



STANDING ORDERS

OF THE

**PARLIAMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC
SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA**

(As amended up to 23rd November 2022)

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Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka**

The Standing Orders of the Parliament were prepared by the Committee on Standing Orders under Article 74 of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

These amended Standing Orders are published incorporating the amendments passed by Parliament on October 5, 2022 and November 23, 2022 and be effective from November 23, 2022.

Secretary-General of Parliament

Parliament of Sri Lanka
Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte
November 23, 2022.

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STANDING ORDERS OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA AFTER A GENERAL ELECTION

1. On the first day of a meeting of Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (hereinafter referred to as the “Parliament”) after a general election, Members having assembled at the time and place duly appointed and being seated in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 3, the Secretary-General of Parliament (hereinafter referred to as the “Secretary-General”) shall read the Proclamation of the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (hereinafter referred to as the “President”) by which the meeting was summoned and thereafter the Order of Business on such day shall be—

- (a) the election of a Speaker;
- (b) the Official Oath or Affirmation by the Speaker who shall take his oath or make his Affirmation before the Parliament as administered by the Secretary-General;
- (c) the Official Oath or Affirmation by all the Members before the Speaker;
- (d) the election of the Deputy Speaker and the Chair of Committees (hereinafter referred to as the “Deputy Speaker”);
- (e) the election of the Deputy Chair of Committees;

and on the conclusion of such business, Parliament shall stand adjourned to the date and time fixed by Parliament.

2. Whenever a vacancy occurs in the office of the Speaker, Parliament shall, at its first meeting after the occurrence of the vacancy, proceed to elect a Speaker.

SEATING OF MEMBERS

3. (1) On the first day of the meeting of Parliament after a general election and thereafter until a seat has been allotted to each Member, the Members may sit in any seat within the Bar.

(2) Seats shall be allotted to Members, from time to time, at the discretion of the Speaker.

ELECTION OF A SPEAKER

4. The procedure for the election of a Speaker shall be as follows:—

- (a) Any Member who wishes to propose a Member for election as the Speaker shall ascertain in advance whether that Member is willing to serve as the Speaker if elected.
- (b) Any Member addressing the Secretary-General shall propose some other Member then present in Parliament for its Speaker, and move the name of the Member whom he proposes to take the Chair of Parliament as the Speaker. The proposal shall be seconded, but no debate shall be allowed.
- (c) If only one Member is so proposed and seconded as the Speaker, such Member shall be declared by the Secretary-General without question put, to have been elected as the Speaker. If more than one Member is so proposed and seconded, Parliament shall, after the division bells are rung for five minutes, proceed to elect a Speaker by secret ballot.
- (d) For the purpose of a ballot the Secretary-General shall give to each Member present a ballot paper on which each such Member shall write the name of the Member for whom such Member wishes to vote and the Ballot papers be folded so that the name written thereon shall not be seen and shall be signed by the Member voting.
- (e) The Ballot papers shall be collected by the Secretary-General in such manner as the Secretary-General shall determine, and counted by the Secretary-General at the Table of Parliament. The results of the ballot shall be declared by the Secretary-General.
- (f) (i) Where more than two candidates have been proposed and at the first ballot no candidate obtains more votes than the aggregate votes obtained by the other candidates, the candidate who has obtained the least number of votes shall be excluded from the election and balloting shall proceed afresh with the candidate obtaining the lowest number of votes at each ballot being excluded until one candidate obtains more votes than the remaining candidate or the aggregate votes of the remaining candidates, as the case may be.

- (ii) Where at any ballot among three or more candidates, two or more obtain an equal number of votes and one of them has to be excluded from the election under sub-paragraph (i), the determination, as between the candidates whose votes are equal, of the candidate to be excluded, shall be by lot which shall be drawn in such manner as the Secretary-General shall decide.
- (iii) Where at any ballot between two candidates the votes are equal, another ballot shall be held and at the end of such other ballot, if the votes are still equal the candidate to be excluded shall be determined by lot which shall be drawn in such manner as the Secretary-General shall decide.
- (g) As the Ballot papers are counted they shall be placed in a box and, when a Member has been declared elected as the Speaker, the box shall be sealed in the presence of Parliament and kept in the custody of the Secretary-General for one calendar month and then, subject to any direction the Secretary-General may receive from Parliament, the Secretary-General shall destroy the Ballot papers and certify that to Parliament.

OFFICIAL OATH OR AFFIRMATION

5. (1) Having taken the Official Oath, or having made the Official Affirmation, the Speaker shall cause the said Oath or Affirmation to be administered to and signed by all Members present. The Oath or Affirmation shall be administered by the Secretary-General.

(2) Every Member starting with the Speaker shall, immediately after having taken the Oath or made the Affirmation, sign the book to be kept for that purpose by the Secretary-General.

(3) On any day on which Parliament sits, a Member who has not previously taken the Oath or made the Affirmation may notify the Secretary-General at the Table at the time appointed under Standing Order 22 and thereupon the said Oath or Affirmation shall be administered to such Member who shall then sign the book.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMITTEES

6. (1) At the first sitting of a newly elected Parliament as specified in Standing Order 1, or at the commencement of Public Business at the first

meeting of Parliament after the occurrence of a vacancy in the office of Deputy Speaker or of Deputy Chair of Committees, Parliament shall proceed to the election of a Deputy Speaker or Deputy Chair of Committees, as the case may be.

(2) The procedure for the election of a Deputy Speaker and a Deputy Chair of Committees shall be as nearly as may be the same as that for the election of a Speaker save that the elections shall be conducted by the Speaker.

ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT

7. In the event a President to be elected in terms of Article 40 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (hereinafter referred to as the “Constitution”) the Parliament shall follow the procedure specified in the Presidential Elections (Special Provisions) Act, No. 2 of 1981 to conduct the secret ballot using ballot papers.

MEETINGS OF PARLIAMENT

*8. [(1) Unless Parliament otherwise decides, Parliament shall meet in two alternate weeks in each month commencing after the first Sunday of each month and shall sit on every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of the first and the third of such weeks.

(2) The sitting of Parliament shall commence at 9.30 a.m.:

Provided that, a meeting summoned by the President, shall begin at such hour as the President may fix by notice given thereon.

(3) On the sitting days of Parliament, the proceedings on any Business of Parliament under consideration at 12.30 p.m., unless Parliament otherwise decides, be interrupted without question put and shall be resumed at 1.00 p.m.

(4) The Speaker shall adjourn Parliament at 5.30 p.m. without question put.

(5) At 5.00 p.m. the proceedings on any business then under consideration shall be interrupted, and if Parliament be in Committee, the Presiding Member shall leave the Chair and make his report to Parliament, and if a motion has been proposed for the adjournment of Parliament, or of the debate, or in Committee that the Chair do report progress or do leave the Chair, every such dilatory motion shall lapse without question put:

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

Provided that, on the interruption of business, the closure may be moved under Standing Order 46 and, if moved, or if proceedings under that Standing Order be then in progress, the Speaker or the presiding Member shall not leave the Chair until the question consequent thereon and on any further motion as provided for in that Standing Order has been determined.

(6) After the business under consideration at 5.00 p.m. has been disposed of, no business which may be opposed by any Member shall be taken up for consideration.

(7) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (4) and (5) of this Standing Order, for the purpose of concluding the present Business of the House, the hours of sitting may be extended by the House on a proposal made by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers without notice, if agreed upon by a majority of Members present in the House.]

***9.** [A motion may be made by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers at the commencement of Public Business, to be decided without amendment or debate to the effect that the proceedings on any specified business be exempted at a particular day's sitting from the provisions of Standing Order 8, and if such a motion be agreed to, the business so specified shall not be interrupted if it is under discussion at the time fixed for interruption of business and may be entered upon at any hour though opposed:

Provided that, when the business exempted from the operation of Standing Order 8 is disposed of after 5.00 p.m. the Speaker shall, immediately after the conclusion of the last item of exempted business, adjourn Parliament without question put.]

DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

10. (1) The Secretary-General shall keep the minutes of the proceedings of Parliament and of Committees of the whole Parliament. The minutes shall record the names of Members attending, and all decisions of Parliament.

(2) In the case of any division of Parliament or of a Committee of the whole Parliament the minutes shall include the numbers voting for and against the

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

question. Where the division takes place under Standing Order 47(2)(b) and (c), the number and names of the Members so voting and the number and names of those declining to vote shall be included in the minutes. The minutes shall not require confirmation but errors if any in the minutes may be corrected, on a motion made, with the leave of Parliament.

(3) The Secretary-General shall prepare from day to day and keep on the Table of Parliament and in the Library an Order Book showing all business appointed for any future day and any notice of questions or motions which have been set down for a future day, whether for a day named or not. Business may be set down for any particular day and a note to that effect made in the Order Book.

(4) The Secretary-General shall be responsible for the safe custody of minutes, records, Bills and other documents laid before Parliament which shall be open to inspection by Members of Parliament and by other persons under such arrangements as may be sanctioned by the Speaker.

(5) The Secretary-General shall be responsible for ensuring the administrative and resource support for committees.

QUORUM

11. The quorum of Parliament required in terms of Article 73 of the Constitution is twenty Members including the person presiding. If at any time the attention of the Speaker or other Member presiding is directed to the fact that a quorum is not present, the Speaker or other Member presiding shall order the division bells to be rung and if at the expiration of five minutes a quorum be not present, the Speaker or other Member presiding shall adjourn Parliament without question put.

12. The quorum of a Committee of the whole Parliament shall be twenty. If the absence of a quorum be noticed in Committee of the whole Parliament the Chair shall proceed in the manner specified in Standing Order 11 and if a quorum be not present, he shall leave the Chair and, Parliament being resumed, shall forthwith count the number of Members in Parliament. If a quorum be not then present, Parliament shall adjourn as provided for in Standing Order 11, but if a quorum be proved to be present, Parliament shall forthwith resolve itself into Committee.

PROCEEDINGS OF PARLIAMENT

13. The Business of Parliament shall be conducted in Sinhala, Tamil and English. Every speech made in Parliament shall be recorded in the Official Report of Parliamentary Debates (hereinafter referred to as the “Hansard”) in the language in which it was made. It shall be the duty of the Speaker to make suitable arrangements for the Members who do not understand the language in which any speech is made. Such arrangements may include—

- (a) the publishing of the Order Paper of Parliament in Sinhala, Tamil and English;
- (b) the simultaneous interpretation of speeches and other proceedings into the other two languages;
- (c) the printing of the front cover of the Hansard in Sinhala, Tamil and English;
- (d) recording of the speeches in the Hansard in the floor language, with the name of the speaker entered in Sinhala, Tamil and English.

14. (1) The proceedings of the House may be made available for broadcast over radio, television or any other electronic means or devices subject to the rules and conditions that may be determined by the Parliament, from time to time.

(2) Any broadcasting of the proceedings of the House shall maintain such standards of fairness as are adopted by the Parliament.

(3) The proceedings of Committees shall also be available for broadcasting at times as may be determined by the Committees, subject to the rules and conditions the relevant Committees and Parliament may determine, from time to time:

Provided that, the Speaker or a Chair of a Committee may exercise his discretionary power to decide whether to allow, restrict or control the live broadcast of the proceedings in Parliament or a Committee as the case may be at any given time.

ADJOURNMENT

15. An adjournment of Parliament shall mean an adjournment till the next ordinary Sitting Day unless Parliament on a motion made after notice has ordered an adjournment to some other definite date. A motion to adjourn *sine die* shall not be entertained.

16. During an adjournment of more than forty-eight hours duration, the Speaker if so requested by the Prime Minister, shall give notice convening Parliament for such date being an earlier date than to which Parliament had adjourned as may be contained in the request and thereupon Parliament shall meet on the date and the time specified in the notice issued by the Speaker and shall transact its business as if it had been duly adjourned to that date and time. When issuing such a notice, the Speaker shall take all practicable steps to acquaint Members with the date and time for which Parliament has been convened.

DILATORY MOTIONS

17. When a motion is made for the adjournment of a debate, or of Parliament during any debate, or that the Chair or a Committee of the whole Parliament “do report progress”, or “do leave the Chair”, the debate thereupon shall be confined to the matter of such motion, and no Member having moved or seconded any such motion shall be entitled to move or second, any similar motion during the same debate.

18. Where the Speaker, or other Presiding Member, or the Chair of a Committee of the whole Parliament, shall be of the opinion that a motion for the adjournment of a debate, or of Parliament during any debate, or that the Chair do report progress, or do leave the Chair, shall be considered as an abuse of the rules of Parliament, he may forthwith put the question thereupon from the Chair, or may decline to propose the question thereupon to Parliament.

ADJOURNMENT ON MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

***19.** [(1) A motion for the adjournment of Parliament shall not be made until Public Business has been entered upon unless a Member other than a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers rises in his place at the end of questions and asks leave to move the adjournment of Parliament, for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance and state the matter.

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

(2) Any such motion by a Member under paragraph (1) above shall not be made unless—

- (a) written notice of such motion is given to the Speaker before the commencement of the sitting on the day on which the motion is proposed to be made and the consent of the Speaker is obtained; and
- (b) the leave of Parliament has been obtained by such Member; or
- (c) not less than twenty Members rise in their places to support the request of such Member, where the leave of Parliament not having been given:

Provided that, where the Speaker has refused his consent or is of the opinion that the matter proposed to be discussed is not in order, he may allow the Member raising the question to read the notice of the motion or part thereof as approved by the Speaker and thereafter the Speaker shall state the reason for refusing consent or holding the motion not in order.

(3) If the motion is so supported or Parliament gives leave, it shall stand over until 3.30 p.m.

(4) Leave shall not be sought for more than one such motion on any one day.

(5) The days on which Government Business has precedence, no motion for the adjournment of Parliament, other than a motion made under the provisions of this Standing Order, shall be moved between the items of business set down for that day before 5.00 p.m. unless such motion be moved by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers.]

MOTIONS OR QUESTIONS AT THE TIME OF ADJOURNMENT

20. On a day the Committee on Parliamentary Business has decided to entertain a motion or questions at the adjournment time of the House, not more than one hour after conclusion of the Public Business of the House shall be set apart for this purpose subject to the following rules: —

- (a) The adjournment motion or questions shall be confined to matters of urgent public importance;
- (b) The Speaker shall have the power to disallow a motion or a question if he is of the opinion that such motion or the question violates any Standing Order or it is an abuse of the right of a Member to propose such a motion or a question;

- (c) The time allocated for a motion or questions at the adjournment time of the House during the debate on the Appropriation Bill may be reduced as may be determined by the Committee on Parliamentary Business; and
- (d) The procedure relating to the acceptance of Motions or Questions at the adjournment time of the House shall be determined by the Committee on Parliamentary Business.

STRANGERS

21. (1) “Strangers” may be present in the Chamber in places set apart for them, under the rules made by the Speaker for such purpose.

(2) If at any sitting of Parliament, or in Committee, any Member shall take notice that strangers are present, the Speaker, or the Chair, as the case may be, shall forthwith put the question “That strangers be ordered to withdraw” without permitting any debate or amendment.

(3) The Speaker or the Chair may, even in the absence of such notice, whenever he thinks fit, order the withdrawal of strangers from any part of the Chamber.

(4) The Attorney-General or any representative who is present in Parliament in the performance of the duties under Article 77 of the Constitution shall not be deemed to be a stranger.

(5) The Speaker may grant a general permission to any representative of any news-media to attend the sitting of Parliament. Such permission may be revoked, if the news-media makes a report which the Speaker considers unfair or is intended to cause disrepute to the House.

BUSINESS OF PARLIAMENT

22. The Business of Parliament shall be conducted in the following order:—

- (1) Official Oath or Affirmation by new Members;
- (2) Messages from the President;
- (3) Announcements by the Speaker;
- (4) Presentation of Papers;
- (5) Presentation of Reports from Committees;
- (6) Presentation of Public Petitions;

- (7) Questions for Oral Answers;
- (8) Motions for leave of absence;
- (9) Ministerial statements;
- (10) Personal explanations;
- (11) Questions of privilege;
- (12) Motions at the commencement of Public Business not requiring notice;
- (13) Motions at the commencement of Public Business for which notice is required;
- (14) Votes of condolence;
- (15) Public Business.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

23.(1) Public Business shall consist of Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions.

(2) An Order of the Day shall be a Bill, Regulation, Resolution or any other matter which Parliament has ordered to be taken into consideration on a particular day. An earlier day cannot be substituted for the day so appointed.

(3) Government Business shall have precedence on every day except the sitting of the first Friday of each month.

(4) On the sitting of the first Friday of each month a motion may be made by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers without notice at the commencement of Public Business to be decided without amendment or debate to the effect that “Government Business have precedence this day” or that “a specified item of Government Business have precedence this day”. If such motion be carried Government Business or the specified item of Government Business shall have precedence accordingly.

(5) Government Business shall be set down in such order as the Government thinks appropriate.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ MOTIONS

24. (1) Unless Parliament otherwise orders, on the sitting of the first Friday of each month, Private Members’ Business shall have precedence over

Government Business and Notices of Motions shall have precedence over Orders of the Day.

(2) Unless a Member giving notice of a Private Member's motion indicating the desire to have such motion fixed for a particular Private Members' day, all Private Members' motions shall be fixed for the next available Private Members' day. Any such motion shall be taken in the order in which they appear in the Order Paper subject to any decision made by the Committee on Parliamentary Business. Private Members' Motions shall be included in the Order Book in chronological order and not more than ten motions submitted by any Member shall be included in the Order Book at any given time.

(3) A "Private Member" does not include a Member holding the office of the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chairperson of Committees, Prime Minister, Ministers of the Cabinet, Ministers who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Leader of the House of Parliament, Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, Chief Government Whip and the Chief Opposition Whip.

25. All Orders of the Day, undisposed of at the adjournment of Parliament shall be postponed until the next Sitting Day without a motion to that effect. Any Notice of Motions not so disposed of shall, in the absence of any specific instruction by the Member in whose name the notice stands, be carried forward to the next Sitting Day if standing in the name of a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers or a Minister who is not a member of the Cabinet of Ministers or a Deputy Minister, and to the first Friday sitting of the following month if standing in the name of a Private Member.

PAPERS

26. (1) Papers shall be presented only by the Speaker, a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, a Minister who is not a member of the Cabinet of Ministers or a Deputy Minister.

(2) The presentation of any Paper shall be entered in the minutes.

(3) A short explanatory statement of the contents of any Paper may be made on its presentation, but no debate shall take place at the time of presentation.

(4) All Papers presented shall be deemed to have been ordered to lie upon the Table and any motion for the printing thereof shall be determined without amendment or debate.

NOTICES

27. (1) Notice of questions or motions shall be given in writing, signed by the Member giving the notice and addressed to the Secretary-General. Such notices may be handed over to the Secretary-General at any time when Parliament is sitting or may be sent to or left at the office of the Secretary-General at any time.

(2) The Secretary-General shall, upon receipt of any notice in respect of any question, unless the Speaker rules any question out of order, include in the Order Book for answer on a day not earlier than seven clear days from the day on which the notice was given:

Provided that, any question relating to a matter of urgent public importance may be asked by the Leader of the Opposition or a leader of a recognized political party at the conclusion of questions after due notice has been given to the Minister concerned.

(3) The Secretary-General shall, upon receipt of any notice in respect of any motion, unless the Speaker rules the motion out of order, include in the Order Book, but unless Parliament otherwise orders, no debate thereon shall take place unless five clear days have elapsed since the notice was given. Notwithstanding anything in this paragraph, notices of motions to be moved at the commencement of Public Business shall be included in the Order Paper if received at the Table on the previous Sitting Day.

(4) No debate shall take place on the giving of notice of any matter.

(5) Unless otherwise provided for in these Standing Orders, no debate shall take place except on a motion or order appearing in the Order Paper.

(6) A Member who has given notice of a question or a motion may withdraw the same by giving written notice to that effect to the Secretary-General.

(7) A ministerial statement shall be made by the Prime Minister or by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers on a matter in respect of which ministerial responsibility has been entrusted to that Minister. A Minister so intending to make a statement shall first obtain the consent of the Speaker having submitted a copy of the statement beforehand.

(8) A personal explanation may be made by a Member for the purpose of vindicating the personal conduct of that Member in response to a reference which has been made by another Member in the House while he was not present in the House. Any Member so intending to make an explanation shall first obtain the consent of the Speaker having submitted a copy of the explanation beforehand and giving adequate notice to the Speaker. The explanation so made shall be strictly limited for the purpose of vindicating the personal conduct of that Member.

28. Unless the Standing Orders otherwise direct, notice shall be given of any motion which is proposed to make with the exception of the following:—

- (a) A motion made in Committee of the whole Parliament;
- (b) A motion for the adjournment of Parliament or of any debate;
- (c) A motion that the report of a Select Committee be referred to a Committee of the whole Parliament or be printed;
- (d) A motion for the withdrawal of strangers;
- (e) A motion for the suspension of a Member;
- (f) A motion relating to a matter of privilege;
- (g) A motion arising out of the business of the day immediately after that business is disposed of and before any fresh matter is entered upon.

29. (1) An urgent motion directly concerning the privileges of Parliament shall take precedence of all other motions, and any Orders of the Day. The proceedings of Parliament may be interrupted at any moment, save during the progress of a division, by a motion based on a matter of privilege when a matter has recently arisen which directly concerns the privileges of Parliament.

(2) Any Member intending to raise such a matter of privilege shall first inform the Chair and obtain the permission of the Chair to interrupt the proceedings of Parliament.

PUBLIC PETITIONS

30. (1) Every petition to Parliament shall be addressed to the Speaker and shall be presented by a Member.

(2) Every petition shall be in respectful language and shall not contain irrelevant statements.

(3) Every petition shall be clear and legible and shall conclude with a prayer reciting the relief sought.

(4) Every petition shall be signed by the petitioner or petitioners except in case of incapacity by sickness. A person unable to write shall affix a personal mark in the presence of a witness. The full name, address and the National Identity Card number of every signatory to a petition shall be set out therein. The petitioner may also mention any other contact details including the telephone number.

(5) No letters, affidavits or other documents shall be attached to any petition.

(6) No reference shall be made in a petition to any debate in Parliament.

(7) It shall not be competent for a Member to present a petition on the Member's own behalf, but the same may be presented by some other Member.

(8) Every petition shall, before it is presented, be signed at the beginning thereof by the Member in charge of it and deposited at least two clear days with the Secretary-General who shall submit it to the Speaker for approval and no petition shall be presented until it has been so approved.

(9) A Member presenting a petition shall confine himself to a statement in the following form, and no debate shall be permitted on this statement: –

“The Speaker, I present a petition from of
(Name of Petitioner)

..... and others.”
(Address of petitioner) *(No. of Petitioners)*

(10) A petition having been presented to Parliament shall stand referred to the Committee on Public Petitions.

QUESTIONS

31. At the stage of Business provided by these Standing Orders questions relating to public affairs may be put to the Prime Minister or to any Minister relating to subjects and functions assigned to such Minister by the President and for which such Minister has ministerial responsibility.

32. (1) When any question is reached on the Order Paper of Parliament, and where an oral answer to such question is required, the Speaker shall call upon the Member in whose name the question stands and the Member so called shall rise in his place and ask the question by reference to its number on the Order Paper of Parliament and the reply shall then be given by the Prime Minister or the Minister to whom the question is addressed.

(2) The relevant Minister or in his absence the Minister who is not a member of the Cabinet of Ministers or the Deputy Minister authorized by such Minister shall be present in the House to answer orally such questions on the day they are scheduled to be answered.

(3) A Minister who is unable to be present in the House to answer any question raised by a Member on a particular day shall obtain prior leave of the Speaker and inform the Speaker the arrangements that such Minister has made to have the question answered.

(4) A question shall be answered at least on the third occasion that it is scheduled to be answered.

(5) When a written answer to a question is required the Prime Minister or the Minister to whom the question is addressed shall cause the answer to be printed in the Hansard in all three languages.

33. (1) Any Member may put not more than two supplementary questions on any such answer given under Standing Order 32:

Provided that, such supplementary questions shall not introduce matters not included in the original question, and shall be put only for the purpose of further elucidating any matter arising out of an oral answer:

Provided further, the Speaker shall disallow any supplementary question if the Speaker is of the opinion, that such supplementary question infringes the rules as to admissibility of questions.

(2) The Speaker may limit the time allowed for raising of supplementary questions and answers thereto.

34. (1) The proper purpose of a question shall be to obtain information on a matter of fact within the special cognizance of the Minister to whom it is addressed or to urge that action be taken.

(2) A question must not be made the pretext for a debate.

35. Not more than an hour shall be allotted to questions on any day and no Member shall ask more than two questions for oral answer on any one day:

Provided that, not more than thirty minutes shall be reserved for questions on a day on which the Committee Stage debate of the Appropriation Bill is fixed.

36. The right to ask questions shall be subject to the following rules: —

- (a) Only one subject shall be referred to in any one question and the question shall not exceed one hundred and fifty words;
- (b) Any name or statement not essential to make the question intelligible shall not be mentioned in a question;
- (c) If a question contains a statement, the Member asking it shall take the responsibility for the accuracy of such statement;
- (d) A question shall not contain any argument, inference, imputation, epithet or ironical expression;
- (e) A question shall not be asked about the proceedings in a Committee which has not been placed before Parliament by a report from that Committee;
- (f) A question shall not refer to any matter which is under adjudication by a court of law or to any matter on which a judicial decision is pending;
- (g) A question shall not be asked for an expression of opinion, or for the solution of an abstract legal question or of a hypothetical proposition;
- (h) A question shall not be asked as to the character or conduct of any person unless it relates to the official or public capacity of that person;
- (i) A question reflecting on the character or conduct of any person whose conduct can only be challenged on a substantive motion shall not be asked;
- (j) A question making or implying a charge of a personal character shall be disallowed; and

- (k) A question fully answered in any session shall not be asked again during the same session.

37. (1) The Speaker shall decide whether a question is or is not admissible under these Standing Orders and he may disallow any question when in his opinion it is an abuse of the right of questioning or calculated to obstruct or affect prejudicially the procedure of Parliament or if it infringes the provisions of any of these Standing Orders. Disallowance of a question by the Speaker, with the reason therefor, shall be communicated in writing to the Member concerned by the Secretary-General.

(2) Any notice which contains unbecoming expressions or offends against any Standing Order of Parliament may be amended by the Speaker, with the consent of the Member asking the question, before it appears in the Order Book.

(3) If the Speaker is of the opinion that a question requires a lengthy answer he may direct that the question be considered as one not for oral answer and such decision be communicated to the Member concerned by the Secretary-General.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED FROM THE PRIME MINISTER

38. (1) During the time allocated for questions for oral answers on Wednesday of the first week of the sitting of every month, half an hour may be set aside to ask not more than four questions from the Prime Minister. In the event that the Prime Minister is not available on the first Wednesday the Committee on Parliamentary Business may decide a suitable day in the course of the same month for such purpose.

(2) Any Member of Parliament other than a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, a Minister who is not a member of the Cabinet of Ministers or a Deputy Minister seeking to ask a question under this Standing Order, shall submit the question to the Secretary-General with a copy to the office of the Leader of the House of Parliament before 12 noon of the Friday of the preceding week.

(3) Questions to the Prime Minister shall be limited only to matters relating to Government policies including matters of national importance. Any question which requires a detailed answer or confined to a specific subject may be

referred to the Minister in charge of the relevant subject for answer at the discretion of the Prime Minister.

(4) Two questions each for the Government and the Opposition may be allotted on any given day.

(5) A Member of Parliament may ask only one question on any given day and such question shall not exceed one hundred and fifty words.

(6) Questions to the Prime Minister shall be asked without including arguments or expressing views and shall not address more than one common public policy.

(7) After the Prime Minister has answered any question, the Member who asked the question may ask two supplementary questions. Any other Member of Parliament with the permission from the Member asking the question may ask one or more of the supplementary questions:

Provided that, the supplementary questions shall be limited to the subject relating to the main question or the answer given therefor.

QUESTIONS FOR DEBATE

39. It shall be competent for any Member to propose any motion on any matter of public interest and such motion shall be debated, or otherwise disposed of according to these Standing Orders.

40. (1) A motion or an amendment which by these Standing Orders is required to be seconded, and is not seconded, shall lapse.

(2) If a Private Member does not move a motion which stands in his name when called upon to do so, it shall lapse unless some other Member duly authorized by that Member in writing, moves such motion on his behalf:

Provided that, an Order of the Day may be moved by any Member unless the Member in charge of that order has previously signified to the Secretary-General his desire to have the order deferred to another day.

41. A Member who has made a motion may withdraw the same with leave of Parliament.

ANTICIPATION

42. (1) It shall be out of order to make a motion or move an amendment dealing with the subject matter of a Bill or other Order of the Day appointed for consideration, and such amendment shall also be out of order if it deals with the subject matter of a motion of which notice has been given.

(2) An Order of the Day, Notice of Motion or amendment of which notice has been given, shall not be anticipated in a debate upon a motion for the adjournment of Parliament or in any other debate.

(3) In determining whether a discussion is out of order on the ground of anticipation, regard shall be had by the Speaker to the probability of the matter anticipated being brought before Parliament within a reasonable time.

AMENDMENTS

43. (1) A question, when proposed from the Chair, may be amended—

- (a) by the deletion of certain words and the substitution therefor of certain other words; or
- (b) by the deletion of certain words; or
- (c) by the insertion or addition of certain other words.

(2) Every such amendment shall be in writing and handed over to the Secretary-General by the Member proposing it.

(3) Every amendment proposed to a Bill shall be examined by the Attorney-General in terms of Article 77 of the Constitution.

(4) An amendment to a question shall be relevant to the question to which such amendment is proposed.

(5) An amendment shall not raise any question which, by the rules of Parliament can only be raised by a substantive motion after notice.

(6) After a decision has been made on an amendment to any part of a question, an earlier part of such question shall not be amended.

(7) In like manner, where an amendment of any part of a question has been proposed from the Chair, an earlier part of that question shall not be amended, unless the amendment so proposed is withdrawn.

(8) An amendment to a question shall not be inconsistent with a previous decision on the same question given at the same stage of any Bill or matter.

(9) To an amendment, when proposed from the Chair, an amendment may be moved.

44. (1) If an amendment is for the substitution of certain words for certain other words, the Speaker or the Chair, after stating such amendment, shall first propose the question “that the words proposed to be deleted stand part of the question or clause” and if that question is put and answered in the negative, he shall propose the question “that the words proposed by the amendment be there substituted”:

Provided that, the Speaker or the Chair shall if possible put as the test question on an amendment only such words as will not prevent a subsequent amendment which is in order from being moved. If the question so proposed be answered in the negative, the remainder of the words proposed by the amendment to be deleted shall be deemed to be deleted without further question.

(2) If the amendment is to the effect that certain words be deleted, the Speaker or the Chair, after stating the amendment, shall propose the question that the words proposed to be deleted stand part of the question or Clause.

(3) If the amendment is to the effect that certain words be deleted, substituted, inserted or added, the Speaker or the Chair, after stating the amendment, shall propose the question that the proposed words be there deleted, substituted, inserted or added.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of the preceding paragraphs of this Standing Order, the Speaker may propose the question “That the amendment be agreed to” in place of the “question or questions” stated therein.

(5) Where an amendment is moved to amend a proposed amendment, the last mentioned amendment shall be dealt with as if it were the original question until all the amendments to it have been disposed of.

45. On the conclusion of the debate on a question, the Speaker or the Chair shall if the question then remains in its original form, state the question in its original form or if the question has been amended, state the question in its amended form, and put the question.

CLOSURE

46. (1) After a question has been proposed, a Member rising in his place may claim to move “That the question be now put”. Then the Chair, unless it appears to the Chair that the motion is an abuse of the rules of Parliament or an infringement of the rights of the minority, the question, “That the question be now put”, shall be put forthwith.

(2) When the motion “That the question be now put”, has been carried and the question consequent thereon has been decided, any further motion necessary to decide any question already proposed from the Chair may be made (the assent of the Chair not having been withheld) which may be required to bring to a decision any question already proposed from the Chair.

(3) When a Clause is under consideration, a motion may be made (the assent of the Chair as aforesaid not having been withheld) that the question “that certain words of the Clause specified in the motion stand part of the Clause or that the Clause stand part of or be added to the Bill,” be now put.

(4) Every motion made under this Standing Order shall be put forthwith and decided without amendment or debate.

(5) A motion under this Standing Order shall not be carried in Parliament, or in a Committee of the whole Parliament unless twenty Members vote in favour.

VOTING

47. (1) The question shall be put by the Speaker and the votes may be taken by voices, ‘Ayes’ and ‘Noes’, and the result may be declared by the Speaker.

(2) Any Member who is not agreeable with the decision of the Speaker may call for a division for a vote to be taken in any of the following methods as may be determined by the Speaker. In such case the division bells shall be rung for five minutes and thereafter-

- (a) a division shall be taken by counting the Members row by row, rising in their places in support or against the motion before the House;
- (b) a division shall be taken by the use of the electronic vote recorder. The Members shall press the appropriate button to indicate the decision of such Members within the time period allowed by the Speaker;
- (c) a division shall be taken by the Secretary-General asking each Member separately as to how that Member desires to vote and shall record the votes accordingly. The Secretary-General shall first ask the Prime Minister and then the Ministers of the Cabinet of Ministers, Ministers who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Deputy Ministers in the respective alphabetical order of their names and then the other Members in the alphabetical

order of their names. Any Member may if he wishes to decline to vote state such fact to the Secretary-General. In such case the Secretary-General shall record the name of such Member as having declined to vote.

(3) The Speaker shall announce the numbers of the votes for and against the decision and if the votes are equal the Speaker shall cast a deciding vote. The Speaker shall then declare the result of the division.

48. In the event of confusion or inaccuracy in the course of a division concerning the numbers or names recorded, which cannot otherwise be corrected, the Speaker shall direct the House to proceed to another division immediately thereafter.

49. If a Member states that he has exercised his vote erroneously or any vote has been counted wrongly, that Member may claim that such error be rectified:

Provided that, the Member shall make such claim before the Speaker has declared that the time allowed for voting has ceased.

PROCEDURE AS TO PRESENTATION OF BILLS

***50. [(1)** Any Minister may after notice, subject to the provisions of Article 78 of the Constitution, present a Bill without an order of Parliament for its introduction. When a Bill is so presented at the commencement of Public Business, the title of the Bill shall be read by the Secretary-General and the Bill shall then be deemed to have been read the first time and to have been ordered to be printed and shall stand for Second Reading on a date not earlier than †fourteen days from the date on which it was presented:

Provided that, an Urgent Bill referred to in Article 122 of the Constitution shall stand for Second Reading upon such day as the Minister of the Cabinet or the Deputy Minister may appoint.

(2) Every such Bill shall be referred to the relevant Sectoral Oversight Committee without a motion immediately after the First Reading. The Committee may suggest amendments to the Bill. No further proceedings to be

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

† Consequential amendment as per the Twenty First Amendment to the Constitution.

had until the Committee has reported back to Parliament or until the expiration of period of time allowed by Parliament.

(3) When the Speaker receives a copy of a reference addressed to the Chief Justice by the President in relation to a Bill which is in the view of the Cabinet of Ministers urgent in the interest of national security or for the purpose of any matter relating to disaster management, and bears an endorsement to that effect under the hand of the Secretary to the Cabinet under Article 122(1) of the Constitution, such Bill shall not be placed on the Order Paper until the Speaker has received from the Supreme Court its determination as provided for in Article 122(1)(c) of the Constitution.]

BILLS IN RESPECT OF MATTERS SET OUT IN LIST III OF THE NINTH SCHEDULE TO THE CONSTITUTION

51.(1) When a Bill in respect of any matter set out in List III of the Ninth Schedule to the Constitution is presented to Parliament, unless Parliament otherwise decides, by resolution, the procedure laid down in paragraph (2) of this Standing Order shall be followed.

- (2) (a) The Speaker shall direct the Secretary-General to forward copies of such Bill to each Provincial Council for report to Parliament on its views regarding the Bill within a period of two months from the date of reference of such Bill to such Provincial Council or within such other period of time as Parliament may specify.
- (b) On the expiry of the time specified in sub paragraph (a) above, or on the receipt of the views of the Provincial Council, whichever is earlier, Parliament may proceed with the Bill.
- (3) (a) Whenever a communication is received from any Provincial Council seeking to consult Parliament on any proposed Statute to be made in respect of any matter set out in List III of the Ninth Schedule to the Constitution, the Speaker shall announce its receipt at the first available opportunity. The proposed Statute shall thereupon be referred to the Legislative Standing Committee.
- (b) After consideration of the report of the Legislative Standing Committee, Parliament shall direct the Secretary-General to forward the views of Parliament regarding the proposed Statute to

the Provincial Council concerned within two months of the receipt of such communication.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS

***52.** [(1) Any Private Member desiring to introduce a Bill shall apply to Parliament for leave to do so, setting the objective and leading features of such Bill.

(2) Every such application shall be made in the form of a motion and the Member making such application shall deliver to the Secretary-General a copy of the proposed Bill, in Sinhala and Tamil with a translation in English together with a copy of his motion.

(3) The Secretary-General shall refer the Bill to the Attorney-General to seek his opinion as to whether the Bill is inconsistent with the Constitution and whether it attracts any impediment in respect of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The Attorney-General shall communicate his observations to the Parliament within a period of six weeks.

(4) After the receipt of the opinion of the Attorney-General the Secretary-General shall cause the Bill to be published in the Gazette in Sinhala and Tamil with a translation in English.

(5) At any time after the lapse of a period of seven days from the date on which the Bill was published in the Gazette, the motion referred to in paragraph (2) above shall be placed on the Order Paper of Parliament.

(6) Leave being granted by the House on a question put and carried or in the event that leave is not granted by the House but not fewer than twenty Members rise in their places to support the Member, the Bill shall then be deemed to have been read the first time and ordered to be printed and shall stand referred without discussion to the Minister or Deputy Minister in charge of the subjects and functions to which the Bill relates. If the Minister or the Deputy Minister is not present it shall stand referred to such other Minister or Deputy Minister as the Speaker may nominate and no further proceedings shall be taken in respect of such Bill until the Minister or Deputy Minister to whom it has been referred to has reported to Parliament thereon.

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

(7) After the report referred to in paragraph (6) above has been made or if after the expiry of six months from the date on which the Bill was referred to the Minister or Deputy Minister and where no report has been made by such Minister or Deputy Minister, the Bill shall be set down for Second Reading upon such day as the Member in charge of the Bill desires.]

53. (1) Where any Bill which is intended to affect or benefit some particular person, association or corporate body is proposed, notice of such Bill shall be given by advertising in the Gazette in Sinhala, Tamil and English and at least in one Sinhala, one Tamil and one English newspaper circulating in the Republic a statement of its general nature and objects, and such advertisement shall appear at least one month before the application for leave of Parliament to introduce the Bill is made.

(2) In the case of every such Bill, paragraph (2) of Standing Order 52 shall apply as if the words “and a copy of the advertisements published under paragraph (1) of this Standing Order” had been inserted at the end of that paragraph.

(3) Every such Bill after being read a second time shall be referred by the Speaker to the Legislative Standing Committee.

(4) The Legislative Standing Committee on such a Bill shall require proof of the facts and other matters set forth in the Bill as showing that it is expedient that the Bill should be passed, and may take such oral or other evidence as it may think requisite, and thereafter if the Legislative Standing Committee finds that the said facts and other matters are not proved, shall report accordingly; but if the Legislative Standing Committee finds that the said facts and other matters have been proved, it shall consider the several Clauses of the Bill, and may repeal, substitute or insert any Clause and may make any other amendments which it may deem necessary, and all such amendments shall be reported to Parliament:

Provided that, no Clause shall be allowed in such a Bill which is inconsistent with the notice specified in paragraph (1) of this Standing Order. No Clause affecting any private right or interest shall be allowed in such a Bill unless circumstances are set forth in the Bill which render it justifiable and expedient.

PARTIES AFFECTED, WITNESSES, EVIDENCE

***54.** [In any case, in which individual rights or interests may be peculiarly affected by any Bill, any party so affected may be heard either in person or by counsel upon petition before the Sectoral Oversight Committee or the Legislative Standing Committee to which such Bill is referred to.]

SECOND READING

***55.** [(1) A Bill other than a Bill under Article 122 of the Constitution, shall be set down for Second Reading on a date not earlier than [†]fourteen days from the date on which it was presented.

(2) When the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to determine whether any Bill or any provision thereof is inconsistent with the Constitution has been invoked under Article 121 of the Constitution and a copy of the reference or petition has been delivered to the Speaker—

- (a) such reference or filing of a petition shall be conveyed to Parliament by the Speaker on the first day of a meeting of Parliament after such reference is made or such petition is filed;
- (b) no proceedings in relation to such Bill shall be had until the determination of the Supreme Court in respect thereof has been made and communicated to the Speaker or until the expiration of a period of three weeks from the date of such reference or filing of such petition, whichever occurs first;
- (c) upon receipt of the determination of the Supreme Court it shall be announced to Parliament by the Speaker and no debate shall be permitted on such announcement.]

DEBATE ON SECOND READING

56. On the Second Reading of a Bill a debate may arise covering the general merits and principles of the Bill.

COMMITTEE STAGE OF BILLS

***57.** [When a Bill has been read a second time, upon a motion made by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, a Minister who is not a member of the

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

[†] Consequential amendment as per the Twenty First Amendment to the Constitution.

Cabinet of Ministers or a Deputy Minister, the Bill shall be referred to a Committee of the whole Parliament:

Provided that, if upon a motion made by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers, a Minister who is not a member of the Cabinet of Ministers or a Deputy Minister, Parliament so decides, a Bill, other than an Annual or Supplementary Appropriation Bill, may be referred to a Select Committee to be nominated by the Speaker or to the Legislative Standing Committee.]

***58.** [When a Bill has been referred to a Select Committee, or the Legislative Standing Committee no further proceedings shall be taken thereon until the Committee has reported.]

PROCEDURE ON BILLS IN COMMITTEE

59. Where any Bill is referred to a Committee under Standing Order 57, such Committee shall discuss its several provisions and any proposed amendments, and may adjourn its sitting or if it is a Committee of the whole Parliament, report progress, from time to time, as occasion may arise.

60. The Chair of the Committee or the Secretary-General shall read the number of each clause of the Bill in succession.

61. Any amendment may be made to a Clause, or Clauses by deleting, substituting, inserting and adding provisions provided, the same be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, and be otherwise in conformity with the Standing Orders.

62. The principle of the Bill shall not be discussed in Committee, but only its details.

63. No amendment inconsistent with any decision made upon any previous part of the Bill may be proposed.

64. After a Bill has been read through in Committee, and while it is still in Committee, any Member may, with leave of the Chair, move an amendment to any Clause already passed.

65. The consideration of any Clause of the Bill may be postponed until the remaining Clauses of the Bill have been considered and before new Clauses are brought up.

66. (1) New Clauses may be proposed before the Schedules to the Bill are considered and shall be deemed to have been read the first time. The questions

which follow thereupon shall be “That the Clause be read a second time” and “that the Clause (or the Clause as amended) be added to the Bill”.

(2) New Schedules may be proposed after the Schedules to the Bill have been disposed of and shall be treated in the same manner as new Clauses.

(3) When every Clause and Schedule and any proposed new Clause or Schedule have been dealt with, the preamble, if there be one, shall be considered and a question put “That this be the preamble of the Bill”.

(4) If any amendment be necessary to the title of the Bill, it shall be made at the conclusion of the proceedings set out in this Standing Order.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON BILLS

67. When a Committee of the whole Parliament has completed the consideration of a Bill, the Chair shall report the Bill with or without amendments to Parliament.

***68.** [The Legislative Standing Committee or a Select Committee to which a Bill has been referred shall present a report to Parliament setting out its recommendations, and a copy of the report shall be distributed to every Member.]

69. The report of a Select Committee on a Bill shall be presented by the Chair and may be ordered to lie upon the Table, or be otherwise dealt with as Parliament may direct. Upon motion made by any Member the Bill may be referred to a Committee of the whole Parliament or the report of the Select Committee set down for consideration upon a day to be appointed by the Member in charge of the Bill.

***70.** [The report of the Legislative Standing Committee or the Select Committee on a Bill shall be presented by the Chair and the report shall be set down for consideration upon a day to be appointed by Parliament. Upon consideration of the report from the Legislative Standing Committee or a Select Committee, Parliament shall consider only those amendments, if any, made by the Committee but may further amend those amendments. No new amendments shall be made by Parliament upon consideration of the report except such are as consequential upon amendments made by the Committee and accepted by

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders, October 05, 2022

Parliament, but the Bill may be recommitted to the same Committee with reference to particular amendments made by that Committee.]

THIRD READING

71. A Bill having passed through Committee of the whole Parliament, or having been reported without amendment to Parliament by a Select Committee, may, on motion made, forthwith be read a third time and passed, or if Parliament so direct the Third Reading may be postponed.

***72.**[(1) When a Bill has been reported to Parliament by the Legislative Standing Committee or a Select Committee without amendments, it may upon the day appointed for its consideration, be forthwith read a third time and passed or if Parliament so direct, the Third Reading may be postponed.

(2)If the Legislative Standing Committee or a Select Committee has amended the Bill, it may be read a third time and passed as soon as Parliament has considered the amendments made by the Committee or if Parliament so direct, the Third Reading may be postponed.]

73. At the Third Reading of a Bill any amendments to the words or for the purpose of drafting requirements, may be made upon Motion after notice. At any time before the certificate of the Speaker is endorsed on the Bill the Speaker shall have the power to correct any grammatical or typographical errors in the Bill.

CERTIFICATE OF THE SPEAKER

74. As soon as may be after a Bill has been passed by Parliament the Speaker shall endorse on the Bill in Sinhala and Tamil the Certificate specified in Article 79 of the Constitution.

ALLOTTED DAYS FOR APPROPRIATION BILL

75. (1) Twenty-six days and no more (unless as hereinafter provided) being days before 31st December shall be allotted to the consideration of the Appropriation Bill:

Provided that, the number of days occupied in the consideration of any Supplementary Appropriation Bill shall not be included in the computation of the aforesaid twenty-six days.

(2) Except on Friday on a day so allotted the hours of sitting shall be 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 1.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. On Friday the hours of sitting shall be 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.:

Provided that, at 6.00 p.m. the provisions of paragraph (4), (5) and (6) of Standing Order 8 shall operate.

(3) On a day so allotted, the Appropriation Bill shall be put down as the first item of Public Business and no other Public Business shall be taken before 6.00 p.m. on any such day.

(4) Not more than seven days shall be allotted to the Second Reading of the Bill, and at 6.00 p.m. on the last allotted day the Speaker shall, unless the proceedings on Second Reading have terminated earlier put forthwith any question necessary to dispose of the Second Reading and to commit the Bill and Parliament shall not be adjourned until all such questions have been disposed of.

(5) Except as provided for in paragraph (1) above, not more than twenty two days shall be allotted to the Committee Stage of the Appropriation Bill and on the last of such days at 6.00 p.m. The Chair shall, unless the Bill has previously been reported, put forthwith the question on any amendments then under discussion and then successively on any Government amendments to that Head and the question necessary to dispose of that Head and shall then proceed successively to put forthwith the question with respect to each Ministry's Head that the total amounts of the Heads outstanding in the Ministry's Estimates be inserted in the Schedule for the services defined in those Estimates and then that the several Schedules respectively stand part of the Bill and Parliament shall not be adjourned until the Bill has been reported.

(6) On any day on which proceedings under this Standing Order are to be brought to a conclusion the consideration of such proceedings shall not be anticipated or interrupted by a motion of adjournment and no dilatory motion shall be moved on such proceedings:

Provided that, if leave is given for a motion of adjournment under Standing Order 19 such motion shall stand over until the proceedings on the Appropriation Bill have been concluded and at 8.00 p.m. the Speaker shall, unless Parliament be previously adjourned, adjourn Parliament without question put.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR RULES OF ORDER

76. (1) The Speaker in Parliament and the Chair in any Committee shall be responsible for the observance of the rules of order in Parliament and Committee respectively and their decision upon any point of order shall not be

open to appeal and shall not be reviewed by Parliament except upon a substantive motion made after notice.

(2) Whenever the Speaker or the Chair interrupts during a debate, any Member speaking or offering to speak shall sit down and Parliament or Committee shall be silent so that the Speaker or the Chair may be heard without interruption.

(3) When a question of order has been raised the Member, who raises it shall resume his seat, and no other Member, except by leave of the Speaker or the Chair shall rise until the Speaker or the Chair has decided the question, after which the Member who was addressing Parliament at the time the question was raised shall be entitled to proceed with his speech, complying with the ruling of the Chair.

ORDER IN PARLIAMENT

77. (1) Whenever any Member is named by the Speaker immediately after the commission of the offence of disregarding the authority of the Chair, or of abusing the rules of Parliament by persistently and willfully obstructing the Business of Parliament, or otherwise, the Speaker shall forthwith put the question on a motion being made (no amendment, adjournment or debate being allowed) “that such Member be suspended from the service of Parliament”.

(2) If any such motion be carried and any Member be suspended under this Standing Order the suspension of such Member on the first occasion shall be for two weeks; on the second occasion during the same session shall be for three weeks; and on the third or any subsequent occasion during the same session shall be for four weeks:

Provided that, a Member whose services have been suspended may be authorized by the Speaker to cast his vote only for the final vote of Appropriation Bill during the period of such suspension.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) above, any Member who comes into contact with the mace or lift the mace while it is kept within the precincts of the House commits a grave disorder and shall be suspended for a period of four weeks notwithstanding the fact that such offence was committed by that Member on the first occasion.

(4) Not more than one Member shall be named at the same time, unless several Members present together have jointly disregarded the authority of the Chair.

(5) If any Member or Members acting jointly who have been suspended under this Standing Order from the service of Parliament, refuse, at any time during the period of suspension, to obey the direction of the Speaker to withdraw from the precincts of Parliament, the Speaker may direct such steps to be taken as are required to enforce his decision.

(6) If an offence under paragraph (1) above is committed in a Committee of the whole Parliament, the Chair shall forthwith suspend the proceedings of the Committee and report the circumstances to Parliament and the Speaker shall on a motion being made thereupon put the same question without amendment, adjournment or debate, as if the offence has been committed in Parliament.

78. The Speaker, after having called the attention of Parliament to the conduct of a Member who persists in irrelevance or tedious repetition either of his own arguments or of the arguments made by other Members in debate may direct the Member to discontinue his speech and may order that the live broadcast be discontinued.

79. (1) The Speaker shall order a Member whose conduct amounts to gross disorder to withdraw immediately from Parliament during the remainder of the sitting of the day and may direct such steps to be taken as are required to enforce his order. The Serjeant-at-Arms shall act on such order.

(2) If on any occasion the Speaker deems that his powers under this Standing Order are inadequate, he may name such Members in pursuance of Standing Order 77.

80. Any Member who is suspended under Standing Order 77 or is directed to withdraw under Standing Order 79 shall forthwith withdraw from the precincts of Parliament and shall during the period of such suspension, be debarred also from the Committees.

For the purposes of this Chapter, “Precincts of Parliament” includes the Parliament Buildings and the land area from Gate No. 1 to Gate No. 3 of the Parliament.

81. In case of grave disorder arising in Parliament, the Speaker may, if he deems it necessary, adjourn Parliament without question put or suspend the sitting for a time as may be determined by the Speaker.

82. (1) Any Member who has used objectionable words in debate which are improper or unparliamentary or has stated in debate anything in contravention

of Standing Order 83 or paragraph (f) or (h) of Standing Order 91 and has not explained or retracted the same, or offered apologies to the satisfaction of Parliament for the use of such objectionable words or who has committed any breach of order not specified in these Standing Orders may be proceeded against in any way that Parliament thinks fit, and nothing in these Standing Orders shall prevent Parliament from proceeding against any Member for breaches of order specified in these Standing Orders in any other manner than the manner as specified in these Standing Orders.

(2) Where the Speaker is of the opinion—

- (a) that any Member persists in irrelevancy or contravening Standing Orders he may order that any broadcasting of the proceedings be immediately suspended;
- (b) that objectionable words have been used in debate which are improper or unparliamentary or that anything has been stated in debate in contravention of Standing Order 83 or paragraph (f) or (h) of Standing Order 91 may in his discretion order that such words or such statements be expunged from the Hansard and those words or statements shall be regarded as unspoken.

83. (1) The personal conduct of the President, or the Acting President, Members of Parliament, Judges or other persons engaged in the administration of justice shall not be raised except upon a substantive motion; and in any proceedings, question to a Minister, or remarks in a debate on a motion dealing with any other subject reference to the conduct of any such person shall be out of order.

(2) In this Standing Order “Judge” means the Chief Justice, the President of the Court of Appeal and every other Judge of the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal appointed by the President of the Republic by Warrant under his hand.

REMOVAL OF CERTAIN PERSONS UPON SUBSTANTIVE MOTION

84. (1) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any other law, where notice of a resolution for the presentation of an address to the President for the removal of the Chief Justice, Judges of the Supreme Court, the President of the Court of Appeal and Judges of the Court of Appeal from office on the ground of alleged misbehaviour or incapacity is given to the Speaker in terms of

Article 107 of the Constitution, the Speaker shall entertain such resolution and place it on the Order Paper of Parliament.

(2) (a) Where a resolution referred to in paragraph (1) above is placed on the Order Paper of Parliament, the Speaker in consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, shall appoint a panel of inquiry consisting of three retired Judges of the Supreme Court to investigate on the alleged misbehaviour or incapacity of the Judge concerned.

(b) The Speaker shall appoint one of the members of the panel of inquiry as the Chair of such panel of inquiry.

(3) The panel of inquiry so appointed shall conclude the inquiry within a period of two months and the relevant procedure will be prescribed by law. However, the Speaker at the request of the panel of inquiry may extend such time for further periods not exceeding one month at a time.

(4) After conclusion of the proceedings of inquiry, the panel of inquiry so appointed shall report its findings together with the minutes of evidence taken before the panel to the Speaker and the Speaker shall present findings of the panel of inquiry to Parliament only if the panel of inquiry has found the Judge concerned is guilty of the alleged misbehaviour or incapacity. If the panel of inquiry has found that the Judge concerned is not guilty, he must inform it to Parliament and terminate the proceedings.

(5) If the panel of inquiry has reported that the Judge concerned has been found guilty of the alleged misbehaviour or incapacity, the Speaker shall present it for approval of Parliament. If such resolution is passed by a majority of the total Members of Parliament (including those not present) the Speaker shall forward the same to the President for the removal of the Judge concerned on the ground of proved misbehavior or incapacity.

(6) The panel of inquiry may continue its functions notwithstanding a prorogation or a dissolution of Parliament.

85. (1) Where a resolution for the presentation of an address to the President for the removal from office of—

(a) the Secretary-General of Parliament appointed under Article 65 of the Constitution; or

(b) the Commissioner General of Elections appointed under Article 104E of the Constitution; or

(c) the Auditor-General appointed under Article 153 of the Constitution; or

- (d) the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) appointed under Article 156 of the Constitution,

is placed on the Order Paper of Parliament, such resolution shall not be proceeded with until after the expiration of a period of one month from the date on which the Select Committee appointed under paragraph (2) of this Standing Order has reported to Parliament.

(2) Where a resolution referred to in paragraph (1) above is placed on the Order Paper of Parliament, the Speaker shall appoint a Select Committee of Parliament consisting of not less than seven members to investigate and report to Parliament on the matters set out in such resolution.

(3) (a) A Select Committee appointed under paragraph (2) above shall transmit to the person whose removal from office is the subject matter of its investigation, a copy of the matters set out in the resolution in pursuance of which such Select Committee was appointed, and shall require such person to make a written statement of defence within such period as the Select Committee may specify.

(b) The person whose alleged misbehaviour or incapacity is the subject of the investigation by a Select Committee appointed under paragraph (2) above shall have the right to appear before the Select Committee and to be heard by such Committee, in person or by an Attorney-at-Law and to adduce evidence, oral or documentary, in disproof of the allegations made against such person.

(4) The Select Committee appointed under paragraph (2) above shall have the power to summon any person and call for papers and records and not less than half the number of members of the Select Committee shall form the quorum.

(5) At the conclusion of the investigation made by the Select Committee appointed under paragraph (2) above, it shall report its findings to Parliament together with the minutes of evidence taken before it, and may make a special report of any matter which it may think fit to bring to the notice of Parliament.

(6) Where a resolution for the presentation of an address to the President referred to in paragraph (1) of this Standing Order is passed by Parliament, the Speaker shall present such address to the President on behalf of Parliament.

RULES OF DEBATE

86. No Member shall speak more than once on any proposition before Parliament except—

- (a) in explanation of some material part of his speech which has been misunderstood, but without the introduction of any new matter; or
- (b) to a point of order.

87. The Member who moves any motion or amendment may speak in support thereof; however, no further debates shall be allowed nor shall any question thereon be put to Parliament until the motion or amendment be duly seconded.

88. Any Member may second a motion or amendment by rising in his place and bowing to the Chair, without prejudice to his right to speak at a later period of the debate.

89. No Member may speak to any question after the same has been fully put by the Speaker. A question is fully put when the voices of both the “Ayes” and the “Noes” have been given thereon.

90. When a question for debate has been proposed, debated, and disposed of, it shall not be competent to any Member, without the leave of the Speaker, again to propose such question in the same Session, nor shall it be competent, without such leave, to revive in any debate any matter upon which Parliament has come to a conclusion during the same Session.

RULES FOR MEMBERS SPEAKING IN PARLIAMENT

91. Every Member shall in speaking to any proposition under consideration of Parliament, strictly observe the following rules:—

- (a) Every Member shall address his observations to the Speaker and except with the leave of the Speaker, speak standing from the seat allotted to him;
- (b) No Member shall be interrupted, unless on a point of order or the Member speaking gives way for intervention;
- (c) When a Member has finished his observations, the Member shall resume his seat, and any other Member wishing to address Parliament may rise;

- (d) If two Members rise at the same time, the Speaker shall call on the Member who first catches his eye;
- (e) Every Member must confine his observations to the subject under discussion;
- (f) No Member shall refer in any motion or debate, to any matter which is under adjudication by a court of law or to any matter on which a judicial decision is pending. The Speaker or the Chair may direct any Member who speaks in violation of the rule against sub judice to resume his seat:

Provided that, the Speaker may allow such reference if he is of the opinion that there is no real and substantial danger or prejudice to the outcome of the judicial proceedings before court. (sub judice rule)

- (g) If any offensive or disorderly words are used, whether by a Member who is speaking or by a Member who is present, the Speaker shall bring him to order and direct that such reference be expunged from the Hansard;
- (h) No Member shall make any imputation of improper motives against another Member, or make reference to personal affairs of another Member;
- (i) A Member shall speak on the subject matter before Parliament;
- (j) By the indulgence of Parliament, a Member may explain matters of a personal nature although there is no question before Parliament, but such matters may not be debated, and he shall confine himself strictly to the vindication of his own conduct;
- (k) The Member moving a Bill, Regulation, Resolution or Motion shall have the right to reply at the conclusion of the debate;
- (l) Any Member deviating from the rules may be immediately called to order by the Speaker;
- (m) The Members shall, except when voting, make an acknowledgement to the Chair on entering and leaving the Chamber;

- (n) When the Speaker or the Presiding Member is about to leave the Chamber at the conclusion of a sitting, Members shall rise in their places and remain standing until the Speaker or the Presiding Member has left the Chamber; and
- (o) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Standing Order, the Speaker shall be responsible for allocating time among Members in a fair and equitable manner. In determining who should be called to speak, the Speaker may be assisted by the Whips of the Government and the Opposition by providing a list of speakers whom the Speaker may call to speak in an orderly manner.

RULES FOR MEMBERS NOT SPEAKING

92. (1) Any Member, during a debate in Parliament or in a Committee of the whole Parliament—

- (a) shall enter Parliament or Committee with decorum and in an orderly manner;
- (b) shall not cross the floor of Parliament;
- (c) shall not read newspapers, save such as related to the business before Parliament;
- (d) shall not smoke;
- (e) shall maintain silence while another Member is speaking and shall not interrupt unless the Member speaking gives way;
- (f) shall not converse using verbal communication devices; and
- (g) shall not enter the well of the House.

(2) Points of Order

- (a) A member may in any proceedings question whether proper procedures have been or are being followed by making a point of order except at a time when a division is in progress.
- (b) In making a point of order, a member may not speak for more than one minute and may not speak on the question under consideration.

Points of order shall take precedence over the question under consideration, the discussion of which shall be suspended while they are being considered.

- (c) The Speaker or the Presiding Member shall normally take an immediate decision on any point of order in accordance with these Standing Orders but may exceptionally defer taking a decision. The Speaker or the Presiding Member shall announce the ruling made under this Standing Order and no further discussion on the decision shall be allowed.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PARLIAMENT

93. (1) A Committee of the whole Parliament shall be appointed by a resolution of Parliament.

(2) When such resolution has been agreed to, the Speaker shall leave the Chair without question put.

94. The Speaker, or if he is not present, the Deputy Speaker, shall preside as Chair of a Committee of the whole Parliament, and in the absence of both, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees shall preside. In the absence of the Speaker, the Deputy Speaker and the Deputy Chairperson of Committees, any Member of the Panel of Chairs shall preside.

95. Voting in Committee of the whole Parliament shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 47 to 49 with the substitution of the word “Chair” for the word “Speaker”.

96. The Chair of a Committee of the whole Parliament shall not vote unless the votes of the other Members are equally divided, in which case the Chair may exercise a casting vote.

97. The rules as to procedure when the Speaker is in the Chair, shall apply to procedure in Committee of the whole Parliament except that—

- (a) a motion shall not require notice;
- (b) a motion need not be seconded;
- (c) a Member may speak more than once to the same question.

98. A Committee of the whole Parliament shall deal only with the matters referred to it by Parliament.

99. The proceedings in a Committee of the whole Parliament shall be recorded in the minutes of Parliament.

SELECT COMMITTEES

100. A Select Committee may be appointed by resolution of Parliament.

101. A Select Committee shall not, without the leave of Parliament, consist of more than twelve Members. A motion for such leave requires notice.

102. The scope of an inquiry by a Select Committee shall be determined by the terms of the order under which it is appointed but it may be enlarged or restricted by the instructions of Parliament. Such order shall specify the time for the presentation of the final report of the Committee provided that Parliament may extend such time period to a specified date as it deems appropriate.

103. The Chair and Members of every Select Committee shall be appointed by the Speaker. In the absence of the Chair, any Member of the Committee chosen by the Members present, shall chair for that meeting.

104. The Committee shall hold its first meeting at such time and place as may be appointed by the Chair. Meetings after the first meeting shall be held at such times and places as the Committee may determine.

105. Four Members of a Select Committee shall unless otherwise ordered, form the quorum.

106. In case where a vacancy occurs in any such Committee, the Speaker may appoint, from time to time, another Member to take the place of such Member on a Select Committee. Any Member who absents from three consecutive meetings of a Select Committee without having obtained the prior leave of the Committee, shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of such Committee. Every appointment under this Standing Order shall be announced to Parliament at its next meeting.

107. The Chair of a Select Committee shall have an original vote. If the votes cast be equally divided, he may exercise a casting vote.

108. If it is desired to enable a Select Committee to which a Bill or matter has been referred to hear evidence thereon, Parliament may by resolution empower that Committee to summon persons and call for papers and records,

and any Committee on which such powers have been conferred shall have leave to report their opinions and observations together with the minutes of evidence taken before them to Parliament and to make a special report of any matter which they may think fit to bring to the notice of Parliament.

109. A Select Committee may continue its investigations although Parliament may be adjourned or prorogued and shall not be dissolved until the presentation to Parliament of its report or by motion of Parliament.

110. The names of the Members present each day at the sitting of any Select Committee, the names of the witnesses examined and in the event of any division taking place, the question proposed, the name of the proposer and the respective votes thereupon of the Members present, shall be entered in the minutes of the proceedings of the Committee and such minutes of proceedings together with the minutes of evidence shall be reported to Parliament and printed with the report of the Committee.

SECTORAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEES

***111.**[(1) There shall be not more than Twenty Sectoral Oversight Committees of which the subjects and functions are determined by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The Sectoral Oversight Committees shall function for the duration of Parliament and conduct its inquiries notwithstanding any adjournment or prorogation of Parliament.

(3) The Sectoral Oversight Committees shall have the power to examine any Bill, except the Bills defined in Article 152 of the Constitution, Treaty, Reports including the Annual and Performance Reports relating to the institutions coming under its purview or any other matter referred to the Committee by Parliament or any Committee or a Minister relating to the subjects and functions within their jurisdiction.

(4) The Sectoral Oversight Committees may conduct at any time such inquiries and investigations as it considers necessary or appropriate in the exercise of its responsibilities.

(5) Each Sectoral Oversight Committee shall meet not less than two days of every month.

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

(6) The Sectoral Oversight Committees shall have general oversight responsibilities in order to assist Parliament in—

- (a) its analysis, appraisal and evaluation of the application, administration, execution and effectiveness of existing government policies;
- (b) its activities for future research and forecasting for the formulation of alternative policies;
- (c) its analysis, appraisal and evaluation of the application, administration, execution and effectiveness of legislation passed by Parliament and condition and circumstances that may indicate the necessity or desirability of enacting any new or additional legislation; and
- (d) its formulation, consideration and enactment or changes in any law and of such additional legislation as may be necessary or appropriate.

(7) Each Sectoral Oversight Committee may examine the suitability of any person who has been either appointed to any post or nominated to hold office in any post to any institution within the jurisdiction of that Committee and make recommendations in regard to such persons to the appropriate Ministry.

(8) All Members of Parliament other than the following are eligible to serve as Members of any Sectoral Oversight Committee:—

- (a) The Speaker;
- (b) The Deputy Speaker;
- (c) The Deputy Chairperson of Committees;
- (d) The Prime Minister;
- (e) The Leader of the House of Parliament;
- (f) The Leader of the Opposition in Parliament; and
- (g) The Ministers of Cabinet of Ministers appointed under Article 43(1) of the Constitution.

(9) Ministers appointed under Article 45(1) of the Constitution and Deputy Ministers shall not be eligible to serve in any Sectoral Oversight Committee whose jurisdiction and related functions are the same as any subject, function, Department or Institution of the Minister of the Cabinet under whose purview such Minister or Deputy Minister functions:

Provided that, the Committee may invite the Minister, the Minister who is not a Member of the Cabinet of Ministers or the Deputy Minister to assist the Committee when a Bill is being discussed in the Committee.

(10) The Committee of Selection shall in nominating Members to Sectoral Oversight Committees have due regard to numerical strengths of political parties and independent groups represented in Parliament in accordance with the nominations made by the leaders of such political parties and independent groups.

(11) Any Member of Parliament, who is not a Member of a particular Sectoral Oversight Committee may be permitted to observe the Committee proceedings by the Chair of any such Committee.

(12) Each Sectoral Oversight Committee shall at its first meeting and thereafter, at the first meeting after the Chair become vacant, elect a Chair from among the Members of the Sectoral Oversight Committee.

(13) Any Member who absents from three consecutive meetings of any Sectoral Oversight Committee without obtaining prior leave of such Committee shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of such Committee.

(14) Each Sectoral Oversight Committee may where it considers necessary appoint Sub-Committees of its own members to examine and report to such Committee, such matters as the Committee may deem necessary.

(15) Any matter referred to a Sectoral Oversight Committee may not be taken up for consideration by Parliament until six weeks has lapsed from the date of the reference, unless the Parliament has directed otherwise as the Parliament may by resolution determine such period.

(16) Every Sectoral Oversight Committee may in regard to any Bill or any other matter of public importance, call for evidence from any affected or interested party.

(17) Every Sectoral Oversight Committee is empowered to summon persons and call for papers and records and shall submit to Parliament, Reports containing their opinion and observations together with the minutes of evidence taken before them.

(18) Where a Sectoral Oversight Committee do the enactment of legislation or submit a non-legislative report, the Minister of the Cabinet to whom the relevant subject is assigned and has ministerial responsibility or if not assigned, the Prime Minister shall fulfil the recommendations laid down in the report within a period of eight weeks, and also submit a statement on actions proposed to take with regard to observations or if the Minister is of the view that particular recommendations may not be fulfilled, the Minister shall explain the reasons for this in writing and indicate alternative actions that the Minister proposes. If the Committee requires, the Committee may invite the relevant Minister to explain the position in person and to answer the questions that arise as to such matters within eight weeks.

(19) (a) The Chair may invite not more than five (5) Youth Representatives between the age of 18 and 35 years to assist the Committee in respect of each matter taken up for inquiry before the Committee.

(b) With the permission of the Chair, the Youth Representatives summoned may give the opportunity to ask questions from the witnesses and peruse documents before the Committee.

However, the Youth Representatives will not have a vote in the Committee.

(c) The Chair may allow the views, observations and opinions of the Youth Representatives to be included in the Report of the Committee by way of an addendum to the Report, subject to any direction that the Committee may decide.

(d) Selection criteria for the Youth Representatives shall be decided on the guidelines set by the Committee of Selection.]

MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

***112.** [(1) The Committee of Selection shall at the commencement of every Session of Parliament and from time to time as necessary may appoint a number of Ministerial Consultative Committees corresponding to the number of Ministries of the Cabinet of Ministers, comprising:-

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

- (a) The Cabinet Minister in charge of the relevant subject as Chair;
- (b) State Minister;
- (c) Deputy Minister; and
- (d) Five other Members of Parliament nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) Any Member who absents himself from three consecutive meetings of the Committee without having obtained prior leave of such Committee on application under his signature, shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of such Ministerial Consultative Committee and shall not be re-appointed to such Committee during the same Session unless agreed to by the Committee of Selection:

Provided that, the preceding provisions shall not apply where any meeting of such Committee is held on a day falling within the period during which such Member has, with the leave of Parliament first obtained, absented himself from sittings of Parliament.

(3) Any Member of Parliament may attend the meetings of a Ministerial Consultative Committee of which he is not a Member at the request of the Chair of the Committee and shall withdraw when requested by the Chair.

(4) The duty of a Ministerial Consultative Committee shall be to consider and report such matters as are referred to the Committee by the Chair or by Parliament or by any Member of Parliament including motions, regulations, or papers, etc.

(5) (a) The meetings of the Committee shall be summoned in consultation with the Secretary to the respective Ministry.

(b) A Ministerial Consultative Committee shall have the power to initiate through the Chair any Bill or motion.

(6) Each Ministerial Consultative Committee shall meet whenever summoned by the Chair. It shall be the duty of every Secretary to the Ministry to ensure in consultation with the Chair and Secretary General of Parliament that meetings are summoned by the Chair at least once a month and meaningful programme of work arranged and the Ministerial Consultative Committee from time to time shall report its findings to Parliament:

Provided that, a meeting shall be summoned as soon as possible upon the written request of at least three Members of such Ministerial Consultative Committee.

(7) Each Ministerial Consultative Committee shall have the power to send for and examine persons, papers and records, to move from place to place and to do all such acts as are necessary for the fullest consideration of the matters referred to it and to meet notwithstanding any adjournment of Parliament.

(8) Three Members of a Ministerial Consultative Committee shall form the quorum and it shall be the duty of the Chair of such Ministerial Consultative Committee not to function without the required quorum.

(9) General Rules for Committees shall apply to Ministerial Consultative Committees.]

LEGISLATIVE STANDING COMMITTEE

113. (1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Legislative Standing Committee consisting of the Deputy Speaker as the Chair, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees and ten other Members nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The Committee of Selection may also decide on the number of co-opted Members to serve on the Committee representing both government and the opposition and the Speaker is empowered to nominate such Members.

(3) The quorum of the Committee shall be three members.

(4) The duty of this Legislative Standing Committee shall be limited to the consideration of the Bills/proposed statutes referred to it by Parliament.

(5) For the performance of its duties the Committee shall have power to summon for persons, papers and records.

(6) The Chair of the Legislative Standing Committee shall have an original vote and if the votes be equally divided, he shall also have a casting vote.

(7) The Member in charge of any Bill referred to this Legislative Standing Committee, if not a member of the Committee, shall have the right to attend any meeting at which such Bill shall be under discussion and to address the Committee upon the Bill, and to move amendments and vote as a member of the Committee upon any question arising in connection with such Bill.

(8) The procedure in the Legislative Standing Committee shall be as nearly as may be the same as that in Committee of the whole Parliament and the

minutes of the Legislative Standing Committee shall be kept in the same form as those of a Committee of the whole Parliament and shall be reported to Parliament within the time limit, if any, laid down by Parliament, together with the Bill/proposed statute and the report thereon:

Provided that, where at the conclusion of a session the Legislative Standing Committee has not completed its deliberations and presented its report to Parliament, the proceedings of that Committee shall stand referred to the Legislative Standing Committee to which the Bill/proposed statute may be referred in the next session.

COMMITTEES FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

114. (1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee of Selection appointed at the commencement of every Session to consider the constitution, number, functions and quorum of Sectoral Oversight Committees and Ministerial Consultative Committees and to report with all convenient speed their opinions thereon to Parliament, and to nominate Members to serve upon the following Committees: —

- (a) the Committee on Parliamentary Business;
- (b) the Committee on Standing Orders;
- (c) the House Committee;
- (d) the Committee on Ethics and Privileges;
- (e) the Legislative Standing Committee;
- (f) the Ministerial Consultative Committees;
- (g) the Committee on Public Accounts;
- (h) the Committee on Public Enterprises;
- (i) the Committee on Public Finance;

- (j) †the Committee on Banking and Financial Services;
- (k) †the Committee on Economic Stabilization;
- (l) †the Committee on Ways and Means;
- (m) the Committee on Public Petitions;
- (n) the Committee on High Posts; and
- (o) the Backbencher Committee.

(2) The Committee of Selection shall consist of the Speaker who shall be the Chair and twelve Members which shall include the Leaders of political parties or their nominees to be nominated by Parliament at the commencement of each Session. The Committee of Selection shall have leave to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of Parliament, to report from time to time, and to inform Parliament when any Member has been nominated to any Committee.

COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY BUSINESS

115. There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Parliamentary Business consisting of the Speaker who shall be the Chair, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees, the Leader of the House of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, the Chief Government Whip, the Chief Opposition Whip and eight other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection. It shall be the duty of the Committee on Parliamentary Business to consider and decide on the time that should be allocated for the discussion of such Business of Parliament and such other matters as the Speaker, in consultation with the Leader of the House of Parliament, may refer to the Committee. The minutes of meetings of the Committee on Parliamentary Business shall be circulated to all Members.

† Consequential amendment relevant to the amendment passed on November 23, 2022

COMMITTEE ON STANDING ORDERS

116. There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Standing Orders consisting of the Speaker who shall be the Chair, the Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Chairperson of Committees and six other Members to be nominated by the Committee of Selection. It shall be the duty of the Committee on Standing Orders to consider matters of procedure and conduct of Business in Parliament and to recommend any amendments to the Standing Orders that may be deemed necessary and to report on all matters relating to the Standing Orders which may be referred to it by Parliament.

HOUSE COMMITTEE

117. (1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the House Committee consisting of the Speaker as Chair and nine Members nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The function of the House Committee is to consider and advise upon all matters connected with the amenities of Members. The minutes of meetings of House Committee shall be circulated to all Members.

COMMITTEE ON ETHICS AND PRIVILEGES

†118. [(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Ethics and Privileges consisting of not more than ten Members nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The functions of the Committee on Ethics and Privileges are—

- (a) a complaint that is submitted to the Parliament, by a Member of Parliament, with reference to a matter in respect to a violation of ethics and rules of the Code of Conduct of the Members of Parliament or a violation of the Privileges of the Parliament or a Member of Parliament, shall be examined, provided that the Speaker is satisfied that such complaint so submitted, *prima facie*, is a breach of Privilege; and
- (b) to determine with reference to the facts of each case whether a breach of Privilege on the rules of conduct and etiquette has been committed and if so, the nature of the breach, the circumstances

[†] Original deleted and substituted by the amendment passed on November, 23, 2022

leading to such breach and its recommendations as the Committee may deem fit.

(3) Such a complaint that is submitted to the Committee should be forwarded to the Speaker with recommendations of the Committee, within two weeks from the date of receipt. However, the Speaker has the authority to grant permission to a request to extend the said period on exceptional grounds. The Committee shall have the power to summon persons, and call for documents and other records and to do other acts as are necessary for the examination of the matters so referred to it.

(4) The Committee shall also examine any matter referred to it in relation to a violation or non-adherence of the rules of the Code of Conduct of the Members of Parliament. Every Member shall co-operate, at all stages, with any such examination by or under the authority of Parliament. No Member shall lobby a Member of the Committee on Ethics and Privileges in a manner calculated or intended to influence its consideration of an alleged breach of the rules of Code of Conduct.

(5) In the performance of its duties the Committee may obtain the services of experts, call for documents and summon and examine witnesses.

(6) The Parliament may consider conclusions and recommendations made in the report of the Committee on Ethics and Privileges and may impose sanctions on Members concerned where it deems necessary.

(7) The Committee on Ethics and Privileges may, from time to time, make rules to regulate its procedure.

(8) The Chair of the Committee may issue such directions as the Chair may consider necessary for regulating the procedure in respect of all matters connected with the examination of cases with reference to ethical and other misconduct of Members.]

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

***119.**[(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Public Accounts consisting of sixteen Members, who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers nominated by the Committee of Selection.

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

(2) It shall be the duty of the Committee on Public Accounts to examine the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure and such other accounts laid before Parliament as the Committee may think fit, with the assistance of the Auditor-General.

(3) The Committee on Public Accounts shall, every three months, report to Parliament on the accounts examined, the finances, financial procedures, performance and management generally of any department, local authority and on any matter arising therefrom. The report shall include observations on matters that require remedial action, and recommendations to ensure the proper usage of public finance.

(4) A report of the Committee on Public Accounts, once tabled in Parliament shall be referred to the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance and the Ministers in charge of the institutions and the respective Minister shall submit the observations and actions taken in that regard to Parliament within eight weeks, and also submit a statement of actions proposed to be taken with regard to the observations or if the Minister is of the view that particular recommendations may not be fulfilled, the Minister shall explain the reasons in writing and indicate alternative actions, the Minister proposes to take to ensure the proper usage of public finance. If the Committee requires, the committee may invite the relevant Minister to explain the position in person and to answer the questions that arise as to such matters within eight weeks. When Parliament so decides, the report concerned may be referred to the Attorney- General for his observations and necessary action.

(5) (a) The Committee on Public Accounts shall as required appoint sub-committees of its Members to look at any institution. Such sub-committee shall report to the Committee on all accounts and the finances and management of such departments and local authorities as the Committee may direct.

(b) The Committee on Public Accounts or any sub-committees appointed by the Committee shall as required have sittings in Parliament or any relevant institutions as decided by the Committee.

(c) Members who are not Members of the Committee on Public Accounts may be allowed to observe the proceedings of the Committee with the permission of the Chair.

(6) The Committee on Public Accounts or any of its sub-committees shall for the performance of its duties have the power to summon before it and question any person and call for and examine any paper, book, record or other document and to have access to stores and property.

(7) The quorum of the Committee on Public Accounts shall be five Members. Any Member not attending three consecutive meetings of the Committee without good reason acceptable to the Committee shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of the Committee.]

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ENTERPRISES

***120.** [(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Public Enterprises consisting of sixteen Members, who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Committee on Public Enterprises to examine the accounts of public corporations, institutions funded wholly or in part by Government and of any business or other undertaking vested under any written law in the Government laid before Parliament, with the assistance of the Auditor-General.

(3) The Committee on Public Enterprises shall, every three months, report to Parliament on the accounts examined, the finances, financial procedures, performance and management generally of any public corporation or of any business or other undertaking vested under any written law in the Government and on any matter arising therefrom. The report shall include observations on matters that require remedial action, and recommendations to ensure the proper usage of public finance.

(4) A report of the Committee on Public Enterprises, once tabled in Parliament shall be referred to the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance and the Ministers in charge of the institutions and the respective Minister shall submit the observations and actions taken in that regard to Parliament within eight weeks, and also submit a statement of actions proposed to be taken with regard to the observations or if the Minister is of the view that particular recommendations may not be fulfilled, the Minister shall explain the reasons in writing and indicate alternative actions, the Minister proposes to take to ensure the proper usage of public finance. If the Committee requires, the committee may invite the relevant Minister to explain the position in person and to answer

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

the questions that arise as to such matters within eight weeks. When Parliament so decides, the report concerned may be referred to the Attorney- General for his observations and necessary action.

- (5) (a) The Committee on Public Enterprises may when it considers necessary appoint any sub-committees consisting of its own Members to examine and report to the Committee on all accounts, the budgets and annual estimates, the finances and management of such public corporations or of any business or other undertaking vested under any written law in the Government as the Committee may direct.
- (b) The Committee on Public Enterprises or any sub-committees appointed by the Committee shall as required have sittings in Parliament or any relevant institutions as decided by the Committee.
- (c) Members who are not Members of the Committee on Public Enterprises may be allowed to observe the proceedings of the Committee with the permission of the Chair.

(6) The Committee or any of its sub-committees shall for the performance of its duties have the power to summon before it and question any person and call for and examine any paper, book, record or other document and to have access to stores and property.

(7) The quorum of the Committee on Public Enterprises shall be five Members. Any Member not attending three consecutive meetings of the Committee without good reason acceptable to the Committee shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of the Committee.]

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC FINANCE

***121.** [(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Public Finance consisting of a Chair and eleven Members, who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers nominated by the Committee of Selection provided that the Chair shall be a Member of the Opposition.

* Original deleted and substituted by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on October 05, 2022

(2) It shall be the duty of the Committee on Public Finance to examine-

- (a) the collection of revenue under Article 148 of the Constitution;
- (b) the payment from the Consolidated Fund;
- (c) the utilization of public funds for specific purposes by law;
- (d) the application of public funds;
- (e) the recessions of appropriations contained in the Appropriation Act for the current year, the transfer of appropriation and the unexpected balance;
- (f) the implementation of the Appropriation Act for the current year;
- (g) public debt and debt service;
- (h) reports and statements under the Fiscal Management (Responsibility) Act, No. 3 of 2003; and
- (i) the Bills, Motions, Resolutions and Orders defined in Article 152 of the Constitution.

(3) The Parliament, any Committee or a Minister may also refer any matter to the Committee on Public Finance for its consideration and response.

(4) The Committee shall, from time to time, report to Parliament, the issues arising from the matters referred to in paragraphs (2) and (3) above.

(5) The Committee shall present before the commencement of the committee stage of the Appropriation Bill a report—

- (i) on the fiscal financial and economic assumptions used as the basis in arriving at total estimated expenditure and revenue; and
- (ii) on the estimates including whether the allocation of money is in compliance with the policies of the Government.

(6) A report of the Committee on Public Finance once tabled in Parliament shall be referred to the Minister of Finance and the Minister who shall submit the observations and steps taken therein contained to Parliament within a period of eight weeks.

(7) The Committee on Public Finance may have the power to summon persons and call for papers and records and shall submit to Parliament, Report containing their opinions and observations together with the minutes of evidence taken before them.

(8) The quorum of the Committee shall be four Members.]

COMMITTEE ON BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

†122. [(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Banking and Financial Services consisting of sixteen Members, who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The Committee shall have power as follows:—

- (a) To consider and report on professional standards and culture of the Sri Lankan banking, insurance and other financial sector services;
- (b) To make recommendations on reforms for creating improved functioning and diverse banking, insurance and other financial sector services, in order to empower consumers and provide greater discipline on these institutions to raise standards and provide recommendations for legislative and other regulatory actions;
- (c) To study and review on a comprehensive basis, matters relating to international economic policy, overseas financial services Regulations, and its effects on Sri Lankan monetary affairs, credit and financial services and economic growth;
- (d) To review on a continuous basis, matters relating to monetary policy including Central Bank Reserve System, export and foreign trade promotion, export controls, import controls, financial aid to commerce, industry and small and medium enterprises, financial markets, financial procedures, performance and management of financial institutions, issuance and redemption of notes, coinage and currency, matters relating to disbursement and recovery of

† New Standing Order added by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on November 23, 2022

loans; and provide recommendations to ensure the stability and continuance of the financial sector;

- (e) To conduct and examine regulatory and competitive investigations into the Sri Lanka Inter Bank Offered Rate (SLIBOR) setting process;
- (f) to review the co-operate governance, performance and management, transparency and conflicts of interest relating to state financial institutions and financial services provides including insurance;
- (g) to conduct policy reviews of the responsibilities of the Government, and of future Governments and Parliament in respect of financial policy and financial institutions including insurance;
- (h) to examine and report on the performance and management of the Securities Exchange Commission and capital market developments; and
- (i) to examine and report on the performance and management of the Colombo Stock Exchange.

(3) The Committee shall, every three months report to Parliament on its findings of any state-owned Bank, or of any other institution providing financial services including Insurance, or other undertaking vested under any written law in the Government and on any matter arising therefrom. The report shall also include observations on matters that require remedial action, and recommendations if any.

(4) A report of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services once tabled in Parliament shall be referred to the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance and the Ministers in charge of the institutions who shall fulfil the recommendations laid down in the report within a period of eight weeks, and also submit a statement on actions they propose to take with regard to observations, or if the Minister is of the view that particular recommendations may not be fulfilled, the Minister shall explain the reasons for this in writing and indicate alternative action the Minister proposes. If the Committee requires,

the Committee may invite the relevant Minister to explain the position in person and to answer the questions that arise as to such matters within eight weeks.

(5) (a) The Committee shall as required appoint sub-committees of its Members to look at any institution, provided that other Members of the Committee may attend any such sub-committee meeting if they so wish. Such sub-committee shall report to the Committee on such matters as the Committee deem necessary.

(b) The Committee or any sub-committees appointed by the Committee shall as required have sittings in Parliamentary Complex or any relevant institutions as decided by the Committee.

(6) Members of Parliament who are not Members of the Committee may be allowed to observe the proceedings of the Committee with the permission of the Chair.

(7) The Committee on Banking and Financial Services or any of its sub-committee shall for the performance of its duties have the power to summon before it and question any person and call for and examine any paper, book, record or other document and to have access to stores and property.

(8) The quorum of the Committee on Banking and Financial Services shall be five Members. Any Member not attending three consecutive meetings of the Committee without good reason acceptable to the Committee shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of the Committee.]

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STABILIZATION

†123.[(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Economic Stabilization consisting of sixteen Members, who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The functions of the Committee on Economic Stabilization are:-

(a) to examine the performance, management, operational efficiency, policy framework, legal framework and risk management of state-owned enterprises;

† New Standing Order added by the amendment to Standing Orders passed on November 23, 2022

- (b) to examine the financial stability, debt management, profit and investment management of state-owned enterprises;
- (c) to examine the requirements for divestiture, opportunities for public-private partnerships and strategies to minimize losses and enhance profits of state-owned enterprises; and
- (d) to examine human resource management, reduction of excessive or surplus staff, non-payment of wages and statutory dues, over payments of wages and allowances pertaining to those who are employed by the state-owned enterprises.

(3) The Committee shall, every three months report to Parliament on its findings of any state-owned enterprises governed by the Finance Act, No 38 of 1971 and the Companies Act, No. 7 of 2007.

(4) A report of the Committee on Economic Stabilization, once tabled in Parliament shall be referred to the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance and the Ministers in charge of the institutions who shall fulfil the recommendations laid down in the report within a period of eight weeks, and also submit a statement on actions they propose to take with regard to observations, or if the Minister is of the view that particular recommendations may not be fulfilled, the Minister shall explain the reasons for this in writing and indicate alternative action the Minister proposes. If the Committee requires, the Committee may invite the relevant Minister to explain the position in person and to answer the questions that arise as to such matters within eight weeks.

- (5) (a) The Committee shall as required, appoint sub-committees of its Members to look at any institution, provided that other Members of the Committee may attend any such sub-committee meeting if they so wish. Such sub-committee shall report to the Committee on such matters as the Committee deem necessary.
- (b) The Committee or any sub-committees appointed by the Committee shall as required have sittings in Parliamentary Complex or any relevant institutions as decided by the Committee

(6) Members of Parliament who are not Members of the Committee may be allowed to observe the proceedings of the Committee with the permission of the Chair.

(7) The Committee on Economic Stabilization or any of its sub-committee shall for the performance of its duties have the power to summon before it and question any person and call for and examine any paper, book, record or other document and to have access to stores and property.

(8) The quorum of the Committee on Economic Stabilization shall be five Members. Any Member not attending three consecutive meetings of the Committee without good reason acceptable to the Committee shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of the Committee.]

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

†124. [(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Ways and Means for the purpose of recommending measures necessary to mobilize additional revenue for the Government and to consider its expenditure in strengthening the economic stability of the country consisting of sixteen Members, who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The Committee shall have the power to examine all matters related to taxation, tariff and other revenue enhancing measures for the government, propose changes to the existing policies on taxation and tariffs as and when necessary.

(3) In discharging the duties of the Committee, the committee shall examine and provide recommendations on—

- (a) effective revenue collection mechanisms;
- (b) matters relating to the Inland Revenue Laws, and revenue measures specified in other Laws;
- (c) matters relating to customs and customs administration which includes tariff, customs laws, policies and guidelines that are applicable in imports and exports;

† New Standing Order added by the amendment passed on November 23, 2022

- (d) matters relating to international trade including all types of trade agreements, Commodity agreements and their implementation as well as the international rules and recognized aspects of these agreements;
- (e) matters relating to the import industry including their impacts, import policies, mechanisms to promote competitive import market and measures to address harmful and unfair imports and such import practices;
- (f) specific matters relating to trade industry including export policies, export promotion mechanisms, market access and competition, continuous supply of material required by the industries, bilateral and multilateral trade relations;
- (g) matters relating to all government pensions, healthcare, welfare and social security schemes, their payments and policies, government social services programs including childcare programs, programs for persons with physical or mental disabilities, rehabilitation programs; and
- (h) matters relating to the provision of emergency reliefs and related policies.

(4) The Committee shall have the general oversight powers on all matters within the scope of the Committee but limited to existing laws:

Provided that, the Committee may make recommendations on the enactment of new laws, to introduce amendments to or repeal of existing laws on matters coming within the purview of the Committee.

(5) The Committee shall, every three months report to Parliament on its findings and the report shall also include observations on matters that require remedial actions, and recommendations if any.

(6) A report of the Committee on Ways and Means, once tabled in Parliament shall be referred to the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance and the Ministers in charge of the institutions who shall fulfil the recommendations laid down in the report within a period of eight weeks, and also submit statement on actions they propose to take with regard to observations, or if the Minister is of the view that particular recommendations may not be fulfilled, the Minister shall explain the reasons for this in writing and indicate alternative action the

Minister proposes. If the Committee requires, the Committee may invite the relevant Minister to explain the position in person and to answer the questions that arise as to such matter within eight weeks.

(7) The Committee shall as required, appoint sub-committees of its Members to look at any institution, provided that other Members of the Committee may attend any such sub-committee meeting if they so wish. Such sub-committee shall report to the Committee on such matters as the Committee deem necessary.

(8) The Committee or any sub-committee appointed by the Committee shall as required have sittings in Parliamentary Complex or any relevant institutions as decided by the Committee.

(9) Members of Parliament who are not Members of the Committee may be allowed to observe the proceedings of the Committee with the permission of the Chair.

(10) The Committee on Ways and Means or any of its sub-committee shall for the performance of its duties have the power to summon before it and question any person and call for and examine any paper, book, record or other document and to have access to stores and property.

(11) The quorum of the Committee on Ways and Means shall be five Members. Any Member not attending three consecutive meetings of the Committee without good reason acceptable to the Committee shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of the Committee.]

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PETITIONS

***125.** [(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Public Petitions consisting of fifteen Members, who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers, nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) It shall be the duty of the Committee on Public Petitions to consider the petitions referred to it under the provisions of paragraph (10) of Standing Order 30.

(3) Where the Committee on Public Petitions is of the view that any petition discloses an infringement of a fundamental right or other injustice by a public

* Original Deleted and substituted by the amendment to standing orders passed on October 05, 2022

officer or an officer of a public corporation, local authority or other like institution, the Committee on Public Petitions may inquire into such petition or refer such petition, to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) to inquire and report.

(4) The Committee on Public Petitions having inquired into the petition or after consideration of a report made to it by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) upon the conclusion of his investigation in respect of a petition referred to him by the Committee on Public Petitions, may report to Parliament its opinion on the action to be taken on such petition or report.

(5) The Committee on Public Petitions shall, every three months, report to Parliament its opinion on the action to be taken in respect of petitions referred to it, together with such other observations on such petitions as it may think fit.

(6) When the report is tabled in Parliament, the Speaker shall take steps to send the contents of such report to the relevant Minister for his responses to the observations. The Minister's responses shall be forwarded to the Speaker in writing within a period of eight weeks.

(7) Having received the responses from the relevant Minister, the Speaker shall forward a copy to the Chair and the Member of Parliament who has presented the petition whereupon the Committee shall consider the responses and, if not satisfied, shall request the Minister to take suitable remedial action. The Minister shall act as required within a month or else respond in writing as to why this is not possible, and indicate what alternative action he has taken to deal with the grievance under consideration.

(8) The Committee on Public Petitions may, when it considers necessary, appoint any sub-committee of its own Members to examine and report to the Committee on Public Petitions of such petitions or reports as the Committee on Public Petitions may direct.

(9) The Committee on Public Petitions or any of its sub-committee shall, for the performance of its duties have the power to summon before it and question any person, call for and examine any paper, book, record or other document and to have access to stores and property.

(10) The quorum of the Committee on Public Petitions shall be five Members. Any Member not attending three consecutive meetings of the Committee without good reason acceptable to the Committee shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of the Committee.]

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

126. (1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on Constitutional Affairs consisting of the Speaker as the Chair, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the House of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and three other Members nominated by the Speaker.

(2) The quorum of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs shall be three Members.

(3) All Independent Commissions established under the Schedule of the Article 41B of the Constitution, shall forward to Parliament a report of its activities, including exercise, performance and discharge of its powers, duties and functions for each calendar year.

(4) The Committee shall consider the annual reports and shall have the power to summon the Chairpersons, members and officials of the Commissions in the exercise of its duties.

(5) For the avoidance of doubts, this Committee will not seek any clarification with respect to judicial proceedings instituted or to be instituted by the Commissions if any.

COMMITTEE ON HIGH POSTS

127.(1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Committee on High Posts consisting of not more than twelve Members nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The functions of the Committee on High Posts are to examine the suitability of any person who has been either appointed to any post or nominated to hold office in any post determined by the Cabinet of Ministers and to make recommendations in regard to such persons.

(3) In the case of persons appointed or nominated for the posts of Secretaries to Ministries, Heads of Missions abroad and Chairpersons of selected Corporations as determined by the Committee on High Posts shall be examined within a period of three months.

(4) The Committee on High Posts shall, for the performance of its duties, have the power to summon before it and examine any person and call for and examine any paper, book, record or other document and to do all such acts as may be necessary for the fullest examination of the suitability of any such person referred to in paragraph (2) above.

(5) Notwithstanding a prorogation of Parliament, the Committee shall have the power to report to Parliament, from time to time, and shall continue its examination.

(6) The quorum of the Committee on High Posts shall be four Members.

LIAISON COMMITTEE

128. (1) The Speaker shall at the beginning of a new Parliament appoint the Liaison Committee.

(2) The Liaison Committee shall comprise of the following:—

(a) The Speaker who shall be the Chair of the Committee;

(b) the Deputy Speaker;

(c) the Deputy Chairperson of Committees;

(d) the Leader of the House of Parliament;

(e) the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament;

(f) the Chief Government Whip;

(g) the Chief Opposition Whip; and

(h) Chairs of the Committee on Ethics and Privileges, Committee on Public Accounts, Committee on Public Enterprises, Committee on Public Finance, †[Committee on Banking and Financial Services, Committee on Economic Stabilization, Committee on Ways and Means], Legislative Standing Committee, Sectoral Oversight Committees, Ministerial Consultative Committees, Committee on Public Petitions, Committee on High Posts, and the Backbencher Committee.

(3) The Liaison Committee shall consider—

(a) matters pertaining to facilities and staffing of Committees;

† Consequential amendment relevant to the amendment passed on November 23, 2022

- (b) the availability of committee rooms for meetings of Committees;
- (c) the availability of experts and researchers for Committees;
- (d) the attendance at meetings by members of Committees; and
- (e) the allocation of time to debate reports of Committees.

(4) The Committee shall meet at least once in two months and the Chair shall take steps to summon the meetings of the Liaison Committee.

(5) The Liaison Committee shall have the power to summon persons and call for papers and records, to sit and to report to Parliament, from time to time.

BACKBENCHER COMMITTEE

129. (1) There shall be a Committee to be designated the Backbencher Committee, nominated by the Committee of Selection.

(2) The Backbencher Committee shall consist of the Chief Government Whip, the Chief Opposition Whip, three Backbenchers from the Government and three Backbenchers from the Opposition.

(3) In the case of Members from the Opposition one place shall be allotted to the largest party in the Opposition and another place shall be allotted to the second largest party in the Opposition;

(4) Ministers of the Cabinet of Ministers, save and except the Chief Government Whip, Ministers who are not members of the Cabinet of Ministers, Deputy Ministers, the Leader of the House of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Leaders of the Political Parties shall not be entitled to be a Member of this Committee.

(5) The Chief Government Whip shall be the Chair of the Committee and in his absence, the Chief Opposition Whip shall chair the Committee.

(6) It shall be the duty of the Backbencher Committee to determine the Business to be taken up on days allotted for Backbencher Business.

(7) The Committee shall have the powers as of any other Committee set up for Special Purposes and the General Rules for Committees shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to this Committee.

(8) The Committee may invite Government officials to attend its meetings.

(9) Any Backbench Member of Parliament desiring a debate on any matter shall inform in writing to the Backbencher Committee setting out—

- (a) the importance of holding a debate;
- (b) the number of Members who are likely to take part; and
- (c) whether the matter has been debated or is scheduled to be debated or is likely to be debated in the current Session in Parliament.

(10) The Backbencher Committee, if it considers that the request made by any Backbench Member of Parliament under paragraph (9) above is appropriate, shall request the Committee on Parliamentary Business for allocation of time for such a debate.

(11) The Committee on Parliamentary Business shall thereafter allocate a suitable date and time for such debate.

PROCEDURE FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES COMMITTEES

130.(1) Unless otherwise specified in the Standing Orders, every Committee for Special Purposes, before the commencement of Business at its first meeting, shall elect one of its Members to be its Chair.

(2) The Chair shall have an original vote and if the votes cast be equally divided the Chair shall have a casting vote.

(3) Unless otherwise specified in the Standing Orders, vacancies of Committees shall be filled by the Committee of Selection. The filling of every such vacancy shall be announced to Parliament at its next meeting.

(4) Unless otherwise specified in the Standing Orders, the quorum shall be three Members and it shall be the duty of the Chair of such Committee not to function without the required quorum.

(5) Meetings of a Committee shall be summoned by the Chair.

(6) In the absence of the Chair any other Member elected by the Committee shall preside.

(7) Any Member who absents himself from three consecutive meetings without having obtained the prior leave of such Committee, shall be deemed to have vacated his membership of such Committee:

Provided that, the preceding provisions shall not apply where any meeting of such Committee is held on a day falling within the period during which such Member has, with the leave of Parliament first obtained, absents himself from Sittings of Parliament.

GENERAL RULES FOR COMMITTEES

131.(1) The Secretary-General, or any other officer of Parliament nominated by the Secretary-General shall be the Secretary to each Committee save and except for Standing Order 85 (1) (a).

(2) Each Committee may, when it considers necessary appoint sub-committees of its own Members to examine and report to such Committee on such matters within a period to be specified by such Committee. Such Committee may when it considers necessary authorize any such sub-committee for the performance of its duties to summon before it and question any person and call for and examine any paper, record or document and move from place to place for the fullest consideration of the matters referred to it and to meet notwithstanding any adjournment of Parliament.

(3) Each sub-committee appointed under paragraph (2) above shall consist of a Chair and two or more Members nominated by the Committee from among its Members. Two Members, including the Chair of such sub-committee shall form the quorum.

(4) The Secretary to any Committee may delegate an officer from among the staff to every sub-committee who shall prepare and maintain the minutes of every such sub-committee.

(5) The report of a Committee or sub-committee shall be presented by the Chair or in the absence of the Chair by any other Member of the Committee authorized by the Chair.

(6) Any Member of the Committee functioning as the Chair of one sub-committee shall not function in that capacity concurrently in any other sub-committee of such Committee.

(7) When any report of a Committee is tabled in Parliament, the Parliament may order that the relevant Minister shall respond in relation to the contents of such report within a period of eight weeks. In relation to any report of the Committee on Public Accounts and Committee on Public Enterprises, the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance has to table the Government's

response. The relevant Ministers shall respond in respect of reports from other Committees.

(8) A Committee and any sub-committee appointed by such Committee shall obtain permission from the Speaker to sit outside the Parliament.

(9) A Committee shall have the power subject to the approval of the Speaker to appoint persons with specialized knowledge either to provide information or to elucidate matters of complexity within the Committee's terms of reference and to remunerate such persons.

(10) Every Committee and any sub-committee appointed by such Committee when so authorized by the Committee shall have the power to admit strangers to their meetings with the approval of the Speaker. Such strangers may be excluded when the Committee or sub-committee is deliberating.

(11) The Chair of such Committee or sub-committee shall determine the procedure to be followed in the admission of strangers to the meetings.

(12) The rules applicable in respect of visitors to the galleries of Parliament shall apply to strangers admitted to meetings of a Committee or sub-committee.

(13) The Chair of a Committee or a sub-committee shall have the same powers as the Speaker in respect of maintaining order at the meetings of the Committee or sub-committee, as the case may be.

RESIGNATION OR REMOVAL OF CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES

132. (1) In the case of every Committee other than a Select Committee, where:—

- (a) the Chair has ceased to be a Member of the House; or
- (b) the Chair has given written notice to the Speaker of his wish to resign from the Chair; or
- (c) the Committee has adopted a resolution that it has no confidence in the Chair in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs (2) and (3) of this Standing Order,

the Speaker shall declare the Chair vacant and, as soon as practicable, announce the date of the election of a Chair of that Committee which shall be not less than seven Sitting Days after that announcement.

(2) No motion expressing no confidence in its Chair may be made in a Committee unless notice of the motion has been circulated to the Chair and to all Members of the Committee at least seven Sitting Days in advance of the meeting at which the motion is to be made.

(3) A resolution by a Committee expressing no confidence in its Chair shall have no effect for the purposes of paragraph (1) (c) above unless either:—

(a) it is agreed by the Committee without a division; or

(b) the majority of the membership of the Committee, including at least two Members from the Government and at least one Member from the Opposition, vote in favour of the resolution.

(4) A motion expressing no confidence in the Chair may not be made in a Committee in the six months following the election of a Chair by the Committee or in the year following a vote on such a motion on that Chair.

PROCEDURE IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE PARLIAMENT ON SCHEDULES TO THE APPROPRIATION BILL

133.(1) The Chair shall call the title of each Programme under each Head of Expenditure on which a motion may be made to reduce or omit any Project or Object appearing in the printed estimates under that Programme and the question to be proposed thereon shall be “That Programme..... be reduced by Rs.in respect of object” (or “in respect of Project.....”).

(2) When a question has been proposed for the reduction or omission of a Project or Object, Members shall speak to such question only, until it has been disposed of.

(3) When several motions are offered to the same Programme they shall be called upon in the order in which the Projects or Objects to which they relate appear in the printed Estimates.

(4) When several motions are offered to the same Project or Object in a Programme the smallest reduction shall be first proposed and a motion to omit

the Project or Object shall only be proposed after all motions for reductions have been disposed of.

(5) After a question has been proposed from the Chair for reducing or omitting any Project or Object, no motion shall be made or debate allowed upon any preceding Project or Object.

(6) After a question has been proposed from the Chair for the omission or reduction of any Project no motion shall be made for the reduction or omission of any item in that Project.

(7) No motion for an increase of the expenditure of a Programme, Project or Object shall be made except by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers after notice and that notice shall amongst other things, set out to what sum it is proposed to raise the expenditure on that Programme and that the sanction of the Cabinet of Ministers had been obtained for the increase.

(8) If no motion for a reduction or omission of any Project or Object in the Programme be offered or where every such motion has been disposed of, the question shall be proposed from the Chair “That the sum of Rupeesfor programme” (or “That the reduced sum of Rupees.....for Programme.....”) “be inserted in the Schedules”. Once that question has been proposed from the Chair, no further debate on individual Projects or Objects in that Programme shall be permitted.

(9) Notwithstanding anything in Standing Order 28, motions for the reduction of any Programme, Project or Object shall require notice.

EXCESSES

134. (1) No motion in respect of a grant of money for the service of a financial year already ended (hereinafter referred to as “an Excess”) shall be entertained except in the circumstances set out in paragraph (5) of this Standing Order.

(2) It shall be an order to the Committee on Public Accounts that they do examine any Excess on any Project of a Programme and state in their report whether the Excess is on the Programme or only on one or more Projects of that Programme.

(3) If the Excess is on one or more Projects only, the Committee shall inquire whether the Excess was incurred with proper authority and with due

regard to economy and if satisfied shall report accordingly and no further sanction for that Excess shall be required:

Provided that, on any Excess on any personal emoluments project the Committee shall also satisfy themselves that the expenditure was in accordance with the existing salary scale and involved no element of personal favouritism and if so satisfied shall report accordingly.

(4) If the Committee on Public Accounts is not satisfied they shall report that they have disallowed the Excess or so much of the Excess they think fit.

(5) Whenever the Committee on Public Accounts has reported either that an Excess has been incurred on a Programme or that they have allowed certain items of expenditure, a motion to resolve Parliament into a Committee to consider a grant to make good such an Excess or such items which have been disallowed may be put on the Order Paper by the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance for consideration on a day to be agreed by that Minister:

Provided that, no such motion shall be entertained after the 31st December of the year next but one after that to which the Excess relates.

(6) Nothing in this Standing Order shall diminish the power of the Committee on Public Accounts to disallow any item of expenditure, whether or not an Excess is involved, incurred without proper authority and the procedure set out in paragraph (5) of this Standing Order shall apply to any such disallowance.

135. (1) No motion, in respect of any Advance Account Activity, the maximum limits of which are exceeded or the minimum limits of which are not complied with in a manner authorized by law (hereinafter referred to as “non-compliance with Advance Account Limits”) in any Financial year, will be entertained except in the circumstances set out in paragraph (4) of this Standing Order.

(2) It shall be an order to the Committee on Public Accounts that they do examine every instance, reported by the Auditor-General of the maximum limits of an Advance Account Activity being exceeded, or a minimum limit of an Advance Account Activity not being complied with. The Committee shall determine whether the non-compliance with Advance Account Activity Limits, is in accordance with the law. Where the reported non-compliance with Advance Accounts Limits is not in accordance with the law, the Committee on Public Accounts shall determine whether such non-compliance with Advance Accounts Limits should be authorized or not.

(3) It shall be an order to the Committee on Public Accounts that they do examine any unauthorized working losses on Advance Accounts Activities where such losses have not been settled in full before the end of the financial year to which such losses relate, and which have been reported by the Auditor-General in his Report to Parliament.

(4) Whenever the Committee on Public Accounts has recommended whether or not any non-compliance with the limits on any Advance Account Activity should be authorized or when the Committee has recommended whether or not unauthorized losses in any Advance Account Activity should be authorized, a motion to resolve Parliament into a Committee to consider such recommendations may be put on the Order Paper by the Minister in charge of the subject of Finance for consideration on a date to be agreed by that Minister.

PUBLIC MONEY

136. Parliament shall not proceed upon the consideration of any motion, Bill or amendment thereto authorizing disposal or imposition of charges upon the Consolidated Fund or other funds of the Republic or the imposition of any tax or the repeal, augmentation or reduction of any tax for the time being in force unless introduced by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers who shall, before making such motion, introducing such Bill or moving such amendment, signify to Parliament the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers to such motion, Bill or amendment. An indication on the Order Paper of Parliament that “Cabinet approval is signified” shall be deemed sufficient in compliance to this requirement.

AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS

137. Any Member may give a notice of motion for the amendment of the Standing Orders. Such notice shall be accompanied by a draft of the proposed amendment and the motion when proposed and seconded shall stand referred to without any question being proposed thereon to the Committee on Standing Orders and no further proceedings shall be taken on any such motion until the Committee on Standing Orders has reported thereon.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

138. Any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended on a motion made after notice by a majority of Members of Parliament at any meeting to enable any special business to be considered or disposed of:

Provided that, a motion under this Standing Order unless proposed by a Minister of the Cabinet of Ministers shall be decided by a division and shall be declared lost if it appears that less than twenty Members of Parliament voted in the majority in support of such motion.

GENERAL AUTHORITY OF THE SPEAKER

139. The Speaker shall have the power to regulate the conduct of Business in Parliament in any matter not provided for in these Standing Orders.

140. (1) The Speaker may suspend a sitting or adjourn Parliament if the Speaker thinks it is necessary to do so to maintain order.

(2) Whenever the Speaker suspends a sitting, the Speaker himself shall decide when the sitting shall resume. Whenever the Speaker adjourns Parliament it stands adjourned until its next Sitting Day.

141. The Speaker shall be responsible for the management of buildings, security arrangements and the general administration of the Chamber.

142. Anything which by these Standing Orders may be done by the Speaker may also be done by the Deputy Speaker or Deputy Chair of Committees or by a Member elected by the Parliament to preside in the seat of the Speaker subject to the provisions of Article 159 of the Constitution.

PANEL OF CHAIRS

143. The Speaker shall nominate at the commencement of every Session of Parliament, a Panel of Chairs of not less than four Members to act as temporary Chair of Committees when requested by the Deputy Speaker or in the absence of the Deputy Speaker, by the Deputy Chairperson of Committees and may vary the constitution of the Panel, from time to time. Anything which may be done by the Deputy Speaker may also be done by a temporary Chair when presiding in place of the Deputy Speaker.

NO LEGAL REPRESENTATION BY MEMBERS

144. No Member of Parliament shall appear before Parliament or before any Committee thereof as an Attorney- at- Law for any party or in any capacity for which such Member of Parliament is to receive a fee or reward.

EXPENSES OF WITNESSES AND EXPERTS

145. (1) The sum to be paid or tendered for the expenses of any person who is summoned to attend or to produce any document shall be the sum which, if

that person were a witness attending Court, would be payable to such person in accordance with the regulations for the time being in force.

(2) Where services of any expert or any technical personnel is required by the Parliamentary Committees, such service providers shall be paid such remuneration as determined by the Parliamentary Staff Advisory Committee in lieu of the services provided by them.

RESIDUARY POWERS

146. Every matter not specifically provided for in these Standing Orders and every question relating to the detailed working of these Standing Orders shall be regulated in such manner as the Speaker may deem appropriate and direct, from time to time.

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