



PARLIAMENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

FACT SHEET

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MEMBERS' STATEMENTS, EXECUTIVE STATEMENTS AND URGENT MATTERS OF NATIONAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Members' statements

Members' statements are statements made by an Assembly member when recognised by the presiding officer, excluding the Deputy President, Ministers or Deputy Ministers, on behalf of his/her political party on any matter for not more than one and a half minutes. Each party may make statements based on a sequence that reflects their proportional representation in the National Assembly in a manner consistent with democracy.

The number of members' statements on any sitting day, the period of time within which such statements must be completed on that day and the sequence of party participation must be determined by the Assembly Rules Committee.

In terms of the rules, when members' statements have been concluded, a Minister or Deputy Minister present in the House may be given an opportunity to respond for not more than two minutes, to any statement. The time allocated for ministerial responses to members' statements as well as the number of ministerial responses are determined by the Rules Committee and must be agreed to by the Assembly.

On 26 November 2019, for example, the Rules Committee determined the number of permissible ministerial responses to members' statements at seven ministerial responses. This proposal was agreed to by the Assembly on 3 December 2019.

Executive statements

Executive statements are statements made by Cabinet members or the relevant Deputy Minister on behalf of that Cabinet member to make a factual or policy statement (not for party political purposes) relating to government policy, any executive action or other similar matter, of which the Assembly should be informed. The time allocated to a Cabinet member to make such a statement is 20 minutes, unless extended with the consent of the Assembly.

Each party is then given an opportunity to respond to the statement for a period determined by the Rules Committee. At the conclusion of party responses, the responsible Cabinet member or Deputy Minister is given an opportunity to reply.

Whenever possible, a copy of an Executive statement must be delivered to the leader of each party, or that leader's representative, at or before the time the statement is made in the Assembly.





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Matters of Urgent National Public Importance

The Assembly Rules provide that a private member may request the Speaker in writing to schedule without delay an urgent matter of national public importance for discussion by the House. The member must motivate why the matter is of so urgent a nature that it should override the agreed programme of the House and be dealt with as an urgent matter. The Speaker may at his/her discretion schedule the discussion for the same day if the request was received at least by midday; convene a special sitting if the House is not scheduled to meet at an earlier date that would accommodate the urgency of the matter or schedule the matter for discussion at the earliest opportunity. In exercising his or her discretion, the Speaker must apply the criteria specified in the rules. These include, inter alia, that:

- The request should be raised at the earliest opportunity
- The request should be of serious and immediate concern
- The request must deal with a matter for which government is responsible
- The request must be specific and relate to one occurrence
- The request will not be granted if the matter can be considered by some other means in the near future

Matters already discussed by the House during the same annual session may not be discussed under the relevant rule and questions of privilege may also not be discussed under this rule.