Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

The indicator on parliamentary procedures outlines the unique responsibilities assigned to members of parliament to conduct legislative business, specifically in plenary or debate settings. The indicator describes the frameworks that define member activities in the plenary, including in a chamber’s rules or standing orders, in addition to the regulations outlining the ability of members to set the agenda, convene meetings, conduct debates, make decisions, ensure institutional record-keeping, and address general plenary matters. The indicator also covers methods for maintaining parliamentary activities in an emergency or crisis situation.

This indicator underscores the mandated roles of members who are solely responsible, as elected members of a national legislature, for making laws in a responsible, orderly and accountable manner.

The assessment of the indicator on parliamentary procedures covers the following dimensions:

- 1.3.1 Institutional framework
- 1.3.2 Rules of procedure
- 1.3.3 Procedures in times of crisis
- 1.3.4 Calendar/timetable/planning
- 1.3.5 Convening sessions and agenda-setting
- 1.3.6 Quorum
- 1.3.7 Debate
- 1.3.8 Voting
- 1.3.9 Records
- 1.3.10 Dissolution
**Dimension 1.3.1 Institutional framework**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the overarching framework of laws, regulations or orders that define parliament’s procedural role and function. The institutional framework also defines the process by which parliament’s actions and mandate are exercised, and is reflected in all aspects of the work of the parliament. (Note that dimension 1.1.1 relating to the overall autonomy of the parliamentary institution, and dimension 1.1.2 relating to the autonomy of the parliamentary institution in determining its own procedures, are relevant to this dimension.)

This dimension encompasses provisions set forth in a variety of documents, including a country’s constitution, legislation relating to parliamentary practice and procedure, and, most importantly, parliament’s rules of procedure (see dimension 1.3.2). (Note that for legislatures with multiple chambers, an individual set of rules and procedures will generally exist for each chamber.)

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**On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of institutional framework would encompass the following:**

There is a clear institutional framework defining parliament’s role as a representative institution that is independent, is the primary body responsible for adopting legislation, and has oversight of the executive. The institutional framework must also define parliament’s procedural powers and authority as an effective institution, as this is related to its role in the performance of legislative, oversight and representative functions. For legislatures that have multiple chambers, unique rules of procedure typically exist for each individual body.

The framework also defines the parameters for the detailed procedural operations of the legislature, which encompass all the functions and responsibilities of the legislature.

The framework is readily available and clearly explained to all members and staff of the institution, and is transparent in order to ensure the awareness of the general public. When members and staff are elected or hired in the institution, they are encouraged to uphold and abide by these tenets.

**Assessment**

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or legislative provisions relating to the establishment of an independent legislative branch
• Standing orders or rules of procedure that are debated and adopted by the legislature alone
• Documents or presentations that explain the framework
• Commitments made to abide by the framework

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Institutional framework for procedure**

In addition to the relevant constitutional and legislative provisions of a legislature, there is a robust and comprehensive framework in which the legislature can autonomously provide details of its procedural operations, including the authority to develop the rules of procedure of the legislature. In bicameral legislatures, each of the chambers has the authority and autonomy to develop its own rules of procedure.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Institutional framework are readily accessible and explained**

The institutional framework for procedure is readily accessible to MPs, staff and the public. There are documents (such as guidance or handbooks on procedure) and/or presentations that explain the framework in clear terms.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Commitment to the framework**

There are provisions in the constitution, legislation, and/or rules of procedure that require MPs and parliamentary staff to adhere to the institutional framework.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**
Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.3.2 Rules of procedure**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the specific powers and provisions defined in a parliament’s rules of procedure (also known as ‘standing orders’). Rules of procedure define the powers and privileges of the institution, in relation to debate, voting, motions and amendments, in addition to the composition of parliament and its committees and offices. In unicameral legislatures, there is only one set of rules of procedure that defines the entire institution, whereas in bicameral legislatures, there are rules of procedure that define the conduct, actions, and composition of each chamber individually, thus reflecting the institutional independence of the chambers.

The rules should cover all the legislature’s activities and can define matters such as:

- The individual actions and conduct of elected members of the institution, including the powers and privileges of members of majority and minority parties and groups
- The composition of the membership and inclusionary practices concerning the hiring and overall representation of groups
- Plenary and debate conduct and provisions
- Agenda-setting provisions
- Ethics and conflict of interests clauses
- Political activities and funding
- Independent budgetary authorities
- The establishment and operation of committees

The rules of procedure should be consistent with the institutional framework set by the constitution and any legislation relating to parliamentary procedures (see dimension 1.3.1). They should be introduced, amended, and passed by members of the institution alone, and abided by all stakeholders of the institution when elected or hired by the institution. They should be expressed in simple and comprehensible language so that they are understood by MPs and the public. They should be transparent and accessible to all MPs and staff (and be published in hard copy as well as online). The interpretation of such rules of procedure also needs to be consistent and available to MPs, including past practices and past interpretations (such as interpretations or rulings by the presiding officer). This practice should ideally be described in documents such as guides or handbooks on procedure and practice that are available to MPs. The rules of procedure should be subject to regular or ongoing review and proposals for amendment by a group of MPs (such as a standing orders committee or committee on procedure) representing the membership of the legislature.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of rules of procedure would encompass the following:

There are clear and comprehensive rules of procedure (or standing orders) of parliament which are owned, adopted and amended by parliament alone, and which codify the rules and regulations of all aspects of parliamentary activity.
Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7

The rules should be comprehensive of all the legislature’s activities and can define, among other matters, the individual actions and conduct of elected members of the institution, including: the powers and privileges of members of majority and minority parties and groups; the composition of the membership and inclusionary practices concerning the hiring and overall representation of groups; plenary and debate conduct and provisions; agenda-setting provisions; ethics and conflict of interests clauses; political activities and funding; independent budgetary authorities; and the establishment and operation of committees. The rules also outline parameters on staffing and parliamentary administration, including the appointment of a secretary-general or other relevant head of the administration.

The rules of procedure are:
- Expressed in simple comprehensible language
- Transparent and accessible
- Interpreted consistently, with documentation of interpretations available in guides or handbooks on parliamentary practice and procedure that are readily available to MPs
- Subject to regular review and proposals for amendment by a group of MPs (or a committee) representative of all MPs in the legislature

Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Rules of procedure that are adopted or amended by the legislature alone, which exist for every relevant chamber (unicameral or bicameral) of the institution
- Any additional information that supports the assessment

Assessment criterion No. 1: Parliamentary rules of procedure are determined by the legislature

There is evidence of a set of parliamentary rules of procedure that is maintained by parliament alone, and can only be established, amended, or passed by members of the institution. The rules of procedure should be made public and be accessible to the public, in addition to all individuals in the institution. Depending on the nature of the legislature (unicameral, bicameral), each respective chamber has its own codifying rules of procedure. These rules are read by all members and staff of the parliamentary administration elected or hired by the institution, who undertake to comply with them.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Parliamentary rules of procedure are comprehensive
Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

There is evidence that the set of parliamentary rules of procedure is comprehensive and consistent with the constitutional and legislative framework. The rules define, among other matters, the individual actions and conduct of elected members of the institution, including: the powers and privileges of members of majority and minority parties and groups; the composition of the membership and inclusionary practices concerning the hiring and overall representation of groups; plenary and debate conduct and provisions; agenda-setting provisions; ethics and conflict of interests clauses; political activities and funding; independent budgetary authorities; and the establishment and operation of committees. Parliamentary rules of procedure also define parameters related to parliamentary staff and the administration, including the appointment of a head of parliamentary administration.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Rules are interpreted and followed consistently**

The rules of procedure are subject to consistent interpretation and implementation. Such interpretation is readily available to MPs in the form of guides or handbooks on parliamentary practice and procedure, and actions outlined by the rules are carried out consistently. In some parliaments, consistent procedural implementation is directed or managed by a non-partisan individual to ensure compliance by all those subject to the chamber’s rules.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Rules are reviewed regularly by MPs**

The rules of procedure are subject to regular review and proposals for amendment by a group (or committee) of MPs representative of the legislature.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
**Dimension 1.3.3 Procedures in times of crisis (or emergency)**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the specific provisions under which a parliament may conduct business in times of crisis or emergency. Crisis procedures are different from normal standing orders and procedures of parliament, and are only to be used in exceptional circumstances as determined by the president or speaker of parliament, or another relevant presiding officer, or by the parliament itself by majority vote. Emergency provisions may be defined in either a country’s constitution or standing orders, as well as in other legislation outlining emergency procedures.

Emergency procedures allow parliament to adjust the required composition of the membership or other operational procedures in order to adapt to the established emergency period. However, this depends largely on the type of crisis. For example, in some emergency situations the number of MPs required for a quorum may be reduced, whereas other provisions may include a virtual or hybrid operation in order to conduct business (such as some members appearing in person and others conducting business virtually). This has been a particular feature of the operation of many parliaments during the COVID-19 pandemic, where the presence of the full complement of MPs has been problematic. A combination of adapted procedures and the use of technology has enabled both the plenary and committees to continue to meet. Furthermore, emergency procedures may require business to be conducted in a truncated or exceptional format, such as debates being limited and votes being cast despite not all members being present.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of procedures in times of crisis (or emergency) would encompass the following:

There are clear provisions established in law (constitutional, legislative or procedural) that define the exceptional circumstances of emergency or crisis in which emergency procedures are to be used. They also prescribe the actions to be taken by parliament in such times. Specifically, the procedures define the composition of parliament in times of crisis, including the number of members and the use of virtual or hybrid proceedings that are required in order to debate, pass, or amend legislation.

Procedures may also define the conduct of the executive in relation to the parliament during an emergency, especially if the crisis is related to the power of the executive over a nation’s armed forces. Furthermore, the procedures must also define the emergency powers of parliament. In an emergency, the executive and legislature must know their respective powers. For example, it is expected that the executive will notify the legislature of a crisis situation immediately, so that the legislature may act quickly to define rules that allow business to proceed. Such rules must also define the amount of time that the legislature has to act, especially if it must act in the absence of executive power, or to exercise an oversight function. Likewise, it is important for emergency rules to define and ensure parliament’s oversight powers and procedures during an emergency.

See Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), “World e-Parliament Report 2020” (IPU, 2021), 17-31 for a description of the procedural and technological innovations that many parliaments have implemented during the pandemic.
Emergency powers define modifications of the usual agenda-setting and debate procedures, and may allow for a truncated set of motions in order for debate to proceed quickly and effectively if it pertains to the crisis. Crisis procedures should also give members an opportunity to contribute by modifying normal procedures in the rules.

Crisis procedures may also be ‘time bound’ and therefore only apply for a limited period of time during, such as in the case of a trial or exceptional circumstances. Members may vote to allow for exceptional circumstances in the representation, voting and passage of directives at such times.

**Assessment**

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional provisions, legislation or rules of procedure that define the action to be taken in the event of an emergency or crisis, including limited or modified rules, and evidence of flexibility in their use
- Virtual or hybrid meetings of the plenary and committees

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Existence of parliamentary crisis procedures in the constitution or legislation**

There are constitutional or legal provisions and precedents for parliament to adopt limited or amended rules in the enactment of legislation when it relates to emergencies and acute crises. These frameworks clarify the role of the executive and legislature in such crisis scenarios, and define the circumstances in which emergency or crisis procedures can be adopted.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Existence of parliamentary rules (or standing orders) on emergency procedures**

There is evidence of parliamentary rules of procedure (or standing order) provisions outlining debate, agenda-setting, oversight and law-making procedures, in addition to other executive, legislative and presiding officer privileges in an emergency or crisis situation.
Assessment criterion No. 3: Rule flexibility in the case of emergency

The rules on emergency procedures allow for flexibility in the representation and number of members present for a debate, and also prescribe the specific powers available to members with regard to speaking time, directives and voting. The rules will also establish whether business may be conducted in person, virtually or in a hybrid model, such as in emergencies that limit in-person operations. There is also an established procedure and criteria for emergency operations, including the clarification of the respective roles of executive and legislative bodies.

Assessment criterion No. 4: Practice in the legislature

The flexibility in the rules on emergency procedures is reflected in the practice of the legislature, and the necessary ICT support is available for virtual and hybrid proceedings of the plenary and committees to take place successfully.

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.3.4 Calendar/timetabling/planning**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the existence of a publicly available parliamentary calendar that establishes the timetables for debate and in-session periods and sittings, in addition to recesses (or in-state/locality work periods or adjournments) and holidays. It includes the process by which the calendar is developed and maintained. The parliamentary calendar is typically maintained by a member of the chamber leadership, and may only be changed in conference with designated officers. In some legislatures, the calendar is subject to approval and amendment by the legislature. The parliamentary calendar also includes information related to committees and standing committee provisions, mandates and parameters.

Information related to the procedures for the development of the parliamentary calendar, timetabling and planning is included in the institution’s rules of procedures or standing orders.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of calendar, timetabling and planning would encompass the following:

**The procedure for the development of a parliamentary calendar and the timetabling and planning of sessions is included in the legislature’s rules of procedure.**

There is a publicly available calendar, which is maintained and updated by the parliamentary leadership, and which outlines the days on which parliament is in session throughout the year, and the days on which it is in recess (also known in some structures as in-state/locality work periods or adjournments). Session times are determined by each chamber’s leadership, but typically follow a regular season of sessions and recesses as dictated by tradition. For example, many parliaments take recess for countrywide holidays, festivals, or religious events. The calendar also includes the regular ‘sitting hours’ of members during sessions and proceedings. Though times are subject to change under the jurisdiction of parliamentary leadership, the calendar itself will typically record the regular session hours in which debate and formalities take place. In some legislatures, the calendar is approved and can be amended by the legislature.

The calendar includes details related to all legislative activity within the chambers in the institution (depending on the unicameral or bicameral nature of the legislature). It should also include information related to hearings and business meetings of parliamentary committees.

**The parliamentary calendar is maintained by the parliamentary leadership, and is kept up to date. The calendar is prepared ahead of each new session year, but is subject to change under the authority of the president or speaker or designated leadership officers of the chamber. Viewers are able to see illustrative activities on the calendar for the entirety of the calendar year.**

**Assessment**
The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Rules of procedure defining the existence and development process of a legislative calendar that provides an overview of session and recess times, legislative activity and committee events/activities, in addition to the powers of the leadership in maintaining the calendar
- Parliamentary calendars, including evidence of regular updates and public availability

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Procedures for determining the calendar and timetable of the legislature**

Parliament’s rules of procedure or standing orders include references to the procedure for the development and maintenance of a calendar which outlines the times throughout the year when parliament is in session and conducts legislative sittings and business. The rules stipulate the specific periods of the year during which parliament regularly sits, though the actual timetable is subject to change under the authority of the president or speaker of parliament.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 2: A calendar or timetable exists for plenary and committee activities**

There is a session calendar that includes information related to the timetabling of plenary debate. The calendar also stipulates information related to all committee and standing committee affairs, including hearings, business meetings and other extraordinary gatherings. Finally, the calendar is updated regularly to include the anticipated legislative activity.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 3: Calendar transparency**
The calendar is made available for all members of the parliament and the general public. The calendar is regularly updated and maintained to ensure that relevant updates and changes are kept current for public view.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.3.5. Convening sessions and agenda-setting

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines the means by which parliament convenes sessions, including initial sessions after an election, and by which it establishes its own agenda for the purpose of legislative or other debate. The dimension also prescribes the rights of parliament and legislators to have regular, special or extraordinary sessions and to ensure that there is a specified maximum period between sessions. The dimension outlines the responsibilities of the leadership or special committees in developing and maintaining the agenda, and the powers under which legislators may vote to change the agenda, including determining legislation for debate.

The dimension pays particular attention to the rights of legislators to meet regularly in order to fulfil the legislature’s representational and oversight mandates, the opportunities for MPs to contribute to agenda-setting, and the provisions by means of which the executive may call parliament into a special or extraordinary session.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of convening sessions and agenda-setting would encompass the following:

There are constitutional or legal provisions that specify a maximum period within which the parliament must meet after an election. There is also specification of the maximum period within which the parliament must regularly meet.

As prescribed by parliament’s rules of procedure, the institution meets at regular intervals in order to fulfil its legislative, representational and oversight mandates. Sessions are determined by a parliamentary authority (either by the leadership or special committees), and all members have the right to vote to amend or change that agenda in accordance with the rules of procedure. Furthermore, all members of parliament have the right to participate, including through debate, votes, the submission of remarks or questions for the record, or other comments or actions.

While the executive can call special or extraordinary sessions of parliament, a legislative body’s standing orders prescribes the right of the autonomous legislature to call and hold its own sessions, and to determine which legislation and other issues are to be debated at given times.

The agenda is subject to all legislators within the chamber having the equal right to initiate, propose or amend legislation and to call regular, special, or extraordinary sessions. This provision gives the elected representatives of the people the ability and mandate to represent the interests of the citizenry through policy debate and development.

The session calendar and the agenda for sessions should be made publicly available, updated and maintained, and be provided for legislators with ample notice so that they may prepare for session activities and debate.
Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Constitutional or legal provisions specifying times for the holding of sessions after an election and at other times
- Rules of procedure defining the existence of procedures governing the ability of jurisdictional authorities (parliamentary leadership or special committees) to establish parliament's own agenda, in addition to the rights of members to amend that agenda, including any legislation that would be considered

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

**Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional or legal provisions specifying maximum time periods within which sessions must be convened**

The constitution or other legal instruments specify a maximum period within which parliament must meet for its first session after an election (for example, within three months of an election). Similarly, the constitution or legal provisions specify the maximum period within which the parliament must regularly meet for sessions (for example, no more than six months between sessions of the legislature).

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 2: Existence of agenda-setting provisions within the rules of procedure**

Parliament’s rules of procedure or standing orders contain provisions for the rights of the leadership or special committees to determine the agenda of parliament, and the powers under which legislators approve or amend the agenda. They also allow for all members of parliament, regardless of partisan affiliation, the right to debate, vote and engage in parliamentary action.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**
Assessment criterion No. 3: Consistent follow-through on agenda-setting provisions

Parliament consistently carries out provisions on agenda-setting, as outlined under the rules of procedure. In practice, this means that agenda-setting privileges (as allowed under the rules) are respected consistently by all members of parliament, regardless of partisan affiliation.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Convening authorities

There are specific provisions under which the relevant jurisdictional authority, such as the executive, can call regular, special or extraordinary sessions. Members of the autonomous body have the right to call a special session to order under a specified proportional vote by the chamber. This authority is separate from the privileges granted to the executive to call a special session of parliament, which are in any case clearly defined.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 5: Advance notice

Members of the chamber are given ample advance notice of the convening of sessions and the overall agenda in order to prepare for debate and deliberation. The session agenda, as outlined on the parliament's calendar, is also publicly available, and is regularly updated and maintained to ensure that it remains current.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
Dimension 1.3.6 Quorum

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

About the dimension

This dimension outlines the requirements for a quorum, or the minimum number of members of a chamber who must be present in order to legitimize legislative business. The existence of a quorum is therefore a practical measure that allows a chamber to be effective by operating without the full number of members being present. A quorum is intended to validate member actions by ensuring there is a representative sample of witnesses of statements, debates and votes taken in the chamber, and therefore provides protection against decision-making by a very small number of members. The requirement to maintain a quorum can also be used as a tactic to delay debate on legislation, since if there are not enough members present in the chamber when a scheduled debate is to take place, the presiding officer is forced to request a quorum, which further stalls the process. Often, legislators have a specific timeframe from when a ‘quorum call’ is announced to when a quorum must be formed to begin or continue debate. A quorum is also an important tool for members who want witnesses to their actions. In some legislatures, members can raise a ‘point of order’ to draw attention to a quorum not being established, which forces the presiding officer to call for a quorum to be formed to continue business.

Quorum regulations are outlined in a country’s constitution, in legislation and in a chamber’s rules of procedure, and define the number of members that must be present in order for legislative action to occur. Rules of procedure may also outline the stated time period that members have between when a quorum is announced and when it must be formed in the chamber to conduct business, in addition to the allowable parameters under which a member may raise a point of order to call for a quorum.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of quorum would encompass the following:

Rules concerning quorum are outlined in the constitution, legislation and/or a chamber’s rules of procedure (or standing orders), which define the minimum number of members who must be present (either in person, or virtually if this is permitted) in order for legislative business to be conducted, and the amount of time that members have to present themselves in the chamber in the event that a quorum is requested.

Rules of procedure also define the powers of members to request a quorum, and these rules are consistently implemented in practice.

Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent)

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2 To maintain operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, some legislatures adopted rules allowing for hybrid or virtual presence in order to reach a quorum, where this was permitted by their constitutional and legal frameworks. Also, many parliaments adopted COVID-19 emergency procedures to reduce the number of members required for a quorum.
that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Quorum regulations defined in the constitution, legislation and/or chamber’s rules of procedure

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

Assessment criterion No. 1: Existence of a quorum in the rules of procedure

There is evidence of quorum regulations being defined in the constitution, legislation and/or a body’s rules of procedure, including the consequences for actions of the legislature if a quorum is not present and enforced.

Non-existent ☐ Poor ☐ Basic ☐ Good ☐ Very good ☐ Excellent ☐

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Member independence to call for a quorum

Members have the right, as defined under the legislature’s standing orders, to call for a quorum in the absence of a minimum number of members present in order to legitimize legislative business.

Non-existent ☐ Poor ☐ Basic ☐ Good ☐ Very good ☐ Excellent ☐

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Quorum practices are followed consistently in line with the rules

Quorum rules are upheld consistently in parliamentary business.

Non-existent ☐ Poor ☐ Basic ☐ Good ☐ Very good ☐ Excellent ☐

Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.3.7 Debate**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1. Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines parameters for member debate. The right to debate is universally one of the most critical functions of a legislator in a democratic system. Debate provides members with the opportunity to publicly register their support for or rejection of an idea based on the priorities of their constituency and/or party. It is also the mechanism by which a chamber deliberates on matters under consideration, and enables members to be informed so that they can make a decision. Debate can occur at the committee level or in full plenary. For the purpose of this dimension, ‘debate’ will refer to that in which members engage during a plenary.

Member debate ensures that law-making is approached through the balanced representation of citizen and party interests. It also allows members to have oversight of executive actions, by providing them with opportunities to debate issues of importance relating to government proposals, programmes and services.

In line with the principle of legislative autonomy, a legislature should have complete control over the structure of its debates. It is especially important for legislatures to adopt processes for structuring and regulating debate which are clearly understood, and which are impartially applied to all members regardless of party affiliation. The rules should provide for debate time-limits, opportunities for members to table a motion or propose amendments, call a point of order, or hold open a debate. There should also be legislative rules to ensure that debate can take place in an orderly and respectful way with members being able to express their views freely.

Debate on bills should be made public to provide citizens with the opportunity to hold their members accountable. Members should also be allotted adequate time and opportunity for debate ahead of a scheduled vote, to ensure that all sides are equally able to contribute on a proposed matter, and for citizens to contact their representatives regarding the pending legislation.

Processes for structuring and regulating debate are outlined in a legislature’s rules of procedure or standing orders and are applied impartially by the presiding officers. Additionally, the importance of a legislature’s right and responsibility to debate legislation may also be recognized in a country’s constitution.

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**On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of debate would encompass the following:**

- There are clearly defined rules for structuring debate in a legislature, which apply impartially to all members regardless of party or group.

- These rules define timetables for debate, allowing ample time for all members to debate issues, legislation and other matters before a planned vote. The rules also stipulate the ability of members to determine the order of precedence of motions tabled, and grant members the ability to provide comments for the record, propose amendments, raise points of order, and hold open a debate.

- Debate is open to the public through physical or virtual public access, a webcast, and official records.
Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Provisions on debate processes defined in a chamber’s rules of procedure
- Constitutional provisions that indicate the important role of legislators in debating legislative priorities
- Practice of the legislature in debate, such as rulings of presiding officers

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

Assessment criterion No. 1: Processes for structuring and regulating debate are contained in the parliamentary rules of procedure

Debate processes are established in a body’s rules of procedure, which clearly define member debate powers, timetables and the tone of debate (orderly and respectful).

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: All members are entitled to equal debate time

Members have the right, as defined under the chamber’s standing orders, to enable and participate in debate. They also have the power to table motions, call amendments, and stall or hold open debate to allow ample time to discuss pending matters.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: All plenary debates are made public

All plenary debate and proceedings are made publicly available through physical or virtual public access, a webcast, and official records.
Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Assessment criterion No. 4: Practice and consistent implementation of rules**

Debate procedures are conducted in a consistent manner as outlined under the legislative rules of procedure, and in an impartial manner by the chamber’s presiding officer.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

**Recommendations for change**
**Dimension 1.3.8 Voting**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines parameters for member voting, including by voice or by ballot. The ability of members to cast votes for or against a policy provision is quintessential to parliamentarians’ role in a representative institution. As a member of parliament, casting a vote is a critical responsibility for the development of informed policymaking that represents citizen interests. Members must be able to vote freely without improper interference or influence. Voting powers are restricted to members of parliament, and are reserved for those who are elected (or appointed) by their constituents or party to represent their priorities on a national stage. No partisan or non-partisan staff of the institution may be granted the privilege to vote in the legislature.

Votes should be recorded and made publicly available in a manner that offers an ‘on-the-record’ account of the member’s decision (yay, nay, abstain, not present). There should be clear guidelines for public voting in a chamber’s rules of procedure. Rules must also stipulate if there are any exceptions to publicly available votes or a recorded account of how a member voted. Methods for recording votes include roll-call, electronic record or paper record/tally. For legislatures that allow proxy voting, established approval mechanisms allowing proxy must be articulated in a chamber’s rules. The rules of the legislature shall also allow a minority of legislators to demand that a recorded vote be held.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of voting would encompass the following:

- There are clearly defined rules of procedure for allowing, calling and recording votes in the chamber. The rules establish that a member exercises the vote freely, and without improper interference and influence, and that only a member has the power to vote in the legislature.

- The rules define the presumption that votes will be recorded and made public, in order to maintain an account of how a member has voted. Rules must also outline exceptions to publicly available voting, and make provisions for advance notice in the event that a vote is held in private.

- The rules must also define the manner in which a minority of legislators can call for a vote, or demand that a vote be held on a specific matter.

**Assessment**

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions on voting processes in a chamber’s rules of procedure
- Publicly available records of votes in the legislature
Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

Assessment criterion No. 1: Voting is restricted to members of the legislature

There is evidence that voting provisions are defined in a body’s rules of procedure, which outline the privilege of voting that is to be freely exercised by members without improper interference or influence, and to be restricted to members of the legislature. The rules will also outline parameters on proxy voting, if allowed, and specify how to arrange such voting.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: A minority of members may call for a vote to be held

The rules clearly specify that a minority of members may call for a vote to be held on a particular matter.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: The rules outlining voting procedures are followed and implemented consistently in practice

The rules on voting procedures are followed consistently in practice, as verified by the presiding officer and authorities.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 4: Voting records
The rules clearly define how votes will be recorded (for example, paper ballot, card e-voting, or other) and which voting options are available to members during a vote (depending on parliament these might be, for example, “yay, nay, abstain, not present”; or “for and against”).

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Assessment criterion No. 5: Voting is made public**

The rules clearly stipulate that votes will be made public, provide details on any exceptions to public voting, and require advance notice to be given before a non-public vote.

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**Evidence for this assessment criterion:**

**Recommendations for change**

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*Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7*
**Dimension 1.3.9 Records**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines parameters for documenting and maintaining records. Record-keeping is critical to institutional sustainability and capacity. Records should include evidence of the formal decisions and proceedings of the legislature, a direct transcript of all member deliberations and votes, daily proceedings, statements, questions for the record, and any other business conducted in plenary. It should also include documents presented to the chamber and copies of bills and motions proposed for debate in the chamber.

Records should also be maintained of all official business (submissions, hearings and business meetings) conducted in a committee, including all standing, select, and special committees in parliament. All records should be made publicly available through an easily accessible portal (either in print or online) unless in the event that a particular committee holds a classified or private meeting, which would be outlined in its specific rules of procedure or in the chamber’s rules. There may be exceptions to recorded activities and transcripts from select or special committees, especially if deliberations are classified and only authorized for approved audiences.

Records must be maintained continuously from the commencement of the legislature. A legislature should have a central repository of written records that is easily accessible to all members and staff, and the public alike. Records should also be made available in all official working languages as outlined in the nation’s constitution.

Records are often compiled by parliamentary staff who support the chamber. Staff could include Hansard reporters or stenographers who are responsible for recording transcripts of all daily proceedings, plenary business and committee affairs. Additionally, there may be staff in the chamber responsible for recording the formal decisions and proceedings of the chamber, including records of votes. These individuals should ensure protection of such records, and store them in the necessary record-keeping repositories following any votes cast. Parliament may also have someone responsible for maintaining the entire records repository, including someone who collects statements for the record.

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<th>On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of records would encompass the following:</th>
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<td>The legislature has a central repository for easily accessible, written records that are also made available online for electronic public consumption.</td>
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<td>Records are maintained of all decisions, votes, deliberations, daily proceedings, documents presented and considered, other plenary business, and committee business and hearings, for all years that parliament has been in existence (and recordkeeping was maintained/possible).</td>
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<td>Records should be made available in all official working languages outlined in the constitution.</td>
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**Assessment**

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:
- Hansard reporter, stenographer or official record keeper for all plenary and committee business
- Central recordkeeping repository within parliament
- Record-keeping provisions in all working languages, as outlined in a chamber’s rules.

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

Assessment criterion No. 1: Records are established for all official parliamentary business

There is evidence of record-keeping procedures for all parliamentary business. This involves the collection and protection of all official documents such as evidence of the formal decisions and proceedings of the legislature, a direct transcript of all member deliberations and votes, daily proceedings, statements, questions for the record, and any other business conducted in plenary. Chamber support staff compile and maintain the official records of the legislature, including those produced by Hansard reporters, stenographers and others responsible for developing transcripts.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Records are stored in a central repository in parliament and made publicly available where applicable

Records are stored and maintained in a central location within the parliament in written form. They must be stored in a way that is easily accessible to members and staff, in addition to the public when appropriate, depending on the type of committee proceeding and committee itself. Records may also be publicly accessible through an electronic or online portal.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Records are made available in all official working languages
Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

Records are made available in all official working languages as outlined by a country’s constitution.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change
**Dimension 1.3.10 Dissolution**

Indicator: 1.3 Parliamentary procedures  
Sub-target: 1 Effective parliament  
Target: 16.6 Effective, accountable and transparent parliament

**About the dimension**

This dimension outlines the authority to end or ‘dissolve’ a term of parliament to allow for new elections to take place. This may or may not occur before the scheduled end of a term of parliament. Of course, dissolution occurs automatically at the scheduled end of a parliamentary session or term. When dissolution takes place, there are established constitutional or institutional rules that require all non-returning members to leave their posts in a timely manner.

All powers and parameters specifying the circumstances for dissolution are outlined in a nation’s constitution, in addition to a parliament’s rules of procedure. The power to dissolve parliament is highly dependent on a nation’s structure of government and the powers vested in both the executive and parliament, and often is more nuanced in semi-presidential and semi-parliamentary systems.

There are many different ways in which parliament can be dissolved. Depending on a country’s structure of government, dissolution can occur when there is a loss of confidence by a majority in the parliament leadership. In parliaments with a strong executive government, the government may have the ultimate power to force dissolution at will. In other systems, the prime minister or head of parliament can enact dissolution at will. In some systems, dissolution may be used as a tactic to force an election on policy initiatives, or to gain public trust in a measure proposed by a minority or majority in parliament. Some systems have fixed terms for parliament which can only be altered in exceptional circumstances. Typically in systems where the government can dissolve parliament on its own terms, parliament has less authority in driving the terms of dissolution. Alternatively, in systems that provide for more balanced executive-legislative relations, parliament’s power to force dissolution is an important factor in strengthening the institution’s overall independence, especially in instances of executive dominance or overreach. Of course, dissolution is automatic when parliament reaches its scheduled end of session or term, with all non-returning members leaving office in accordance with stated timelines, and returning members or new members engaging in activities to prepare for and assume office.

In the case of an emergency, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, dissolution can occur for different reasons, including as a result of an executive order, election circumstances and other environmental contexts.

For the purpose of this dimension, regardless of how dissolution occurs in a parliament, there should be clarity in the constitutional or other provisions for dissolution, as well clear guidance or practice about the roles of those who may be involved in the process of dissolution, and clear provisions defining the end of a parliamentary term and specifying what happens when a parliamentary term ends. Rules should also define the length of terms, which result in automatic dissolution, in addition to timelines for leaving or assuming office, as well as provisions outlining allowable resources for outgoing/incoming officials, and rules on record storage or official recordkeeping requirements. Terms for vacating or moving onto the parliamentary premises may also be outlined in a chamber’s rules, architecture/building, ethics or administration committee, or other relevant committees in parliament.

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For more information on possible circumstances of dissolution, please refer to this document: https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/dissolution-of-parliament-primer.pdf

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Indicators for democratic parliaments, based on SDG targets 16.6 and 16.7
Parameters for dissolution should include awareness of the importance of institutional memory, including processes for collecting evidence, information, and handover records for members leaving office. Such actions ensure institutional sustainability regardless of shifts in power. Provision should be made for the preservation and public accessibility of any official records developed by the member while in office to comply with general reporting and archival requirements as outlined in a nation’s laws.

On the basis of a global comparative analysis of parliamentary practices and models in parliamentary development, an aspiring goal for parliaments in the domain of dissolution would encompass the following:

There is clear constitutional and legal authority for the dissolution of parliament. Legal provisions, practice and guidance clearly specify the roles of those who are involved in the process of dissolution, and clearly provide for the end of the parliamentary term and what happens when the parliamentary term ends. Such parameters may also be outlined in a chamber’s rules of procedure.

A nation’s constitution defines clear session and term calendars, in addition to term limits for members, which culminate in an automatic dissolution of parliament at the end of the scheduled session or term.

In an automatic dissolution, a chamber’s rules of procedure, or regulations under relevant parliamentary committees (such as an ethics, architecture, rules or administration committee) should outline the requirements for outgoing members to vacate the premises, and for their conduct in the immediate months following their term(s) in office. Rules and regulations should also outline the requirements for keeping or archiving of official records and transcripts, and their storage for public access, upon dissolution of parliament and the consequent departure of a member.

Assessment

The dimension is evaluated on the basis of several criteria that should be assessed separately. For each criterion, select one of the six descriptive grades (Non-existent, Poor, Basic, Good, Very good and Excellent) that corresponds best to your parliament, and provide details of the evidence on which the assessment is based.

The evidence for assessment of this dimension might include:

- Provisions on the existence of constitutional authorities
- Rules of procedure or other regulations
- Administrative procedures to ensure compliance by members with regard to archiving and ethics upon dissolution

If relevant, additional comments or examples that support the assessment (such as references to external national, regional or international surveys and reports) can be provided.

Assessment criterion No. 1: Constitutional authorities

There is constitutional and legal authority for the dissolution of parliament, including clear provisions defining the end of a parliamentary term and automatic dissolution of parliament. These provisions and any associated practice and guidance clearly specify the circumstances and roles of those who are involved in the dissolution process.
Indicator 1.3 – Parliamentary procedures

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 2: Procedures in the case of dissolution

A chamber’s rules of procedure and its practice outline details of the impact of dissolution on the work of the parliament. The rules also define a scheduled end of session, in addition to the timetables under which outgoing and incoming leaders are allowed to vacate or enter the premises upon automatic dissolution of a scheduled term and before the beginning of the subsequent term.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Assessment criterion No. 3: Requirements for outgoing members in a dissolution

Regulations exist, most likely in the rules of a procedure or relevant committee regulations (such as a rules, architecture/building, administrative or ethics committee), which prescribe record-keeping or archival requirements, in addition to ethics parameters for member compliance upon dissolution.

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Evidence for this assessment criterion:

Recommendations for change

Sources for further reading