

The National Assembly may not agree with all suggestions, but it must hear the suggestions and vote again.

If two-thirds of the National Assembly still wants the Bill it can go forward through the stages. If not, the Bill cannot become a law.

If approved by both Houses, and signed by the President of the country, the Bill becomes a law. If the President refuses to sign, the National Assembly may still approve the Bill by a two-thirds majority.

It is then published in the official Government newspaper, the Gazette, as an Act of Parliament. It comes into force from the specific date indicated.



HOW LAWS ARE MADE

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What is a law?

A law is a decision of Parliament, which should be obeyed by all citizens. A citizen who does not obey a law will be prosecuted

The Cabinet, a Line Ministry or Government department, a Member of Parliament (MP), an Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), or any private citizen can propose a law.

In the case of a Government-Bill, the responsible Ministry must draft a proposal and submit it to Cabinet for approval.

Once approved and tabled before Parliament, the draft is called a Bill.



A Bill tabled by a Backbencher, a Member of Parliament (MP) who is not a Minister, is called a Private Member's Bill, and needs to Cabinet approval.

The Bill is announced in the National Assembly (NA) in what is known as the First Reading stage. It then becomes a public document.

The Second Reading stage is for the Members of Parliament to approve or reject the Bill in principle, i.e. whether the Bills is necessary or not. If rejected by more than half of the Members, the Bill is taken 'off the table' and may be re-introduced after 30 days in the same form or with changes.

At this stage the Minister or the Private Member who tabled the Bill (sponsor), explains why the Bill is needed.

If its principle is approved, the Bill goes to the Whole House Committee where all Members of Parliament examine it clause by clause.

Details of the Bill are then discussed. If there are serious disagreements, the Bill can either be voted on or be referred to a Committee.



Committees are smaller groups of Members of Parliament elected from all parties to examine Bills and other documents in detail.

Committees are appointed for specific areas like economics, human resources, etc. Committee Members usually have special knowledge of the subject.

They may and do ask for input from experts and the broader public. This they do by calling in individual persons or holding public hearings.



On the basis of its findings, a Committee may suggest changes to the House on specific aspects of the Bill. It is however not allowed to deal with the principle of the Bill.

Once the National Assembly adopts the recommendations, the Bill is read for the Third time. At this stage a majority vote of the House is necessary to approve the Bill and no further debate is then allowed.

The Bill then goes to the National Council (NC) for review.

The National Council may approve the Bill as it is, or recommend changes and send it back to the National Assembly.

The National Council can object to the principle of the Bill and send it back to the National Assembly, which must then vote again on the principle.