

Q

Quorum: is the minimum number of MPs required to start a meeting.

Quorum of the National Assembly: Thirty seven (37) members (50%+1), excluding non-voting members.

Quorum of the National Council: Fourteen (14) members out of a total 26.

R

Recess: the period between Sessions of Parliament.

Referendum: a process for deciding on a matter of public policy through a public vote by registered voters.

Resolution : a decision by the whole House or a Committee.

Ruling: an authoritative decision made by a Presiding Office on matters of procedure.

S

Second Reading: the stage in the passage of a Bill at which the House agrees to a Bill.

Secretary: the most senior staff member at Parliament who deals with daily administrative duties.

Sergeant-At-Arms: the officer, who leads the Presiding Officer in and out of Chamber, and carries the Mace.

Session: the period between the time the House first meets until it is suspended for recess.

Sitting: the period between the time the Presiding Member takes the chair and the time the House is adjourned for the day.

Speaker: the principal Presiding Officer of the National Assembly.

Standing Committee: a permanent group of Parliamentarians composed of members elected by each party to whom matters relating to a given subject may be referred for closer examination.

Statutes: Laws or Acts of Parliament.

State of the Nation Address: an annual speech by the President, to a joint sitting of the National Assembly and the National Council, outlining the state of affairs in the country and government's intentions.

T

Table: The table immediately in front of and below the Presiding Officer's chair.

Tabling: a formal presentation of a document to the House by a Member.

Third Reading: The final stage during which a Bill is passed.

Title (Short): the title of a Bill or Act by which it is known.

V

Vacation of a seat: the act of a Member ending his/her membership of Parliament

Vote: * to choose a candidate or party in an election. *to take a stand for or against an issue. *Questions are put to a vote in the House. *The part of an Appropriation Bill detailing the authority to spent public money or incur expenses are called votes.

Vote of no Confidence: the act of Members expressing their distrust in the ability of a Member or a party to continue with duties

W

Whip: a Member of Parliament, elected by his/her party to enforce order and discipline among fellow Members. White paper: a document outlining and detailing how a law is intended to be carried out.



GLOSSARY OF PARLIAMENTARY TERMS

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A

Act: a law passed by Parliament

Adjournment: termination of a sitting of the House.

Appropriation Bill: a Bill granting authority to spend public money or to incur expenses for the needs of the state

Presidential Assent: the President's consent to sign a Bill passed by Parliament thereafter it becomes law.

B

Backbencher: a Member of Parliament who is not a Minister and usually occupies a back bench in the National Assembly.

Bi-cameral Parliament: a title for a Parliament that consists Of two Houses.

Bill: a proposed law.

Budget: a financial statement of documents released by the Minister of Finance, outlining the government's proposed Economic and fiscal policies. A plan of how money should be spent over a period of time.

C

Candidate: a person who stands for election to Parliament.

Casting vote: a vote of Presiding Member that breaks an impasse when votes in the Chamber are equally divided.

Caucus: a closed meeting of Members of Parliament belonging to a particular political party to decide on a matter. Chairperson of the National Council.

Chamber: a hall in which all Members of a House meet to debate.

Clause: an individually numbered item in a bill law.

Clerk-at-the-Table: the most senior administrative officer in the Chamber.

Coalition: a combination of two or more political parties for the purpose of getting more representation.

Committee: a small group of Members of Parliament selected or appointed to perform a specific function.

Committee Clerk: a staff member appointed to serve as secretary to a parliamentary committee.

Committee stage: a stage during which a House examines a Bill in detail with a view to making changes where necessary.

Constitution: The set of fundamental rules that state how a country must be governed.

Constituency: an electoral area.

Constituency Office: the office of a Member of Parliament in an electoral constituency.

Constituent: a person having a right to vote, and living in an electoral area.

D

Debate: a discussion of a bill/issue or proposition.

E

Election: the process of selecting (voting for) representatives.

Electorate: the voters

Enact a law: making a law

Executive: the President and Ministers

F

First Reading: a stage in the passing of a bill – the first opportunity for Members of Parliament to debate the intent of a Bill.

G

Gallery: public-seating areas in National Assembly and the National Council.

General Election: the election held to elect Members of Parliament.

I

Introduce a Bill: to present or table a Bill in Parliament.

L

Law: binding rules by which society is governed.

Leader of Government Business: a Cabinet member who co-ordinates government's business in Parliament.

Leader of the Opposition: the leader of the largest opposition party in Parliament.

Legislation: laws or statutes (Acts).

Legislative Process: the process by which laws are made.

Legislature: a law-making body – Parliament.

M

Mace: a ceremonial staff used in Parliament to symbolize the authority of a Presiding Officer.

Maiden Speech: the first speech in the House by a new Member.

Member of Parliament (MP): a Member of the National Assembly or the National Council.

Minister : a Member of the Executive who is usually in charge of a government ministry.

Minority/Opposition party: a political party or parties which does not have a majority in Parliament.

Motion: a proposal by a Member to have a House discuss an issue.

N

Notice of motion: a notice by a Member of Parliament on his/her intention to move a motion.

O

Order Paper: the document which sets out the agenda for a House on a sitting day.

Order of the day: the items of business written down on the Order Paper for consideration on a particular day.

P

Parliament: is the national legislature, consisting of the National Council and National Assembly.

Parliamentary Procedure: the way in which Parliament conducts its business.

Petition: a document presented to Parliament, signed by a person(s), requesting that a certain course of action be taken or not be taken.

Point of Order: is an interjection on the correct procedures to be followed.

Presiding Office: the Member controlling the debate in the Chamber.

Press Gallery: the area in the Chamber set aside for accredited Members of the media.