

## 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 spend 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.