

**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**



**TWELFTH PARLIAMENT  
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY – (FOURTH SESSION)  
SPEAKER'S GUIDELINES**

(No. 2 of 2020)

**ON**

**CONDUCT OF SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE AND COMMITTEE  
MEETINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PERIOD**

**BACKGROUND**

- A. In furtherance of the measures taken by the Government of Kenya to address the spread of COVID-19 Pandemic and the recommendations contained in the Status Report of the Ministry of Health (MoH) upon inspection of facilities within the precincts of Parliament, the following Guidelines are herewith issued.

**THE GUIDELINES**

- B. The following guidelines shall be adhered to in the course of conducting business of the National Assembly—

**Chamber Sitzings**

1. All Afternoon Sitzings of the National Assembly shall end not later than 4.00 pm.
2. There are **Seventy (70) seats** that have been marked in the Chamber for use by the Members, and each has been assigned a number. Whenever the House is scheduled to hold a Sitting, the Clerk shall notify Members using the BULK SMS solution or other means, asking them to register their desire to attend the particular Sitting. Save for the designated seats, priority of allocation of the rest of the seats will be accorded only to Members who have registered.
3. The seats shall be accessible on first-register, first-occupy basis, except seats designated for the following-
  - (a) The Leader of the Majority Party;
  - (b) The Leader of the Minority Party;
  - (c) The Deputy Speaker;
  - (d) The Majority Party Chief-Whip;
  - (e) The Minority Party Chief-Whip; and,
  - (f) A Member scheduled to Move a Business listed in the Order Paper for the particular Sitting.

4. There are three designated waiting areas to accommodate other Members desirous of participating in proceedings, as they wait for an opportunity to access the Chamber, upon vacation of a seat by a Member. These are designated in the two Lounges and dining area located within the Main Parliament Building.
5. Register of Members at any of the designated holding areas within the precincts of Parliament may be taken.
6. Once seated in the Chamber, Members shall not change seats or draw closer to other Members, the Speaker or Clerks-at-the-Table for whatever reason. There shall be **no consultations at the Speaker's Chair or at the Clerk's Table**, unless extremely necessary. Accordingly, it shall be out of order for a Member to approach the Speaker's Chair or the Clerk's Table for any purpose.
7. Upon vacation of a seat by a Member, prompt disinfection of the seating area, the seat, table, electronic system, the microphones and Chamber tablet shall be undertaken by the relevant officers before being occupied by another Member.
8. The biometric listing of Members' attendance to plenary sessions is forthwith suspended. The Serjeant-at-Arms shall manually record Members who are in attendance, including their seating position in the Chamber.
9. Members are encouraged to digitally access Chamber documents through the *E-Parl* portal on Chamber tablets and the parliamentary website to avoid the use of paper documents.
10. The Speaker's Gallery, the Public Gallery and Diplomatic Boxes shall not be occupied by any person except the identified technical staffers facilitating the sitting.
11. Members shall, while entering, while within and when leaving the Chamber, observe the social distancing requirements, together with such sanitization measures as shall be in place.

#### **Committees Sitings**

12. In line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health, for purposes of Committees sittings, the County Hall shall hold a maximum of 34 persons; all Committee Rooms shall be occupied by a maximum of nine (9) persons at any given time. Use of all Committee Rooms in Protection House and Committee Room 12 in Main Buildings for purposes of holding Committee meetings is hereby suspended.



13. The main Chamber may only be used for Committee sittings sparingly. If used, arrangements must be made to ensure thorough cleaning and disinfection is done at least four days prior to the next sitting of the House.
14. Given the limited Committee rooms and sitting spaces, Committees are dissuaded from sitting, except those considering matters or proposals aimed at actualizing measures to address the COVID-19 Pandemic. A sitting of a Committee for any other purpose will require approval of the Speaker.
15. Where it is extremely necessary for another Committee to use the same Committee Room, adequate time shall be provided between the intervals for sufficient sanitary measures to be effected before changeover.
16. Committee Chairpersons may liaise with Party Whips on management of attendance of Members to Committee sittings.
17. With respect to management of Committee meetings, only one Clerk, one Legal Counsel or a Research officer or fiscal analyst and one Serjeant-at-Arms shall facilitate a meeting at a given time. Other members of the secretariat may offer background technical support from offices or home.
18. The media and the public shall not be allowed to physically access Committee sittings. Committees are encouraged to conduct paperless meetings by using Committee Rooms with digital projectors. This extends to receiving submissions from witnesses or the public through any form of written memoranda.

#### **General**

19. During this period, there shall be no catering services within the precincts of Parliament. Only drinking water shall be provided during Sittings.
20. The Clerk shall henceforth deploy and use a Bulk SMS System for sending alerts and updates to Members, using their telephone contacts on record. Members who may have changed their contacts are requested to communicate those changes to the Office of the Clerk by way of a text message to the official mobile phone number, **0790 494 055**, or email: **clerk@parliament.go.ke**.

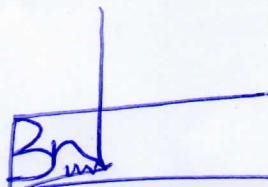
21. Members are encouraged to seek assistance or make enquires through telephone calls rather than physically visiting leadership and staff offices within Parliament Buildings.
22. The National Assembly shall not admit any visitors to its Galleries to follow proceedings until such time as it shall be safe to host visitors. Persons or parties desirous of following National Assembly proceedings are advised to do so remotely through **Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) television or National Assembly YouTube Channel by subscribing to the Channel: Parliament of Kenya or by accessing the Facebook page at Parliament of Kenya@ParliamentKe or Twitter account @NAssemblyKE @NACommitteeKE.**
23. In accordance with the Ministry of Health's advisory, Members and parliamentary staff aged **58** years and above, and those with pre-existing medical conditions as well as those who are expectant or lactating, making them more vulnerable to COVID-19, are encouraged to work from home for their safety.
24. Members and staff of the National Assembly shall uphold hygiene measures and maintain a minimum social distance of **2 metres** between themselves and any other person whenever they are within the precincts of Parliament, including when entering or leaving the Chamber, Committees or other places within the Precincts of Parliament.
25. Sanitary utilities such shall be provided before accessing the facilities and hand sanitizers shall be placed at designated areas for use by Members and staff.
26. Members are strongly advised to operate with a minimum complement of staff. In particular -
- (a) Members' personal assistants and other office staff are discouraged from coming to the offices;
  - (b) Members attending plenary and committee sittings shall be dropped at the entrance to Parliament Buildings; and
  - (c) Drivers, bodyguards and any other accompanying persons (*if it becomes very necessary to be accompanied by such persons at all*) shall be required to drop Members at the gate and find a suitable place for waiting for the Members.



### C. CONCLUSION

27. These Guidelines shall subsist for all Sittings of the House and Committee Sittings during the period of the COVID-19 Pandemic, or until revised or suspended by the Speaker.
28. We undertake to ensure safety of all Members and Staff of the National Assembly. Consequently, We will continually explore ways of facilitating the Sittings of the House and Committees, including remotely by use of modern technology with attendant revision of the Standing Orders.

**LET US ALL STAY SAFE!**



**THE HON. JUSTIN B.N. MUTURI, EGH, MP**  
**SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**April 2, 2020**