conventions, etc.

(d) *Committee on National Defence and Security*: national defence, armed forces, gendarmerie, national security, military justice, fire brigade, etc.

(e) *Committee on Economic Affairs, Planning and Regional Development*: regional development, programme laws, State lands, State corporations, town planning, equipment, public works, etc.

(f) *Committee on Education, Vocational Training and Youths*: primary and secondary education and higher education, mass education, etc.

(g) *Committee on Cultural, Social and Family Affairs*: culture, arts, information, communication, public health, recreational activities, social activities, social welfare, family, women, children, senior citizens, etc.

(h) *Committee on Production and Trade*: agriculture, livestock, forestry, hunting, fisheries, energy and industries, tourism, scientific research, consumption, domestic and foreign trade, etc.

(i) *Committee on Resolutions and Petitions*: consideration of draft resolutions, petitions, internal activities of the National Assembly and interparliamentary relations of the National Assembly.

(2) However, considering the importance of a bill in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation, the Chairmen's Conference may decide to submit such bill for consideration by the whole House.

(3) Proceedings of the House shall be limited to general debate on the said bill whereas substantive debate and the final draft shall be left to the relevant General Committee.

(4) The President of the National Assembly shall preside over the deliberations of the House.

(5) General Committees may set up Sub-committees.

(6) With the exception of the Committee on Finance and the Budget, which may sit as and when necessary, the other Committees and Sub-committees may validly sit only during sessions.

(7) “The modalities for holding meetings of the Committee on Finance and the Budget during recess shall be determined by Bureau Order of the National Assembly”.

SECTION 22: (1) Before setting up General Committees, Group Chairpersons shall submit to the President of the National Assembly the electoral list of their members. Such list shall be posted up and published in the verbatim report and in the Official Gazette of Debates.

(2) Each Group shall be entitled to such number of seats on each General Committee as is proportional to its numerical strength.

(3) The seats shall thus be allocated to the duly constituted Groups under the conditions stipulated in Section 20 above according to the rule of the highest average. After such distribution, the remaining seats shall be allocated by the President of the National Assembly to Members of the National Assembly who do not belong to any Group.

(4) Before the General Committees are set up, the Group Chairpersons shall submit to the President of the National Assembly the lists of candidates drawn up by them.

(5) After being posted up for a minimum period of twelve hours, the lists of candidates for General Committee membership shall be submitted for adoption by the National Assembly if, before such adoption, they have not given rise to objections from at least 14 (fourteen) Members of the National Assembly.

(6) Objections and the reasons thereof shall be submitted in writing to the President of the National Assembly and published in the verbatim

report and in the *Official Gazette of Debates*. In the event of objections, the National Assembly shall hold a vote by list system in plenary sitting, on the understanding that the results of the ballot shall in no way modify the numerical representation of Groups in Committees.

(7) The resignation or exclusion of a member from a Group shall entail loss of the privileges which he enjoyed as member of that Group and, in particular, of his status as member of the Committee to which he had been appointed by the Group. Any member expelled or who resigns shall be replaced by his Group forthwith.

(8) No Member of the National Assembly may belong to more than 2 (two) General Committees.

SECTION 23: (1) After being set up, each General Committee shall be convened by the President of the National Assembly for the election by uninominal ballot of its Bureau composed of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and two

Secretaries. The Committee on Finance and the Budget shall alone appoint a General Rapporteur.

(2) Each year, at the opening of the first ordinary session of the legislative year, the Committee on Finance and the Budget shall also appoint a General Rapporteur for revenue and Special Rapporteurs responsible for public expenditure and control of the use of public funds, including public development funds.

(3) “However, the modalities for carrying out the missions of a General Rapporteur for revenue and Special Rapporteurs responsible for public expenditure and control of the use of public funds as well as public development funds shall be determined by Bureau Order of the National Assembly”.

(4) The chairmanship of a General Committee shall be incompatible with the chairmanship of a special committee.

SECTION 24: (1) The Chairmen's Conference shall refer to the relevant Committees all matters which fall within their competence. The National Assembly shall be informed at its next plenary sitting of any matters referred to Committees.

(2) The substantive study of a matter may be entrusted to only one Committee. However, other Committees may ask to give their opinion on the same matter.

(3) A Committee entrusted with the substantive study of a matter shall appoint a Rapporteur. Committees charged with giving an advisory opinion shall also appoint Rapporteurs to express their opinions on the same matter.

(4) The opinion referred to in sub-section (2) above shall be submitted to the Chairperson of the Committee to which a matter has been entrusted for a substantive study.

SECTION 25: (1) General Committees shall be convened at the behest of the Secretary-General of the National Assembly.

(2) Members of the National Assembly who are not members of a given General Committee may participate in deliberations of the said Committee upon the approval of its Chairperson who shall ensure the control thereof.

(3) Only Members of the National Assembly appointed to sit on a Committee may take the floor and vote during Committee meetings.

(4) Members of Government may attend Committee meetings during the study of bills. They shall be heard upon their request. They may be accompanied and assisted by their close collaborators.

(5) The movers of a Private Members' Bill or an amendment may be invited to attend meetings of the Committee at which their text is being debated. They shall withdraw when a vote is being taken.

6) Amendments from Members of the National Assembly shall be inadmissible in Committee once debate on the sections has started.

(7) The General Rapporteur of the Committee on Finance and the Budget shall be heard by any Committee examining a specific budget submitted to it for an advisory opinion.

SECTION 26: (1) No quorum shall be required for General Committees. However, the presence of half plus one of their members shall be required for valid votes to be taken.

(2) Where the quorum referred to in subsection (1) is not reached before voting takes place, the Committee meeting shall be suspended for 2 (two) hours; upon resumption, voting shall be valid even in the absence of a quorum, but such absence shall be recorded in the Committee's report.

(3) Where a matter is submitted to the National Assembly for examination in respect of which the emergency procedure is applied under Section 56 below, the suspension of a Committee meeting shall be for one hour only. No quorum shall be required upon its resumption.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 97 below, the Chairperson of the Committee may, after consulting the Bureau of the Committee, call to order any Member of the National Assembly who, through personal attacks and interruptions, impedes the smooth running of proceedings or free debate in Committee.

(5) When a Committee member has been called to order 3 (three) times during the same sitting, the Chairperson of that Committee shall accordingly inform the President of the National Assembly. The latter may mete out to such a Committee member the disciplinary sanctions provided for under Section 96 below.

SECTION 27: (1) Committee decisions shall be taken by a simple majority of votes cast.

(2) Voting in Committee shall be by show of hand, by standing and sitting or through an electronic process. Only the election of office bearers shall give rise to voting by secret ballot. In the event of a tie, the matter being put to the vote shall not be adopted.

(3) Committee reports and opinions shall be adopted in Committee prior to tabling before the Bureau of the National Assembly. They shall be distributed to the Members of the National Assembly.

SECTION 28: (1) Minutes of Committee meetings shall be kept and shall indicate in particular the names of members present, apologies for absence and names of members absent, as well as Committee decisions and results of voting.

(2) Only Committee members shall be entitled to consult on the spot Committee minutes and other documents handed to them.

(3) However, the Bureau of the Committee may authorize Members of the National Assembly who are not Committee members to consult such documents. The Committee may also, after taking a vote, authorize a member of Government to consult the minutes on the spot.

(4) At the end of the legislative period, such minutes and documents shall be deposited in the Archives of the National Assembly.

SECTION 29: The functions of member of a General Committee shall be incompatible with those of President of the National Assembly.

SECTION 30: (1) Any Committee may propose that one or more of its members be entrusted with a mission in connection with matters falling within its jurisdiction and that will contribute to the proper discharge of its duties.

(2) Should such a mission give rise to expenditure chargeable to the budget of the National Assembly, as a result of travel in particular, the Committee shall submit the proposal to the Bureau, which shall decide accordingly.

II – SPECIAL COMMITTEES

SECTION 31: The National Assembly may set up special committees for specific purposes, particularly of a major national interest. The

resolution to set up a special committee shall also lay down the procedure for the appointment of its members.

III - JOINT COMMITTEES

SECTION 32: Pursuant to Article 30 (3) of the Constitution, the President of the Republic may cause a Joint Committee to convene in order to propose a common draft of the provisions of a Government or Private Members' bill rejected by the Senate.

SECTION 33: (1) The number of representatives of each House of Parliament within the Joint Committee shall be 7 (seven).

(2) The President of each of the Houses shall, by order, appoint its representatives in a Joint Committee, taking into account the political configuration of the House.

SECTION 34: (1) The composition of a Joint Committee shall be established by a joint order of the President of the National Assembly and the

President of the Senate within 24 (twenty-four) hours following the request by the President of the Republic, at the instance of the President of the National Assembly.

(2) The joint order referred to in subsection (1) above shall specify the House of Parliament where the Joint Committee shall sit.

SECTION 35: (1) The first meeting shall notably set up the Bureau of the Joint Committee.

(2) The Bureau of the Committee shall be composed as follows:

- **Chairperson** : the Chairperson of the relevant General Committee of the House hosting the Joint Committee;
- **Vice-Chairperson:** the Chairperson of the relevant General Committee of the guest House;
- **2 (two) Rapporteurs:** the Rapporteur of the relevant Committee of the House hosting the Joint Committee and the Rapporteur of

the relevant General Committee of the guest House.

SECTION 36: (1) Joint Committees shall meet alternately per matter on the premises of the National Assembly or the Senate.

(2) Their deliberations shall be governed by the ordinary rules applicable to General Committees. Where there is a discrepancy between the Standing Orders of the two Houses, those of the House hosting the Committee shall prevail.

SECTION 37: (1) The Joint Committee shall submit its report to the two Presidents of the two Houses within a maximum period of 72 (seventy-two) hours from the date of its establishment.

(2) It shall be dissolved automatically after submission of its report.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall forward the Joint Committee report to the President of the Republic within 24 (twenty-four) hours after receiving it.

(4) The President of the Republic shall submit the text prepared by the Joint Committee to the two Houses for approval. No amendment shall be admissible, except with the consent of the President of the Republic.

(5) Where the Joint Committee fails to adopt the common text, or where the text is not adopted by either of the Houses, the President of the Republic may either:

- request the National Assembly to rule finally;
or
- declare the Government or Private Members' bill null and void.

CHAPTER VII
TABLING OF GOVERNMENT OR
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS OR DRAFT
RESOLUTIONS

SECTION 38: (1) (a) Bills submitted to the National Assembly by the President of the Republic shall be tabled before the Bureau of the House for onward transmission by the President of the National Assembly to the Chairmen's Conference which shall rule on their admissibility and shall refer them to a General Committee. Members of the National Assembly shall then be informed of its content during a plenary sitting.

(b) Private Members' bills and draft resolutions initiated by Members of the National Assembly shall be submitted in writing. They shall be forwarded to the President of the National Assembly for onward transmission to the Chairmen's Conference which shall rule on

their admissibility and refer them to a General Committee.

(2) Government or Private Members' bills may deal only with matters defined in Article 26 of the Constitution.

(3) The Chairmen's Conference shall rule on the admissibility of texts. In the case of disagreement between the Government and the Chairmen's Conference or of any doubt as to the admissibility of a text, the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly or 1/3 (one third) of the Members of the National Assembly shall refer the matter to the Constitutional Council which shall make a ruling thereon.

(4) Pursuant to Article 18 (3) (a) of the Constitution, no bill or amendment introduced by a Member may be admissible which, if passed, would result in the reduction of public funds or an increase of public charges without a corresponding reduction in other expenditure or the grant of equivalent new supply of funds.

(5) Government and Private Members' bills and draft resolutions shall be distributed to Members of the National Assembly, and shall be referred to the relevant Committee for consideration as provided for under sub-section (1) above. They shall be registered in a general roll and numbered in the order in which they arrive, with an entry indicating the action taken thereon.

CHAPTER VIII

RULES GOVERNING THE AGENDA

SECTION 39: (1) The agenda of the National Assembly shall be drawn up by the Chairmen's Conference.

(2) The Chairmen's Conference shall comprise: Chairpersons of Parliamentary Groups, Chairpersons of General Committees and Members of the Bureau of the National Assembly. A

Member of Government shall take part in the deliberations of the Chairmen's Conference.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall chair the Chairmen's Conference.

(4) The agenda of the National Assembly shall comprise, in the order laid down by the Government, the discussion of Government bills and Private Members' bills declared admissible. Other Private Members' bills retained by the Chairmen's Conference shall be considered subsequently.

(5) Should a Private Member's bill not be considered after the two ordinary sessions, such bill shall be automatically considered as of right at the subsequent ordinary session.

SECTION 40: (1) The Government or the Committee to which the substance of a Government or Private Member's bill is referred may request that the vote be taken without debate. Such request shall be addressed to the President

of the National Assembly who shall refer it to the Chairmen's Conference.

(2) When the report and any advisory reports have been distributed, the vote on the matter without debate shall be entered at the top of the agenda of the next session following their distribution, by decision of the Conference whose Chairperson shall duly notify the National Assembly.

SECTION 41: (1) The Government may object to the entry on the agenda of a vote on a matter without debate.

(2) Where such an entry has been made, the Government may request its withdrawal.

(3) Any Member of the National Assembly may object to a vote without debate entered on the agenda if he wishes to make observations or submit an amendment. His request must be addressed in writing to the President of the National Assembly 2 (two) hours before the

opening of the plenary sitting on whose agenda the matter is included, and must be supported by the signatures of at least 15 (fifteen) Members of the National Assembly.

(4) In such case, the Government or Private Member's bill shall be withdrawn from the agenda and the Committee to which the substance has been referred shall hear the opinion of the Government or the Member of the National Assembly raising the objection.

(5) The Committee shall lay before the National Assembly a supplementary report in which all objections raised must be stated.

SECTION 42: (1) A vote without debate may be immediately re-entered on the agenda when the objection to voting without debate is withdrawn during the sitting in which it was made or before the Committee has submitted its supplementary report.

(2) When a vote without debate on a matter is again entered on the agenda following an objection and after a supplementary report has been distributed, it may be withdrawn only at the request of the Government or on a request signed by thirty Members of the National Assembly, ratified by a vote without debate passed by the majority of the members present. Following such second withdrawal, a vote without debate may not be entered on the agenda.

(3) Where no objection is raised to a vote without debate or when, in accordance with the provisions of Section 41(3) above, an objection is inadmissible, or when the National Assembly decides to vote without debate, the President shall put the individual sections successively to vote and shall then call for a vote on the Government or Private Members' bill as a whole.

CHAPTER IX

ORGANIZATION OF DEBATES

SECTION 43: (1) The Chairmen's Conference may propose the organization of the debates to the National Assembly, whose decision shall be taken without discussion.

(2) The organization of the debates, if decided upon, shall be effected by the said Conference to whose membership shall be added the rapporteur or rapporteurs of the Government or Private Member's bill or bills to be included on the agenda.

(3) The organization of the debates shall provide for the distribution of time allocated for speeches at the sittings, the number and date of which shall be settled by the organizing conference referred to in sub-section (2) above.

(4) It may limit the number of speakers as well as the time allocated to each speaker.

(5) The decisions of the organizing conference referred to in sub-section (2) above shall be final.

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CHAPTER X
SITTINGS OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY

SECTION 44: (1) The President of the Republic may, at his request, address the National Assembly in accordance with the provisions of Article 32 of Constitution.

(2) He may also send to the National Assembly messages to be read by the Prime Minister or another Member of Government.

(3) Members of Government shall attend sittings where the agenda includes matters falling within their competence. Such members of Government may be represented by another Member of Government in cases of unavoidable absence.

(4) Members of Government may be assisted by their close collaborators.

SECTION 45: (1) Plenary sittings of the National Assembly shall be public.

(2) However, the President of the National Assembly may exceptionally decide by a majority of votes cast and without debate, to meet in a close sitting at the request of the Government or of an absolute majority of its Members in accordance with Article 17 of the Constitution.

SECTION 46: (1) The President of the National Assembly shall open sittings, conduct debates, ensure compliance with the Standing Orders and maintain order. He may, at any time, suspend or adjourn a sitting.

(2) Before adjourning a sitting, the President of the National Assembly shall indicate the date and agenda of the next sitting insofar as they have been settled by the Chairmen's Conference.

SECTION 47: (1) The proceedings of the National Assembly shall only be valid when half of its Members plus one are present. If the quorum

is not reached at the day and time fixed for the opening of a sitting, the latter shall automatically be deferred for two hours. The proceedings shall then be valid only if one-third of Members of the National Assembly are present.

(2) If, in the course of a sitting and before a vote is taken, the Members present do not form the majority plus one, the vote shall be valid only if one-third of the Members are present.

(3) The quorum of one-third of the Members of the National Assembly prescribed in sub-sections (1) and (2) above for deferment of either a sitting or voting shall not be required when the National Assembly is meeting pursuant to Section 56 below.

(4) In all cases provided for in sub-sections (1) and (2) above, the names of absent Members shall be entered in the minutes.

SECTION 48: (1) Verbatim reports of sittings shall be distributed to Members of the National Assembly at least one hour prior to the sitting at which they are to be adopted.

(2) The verbatim reports of the last sitting of a session shall be submitted to the National Assembly for adoption at that sitting prior to adjournment.

(3) The minutes of each sitting signed by the President and the Secretaries shall be deposited in 4 (four) copies in the Archives of the National Assembly.

(4) Minutes shall be published by the Secretariat General of the National Assembly.

SECTION 49: Before taking up the agenda, the President shall inform the National Assembly of apologies received for absences and make announcements concerning the National Assembly. The National Assembly may order the immediate printing of such announcements or any one of them, independently of their publication in the *Official Gazette of Debates*.

SECTION 50: No matter shall be tabled for examination, discussion and voting that has

not previously been the subject of a report by the General Committee concerned with its substance.

SECTION 51: (1) No Member of the National Assembly may speak until he has requested and been given the floor by the President, even if, exceptionally, the latter may be interrupted by a speaker.

(2) The names of Members of the National Assembly who request the floor shall be listed in the order in which their requests are made. They may relinquish their turn to speak to one of their fellow-Members or reverse the order in which they are listed.

(3) The time allowed for each speaker shall be limited to 10 (ten) minutes. However, the President of the National Assembly may, bearing in mind the number of speakers wishing to take the floor, decide to limit the said time to thirty (30) minutes per parliamentary group.

(4) Members of the National Assembly shall take the floor from the rostrum.

(5) Should a Member speak without having been given the floor or should he continue to speak after the President has requested him to withdraw, the President may decide that his remarks shall not be recorded in the minutes.

(6) Speakers shall not depart from the item under discussion or the President shall remind them of the point. Should a speaker fail to comply, the President may decide that his remarks shall not be recorded in the minutes. In the event of persistence, the President may call him to order.

(7) Any speaker who declines to leave the rostrum after having been requested to do so by the President may be called to order, with a record thereof in the minutes and, if necessary, may be the subject of a vote of censure or even be expelled temporarily under the conditions laid down in Section 97 below.

SECTION 52: The President of the National Assembly may only take the floor in a debate to sum up the issue and limit the debate to the point under discussion. Where he desires to participate in the debate, he shall yield the chair to one of the Vice-Presidents, in order of precedence. He may resume the chair only after debate on the point has been exhausted.

SECTION 53:(1) Chairpersons and Rapporteurs of relevant General Committees as well as the Members of Government concerned shall be given the floor at their request.

(2) A Member of the National Assembly may always take the floor in order to reply.

(3) Apart from the cases provided for in sub-section (1) above, Members of the National Assembly who are members of the relevant Committees may not take the floor during general discussions.

SECTION 54: (1) A point of order which a Member of the National Assembly may wish to raise shall be given priority over the main issue. Should his point of order be clearly inconsistent with the Standing Orders, the President may withdraw his right to speak and apply to him the provisions of Section 51(6) and (7) above.

(2) The floor may also be granted, at the discretion of the President and at the end of the sitting only, to any Member of the National Assembly who requests it in writing to raise a private matter. Thereafter, the President shall declare the matter closed.

SECTION 55: (1) The President or any other Member of the National Assembly may propose closure of debate when at least two speakers of opposing views have dealt with the substance of the matter.

(2) When a Member wishes to speak against the closure of a debate, the right to do so may be granted for just three (3) minutes and

to a single speaker who must confine himself to that purpose. The first Member still listed to speak shall be given priority to speak against closure.

(3) Should the request for closure be rejected by the National Assembly, the debate shall continue. However, in the event of further motion for closure, a decision shall be taken under the conditions provided for in these Standing Orders.

CHAPTER XI

PROCEDURE FOR DEBATE AT PLENARY SITTINGS

SECTION 56: (1) An emergency procedure may be requested by the Government or a Member of the National Assembly for matters submitted to the National Assembly for examination.

(2) Such requests shall be granted as of right if made:

- by the Government;
- by half plus one of the Members of the National Assembly.

(3) Debates for which an emergency procedure is of right or has been granted shall be given priority on the agenda. In other cases, requests for emergency procedure shall be put to vote immediately without debate.

(4) In the event of any emergency procedure, the National Assembly shall at once determine the date for discussion of the substance, on the basis of the report of the Committee concerned. If the request for an emergency procedure has been rejected, the matter shall be examined in accordance with ordinary procedure.

SECTION 57: (1) In principle, Government and Private Members' bills or draft resolutions shall be discussed only once in open sitting.

(2) The Rapporteur(s) of the advisory Committee(s) shall present his or their report(s) before that of the Rapporteur of the Committee for substantive study.

(3) When the Rapporteur of the General Committee to which a matter has been submitted for substantive study has presented his report then, and only then, may a Member of the National Assembly raise a preliminary objection with a view to deciding that there is no need for debate. He may state his case orally, whereupon only the Chairperson or the Rapporteur of the General Committee to which a matter has been submitted for substantive study and the competent Minister on the Government bench may speak. Only the mover of the preliminary objection may avail himself of the right granted under Section 53 (3) above.

(4) Where the preliminary objection is adopted, the bill shall be rejected. Where it is turned down, the report shall then be debated.

SECTION 58: (1) A general debate shall be held on Government or Private Members' bills or draft resolutions.

(2) In the course of general debate, and until its closure, interlocutory motions may be tabled with a view either to adjourning the debate until certain conditions are fulfilled, or referring back to the Committee entrusted with the substantive study of the matter, or to another committee for advisory opinion. The debate on interlocutory motions shall be held in accordance with the procedure laid down in Section 57 above. However, further referral to the Committee charged with substantive study shall be as of right if the Government so requests or accepts.

(3) Where general debate has been closed, the President shall consult the National Assembly with regard to proceeding to debate on the sections of the Government or Private Members' bill.

(4) Where the findings of the Committee charged with substantive study are in favour of rejecting the Government or Private Members' bill, the President shall put such rejection to the vote immediately after the general debate has been closed.

(5) Where the Rapporteur of the General Committee charged with the substantive study does not submit his report or the said Committee does not submit its conclusions, the National Assembly shall be called upon to decide whether the sections of the Government or Private Members' bill are to be debated.

(6) In all cases where the National Assembly decides that the sections of the Government or Private Members' bill are not to be debated, the President shall declare that the bill has not been adopted.

SECTION 59: (1) When it is decided to proceed with debate on the sections, any alternative texts that may have been submitted shall be examined.

(2) Proposed alternative bills shall constitute amendments to the entire bill under debate. They may only be referred to the Plenary sitting if deemed admissible by the Chairmen's Conference and if they had been previously submitted to the appropriate General Committee. The National Assembly may be consulted only as to whether they should be taken into consideration or not. In the affirmative, the alternative text shall be referred to the Committee, which shall take it as a basis for debate and submit a new report within whatever period that the National Assembly may decide.

(3) After the National Assembly has decided to hold a debate on the sections and in the event of rejection of the alternative text, consideration and debate on the text shall deal with each section in turn and with any amendments thereto, under the conditions laid down in Section 61 below.

SECTION 60: (1) The bill examined in Plenary sitting shall be the text submitted by the President of the Republic or the one forwarded by the President of the Senate.

(2) The Finance Bill shall be examined in two stages. The first part of the Bill shall be debated and voted section after section. The second part of the Finance Bill may be debated in Parliament only after adoption of the first part. Expenditures shall be voted by chapter, after having been examined in two stages: all the programmes, on the one hand, and resources detailed by section and by sub-section, on the other hand.

(3) The Private Members' bill or draft resolution examined in Plenary sitting shall be the text drawn up by the mover or movers thereof. However, where an amendment is moved on the entire Private Members' bill, the Plenary sitting shall deliberate on the text submitted by the Committee. The draft resolution examined in Plenary sitting shall be the text submitted by the Committee.

(4) The Private Members' draft resolution examined in plenary sitting shall be the text adopted by the Committee.

(5) After all the sections have been put to the vote, a vote shall be taken on the Government or Private Members' bill as a whole. In the case of a Government or Private Members' bill containing only one section, to which no additional section has been submitted, the vote on the single section shall constitute a vote on the text as a whole and no additional section may be submitted.

(6) Before a vote is taken on the Government or Private Members' bill as a whole, Members may make brief statements on their votes for not more than 3 (three) minutes. The provisions of Section 55 above shall apply to such statements.

SECTION 61: (1) Proposed alternative texts and amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Bureau of the National Assembly and referred by the President of the National Assembly to the Chairmen's Conference which shall rule on their admissibility. They shall subsequently be referred to the competent Committee and, where possible, printed and distributed.

(2) Amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Bureau of the National Assembly. They shall contain a brief summary of reasons and shall be signed by the mover. They shall be referred to the competent Committee by the President of the National Assembly and where possible, printed and distributed.

(3) Amendments shall be admissible only:

(a) if they effectively have a bearing on the text under debate or, in the case of alternative bills and additional sections, where they are proposed within the framework of such text;

(b) if they had been previously submitted to the competent Committee.

(4) In controversial cases, the Constitutional Council shall rule on their admissibility in accordance with the provisions of Section 38 (3) of the Standing Orders.

(5) Besides the cases provided for in subsections (1), (2) and (3) above, only the following amendments may be entertained at public sittings:

(a) Amendments on which debate is accepted by the Government or by the General Committee to which they were referred for substantive study;

(b) Amendments tabled on behalf of the General Committee to which a text has been referred for advisory opinion, provided that they shall first be submitted to the General Committee to which it was previously referred for substantive study;

(c) Amendments tabled by the Government;

(d) Amendments directly related to provisions modified by the National Assembly during debate, provided they are accepted by Government or by the General Committee to which the text was referred for substantive study.

SECTION 62: (1) Amendments shall be taken before discussion of the basic text.

(2) No amendments shall be debated by the Assembly unless supported by its mover(s).

(3) If there is more than one amendment to a sub-section or a section, they may be discussed simultaneously.

(4) In the case of a number of amendments to a text, they shall be taken in the following order:

(a) Amendments calling for the deletion of a section;

(b) Other amendments, beginning with those diverging from the proposed text.

(5) The only speakers who may take part in the discussion of proposed alternative texts and amendments shall comprise one of the movers, one speaker of a dissenting opinion, the representative of the Committee to which the substance of the matter has been referred and the representative of the Government.

(6) A single vote shall be taken on amendments having identical aims.

(7) When all amendments to a sub-section of a section or to a section have been debated and examination of succeeding sub-sections or sections has begun, amendments to sub-sections or sections already dealt with shall no longer be admissible.

SECTION 63: (1) Before a vote is taken on a Government bill or Private Members' bill as a whole, the plenary sitting may, at the request of a member, decide to either open another round of debate or to refer the text back to the General Committee for substantive study for review and harmonization.

(2) Another round of debate or a further referral back to the Committee for substantive study shall be as of right where the General Committee so requests or agrees.

(3) In the event of another round of debate, the text adopted after the first round of debate shall be referred back to the General Committee which shall present a new report. In the course of its second debate, the National Assembly shall deal only with the new text proposed by the Committee or with the Committee's amendments to the previously adopted text.

(4) Where a text is referred back to a General Committee for review and harmonization, the Committee's conclusions shall be presented without delay. They shall be read to the National Assembly and debate shall focus on the drafting only.

SECTION 64: (1) The texts adopted by the National Assembly shall within 48 (forty-eight) hours be forwarded to the President of the Senate by the President of the National Assembly.

(2) The texts forwarded may be adopted, amended or rejected by the Senate.

(3) In the event of amendment, the text shall be returned by the President of the Senate to the National Assembly for a second reading. It shall be placed on the agenda upon being received. Debate shall be limited to the provisions on which the 2 (two) Houses have diverging views.

(4) An exception may be made to subsection (3) above only in the case of correction of a clerical error.

(5) Amendments proposed by the Senate shall be adopted or rejected by a simple majority of Members of the National Assembly.

(6) In the event of rejection, the text in question, with reasons for the rejection, shall be returned by the President of the Senate to the National Assembly, for a second reading.

(a) After debate, the text shall be adopted by an absolute majority of Members of the National Assembly.

(b) Where no absolute majority is obtained, the President of the Republic may cause a Joint Committee to convene.

SECTION 65: (1) At any time prior to promulgation, the President of the Republic may request a second reading of any text adopted by Parliament.

(2) Such request for a second reading shall be made within 15 (fifteen) days following the transmission of the text to the President of the Republic by the President of the National Assembly. For the purpose of a second reading, the National Assembly shall follow the same procedure as for the first reading. Adoption of the text on second reading shall be by absolute majority of Members of the National Assembly.

(3) The President of the Republic shall promulgate into law the bills adopted by Parliament within 15 (fifteen) days of transmission if he does not request a second reading or if he does not refer the matter to the Constitutional Council. Should

he not act within this time-limit, the President of the National Assembly may act in his stead.

(4) In all cases, laws shall be published in the 2 (two) official languages of the Republic and inserted in the *Official Gazette*.

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CHAPTER XII

ADOPTION OF MATTERS SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND VOTING PROCEDURE

SECTION 66: (1) Regarding matters submitted to the National Assembly, adoption or rejection of a section, amendment, proposed alternative text, motion or of a complete text, the President shall ask whether there is any objection.

(2) Where there is no objection, the section, amendment, proposed alternative text, motion or complete text which is the subject of the question, shall be adopted.

(3) Where there is an objection, the President shall call upon the National Assembly to vote by show of hands or by standing.

(4) Voting by show of hands shall be the ordinary form of voting at the National Assembly.

(5) In case of doubt on the outcome of the vote by show of hands, a vote by standing shall be conducted. Should the doubt persist, voting by standing shall be conducted as per political party represented in the National Assembly.

(6) No Member of the National Assembly may be given the floor during a vote or in between various ballots.

(7) Secretaries assisted by the Secretary-General of the National Assembly shall then count the votes cast.

(8) The President shall announce the results of the vote to the National Assembly by stating the number of votes “for”, the number of votes “against” and the number of abstentions. He then shall declare:

“The National Assembly has adopted” or

“The National Assembly has not adopted”.

SECTION 67: (1) Voting by show of hands or by standing shall be the ordinary form of voting except in cases otherwise provided for in the Constitution.

(2) Secret ballots shall, in all cases, be held for the election of office bearers and for the disciplinary measures provided for under Section 98 of the Standing Orders.

(3) For the purpose of the secret ballot, green, red and yellow ballot papers shall be distributed to Members. Each member shall insert in a ballot-box presented to him by an usher, an envelope containing a green ballot paper if he is in favour of the proposal, a red ballot paper if he is against, or a yellow ballot paper if he abstains.

(4) When all the ballot papers have been collected, the President shall announce the closure of the ballot. The Secretaries shall then count the votes and the President shall proclaim the results by announcing:

“The National Assembly has adopted” or

“The National Assembly has not adopted”.

SECTION 68: An open ballot shall be compulsory for voting on the revision of the Constitution and on a vote of censure or a vote of no confidence.

SECTION 69: (1) For the purpose of open ballots, green, red and yellow ballot papers shall be distributed to each member bearing his name. Each member shall insert in the ballot-box presented to him by an usher at the request of the Secretary-General an envelope containing a green ballot paper bearing his name if he is in favour, a red ballot paper if he is against, and a yellow ballot paper if he wishes to abstain.

(2) When all the ballot papers have been collected, the President shall announce the closure of the ballot.

(3) The Secretaries shall then count the votes, with the assistance of 2 (two) tellers chosen by the President from amongst Members of the

National Assembly who are not members of the Bureau, if possible, choosing one of them amongst the members of the Government majority and the other from amongst the members of the opposition.

(4) The President shall declare the result of the ballot by announcing to the National Assembly the number of “ayes”, “nays” and abstentions. He shall then announce that:

“The National Assembly has adopted” or

“The National Assembly has not adopted”.

(5) The Secretary-General shall then read out the names of the Members of the National Assembly who took part in the ballot and shall state the manner in which they voted.

SECTION 70: Matters put to the vote shall be declared to have been adopted only if they have been carried by a simple majority of votes cast, except otherwise stipulated by the Constitution. In the event of a tie, the matter shall be rejected.

CHAPTER XIII

PROXIES

SECTION 71: Members of the National Assembly may give proxies in Plenary Sitting only in the following cases:

(a) Illness, accident, serious domestic reasons, acts of God or disasters which prevent the Member of the National Assembly from travelling;

(b) Missions entrusted to the Member of the National Assembly by the Government or the National Assembly;

(c) Attendance at a meeting of an extra-parliamentary or international organization, following appointment by the National Assembly;

(d) In the case of extraordinary session, absence of the Member of the National Assembly from the territory of the Republic of Cameroon;

(e) Performance of a trade-union office, provided that the request for leave, showing reasons thereof, from the member concerned to the President of the National Assembly has been accepted by the House.

SECTION 72: (1) Proxies shall be written and signed by the giver of the proxy and addressed to the holder of the proxy. To be valid, proxies shall be sent to the President of the National Assembly by the Group Chairperson or failing this, by the giver of the proxy before the vote or before the first vote in which the giver of the proxy is unable to take part.

(2) The notification shall indicate the name of the Member of the National Assembly who is to vote in the stead of the giver of the proxy, and the reasons which prevent the giver of the proxy from voting.

(3) The proxy and notification thereof shall also indicate the period during which the giver of the proxy shall be unable to vote.

(4) Proxies may be withdrawn following the same procedure during the period of validity.

(5) In cases of emergency, a proxy and notification thereof may be sent by a facsimile subject to confirmation in the manner indicated above.

SECTION 73: (1) In Committee, Members of the National Assembly may also give proxies in any of the cases listed in Section 71 above. However, they may only do so to another member of the same Committee. Notification of such proxies shall be given to the Chairperson of the Committee.

(2) No Committee member may receive more than one proxy. No Committee member may designate more than one member to vote on his behalf at any given meeting.

(3) The giver of the proxy shall give to the holder of the said proxy a signed authorization which, while upholding the procedure for submitting proxies to the Chairperson of the Committee,

shall give the holder of the proxy either a general mandate for the duration of the giver's absence or a mandate limited to a particular purpose.

(4) Notifications of proxies shall be forwarded to the Chairperson of the Committee, if possible at the beginning of the meeting, or at the latest, before voting begins.

SECTION 74: In connection with the quorum rules set out in Sections 27 and 47 above, Members of the National Assembly who have given proxies in accordance with the above provisions shall be deemed to be present.

CHAPTER XIV
INFORMATION SOURCES AND
CONTROL MECHANISMS
OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

I – ORAL AND WRITTEN QUESTIONS

SECTION 75: (1) Members of the National Assembly may, in accordance with the provisions of Article 35 of the Constitution, put oral or written questions to Members of Government on the activities of their Ministries.

(2) Oral and written questions shall be put by Members individually.

(3) No oral or written question may be put in an extraordinary session which has a limited agenda, unless it has a bearing upon an item on the agenda.

SECTION 76: (1) Any Member of the National Assembly who wishes to put oral or written questions to the Government shall submit them to the President of the National Assembly who shall inform the National Assembly accordingly and refer them to the competent Minister.

(2) Questions shall be drafted very concisely. They shall not contain any charges against third parties mentioned by name.

(3) Oral questions shall be entered in a special record in the order of their submission.

SECTION 77: (1) Members of Government shall reply to questions within 15 (fifteen) days. During a session, this period shall be reduced to 3 (three) days. Should documentary research work involved in answering questions take up too much time, the Member of Government concerned shall inform the author of the question accordingly through the President of the National Assembly. He shall then have another 3 (three) days to complete the documentary research, but during a session, the

supplementary period shall be reduced to 2 (two) days.

(2) If no answer has been given to a written question within the above mentioned periods, the President of the National Assembly shall ask the author of the question whether or not he wishes to convert his written question into an oral question.

(3) Where the author refuses to change the question, the Member of Government concerned shall have not more than 2 (two) additional days to answer the written question.

(4) Written questions and answers thereto as well as oral questions shall be recorded at the end of the verbatim reports of the debates of the National Assembly.

SECTION 78: At the request of the Chairmen's Conference, oral questions shall be given priority at one sitting each week.

(2) Inclusion of the oral questions in the agenda shall be decided by the Chairmen's Conference.

(3) The competent Minister and the author of the question alone may speak. The author of the question may appoint one of his fellow members to deputize for him.

(4) Speakers shall strictly limit their explanations to the subject matter of the question and may not hold the floor for more than 5 (five) minutes.

(5) Should the competent Minister be absent when questions are put in open sitting, they shall be carried over to the agenda of the following sitting.

SECTION 79: (1) Ministers shall have the right to state in writing that, on grounds of public interest, they are precluded from answering or, in exceptional cases, that they require more time to prepare their reply. Such additional time shall not exceed 8 (eight) days.

(2) Where a Minister is absent on 2 (two) consecutive occasions and a question has to be put a third time in open sitting and the Minister is again absent without having answered the question in accordance with the provisions of the preceding sub-sections, the author may expound his question forthwith for a period of not more than 20 (twenty) minutes which may be closed by tabling a draft resolution; such draft resolution shall subsequently be examined first by the Committee concerned and then by the plenary sitting according to ordinary procedure.

SECTION 80: Ministers shall answer oral questions orally and written questions in writing.

II - PETITIONS

SECTION 81: (1) Petitions shall be addressed to the President of the National Assembly by a Member of the National Assembly.

(2) Petitions may not be made from the rostrum of the National Assembly.

(3) The penalties provided by law notwithstanding, no petition brought or handed in by a public gathering shall be entertained by the President of the National Assembly or tabled before the Bureau of the National Assembly.

(4) All petitions shall state the domicile of the petitioner or petitioners and bear their signatures.

(5) Petitioners' signatures shall be legalized. Where legalization is not granted, the petitioner shall include a statement to that effect at the foot of the petition.

SECTION 82.- No petition relating to private interests shall be admissible. The National Assembly shall be concerned exclusively with matters of general interest falling within its area of jurisdiction.

SECTION 83: (1) Petitions shall be entered in a general register in order of reception.

(2) As soon as petitions are received, the President shall refer them to the relevant Committee which shall decide either to refer them to a Minister or to another general or ad hoc Committee of the National Assembly, or to take no further action.

(3) Petitioners shall be notified of the reference number given to their petition and shall be informed of any action taken with regard thereto.

SECTION 84: Where the Committee concerned refers a petition back to the Members of Government with a request for further explanation on its content, the said Members of Government shall be bound to respond within 15 (fifteen) days. If the documentary research pertaining to the question requires much more time, the Member of Government concerned shall accordingly notify the Committee through the President of the National Assembly. He shall be allowed an additional period of 3 (three) days to carry out the said documentary research.

SECTION 85: Members of the National Assembly may consult the register kept for that purpose to take cognizance of the subject of petitions and, within 8 (eight) days of the tabling, may require the report to be presented in plenary.

III – PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES OF ENQUIRY

SECTION 86: (1) The National Assembly, by virtue of Article 35 (1) of the Constitution, may adopt a draft resolution submitted to its Bureau to set up a Committee of Enquiry in accordance with the provisions of Section 38 above.

(2) The draft resolution referred to in sub-section (1) above shall spell out the reasons for the enquiry or the public services whose management the Committee shall investigate under the conditions laid down in sub-section (5) below. The conditions for the functioning of Committees of Enquiry shall be laid down by law.

(3) The National Assembly may, by a majority decision of its members, and at the request of General Committees, grant the said Committees powers to enquire into matters within their jurisdiction.

(4) Requests for powers of enquiry under sub-section (3) above shall be addressed to the President of the National Assembly who shall communicate them to the National Assembly. They shall be entered on the agenda of the National Assembly if the Chairmen's Conference so decide.

(5) Committees of Enquiry shall be established:

(a) to gather information concerning specific facts and submit their findings to the National Assembly which appointed them;

(b) to examine the administrative, financial or technical management of public services with a view to informing the National Assembly of their findings;

(c) to inform the National Assembly on the status of some matters of national interest so it can make appropriate proposals.

SECTION 87: Where legal proceedings have been instituted, no Committee of Enquiry may be set up while such proceedings are being held. Where a Committee has already been established, its duties shall terminate as soon as a judicial enquiry is opened into the case for which it was set up.

SECTION 88: (1) Members of Committees of Enquiry shall be appointed by single list ballot.

(2) Committees of Enquiry shall be of a provisional nature. Motions to set up Committees of Enquiry shall specify the conditions for their functioning.

(3) Their duties shall terminate with the submission of their report and not later than 12 (twelve) months from the date on which the resolution on their establishment was adopted.

They may not be reappointed for the same purpose until a period of 12 (twelve) months has elapsed after termination of their duties.

(4) Any member of a Committee of Enquiry or any person taking part in the work of such a Committee in any capacity shall be bound by secrecy. Any breach of this provision shall be punishable in accordance with legislation governing official secrets.

SECTION 89: The publication, in whole or in part, of the report of a Committee of Enquiry may be decided by the National Assembly on the proposal of its President or the Committee concerned.

SECTION 90: Any person publishing information relating to the work, proceedings, acts or unpublished reports of Committees of Enquiry shall be liable to punishment in accordance with legislation governing official secrets.

SECTION 91: (1) Besides the Committees of Enquiry referred to in the sub-sections above, the National Assembly may set up a Committee of Enquiry on a subject touching on public finance for a period not exceeding 6 (six) months. Such a period shall be renewable if need be.

(2) The Bureau of the National Assembly shall designate Members of the Committee of Enquiry so set up and special rapporteurs of the sector concerned.

(3) Such a Committee of Enquiry shall enjoy the powers provided for by the State's financial regime. It may request assistance from any person it chooses and grant hearings.

(4) With the exception of the President of the Republic, persons invited for hearing shall be bound to obey. Any obstruction of the investigation of a Committee of Enquiry shall be considered an obstacle to the discharge of a public service duty.

SECTION 92: (1) Committees of Enquiry shall forward to the judicial authorities any established act punishable under criminal law of which they become aware. They may report cases to the budget disciplinary board.

(2) They shall submit a report after their investigations. Such a report may be debated but not voted in the National Assembly.

CHAPTER XV

MAINTENANCE OF ORDER IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 93: (1) The President of the National Assembly shall alone be entrusted with the maintenance of order and discipline in the Assembly.

(2) He may order any non-member of the National Assembly causing disorder to be expelled from the plenary hall or to be arrested.

(3) The President of the National Assembly shall determine the strength of the forces of law and order which he deems necessary for the security of the premises of the National Assembly. He has the right to request assistance from such forces of law and order and other authorities as he deems necessary. Such forces of law and order or authorities shall comply therewith.

SECTION 94: (1) Unauthorized persons shall not be admitted into the premises of the National Assembly.

(2) When the House is sitting, and in accordance with instructions from the Bureau, seats shall be reserved in the plenary hall for bearers of special access cards issued by the Secretary-General of the Assembly. These access cards shall be valid for the duration of the session.

(3) Persons admitted to the public gallery shall be properly dressed. They shall remain bare-headed and observe the strictest silence.

(4) The President of the National Assembly may, if circumstances so require, order any person who loudly expresses approval or disapproval, to be immediately expelled by the ushers or the officers in charge of maintaining order.

(5) Permanent access cards to the National Assembly may be issued to persons having regular business with the National Assembly or its services. The size and design of these cards shall be determined by the Secretary-General.

(6) It shall be strictly forbidden for unauthorized persons to enter Committee rooms. Except in the case of officers whose presence within the precincts of the National Assembly has been expressly requested by the President, or persons guarding very important personalities, the carrying of fire-arms within the precincts of the National Assembly shall be prohibited.

SECTION 95: (1) Personal attacks, disturbances, disruptive interruptions and heckling shall be prohibited.

(2) Where deliberations in plenary become stormy, the President may announce his intention to suspend the sitting. If order is not restored, he shall suspend the sitting.

(3) Upon resumption of the sitting, if the circumstances again so require, the President shall adjourn the sitting.

(4) Members of the National Assembly shall leave the plenary hall during suspension of proceedings.

CHAPTER XVI

DISCIPLINE

I – DISCIPLINARY MEASURES DURING PROCEEDINGS

SECTION 96: The following disciplinary measures may be taken against Members of the National Assembly:

- (a) Call to order;
- (b) Call to order recorded in the minutes;
- (c) Censure recorded in the minutes;
- (d) Censure with temporary expulsion.

SECTION 97: (1) Only the President of the National Assembly may call a member to order.

(2) Such a disciplinary measure may be taken against:

(a) any Member of the National Assembly who refuses to perform a duty assigned by the President of the National Assembly, the Eldest Member or any organ of the National Assembly;

(b) any Member causing disturbance in the National Assembly by interruption, personal attack or in any other way.

(3) Any Member called to order who complies and requests an opportunity to justify himself shall be given the floor.

(4) Where a Member of the National Assembly has been called to order twice during the same sitting, the President, after granting him the floor to justify himself if so requested, shall call upon the National Assembly to decide without further debate whether the Member may be heard afresh on the same matter.

(5) The call to order with entry thereof in the minutes may be applied by the President against any Member who:

(a) has been called to order 3 (three) times during the same sittings or consecutive sittings;

(b) has been called to order 3 (three) times in Committee by the Chairperson of the Committee in accordance with the provisions of Section 26 (5) of the Standing Orders.

SECTION 98: (1) The two last disciplinary measures provided for under Section 96 above may only be taken, at the behest of the President of the National Assembly, by a majority of Members present through secret ballot.

(2) Any Member of the National Assembly may be censured:

(a) who is called to order 5 (five) times or who, after a call to order recorded in the minutes, is again called to order during the same sitting or at consecutive sittings;

(b) who causes disorder in open meeting;

(c) who insults, defies or threatens one or more of his fellow Members.

(3) Censure recorded in the minutes shall entail loss of the right to speak during the sitting at which it is incurred and during the next three sittings. It shall also entail suspension of the special parliamentary expense allowance for 2 (two) months.

(4) Censure with temporary expulsion from the Premises of the National Assembly may be applied against any Member:

- (a) who ignores a simple censure or who has been censured twice;
- (b) who resorts to violence in an open meeting;
- (c) who is guilty of contempt of the National Assembly or its President;
- (d) who insults, defies or threatens the President of the Republic or Members of Government.

(5) Censure with temporary expulsion shall entail prohibition from taking part in the proceedings of the National Assembly or to return to the precincts of the National Assembly until the end of the seventh sitting following that at which the disciplinary measure was taken. It shall also entail suspension of the special parliamentary expense allowance for 6 (six) months.

(6) Where a Member of the National Assembly refuses to comply with the President's order to leave the plenary hall, the sitting shall be suspended. In such a case, as well as in the case where a Member is censured with temporary expulsion for the second time, the period of expulsion shall be 30 (thirty) days of sitting.

SECTION 99: (1) Where physical violence is exerted by a Member of the National Assembly against a colleague, the President may propose to the Bureau that the penalty of censure with temporary expulsion be applied. In the absence of such a proposal from the President, a Member may submit a similar proposal to the Bureau in writing.

(2) Where censure with temporary expulsion is proposed under these circumstances, the President shall summon the Bureau to hear the Member. The Bureau may apply one of the penalties provided for under Section 96 above. The President shall notify the Member of the Bureau's decision. Where the Bureau decides in favour of censure with temporary expulsion, the Member shall be escorted to the gates of the building by the chief usher.

II – DISCIPLINARY MEASURES IN CASE OF ABSENCE

SECTION 100: (1) Where a Member of the National Assembly fails to attend 3 (three) consecutive meetings, without any valid explanations to the Assembly, he shall forfeit half of his parliamentary allowance during the period of absence and for 2 (two) months following his resumption of duties.

(2) The Bureau shall call on the Member to provide every valid explanation or justification he deems necessary and shall allow him a time limit to that effect.

(3) After examining the explanation or justification referred to in sub-section (2) above or at the expiry of the allowed time-limit, the Bureau of the National Assembly shall validly impose the pecuniary sanction.

(4) The provisions of this Section shall also be applicable in the cases of absence of Members of the National Assembly without justification, at the sittings of the General Committees of which they are a member.

SECTION 101: Where a Member of the National Assembly fails to attend 3 (three) consecutive ordinary sessions, without any valid explanations to the Assembly, the Bureau of the National Assembly shall as of right establish the resignation of the Member.

CHAPTER XVII

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 102: (1) The National Assembly shall enjoy administrative and financial autonomy. Its services shall be placed under the authority of the Bureau of the National Assembly and under the responsibility of a Secretary-General assisted by 2 (two) Deputy Secretaries-General appointed by Bureau Order.

(2) The Secretary-General and Deputy Secretaries-General shall assist the Bureau in the exercise of its functions.

(3) The Secretary-General may delegate signature to his deputies. The Secretary-General and Deputy Secretaries-General shall be answerable to the Bureau of the National Assembly.

SECTION 103: (1) The President of the National Assembly shall be responsible for the financial management of the Assembly. In that capacity, he shall be appointed authorizing officer for the National Assembly budget.

(2) The Secretary-General shall be authorizing officer with delegated powers.

(3) The authorizing officer of the budget or the authorizing officer with delegated powers shall approve and establish creditors' claims only for services rendered.

(4) Establishment of creditors' claims shall be automatic or at the behest of the persons concerned. Such establishment shall be on the basis of supporting documents drawn up in accordance with regulations.

SECTION 104: (1) The Questors shall exercise control over the finances of the National Assembly. To this effect, they shall express their opinion with respect to expenditure commitments within limits

determined by Bureau Order. The Accounting Officer shall provide all the required documents and items for exercising such control.

(2) The Questors shall prepare the draft budget of the National Assembly for submission to the Bureau before it is examined and voted by the Committee on Finance and the Budget, sitting as a Budgetary Audit Committee as provided for under Section 106.

(3) The Questors shall table the draft budget referred to in Section 104 (2) above before the Committee on Finance and the Budget.

(4) In the exercise of their functions, the Questors may, if the need arises, be assisted by the competent State services if the Bureau so requests.

SECTION 105: (1) Upon recommendation of the Secretary-General, the President of the National Assembly, in agreement with the Bureau, shall determine the detailed administrative organization of its services.

(2) Upon recommendation of the Secretary-General, the Bureau shall define the staff regulations governing National Assembly civil servants who, in that capacity, shall be deemed civil servants of the State.

SECTION 106: (1) The Committee on Finance and the Budget, sitting as a Budgetary Audit Committee, shall examine the Budget of the National Assembly submitted by the Bureau after a draft thereof has been drawn up by the Questors.

(2) That budget, presented in programmes, shall set forth the objectives on the one hand and the resources on the other.

(3) After the Committee on Finance and the Budget has voted the budget of the National Assembly, it shall be included *ipso facto* in the general State budget.

(4) The Committee on Finance and the Budget, sitting as a Budgetary Audit Committee, shall audit the use of the votes allocated to the National Assembly.

(5) The annual administrative accounts prepared by the Authorizing Officer as well as the store accounts and the management accounts of the Accounting Officer shall, together with the estimates for the upcoming budgetary year, be submitted to the Committee on Finance and the Budget, sitting as the Budgetary Audit Committee.

(6) In that capacity, it shall verify and audit accounts. In the exercise of its functions, the Committee on Finance and the Budget may, if necessary, be assisted by the competent State services if the Bureau of the National Assembly so requests.

(7) At the end of each financial year, the Committee shall report to the National Assembly on the task entrusted to it.

SECTION 107: (1) Settlement of the National Assembly expenditure shall be effected by an Accounting Officer appointed by Bureau Order.

(2) Practical terms and conditions for the implementation of the budget of the National Assembly shall be determined by Bureau Order.

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CHAPTER XVIII
ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS
OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY

SECTION 108: After verification of the incompatibilities relating to his term of office and receipt of his accoutrements, a Member of the National Assembly shall be entitled to the various benefits provided for by a Bureau Order.

SECTION 109: The ceremonial privileges which may be enjoyed by the President of the National Assembly and the Members of the Bureau and those which may be enjoyed by the Members of the National Assembly shall be prescribed by decree of the President of the Republic.

SECTION 110: (1) Members of the National Assembly shall receive, each month, a basic parliamentary allowance, a special allowance known as “parliamentary expenses allowance”

and a monthly allocation for the payment of parliamentary assistants.

(2) They shall be entitled to a session allowance.

(3) “The amount and modalities for paying the allowances referred to in sub-sections (1) and (2) here above shall be determined by Bureau Order of the National Assembly”.

SECTION III: (1) With the exception of pensioners, any civil servant elected to the National Assembly and Members of the National Assembly appointed to a remunerated office in the public service or in a public corporation after their election, may not concurrently draw the basic parliamentary allowance and the emoluments accruing to their office.

(2) Where the salary of an official is lower than the basic parliamentary allowance, the Member of the National Assembly shall be paid such salary with the parliamentary expenses

allowance for the duration of his term of office by the Secretary-General of the National Assembly.

(3) Where the salary is higher than the basic parliamentary allowance, the Member shall be paid such salary together with the parliamentary expenses allowance by the Secretary-General of the National Assembly.

(4) In any case, public servants shall retain their pension rights as though they had continued to draw their salary in full without interruption.

SECTION 112.-The salary referred to, in Section 111 above shall include for all officials, whether civil or military, the total amount of salaries and subsidiary allowances of all kinds that are subject to deductions by the Treasury in respect of pensions and granted under the regulations governing officials in active service list as well as the family supplement and family allowances provided for by the laws in force.

SECTION 113: The Eldest Member, the 2 (two) youngest Members and Committee bureau members and the Rapporteurs of the Finance and Budget Committee shall earn a special session allowance the amount and conditions of payment of which shall be determined by the Bureau.

SECTION 114: The special parliamentary expenses allowance, the special session allowance payable to the Eldest Member, the 2 (two) youngest Members, Committee bureau members, the Rapporteurs of the Finance and Budget Committee, and, in the case of members of the Bureau of the National Assembly, and members of the Bureau of Parliamentary Groups, the duty or entertainment allowance, shall neither be distrainable or taxable.

SECTION 115: The basic parliamentary allowance, the special parliamentary expenses allowance and the special duty or entertainment allowances payable to the Members of the Bureau shall be payable monthly by the Secretary-General of the National Assembly, under the same

conditions as the salaries and fringe benefits of officials of the National Assembly.

SECTION 116: Any civil servant elected to the National Assembly shall enjoy automatic increment in the Public Service every two years during the period of his mandate.

SECTION 117: (1) Former civil servants elected to the National Assembly shall retain their pension rights.

(2) Former workers of the private and semi-public sectors elected to the National Assembly shall retain their pension rights.

SECTION 118: (1) Members of the National Assembly shall be entitled to a proportional or long service pension after 2 (two) or 3 (three) consecutive terms of office, irrespective of age.

(2) However, a Member of the National Assembly may claim a parliamentary retirement pension on condition that he has contributed 10 (ten) annuities to a proportional pension or 15

(fifteen) annuities to a long service pension during one or two terms of office.

(3) The terms and conditions for implementing the parliamentary retirement pension scheme shall be determined by Order of the Bureau of the National Assembly.

SECTION 119: (1) The President, the Senior Vice-President, the Vice-Presidents and the Questors shall be entitled to official residences, means of transport and domestic staff whose number shall be determined by Bureau Order.

(2) Group Chairpersons shall have the rank and enjoy the privileges of Vice-President.

(3) Group Vice-Chairpersons shall have the rank and enjoy the privileges of Questor.

(4) Group Secretaries shall have the rank and enjoy the privileges of Secretary of the Bureau of the National Assembly.

5) Parliamentary Group Bureaux shall be entitled to office premises and a secretariat, the composition of which shall be defined by Bureau Order.

(6) The amounts of special duty allowance, entertainment allowance and mission allowance payable to the members of the Bureau, as well as the mission allowances of the other Members of the National Assembly shall be determined by Bureau order of the National Assembly.

(7) The allowances, benefits in kind and the parliamentary precedence of Group Chairpersons of the National Assembly shall be determined by the Bureau.

SECTION 120: (1) Members of the National Assembly and the *Ex Officio* Members of its Bureau shall wear insignia when they are on mission, in public ceremonies and in all circumstances where their status must be made known.

(2) The nature of such insignia shall be determined by the Bureau of the National Assembly.

SECTION 121: No Member of the National Assembly may, without incurring the disciplinary measures provided for under Section 98 of the Standing Orders, use his status or allow it to be used in financial, industrial or commercial undertakings, or the practice of any professional or other occupation, or generally make use of his status for any purpose other than the performance of his parliamentary duties.

SECTION 122: (1) Where the National Assembly has to be represented in international bodies it shall be by Members appointed by the Bureau.

(2) The Committees may submit to the Bureau any proposals they deem to be instrumental in making such appointments.

(3) Members of the National Assembly called upon to represent the Assembly in extra-parliamentary and inter-parliamentary organizations at the request of the Bureau of the National Assembly shall be required to submit to the President of the National Assembly reports on the missions carried out.

CHAPTER XIX
AMENDMENTS TO THE STANDING
ORDERS

SECTION 123: (1) At the beginning of a legislative period, the Standing Orders may be subject to amendment only if a proposal to amend them is moved by at least 16 (sixteen) Members of the National Assembly.

(2) The proposal shall be submitted to the Eldest Member who, after informing the National Assembly, and verification of the mandates of at least three fifths of the Members of the National Assembly, shall submit it to an Ad Hoc Committee composed of 30 (thirty) Members elected by a majority of the valid votes cast on a common list presented by all political parties represented at the National Assembly.

(3) The members of the Ad Hoc Committee referred to in sub-section (2) above shall elect a Bureau comprising:

- 1 (one) Chairperson;
- 1 (one) Vice-Chairperson;
- 2 (two) Secretaries;
- 1 (one) Rapporteur.

(4) The proposals of the Committee referred to in sub-section (2) above shall be submitted directly to the National Assembly for adoption in the form of a law by an absolute majority of Members of the National Assembly.

(5) During a legislative period, any Private Members' bill to amend these Standing Orders shall be moved by at least 16 (sixteen) Members of the National Assembly.

(6) The Private Members' bill tabled in pursuance of sub-sections (1) and (5) above, shall be submitted to the National Assembly on the basis of a report of the Committee on Constitutional Laws or the Ad Hoc Committee, as appropriate. It shall be adopted only by an absolute majority of the Members of the National Assembly.

CHAPTER XX
FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 124: The terms and conditions of implementation of this law shall be determined, as and when necessary, by Order of the Bureau.

SECTION 125: This law, which repeals all previous provisions repugnant hereto, shall be registered, published according to the procedure of urgency and inserted in the Official Gazette in English and French.

Yaounde, 9 September 2014

PAUL BIYA
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC