

SADC PARLIAMENTARY FORUM SPECIAL RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS IN CASE OF *FORCE MAJEURE* [1]

Rule 1 Purpose

(1) These Special Rules of Procedure may be cited as the SADC Parliamentary Forum Special Rules of Procedure for Virtual Meetings, in case of *force majeure*, and shall be read together with the current SADC PF Rules of Procedure, of 2013 as amended on 24th July 2019.

(2) The Special Rules of Procedure are designed to enable SADC PF organs, namely, the Plenary Assembly, Executive Committee, Standing Committees, Regional Women Parliamentary Caucus, Regional Parliamentary Model Laws Oversight Committee, Committee of Clerks of Member Parliaments and the Secretariat to hold virtual meetings.

(3) These Special Rules of Procedure shall come into operation upon adoption by the Executive Committee in line with Rule 11(11) of the Rules of Procedure which empowers the Executive Committee to take binding decisions in between meetings of the Plenary Assembly, without prejudice to the powers of the Plenary Assembly.

(4) These Special Rules of Procedure shall be subject to ratification by the Plenary Assembly at its first virtual meeting convened in terms of these Special Rules of Procedure and shall remain in force unless revoked by the Plenary Assembly.

Rule 2 Application of the Rules

These Special Rules of Procedure shall apply to all statutory meetings of the SADC PF, in case of *force majeure*, as shall be determined by the Plenary Assembly from time to time.

Rule 3 Notice, Venue and Arrangement of Meetings

In terms of these Special Rules of Procedure –

[1] Adopted by the 47th Plenary Assembly Virtual Session on 9th October 2020

(a) The President or Chairperson of a Committee, Sub-Committee or any other organ shall, through the office of the Secretary General, issue a notice and agenda for a virtual meeting which must include the date and time of the meeting.

(b) The meeting shall be deemed to have taken place on the virtual platform from where it has been hoisted.

(c) All documents of the meeting, in all the official languages of the Forum, shall be distributed by electronic means to Members.

(d) Simultaneous interpretation shall be provided in all the official languages of the SADC PF.

(e) Verbatim recording shall be provided in any of the SADC PF official languages.

Rule 4 Privilege, Order in Meetings and Demeanour of Members

In a virtual meeting –

(a) The President or Chairperson shall have all the powers as provided for in these Special Rules of Procedure.

(b) The current Rules of Procedure on order and rules of debate in the meetings of the Plenary Assembly and other organs shall apply.

(c) The demeanour of Members shall be the same as that of physical meetings except that Members need not rise to take the floor and that they shall conform to such virtual meeting practice as may be warranted by the President or Chairpersons of Committees.

Rule 5 Powers of the President and Chairpersons

In a virtual meeting, the President or Chairpersons of Committees shall have the powers currently prevailing in the Rules of Procedure and the Constitution of the SADC PF.

Rule 6 Quorum

In a virtual meeting –

(a) The quorum requirements shall be as determined by the SADC PF Constitution and the current Special Rules of Procedure.

(b) Members who have accessed the meeting via the virtual link sent to their email addresses must confirm their presence through that link for the purposes of establishing a quorum.

Rule 7 Voting

In a virtual meeting –

(a) Members shall be entitled to cast their votes either electronically, by voice or by having their vote recorded by their respective linked up designated proxies.

(b) Only Members who are present when a vote is called for shall be permitted to vote.

(c) The results of a vote shall be announced and recorded in the Votes and Proceedings and electronically filed as part of the journals of the Plenary Assembly.

Rule 8 Participation by the Public, Media and Observers

Access to virtual meetings by the public, media and observers must be facilitated in terms of the Rules of Procedure as amended on 27th June 2018 with due consideration being given to cybersecurity and safety measures.

Addendum: Process Guidelines for these Special Rules of Procedure

1. The Secretary General, together with authorised officials, including technical staff, are responsible for the technical support in facilitating virtual meetings.
2. The Secretary General must give due notice of at least 14 days prior to a virtual meeting.
3. Pre-conference testing must take place prior to the commencement of all virtual meetings.
4. The Secretary General must timeously maintain the minutes and the electronic records of all the proceedings.

SIGNATURE OF THE MOVER: .....