

**The Tunisian National Constituent Assembly
(NCA)**

Rules of Procedure

16 December 2011

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: The Inaugural Sitting of the Assembly	7
Section 1: Procedure at the Inaugural Sitting	7
Rule 1: Initiative	7
Rule 2: Role of Interim President	7
Rule 3: Establishment of Voting Committee	7
Rule 4: Nominations and Voting for President	8
Rule 5: Election Procedure for President	8
Rule 6: Election of Deputy Presidents	8
Rule 7: Resumption of Plenary Sitting and Other Nominations	8
Rule 8: Committee Election	8
Rule 9: Adjournment and Future Committee Meetings	9
Rule 10: Committee Meetings after Adjournment	9
Section 2: Voting Procedures for the Election of Officers	9
Rule 11: Secret Ballot	9
Rule 12: Papers and Envelopes	9
Rule 13: Excluded Ballot Papers	9
Rule 14: Invalid Ballot Papers	9
Rule 15: Electronic Voting	9
Chapter 2: Parliamentary Groups	10
Rule 16: Formation	10
Rule 17: Member Freedom	10
Rule 18: Formal Establishment through Declaration	10
Rule 19: Composition Announcement	10
Rule 20: Membership Changes	10
Rule 21: Dissolution	10
Rule 22: Announcement and Publication of Changes	11
Rule 23: Support from Bureau of the Assembly	11
Chapter 3: Organs of the National Constituent Assembly	11
Section 1: Presidency of the Assembly	11

Rule 24: General Role.....	11
Rule 25: Chairperson.....	11
Rule 26: Temporary Absence	11
Rule 27: Permanent Absence.....	11
Section 2: The Bureau of the Assembly	12
Part 1: Composition of the Bureau.....	12
Rule 28: Bureau Members	12
Rule 29: Selection of Assistants to the President	12
Rule 30: Removal of Deputy President or Assistant	12
Rule 31: Deputy President or Assistant Vacancy	12
Part 2: Terms of Reference of the Bureau	12
Rule 32: General Role.....	12
Rule 33: Regulation of International Parliamentary Relations	13
Rule 34: Vacancies in the Assembly.....	13
Rule 35: Role of Assistants to the President	13
Part 3: Organisation of the Work of the Bureau	13
Rule 36: Frequency, Timing and Voting for Meetings.....	13
Rule 37: Meeting Accessibility and Meeting Minutes.....	13
Section 3: The Presidents' Colloquy	14
Rule 38: General Role and Membership	14
Rule 39: Responsibilities	14
Rule 40: Meetings	14
Section 4: Committees	14
Part 1: General Provisions	14
Sub-section 1: Appointment of Committees.....	14
Rule 41: Establishment and Nominations.....	14
Rule 42: Proportional Membership	15
Rule 43: Nomination Procedure.....	15
Rule 44: Group Leader Meeting.....	15
Rule 45: Membership Announcement.....	15
Rule 46: Vacancy	15
Rule 47: Membership Ineligibility	15
Rule 48: Membership in More Than One Committee	16
Sub-section 2: Committee Bureaux.....	16
Rule 49: First Meeting and Elections.....	16
Rule 50: Proportional Representation	16

Rule 51: Vacancy	16
Sub-section 3: Organisation of the Work of Committees	16
Rule 52: Timing and Quorum of Meetings	16
Rule 53: Meeting Attendance	16
Rule 54: Public Meetings and Associated Publicity.....	17
Rule 55: Role of Non-Committee Members.....	17
Rule 56: Chairperson.....	17
Rule 57: Encouragement of Consensus	17
Rule 58: Study of Matter under Consideration.....	17
Rule 59: Advice on Matter under Consideration	18
Rule 60: Voting.....	18
Rule 61: Record of Deliberations	18
Rule 62: Reports.....	18
Rule 63: Field Visits	18
Part 2: Constitutional Committees.....	18
Sub-section 1: Terms of Reference of the Constitutional Committees	18
Rule 64: Establishment of Six Constitutional Committees.....	18
Sub-section 2: Organisation of the Work of the Constitutional Committees	19
Rule 65: Constitution Drafting	19
Rule 66: Joint Meetings.....	19
Part 3: Legislative Committees	19
Sub-section 1: Terms of Reference of the Legislative Committees.....	19
Rule 67: Establishment of Eight Legislative Committees	19
Subsection 2: Organisation of the Work of the Legislative Committees	20
Rule 68: Examination of Draft Laws or Proposals	20
Rule 69: Examination of Specific Issues	20
Rule 70: Expedited Consideration.....	20
Part 4: Special Committees.....	21
Sub-section 1: Special Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunity	21
Rule 71: Establishment, Seats and Immunity Discussions	21
Sub-section 2: Monitoring and Investigation Committees	21
Rule 72: Establishment of Committees and Reporting.....	21
Rule 73: Establishment of Additional Investigative Committees.....	21
Rule 74: Dissolution	22
Section 5: The Plenary Assembly	22
Part 1: Meetings of the Assembly	22

Rule 75: General Role.....	22
Rule 76: Public Meetings and Associated Publicity.....	22
Rule 77: Official Language.....	22
Rule 78: Secret Sittings	22
Rule 79: Timing of Meetings and Communication with Public.....	23
Rule 80: Quorum Requirement.....	23
Rule 81: Agenda	23
Part 2: Organisation of Seating in the Chamber	23
Rule 82: Seating Blocs and Chamber Accessibility	23
Part 3: Proceedings in Plenary Sittings	24
Rule 83: Role of President.....	24
Rule 84: Registration for Participation in Debate	24
Rule 85: Enforcement of Speaker Time Limits	24
Rule 86: Extension of Time Limit for Debate	24
Rule 87: Government Representatives, Chairpersons and Rapporteurs.....	24
Rule 88: Closure of the Debate	24
Rule 89: Related or Urgent and Important Matters	25
Rule 90: Examination or Referral Back to Committee	25
Rule 91: Consideration of Amendments	25
Rule 92: Voting on Proposed Text.....	25
Rule 93: Reconsideration of Text	25
Part 4: Quorum and Voting in the Plenary Assembly	26
Rule 94: Personal Voting and Voting Options.....	26
Rule 95: Procedure for Approval of Draft Laws	26
Rule 96: Public Voting Procedures	26
Rule 97: Declaration of Vote	27
Part 5: Minutes of Proceedings and Verbatim Report	27
Rule 98: Record of Assembly Proceedings.....	27
Part 6: Maintaining Order	27
Rule 99: Speaking.....	27
Rule 100: Warning and Withdrawal of Speaking Right.....	27
Rule 101: Expressions of Disapproval or Support	27
Rule 102: Suspension and Adjournment of Sitting	27
Chapter 4: Preparation of the Draft Constitution.....	28
Rule 103: Establishment and Composition of Joint Committee	28
Rule 104: Responsibilities of Joint Committee	28

Rule 105: Order of Business and Distribution of Draft	28
Rule 106: Debate on Draft	28
Rule 107: Approval of Draft	29
Chapter 5: Consideration of Draft Laws.....	29
Section 1: Submission and Withdrawal of Draft Laws	29
Rule 108: Submission of Draft Laws.....	29
Rule 109: Re-Introduction of Draft Laws	29
Rule 110: Withdrawal of Draft Laws	29
Section 2: Approval of Draft Laws	29
Rule 111: Circulation of Agenda and Draft Laws	29
Rule 112: Debates on Draft Laws.....	29
Rule 113: International Treaties and Agreements.....	30
Chapter 6: Scrutiny of Government	30
Section 1: Written and Oral Questions.....	30
Rule 114: Requirements and Procedures for Written Questions	30
Rule 115: Requirements and Procedures for Oral Questions.....	30
Rule 116: Withdrawal of Question.....	30
Section 2: Dialogue Meetings with the Government.....	30
Rule 117: Frequency and Procedures	30
Section 3: Motions of Censure	31
Rule 118: Purpose and Procedures.....	31
Chapter 7: Membership of the Assembly	31
Rule 119: Prohibition on Private Employment	31
Rule 120: Oath Requirement	31
Rule 121: Monthly Salary and Expenses	31
Rule 122: Facilities and Security.....	31
Rule 123: Termination of Membership and Vacancy	32
Rule 124: Prohibition on Conflict of Interest	32
Rule 125: Member Attendance.....	32
Rule 126: Member Absenteeism	32
Rule 127: Smoking Prohibition.....	32
Chapter 8: Immunity	33
Rule 128: Member Immunity.....	33
Rule 129: Lack of Member Immunity.....	33
Rule 130: Committee Meeting Accessibility	33
Rule 131: Committee Member Immunity.....	33

Rule 132: Request to End Member Detention.....	33
Rule 133: Consideration of Request to End Member Detention	34
Rule 134: Denial of Request.....	34
Chapter 9: Representation in National and International Organisations, and International Relations	34
Rule 135: Appointments	34
Rule 136: Parliamentary Friendship Groups and Twinning Agreements.....	34
Chapter 10: The Administrative and Budgetary Autonomy of the Assembly.....	35
Rule 137: Autonomy	35
Section 1: Administrative Regulation	35
Rule 138: Regulatory Areas.....	35
Rule 139: Structural Organization and Appointments.....	35
Section 2: Preparation of the Budget of the Assembly	35
Rule 140: Budget Committee.....	35
Chapter 11: Revision of the Rules of Procedure.....	36
Rule 141: Amendment Proposals.....	36

* * *

The Tunisian National Constituent Assembly (NCA)

Rules of Procedure

In accordance with interim law 6/2011 dated 16 December 2011 on the interim regulation of public authorities, the National Constituent Assembly (hereinafter referred to as “the Assembly”), at its sitting on 20 January 2012, agreed the following Rules of Procedure:

Chapter 1: The Inaugural Sitting of the Assembly

Section 1: Procedure at the Inaugural Sitting

Rule 1: Initiative¹

The inaugural sitting of the Assembly shall be convened on the initiative of the Interim President of the Republic.

Rule 2: Role of Interim President

The Interim President of the Republic shall preside at the beginning of the inaugural sitting of the Assembly, call the sitting to order, and then assign the interim chairmanship thereof to the oldest member present, who shall be assisted by the youngest male and female members of the Assembly present. The sitting shall then be suspended until the Interim President of the Republic leaves the chamber.

The session shall thereupon resume under the chairmanship of the oldest member and his assistants, who shall take the following oath:

"I swear by Allah the Almighty to independently undertake my responsibilities at the National Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Tunisia and to serve the nation solely".

The interim chairman or one of his assistants shall call out the names of the members elected, in accordance with the decision of the Central Commission of the Independent High Commission for Elections as regards the final results.

The remaining members shall collectively take the oath.

Rule 3: Establishment of Voting Committee

The Assembly shall at this sitting, and for the whole interim period, establish a five-member committee to count the votes and to monitor the voting procedures, the membership of which will be based on the equal representation of the first five ranking parties and coalitions, according to their shares of seats in the Assembly.

¹ Titles for each rule have been included by International IDEA along with this translation solely for ease of reference. The rule titles are not to be attributed to the authors of the Rules of Procedure or used to inform interpretation. Chapter and section titles were translated from the original.

Rule 4: Nominations and Voting for President

The interim chairman shall declare nominations open for the office of President of the Assembly, and receive and announce nominations during the same sitting. The chairman shall then call on the Assembly to vote by secret ballot.

Rule 5: Election Procedure for President

The President of the Assembly shall be elected for the duration of the Assembly's mandate, by an absolute majority of the members of the Assembly.

If on the first ballot no candidate has obtained an absolute majority of the members of the Assembly, a second vote for which only the two candidates receiving the largest number of votes during the first ballot will run, shall be conducted.

In the event of an equality of votes on the second ballot, the older candidate shall be declared elected. If there is no age difference, lots shall be drawn to determine the winner.

The interim chairman of the sitting shall announce the name of the winning candidate.

Rule 6: Election of Deputy Presidents

The Assembly shall then proceed to elect the first and then the second Deputy Presidents of the Assembly, according to the same procedure adopted for the election of the President of the Assembly, for the whole interim period.

Following the election of the President and the Deputy Presidents of the Assembly, the sitting shall be suspended, and the interim chairman shall leave the Chair.

Rule 7: Resumption of Plenary Sitting and Other Nominations

The plenary sitting shall resume under the chairmanship of the President of the Assembly, with the assistance of his two Deputies.

The President shall thereupon declare nominations open for membership of the Ad Hoc Committee for Establishing the Assembly's Rules of Procedure and of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Interim Regulation of Public Authorities. Nominations shall be submitted and announced at the same sitting, and the Assembly will proceed to vote.

Rule 8: Committee Election

The Assembly shall elect the Ad Hoc Committee for Establishing the Assembly's Rules of Procedure and the Ad Hoc Committee for the Interim Regulation of Public Authorities. Each committee shall be composed of 22 members. Seats shall be allocated based on the proportional representation of Assembly members, as follows:

- Each ten seats in the Assembly that a party, party/independent coalition, and/or mixed coalition has, will be allocated one seat.
- The remaining seats shall be distributed according to the largest remainder formula.
- The President of the Assembly shall put the composition resulting from this formula to the approval of the members present, by simple majority.

Rule 9: Adjournment and Future Committee Meetings

Following these elections the first plenary sitting of the Assembly shall be adjourned, and the President of the Assembly shall direct the Ad Hoc Committee for Establishing the Rules of Procedure and the Ad Hoc Committee for the Interim Regulation of Public Authorities to meet forthwith.

Rule 10: Committee Meetings after Adjournment

Following the adjournment of the plenary sitting, both committees shall convene, under the chairmanship of the President of the Assembly with the assistance of his Deputies. Each committee shall elect a chairman, deputy chairman, rapporteur, and assistant rapporteur.

Section 2: Voting Procedures for the Election of Officers

Rule 11: Secret Ballot

Elections shall normally be conducted by secret ballot. However, if the number of candidates and the number of seats to be filled are equal, the vote may be held in public, upon the proposal of the President of the sitting or any member of the Assembly. Any such public election shall be by show of hands.

Rule 12: Papers and Envelopes

Unless otherwise specified in Rule 11, all elections shall be conducted by secret ballot, using special ballot papers and standardized NCA-stamped envelopes.

Rule 13: Excluded Ballot Papers

Blank and/or invalid ballot papers shall not be taken account of, in any voting process.

Rule 14: Invalid Ballot Papers

The following shall be deemed invalid:

- Any ballot paper that is not designed for the purpose and is not enclosed in a stamped envelope
- Any ballot paper which bears a mark revealing the identity of the member of the Assembly
- Any ballot paper that bears the name of a person who is not a candidate for the post to which the ballot relates
- Any ballot paper that bears an illegible name
- Any ballot paper that has a number of names exceeding the number of posts to which the ballot relates

Rule 15: Electronic Voting

The President of the Assembly may approve the use of electronic voting, if available.

Chapter 2: Parliamentary Groups

Rule 16: Formation

Any ten members or more may set up a parliamentary group. No one party may set up more than one parliamentary group.

Rule 17: Member Freedom

Any member of the Assembly may join a group of his or her choice. No member may join more than one parliamentary group.

Rule 18: Formal Establishment through Declaration

A group shall be established by depositing a declaration with the President of the Assembly within a period not exceeding a week from the date of promulgation of the present Rules of Procedure.

Such a declaration shall contain the name of the group, the names of its president and deputy president, and a list of members supported by their signatures.

Rule 19: Composition Announcement

The President of the Assembly shall, at the plenary sitting held following the deadline for depositing the declarations provided for in Rule 18 above, announce the composition of approved parliamentary groups. The President shall arrange for the publication of lists of such groups in the official gazette.

Rule 20: Membership Changes

The President must be notified in writing by the president of each group of any changes in the membership of the group within seven days of such changes taking place.

Should any such change be the result of a member resigning or a new member joining a group, the notification shall be signed by the president of the group and the member concerned.

If, however, such a change is brought about by a dismissal, only the president of the group shall sign the notification. Should such a change involve the president of the group, his or her successor shall follow the abovementioned procedures.

Rule 21: Dissolution

If, for any reason, the number of members of any parliamentary group falls below ten, the group shall cease to exist and be deemed dissolved upon notification to the President of the Assembly in accordance with Rule 20 above.

Any group that has been dissolved may be re-established according to the aforementioned procedures, without any resultant change in the composition of the committees of the Assembly.

Rule 22: Announcement and Publication of Changes

The President of the Assembly shall announce changes relating to parliamentary groups in the plenary sitting following receipt of any notification thereof. Such changes shall be published in the official gazette.

Rule 23: Support from Bureau of the Assembly

The Bureau of the Assembly shall provide material and administrative support to enable the different parliamentary groups to undertake their tasks. The scale of such support shall be in proportion to the number of members of each group, and will take account of the overall resources available to the Assembly.

Chapter 3: Organs of the National Constituent Assembly

Section 1: Presidency of the Assembly

Rule 24: General Role

The President of the Assembly is the legal representative of the National Constituent Assembly and shall ensure the application of the Rules of Procedure and the plenary Assembly's decisions, as well as the recommendations of the Presidents' Colloquy. The President shall additionally supervise the work of the Assembly. He may take any steps necessary to maintain order and security in and around the Assembly.

Rule 25: Chairperson

The President shall chair the Bureau of the Assembly, the Presidents' Colloquy, and the Joint Committee for Coordination and Drafting, and shall chair and moderate plenary sittings of the Assembly. Whenever the President attends any committee of the Assembly, he shall take the chair of that committee, with assistance of his Deputies.

Rule 26: Temporary Absence

In case of the temporary absence of the President of the Assembly (or in case of the temporary vacancy of the office of President of the Assembly when the postholder is required to perform the functions of the President of the Republic as a result of a vacancy in the latter office), the first Deputy President or if absent, the second Deputy President shall perform the duties and exercise the authority of the President.

Rule 27: Permanent Absence

Whenever the post of President of the Assembly becomes vacant, a new President shall be elected in accordance with chapter 5 of the interim law 6/2011 dated December 16, 2011 on the interim regulation of public authorities, and Rule 5 above.

Section 2: The Bureau of the Assembly

Part 1: Composition of the Bureau

Rule 28: Bureau Members

The Bureau of the Assembly shall be composed of the President of the Assembly together with nine other members:

1. The first Deputy President
2. The second Deputy President
3. The Assistant to the President for Legislation, liaison with the government, and the presidency of the Republic
4. The Assistant to the President for Public Outreach, Civil Society and Tunisian Expatriates
5. The Assistant to the President for Foreign Relations
6. The Assistant to the President for the Media
7. Three assistants to the President for public administration and oversight of the execution of the budget

The Assistants to the President shall undertake their tasks under the direct supervision of the President of the Assembly.

Rule 29: Selection of Assistants to the President

The Assistants to the President shall be chosen for the whole interim period based on proportional representation. Parliamentary groups with a larger number of members have priority in the nomination of Assistants and the choice of their portfolios.

Rule 30: Removal of Deputy President or Assistant

The Assembly may remove a Deputy President or an Assistant to the President from his or her duties in response to a reasoned written request submitted to the Bureau of the Assembly by at least a third of the members thereof. Such a decision shall require an absolute majority of the members of the Assembly.

Rule 31: Deputy President or Assistant Vacancy

Should any post of Deputy President or Assistant to the President become vacant during the interim period, such vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the procedures set out in Rules 6 and 29 of these Rules within a maximum period of one week from the announcement of the vacancy.

The NCA Bureau shall convene therefor, take note of the vacancy, and prepare a report thereon to be submitted to the plenary session.

Part 2: Terms of Reference of the Bureau

Rule 32: General Role

The Bureau shall ensure that the tasks of the Assembly are undertaken and take measures to support members of the Assembly in the performance of their duties. The Bureau shall supervise the administrative and financial affairs of the Assembly, and monitor the execution of the budget.

Rule 33: Regulation of International Parliamentary Relations

The Bureau shall regulate the Assembly's bilateral and multilateral international parliamentary relations, and appoint parliamentary delegates to represent the Assembly, following consultation with the parliamentary groups, and taking into consideration the relative size of their membership.

Rule 34: Vacancies in the Assembly

The Bureau shall take note of all vacancies that may arise in the plenary Assembly accordingly.

Rule 35: Role of Assistants to the President

The Assistants to the President, each according to his specialization, shall assist the President in the performance of his duties particularly with regard to legislation, administration, financial control, and member affairs. Such assistance shall additionally include the coordination of the Assembly's responsibilities both internally and with the government, and the Assembly's relations with civil society and the people, as well as addressing Maghreb, Arab, African and international affairs.

Part 3: Organisation of the Work of the Bureau

Rule 36: Frequency, Timing and Voting for Meetings

The Bureau shall meet when either the President or one third of its members call for a meeting, and shall in any case meet at least once every fortnight on a day to be agreed at the first meeting. The meeting shall be quorate when two-thirds of its members are present. Decisions shall be taken by majority vote. In the event of an equality of votes, the President shall have the casting vote.

Rule 37: Meeting Accessibility and Meeting Minutes

Meetings of the Bureau are held in private and are normally attended only by the Assembly's Secretary General, who holds the meetings' minutes, endorsed by the President of the Constituent Assembly, in a special register.

Meetings of the Bureau may also be attended by the Minister responsible for relations with the Constituent Assembly or his representative when issues related to governmental work are under discussion. The President of the Assembly may also invite on an exceptional basis whoever else he deems relevant to the discussion of specific issues.

Section 3: The Presidents' Colloquy

Rule 38: General Role and Membership

The Presidents' Colloquy is a steering consultative council presided over by the President of the Constituent Assembly and is convened upon his instructions as and when necessary.

The Presidents' Colloquy comprises the following:

- The two Deputies to the President of the Assembly
- The President's Assistants
- The Constitution General Rapporteur
- The Chairmen of the Assembly Committees
- The Leaders of the Parliamentary Groups

Rule 39: Responsibilities

The Presidents' Colloquy is responsible for the following:

- Proposing the legislative and constitutional work programme for the Assembly during its term.
- Reviewing the Assembly budget as proposed by the Bureau before its submission to the Ministry of Finance.
- Proposing the agenda for plenary meetings of the Assembly, in which government projects will have priority.
- Proposing a system for organising plenary debates in order to allocate time between the different parliamentary groups.
- Helping the Bureau to follow up on the work of the Assembly's committees.
- Examination of any other issues referred by the President and his office.
- Exploring means of facilitating the work of the parliamentary groups.

Rule 40: Meetings

Meetings of the Presidents' Colloquy are held in private, and are attended only by the Secretary General of the Assembly, who holds the meetings' minutes, endorsed by the President of the Assembly, in a special register.

The Presidents' Colloquy shall take its decisions by consensus.

The President of the Assembly may also invite the attendance, on an exceptional basis, of whoever he deems relevant to the discussion of specific items on the agenda.

Section 4: Committees

Part 1: General Provisions

Sub-section 1: Appointment of Committees

Rule 41: Establishment and Nominations

The National Constituent Assembly shall establish legislative and constitutional committees, and special committees to perform specific tasks.

The President of the Assembly shall announce the opening of nominations for the membership of committees, and set the timetable for such nominations.

Rule 42: Proportional Membership

The membership of committees shall be determined in proportion to the membership of the parliamentary groups, and of independent members.

The Bureau of the Assembly shall allocate seats on each committee to each parliamentary group according to the formula set out in Rule 8 of these Rules in the presence of the groups' leaders.

Rule 43: Nomination Procedure

Nominations for committee membership shall be submitted to the Assembly's President on the set dates either by the leaders of the parliamentary groups or directly by independent members.

Rule 44: Group Leader Meeting

After nominations have closed, the Bureau shall invite all group leaders to a meeting for the purpose of establishing the list of candidates for the membership of each committee according to the number of seats allocated to each parliamentary group, and to independent members. The list of candidates shall be posted in the Assembly chamber.

Rule 45: Membership Announcement

The membership of the Assembly's committees shall be announced in a plenary sitting of the Assembly.

In the event that the number of independent members nominated exceeds the number of seats allocated to independent members, the Assembly shall proceed to vote by secret ballot. If there is an equality of votes, the youngest candidates shall be declared elected. If there is no difference in age, the outcome shall be determined by lot.

The President shall announce the results at the same sitting.

Rule 46: Vacancy

Whenever a vacancy occurs in a committee, the vacancy shall be filled following the same procedures as set out in Rules 42 to 44 above.

Rule 47: Membership Ineligibility

In accordance with the provisions of article 16 of the interim law on the interim organization of public authorities, no member of the Government may serve as a member of the Bureau of the Assembly or of one of its permanent committees.

Rule 48: Membership in More Than One Committee

A member of the Assembly may serve as a member of more than one committee providing that they are committees of different types.

Sub-section 2: Committee Bureaux

Rule 49: First Meeting and Elections

After its appointment, each committee shall convene for its first meeting under the chairmanship of the President of the Assembly and his two deputies. Each committee shall elect a bureau to conduct its work; the bureau of each committee shall consist of a chairman and a deputy chairman, a rapporteur and two assistant rapporteurs.

Rule 50: Proportional Representation

The apportionment between the parliamentary groups of posts in committee bureaux shall be determined by the Bureau of the Assembly, on the basis of proportional representation. The Bureau shall distribute such posts between the committees after consultation with the group leaders at a meeting specifically convened for this purpose. In the case of disagreement the Bureau of the Assembly shall give priority of choice to the largest parliamentary group.

The chairmanships of committees of the same kind (i.e. those appointed under Rule 64, Rule 67 and Rules 71-73 respectively) shall be distributed between the parliamentary groups according to the principle of proportional representation.

Rule 51: Vacancy

Whenever a vacancy occurs in the membership of a committee bureau, the vacant position shall be filled by election by the relevant committee in accordance with the provisions of Rule 50 above.

Sub-section 3: Organisation of the Work of Committees

Rule 52: Timing and Quorum of Meetings

Committees shall normally meet on agreed days that do not coincide with sittings of the plenary Assembly. Meetings are quorate when an absolute majority of members are present. However, if an absolute majority is not attained at the agreed time of meeting, the meeting may proceed with business as if quorate after a lapse of one hour.

In exceptional circumstances, a committee may meet concurrently with a sitting of the plenary Assembly to discuss matters of importance or urgency, if so requested by the President of the Assembly, or by the Assembly itself.

Rule 53: Meeting Attendance

Attendance at committee meetings is mandatory. Membership shall be revoked for any member who absents himself from three consecutive meetings without obtaining prior

permission from the committee Chairman in writing, or who fails to submit an acceptable explanation in writing to the committee Chairman within one week of the absence.

Rule 54: Public Meetings and Associated Publicity

Committee meetings are normally held in public but a committee may, by a majority of its members, decide to meet in private.

The dates of meetings, and agendas, of committees shall be published on the National Constituent Assembly website.

Rule 55: Role of Non-Committee Members

Any member, not being a member of the committee, may attend the meetings of a committee and give opinions on the subject discussed and participate in discussions (subject to the availability of time), but such a member may not vote.

Any member, not being a member of the committee, may express his or her opinion on any matter in writing and make relevant suggestions in a memorandum directed to the committee chairman through the Assembly's President before the date set down for the discussion of the matter concerned.

The committee chairman shall draw the attention of members to the receipt of any memoranda received from other members of the Assembly, and the committee shall consider the opinions and discuss any proposals, either to accept or reject them, before the general discussion of the matter concerned.

Rule 56: Chairperson

The committee chairman shall supervise the work and propose the agenda for each committee meeting in consultation with the bureau of the committee. The chairman shall preside at the meetings of the committee, and shall, after informing the President of the Assembly, summon meetings by any appropriate written method. In the absence of the committee chairman, he shall be replaced by his deputy, or, if the deputy is absent, by the rapporteur, or in the absence of the rapporteur by the older of the two assistant rapporteurs.

Rule 57: Encouragement of Consensus

The committee chairman shall seek to encourage agreement in the committee's work through the discussion of differing points of view, proposals and opinions.

Where consensus cannot be achieved, the facts shall be recorded in the committee's report and an opportunity provided for the Assembly to decide the matter in plenary sitting.

Rule 58: Study of Matter under Consideration

Each committee may refer any matter under consideration to one of its members or form a working group to study the subject and present a report.

Rule 59: Advice on Matter under Consideration

In order to achieve a deeper understanding of subjects under discussion, any committee may seek advice from whatever source, either by requesting reports on certain points or by inviting individuals or organisations to give evidence at hearings to be held at the Assembly's premises.

Any legislative committee may request the attendance to give evidence of representatives of the government and of officials of public authorities.

The Minister responsible for relations with the National Constituent Assembly or his representative may attend when requested by any committee to explain specific issues.

Rule 60: Voting

Voting in committees is personal and cannot be done by proxy. A committee shall take decisions in all cases by majority vote. Voting shall be carried out in public by raising hands or by any other agreed method. In the event of an equality of votes, the chairman shall have the casting vote.

Rule 61: Record of Deliberations

The minutes of committee meetings and a record of a committee's full deliberations shall be written in special registers, to be reviewed by each committee chairman and rapporteur and signed by them.

Rule 62: Reports

In the case of each matter under consideration the rapporteur or one of his assistants shall prepare the committee's report. After its approval by the committee each report shall be signed by the rapporteur responsible and by the chairman, who will then refer it to the Bureau of the Assembly to be listed in the agenda of the plenary Assembly. Each report, once approved, shall be published on the Assembly's website.

Rule 63: Field Visits

Any committee may make field visits away from the seat of the Assembly in order to follow up any matter within its field of responsibility or to study a specific subject. When making arrangements for such visits, the involvement of elected members of the Assembly from the localities concerned should be considered by the committee.

The committee shall prepare a report within a week following such a visit which shall be submitted to the Bureau of the Assembly and made available on request to any other member of the Assembly.

Part 2: Constitutional Committees

Sub-section 1: Terms of Reference of the Constitutional Committees

Rule 64: Establishment of Six Constitutional Committees

The National Constituent Assembly shall establish six constitutional committees, each comprising not more than twenty-two members. Each committee shall review the sections of the draft constitution within its area of responsibility, as set out below:

1. The Committee for preparation, governing principles and constitutional amendment.
2. The Committee on rights and freedoms
3. The Committee on the allocation of powers to the legislative and executive branches, and the relations between them.
4. The Committee on legal, administrative, financial and constitutional jurisdiction.
5. The Committee on constitutional authorities
6. The Committee on municipal and public authorities.

Sub-section 2: Organisation of the Work of the Constitutional Committees

Rule 65: Constitution Drafting

Each constitutional committee shall be responsible for drafting the sections of the draft constitution within its area of responsibility before referring its draft text to the Joint Committee for Coordination and Drafting. The text may be returned back to the originating committee to reconsider some issues before the Joint Committee submits it for discussion in the plenary Assembly.

Rule 66: Joint Meetings

In order to facilitate the consideration of aspects of the draft constitution that overlap the areas of responsibility of individual constitutional committees, joint meetings may be convened between two or more committees, at the request of any such committee or of the Joint Committee for Coordination and Drafting, and after the President of the Assembly has been informed.

Part 3: Legislative Committees

Sub-section 1: Terms of Reference of the Legislative Committees

Rule 67: Establishment of Eight Legislative Committees

The National Constituent Assembly shall establish eight legislative committees, each comprising not more than twenty-two members. Each legislative committee shall examine such draft laws as are submitted to the Assembly as fall within its area of responsibility before they are referred to the plenary Assembly. It shall also consider any other matters referred to it.

These committees are:

1. The Committee on rights, freedoms and foreign relations, responsible for the consideration of proposals and issues relating to public freedoms, human rights, religious affairs, civil society, media, defence, homeland security and international relations and cooperation.
2. The Committee on general legislation, responsible for the consideration of draft laws and issues relating to jurisdiction, citizenship, personal status and civil, commercial

and criminal laws in general, in addition to general legislative pardon and transitional justice. It shall also review the general organization, electoral systems, *jus in rem* and property rights.

3. The Committee on finance, development and planning, responsible for the consideration of proposals and issues relating to currency, taxes, exchange, financial affairs and budget, development plans, loans, state financial commitments and the activities of public agencies.
4. The Committee on power and the productive sectors, responsible for the consideration of proposals and issues relating to energy, farming, marine fishing, water, industry, mines and traditional industries.
5. The Committee on the service sector, responsible for considering proposals and issues relating to trade, prices, transportation, communication and tourism.
6. The Committee on infrastructure and the environment, responsible for considering proposals and issues relating to housing, modern technology, environment and conservation.
7. The Committee on social affairs, responsible for considering proposals and issues relating to social welfare, public health, employment and family affairs.
8. The Committee on education, responsible for considering proposals and issues relating to education, scientific research, culture, youth, entertainment and sports.

Subsection 2: Organisation of the Work of the Legislative Committees

Rule 68: Examination of Draft Laws or Proposals

Each legislative committee shall examine such draft laws or proposals within its area of responsibility as are referred by the President of the Assembly.

It shall also undertake the examination of any other matters referred to it by the plenary Assembly, subject to the agreement of the committee chairman.

Rule 69: Examination of Specific Issues

Each legislative committee may, with the approval of or at the request of the President of the Assembly, examine specific aspects of a subject within its terms of responsibility when referred from another legislative committee. A report shall be written on the subject and sent to the competent committee.

Each legislative committee may, after informing the Assembly President, invite any other legislative committee to submit its opinion on specific issues referred to it.

Whenever an overlap of jurisdiction arises between two or more legislative committees, the chairman of any of the committees concerned may refer the issue in a memorandum to the President of the Assembly, who shall submit the matter to the Bureau of the Assembly for its opinion.

Rule 70: Expedited Consideration

The President of the Assembly or the Bureau may submit a reasoned request to a legislative committee to expedite its consideration of a proposal or a draft law. The committee shall present a report within a week of the date of the expediting request.

Part 4: Special Committees

Sub-section 1: Special Committee on Rules of Procedure and Immunity

Rule 71: Establishment, Seats and Immunity Discussions

The Assembly shall establish a committee for the whole constituent period comprising not more than twenty-two members, to review the rules of procedure of the Assembly and matters relating to the execution of its provisions, and to consider matters relating to the immunity of members.

Seats shall be allocated in accordance with Rule 8 of these Rules of Procedure.

Meetings discussing immunity shall be held in camera.

Sub-section 2: Monitoring and Investigation Committees

Rule 72: Establishment of Committees and Reporting

The Assembly shall elect two special committees for monitoring urgent and top-priority national issues. Each committee shall be composed of not more than twenty-two members and seats shall be allocated in accordance with Rule (8) of these Rules of Procedure. The committees are:

1. The Committee on Revolutionary Martyrs and Injured and General Legislative Amnesty Enforcement: it shall consider all issues relating to the rights and indemnities of the revolution's martyrs and injured. In addition, it assumes the responsibility for applying the General Legislative Amnesty Law and for compensating dictatorship victims since Independence.
2. The Administrative Reform and Anti-Corruption Committee: it shall consider all issues relating to financial and administrative corruption; redemption of stolen public funds; monitoring and updating management development techniques; and reform of the public service.

Each monitoring committee shall prepare a monthly report including the results of their activities and recommendations thereon. Each such report will be submitted to the Bureau of the Assembly, which will present it to the General Assembly.

Rule 73: Establishment of Additional Investigative Committees

The Assembly may, upon a written request from one-third of its members, establish other special committees to investigate important issues. The establishment of any such committee will require the approval of an absolute majority of the members of the Assembly.

Each investigative committee shall comprise not more than twenty-two members who shall be elected according to the system of proportional representation of the parliamentary groups.

Rule 74: Dissolution

At the conclusion of its activities, any committee established under Rule 73 above shall prepare a report and submit it to President of the Assembly, who, in turn, will present it to the General Assembly. Following the completion of its work any such committee will be automatically dissolved.

Section 5: The Plenary Assembly

Part 1: Meetings of the Assembly

Rule 75: General Role

The Assembly shall examine the draft constitution, draft laws, and the draft state budget after the completion of the work of the relevant committees and the submission of the relevant committees' reports thereon, as well as any other matters included in the Assembly's agenda.

Rule 76: Public Meetings and Associated Publicity

Meetings of the Assembly shall normally be held in public and shall be publicized by all available means, including:

1. Announcing the meeting dates and agenda of the Assembly.
2. Reserving special places for the public and the media, according to regulations laid down by the Bureau.
3. Publishing the Assembly's debates, decisions, and the results of voting and polling operations, etc. in the Assembly section of the Official Gazette.
4. Radio and Television broadcasting of plenary Assembly debates.
5. Publishing on the Assembly website.

Rule 77: Official Language

The deliberations of the Assembly shall be in Arabic. The Bureau shall make every effort to provide facilities for the contribution of members not speaking Arabic to the work of committees and the plenary Assembly. The Bureau shall also ensure that Tunisians abroad are made aware of the activities and deliberations of the Assembly.

Rule 78: Secret Sitings

The Assembly may meet in secret session at the proposal of its President, of the chairman of a parliamentary group, or of ten or more members of the Assembly. Any such request must be approved by an absolute majority of the members of the Assembly.

Secret sittings of the Assembly may be attended only by members of the Assembly, the Secretary General of the Assembly or his deputy, and any others specifically authorized by the Bureau. The minutes and records of debates in secret session may not be read by any other person, save with the express permission of the President of the Assembly.

Provided that these provisions relating to secret sessions shall not apply whenever the Assembly is considering matters relating to the constitution.

Rule 79: Timing of Meetings and Communication with Public

The President shall summon the Assembly to meet at the dates and times determined by the Bureau of the Assembly, which shall, in considering the dates of plenary sittings and of committee meetings, ensure that one week in each month is set aside for members' communication with the public.

Rule 80: Quorum Requirement

The President of the Assembly or one of the two deputy Presidents shall open each sitting at the time specified for it, if an absolute majority of members is present.

However, if an absolute majority is not attained at the agreed time of meeting, the sitting shall be suspended for one hour and shall again resume regardless of the number of attendees, provided that such number is no less the one-third of the members of the Assembly.

In such case, the Assembly shall consider the issues set out in the agenda for the day's sitting, provided that voting takes place according to the requirements of Rule 95 of these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 81: Agenda

The plenary sitting is opened by the reading of the agenda.

The President of the sitting may suggest adding other subjects to the agenda, subject to the approval of the majority of members in attendance.

Before the deliberations on subjects listed on the agenda begin, the President of the sitting shall announce the proposals of the Bureau of the Assembly on the organisation of debates and the time allowed for speakers on points listed on the agenda, and any other matters of which the Assembly should be informed.

Part 2: Organisation of Seating in the Chamber

Rule 82: Seating Blocs and Chamber Accessibility

The President of the Assembly shall allocate the seating in the Chamber into blocs for each parliamentary group.

The blocs of seats shall be arranged from the right of the President to the left according to the size of each parliamentary group, and the last bloc shall be allocated to the independent members according to alphabetical order.

The first seat in each bloc shall be occupied by the leader of the parliamentary group concerned, and the remainder of the seats shall be allocated either in alphabetical order or in accordance with the proposals of the leader of the parliamentary group.

The Assembly's Chamber may not be entered by any except members of the Constituent Assembly, government members and their aids, and guests and Assembly employees so authorized by the President.

Part 3: Proceedings in Plenary Sittings

Rule 83: Role of President

The President of the Assembly or one of his deputies will preside over meetings of the Assembly. He will adjourn and maintain order during the meeting. The President shall organize, close the discussions, manage voting and declare the result. Prayer times must be observed during the course of each sitting.

Rule 84: Registration for Participation in Debate

Members wishing to take part in a debate shall register their names by sending their requests in writing to the President in the Chair either directly or through their parliamentary groups not later than the commencement of the sitting.

At the beginning of the sitting the President in the Chair shall announce the list of speakers and the order in which they will speak.

Rule 85: Enforcement of Speaker Time Limits

Whenever a certain period of time is allocated for a debate, speakers shall not exceed the time limit set for their respective parliamentary groups or for them personally.

If a parliamentary group uses its allotted time during a debate, it may not give the floor to further of its members.

Speeches must be relevant to the subject under discussion. If a speaker departs from the subject or exceeds the time limit, the President shall notify the speaker, but if the speaker does not respond, the President may instruct him to withdraw. If the speaker continues, the President may order the microphones to be turned off and instruct that the speech should be deleted from the record of proceedings.

Rule 86: Extension of Time Limit for Debate

If it appears to the President in the Chair that the time allotted for a debate is insufficient, he may ask the Assembly to extend the time available: any decision on such a request shall be taken by a majority of the members present, and without debate.

Rule 87: Government Representatives, Chairpersons and Rapporteurs

Government representatives, and the chairmen and rapporteurs of the relevant committees may be called to speak whenever they so request.

Rule 88: Closure of the Debate

If it appears to the President in the Chair that a matter under discussion has been fully considered, he may propose to the Assembly that the debate be closed. Only one speaker

against the proposal and one speaker for the proposal may be heard, for not more than two minutes each, and the proposal shall then be decided by a majority of the members present.

Rule 89: Related or Urgent and Important Matters

A member shall have a prior right to speak, either immediately or after the current speaker sits down, if he asks leave to raise a point of order concerning matters affecting the conduct of the proceedings of the Assembly. Any such point of order must be directly related to a specific Rule of these Rules of Procedure. Any such intervention may last for no more than two minutes, after which the right to speak will be withdrawn.

A member who asks leave to speak on an urgent and important matter must indicate the matter that he intends to raise when seeking the floor. He will be permitted to speak only at the end of the business of the day, and no such intervention may relate to matters that have already been discussed and decided upon by the Assembly.

Rule 90: Examination or Referral Back to Committee

At the end of a general debate, the Assembly shall decide, by simple majority of the members present, whether to proceed to examine the detailed articles of any proposal under consideration, or to refer the proposal back to the committee or committees concerned, or to delay further consideration until a later date.

If it is agreed to refer a draft law back to committee, further consideration shall be deferred until a new report is presented on a later date to be fixed by the Bureau of the Assembly.

Rule 91: Consideration of Amendments

Members may propose amendments to any proposal or draft law providing that each amendment is precise, and is submitted in writing.

In the case of every proposed amendment, the Assembly shall decide, by a majority of the members present, and without debate, whether to consider the amendment or to reject it without debate. If the Assembly agrees to consider the amendment it shall then decide whether to refer it back to committee or to adopt the amendment forthwith if it is regarded by the Assembly as marginal or of only a technical nature.

The floor shall be given only to the chairman and rapporteur of the relevant committee, the general constitution rapporteur, parliamentary group leaders, a government representative and one member for the motion and one against.

Rule 92: Voting on Proposed Text

After amendments have been disposed of, the Assembly shall debate and vote on each article of the proposed text, and finally the whole proposal shall be put to the vote.

Once voting has begun on any matter, debate may not be resumed.

Rule 93: Reconsideration of Text

If any amendments made to any part of a draft text require consequential amendments to any part previously agreed to, the Assembly may reconsider the earlier part and vote on it again.

The Assembly may also reconsider an article previously adopted if so requested by the government representative, the chairman or rapporteur of the relevant committee, or the constitution general rapporteur, if new circumstances have arisen before deliberations on the whole text have been concluded.

Part 4: Quorum and Voting in the Plenary Assembly

Rule 94: Personal Voting and Voting Options

Voting is personal and voting by proxy or by mail is forbidden. Members vote by indicating their consent, rejection or abstention.

Rule 95: Procedure for Approval of Draft Laws

The National Constituent Assembly shall approve draft laws and make other decisions as follows:

- 1- By a majority of members present, providing that the ayes are not less than one third of the Assembly's members when the Assembly considers:
 - draft Ordinary Laws
 - Regulations
 - the review of Ordinary Laws issued by decree after 14 January 2011

- 2- By an absolute majority of all Assembly members when the Assembly considers:
 - a motion of confidence
 - a motion of censure
 - the dismissal of the President of the Republic
 - the dismissal of the President of the Assembly
 - the draft articles of the Constitution
 - draft Organic Laws
 - the review of Organic Laws issued by decree after 14 January 2011

- 3- By a two-thirds majority of all Assembly members when the Assembly considers:
 - the first reading of the draft Constitution
 - a second reading of the draft Constitution, if required
 - the declaration of war and the conclusion of peace.

Rule 96: Public Voting Procedures

With the exception of elections, the procedures for which are set out in Rule 11 above, voting takes place in public through one of the following means:

First: electronic voting

Second: vote by raising hands

Third: vote by roll call

Rule 97: Declaration of Vote

The President in the Chair shall declare the result of the vote and the resulting decision of the Assembly. After the final vote on a text, and the announcement of the Assembly's decision thereon, no further debate shall be permitted, and the provisions of Rule 93 of these Rules shall no longer apply.

Part 5: Minutes of Proceedings and Verbatim Report

Rule 98: Record of Assembly Proceedings

A complete record of the proceedings of the Assembly including a verbatim report of the speeches made shall be prepared after each sitting, and published in the official gazette. Such minutes shall be considered final if no objection or request for correction is communicated to the Assembly's President within one week of their publication in the official gazette.

Any objection made by a member to the text of his speech as published in the official gazette must be submitted in writing to the President of the Assembly within the time limit set above.

The Bureau of the Assembly shall verify the validity of objections and decide whether to accept or reject them. When a correction is accepted, the Assembly President shall publish the amended wording.

Part 6: Maintaining Order

Rule 99: Speaking

No member of the Assembly, other than the President in the Chair, may interrupt a speaker or make any comments on the content of a speech. No one may speak unless called by the Chair to speak.

Rule 100: Warning and Withdrawal of Speaking Right

In the case of disorderly conduct by a member of the Assembly, the President in the Chair shall inform the member in person or summon the member to his office for this purpose. If the disorderly conduct continues the President may withdraw from the member the right to speak during the remainder of the sitting.

Rule 101: Expressions of Disapproval or Support

Only members of the Assembly may express disapproval or support during a plenary sitting. Any other persons present who violate this Rule may be expelled from the Chamber by order of the President in the Chair.

Rule 102: Suspension and Adjournment of Sitting

If at any time during a plenary sitting an incident occurs that may interrupt its normal proceedings and the Chair is not able to maintain order, the Chair may suspend the sitting. If the violation continues after the resumption of the sitting, the President in the Chair may adjourn the meeting to another time.

A parliamentary group representative may request the suspension of the sitting for consultations, but such a request may be made only once during the consideration of any particular matter, and such a suspension may last for no more than half an hour.

Chapter 4: Preparation of the Draft Constitution

Rule 103: Establishment and Composition of Joint Committee

In parallel with the general Constitutional Committees, the National Constituent Assembly shall establish a Joint Committee for Coordination and Drafting consisting of:

- the President of the Constituent Assembly, who shall be ex officio Chairman,
- the Constitution general rapporteur, who shall be ex officio Deputy Chairman,
- the first and second assistants to the constitution general rapporteur, and
- the chairmen and rapporteurs of the general Constitutional Committees.

The constitution general rapporteur and his assistants are elected pursuant to Rule 5 of these Rules.

Rule 104: Responsibilities of Joint Committee

The Joint Committee for Coordination and Drafting shall be responsible for:

- the ongoing coordination of work between the general constitutional committees,
- the preparation of the general report on the draft constitution before its presentation to the plenary Assembly, and
- the preparation of the final draft of the constitution in accordance with the decisions of the Assembly.

Rule 105: Order of Business and Distribution of Draft

The President of the National Constituent Assembly shall place the draft Constitution, once drafted, on the order of business of the Assembly, and shall order its distribution to all members of the Assembly, the President of the Republic, and the Prime Minister, together with the general report on the draft constitution and the reports of the general constitutional committees, [not less than] two weeks before the plenary sitting of the Assembly at which the draft Constitution is to be considered.

Rule 106: Debate on Draft

The debate on the draft constitution in the plenary Assembly shall be initiated by the presentation of the General Report on the Constitution.

After the presentation of the General Report, the general debate on the Constitution will be open to all members of the Assembly, the General Rapporteur having a right of reply to all interventions from the floor.

Rule 107: Approval of Draft

Approval of the draft constitution shall be given pursuant to article 3 of the interim law on the interim organisation of public authorities.

Chapter 5: Consideration of Draft Laws

Section 1: Submission and Withdrawal of Draft Laws

Rule 108: Submission of Draft Laws

Draft laws shall be submitted to the Assembly's President by the government or at least ten members of the National Constituent Assembly.

Draft laws and amendments may not have the effect of reducing public resources or of adding new costs or expenses.

Rule 109: Re-Introduction of Draft Laws

A draft law that has been rejected by the Assembly may not be re-introduced within a period of six months following the date of its rejection.

Rule 110: Withdrawal of Draft Laws

A draft law may be withdrawn by the members who presented it at any time before its consideration by the plenary Assembly, but if it is withdrawn at any time after such consideration has begun the withdrawal must be justified.

Section 2: Approval of Draft Laws

Rule 111: Circulation of Agenda and Draft Laws

The President of the Assembly shall circulate to the Assembly members and to the government the proposed agenda with the enlisted draft laws and the relevant committees' reports in writing, not less than forty-eight hours before the date of the plenary sitting at which they are to be considered, except in cases of urgency.

Rule 112: Debates on Draft Laws

Debates on draft laws in the plenary Assembly shall be initiated by the presentation of the report of the relevant committee, followed by the representative of the Government or the representative of the members who submitted the draft law, if they request the floor.

The rapporteur may, when presenting the committee report on the draft law under consideration, summarise the conclusions of the committee if the report has already been circulated to members.

The government representative or, as the case may be, the committee chairman, shall reply to the interventions of members from the floor.

Rule 113: International Treaties and Agreements

The Assembly may not vote on the separate articles of treaties or other international agreements, nor may amendments be proposed thereto. The Assembly may decide in such cases only to agree, to agree with reservations, to postpone a decision, or to reject the text as whole.

Chapter 6: Scrutiny of Government

Section 1: Written and Oral Questions

Rule 114: Requirements and Procedures for Written Questions

Any member or group of members may send to the President of the Assembly written Questions for submission to the Government.

Written Questions must be brief, precise and avoid any references of a personal nature.

The Bureau of the Assembly shall decide on how far the written questions comply with these conditions and shall inform their senders in writing.

The Government shall respond to the Assembly's President with a letter no later than one month from receiving a written question. Questions and the government's responses thereto shall be published in the official gazette and on the Assembly's website.

Rule 115: Requirements and Procedures for Oral Questions

Any member may ask the government oral questions at a plenary sitting. In each case a written request is to be sent to the President of the Assembly stating the nature of the question and indicating which member of the Government is asked to respond. The Government shall respond on a date to be determined by the Bureau.

Oral Questions shall conform to the same rules as set out in Rule 114 above. The government shall be informed of the content of the Question and the date of the plenary sitting at which it is required to respond.

Rule 116: Withdrawal of Question

A member may withdraw a question previously submitted providing that the withdrawal is justified.

Section 2: Dialogue Meetings with the Government

Rule 117: Frequency and Procedures

The Assembly shall arrange meetings for a general discussion with the government on the work of the Government as a whole and on individual departmental policies. Such meetings

shall be held once every month or whenever needed at the request of the Bureau or of a majority of members.

Dialogue meetings shall start with a statement by the relevant government member on the issue. He shall then answer members' questions but may ask for a delay for the preparation of his answers.

Section 3: Motions of Censure

Rule 118: Purpose and Procedures

If members of the Assembly believe that the Government has departed from its declared programme of work, a motion of censure may be proposed to the effect that the Government should surrender its responsibilities.

A motion of censure shall be submitted to the President of the National Constituent Assembly in the form of a justified proposal signed by at least one third of the members of the Assembly; it shall be referred to the Assembly's Bureau, who shall prepare a report thereon within not more than one week of its submission.

The President of the Assembly shall, by all available written means, summon the Assembly to meet within two weeks of the submission of the motion to debate and decide upon it. The President of the Republic shall be informed of the Assembly's decision.

The same procedure shall apply in the case of a motion of censure against an individual member of the Government.

Chapter 7: Membership of the Assembly

Rule 119: Prohibition on Private Employment

Each Member of Parliament represents all the people with effect from the final publication on 15 November 2011 in the official gazette of the results of the elections to the Assembly. In accordance with *article 23* of the decree, 35/2011, dated 10 May 2011 on the election of the National Constituent Assembly, no member (being a holder of public office) shall thereafter undertake private employment.

Rule 120: Oath Requirement

Each new member of the Assembly shall take the oath prescribed in Rule 2 of these Rules at the first plenary sitting of the Assembly after his election.

Rule 121: Monthly Salary and Expenses

The Assembly shall provide a monthly salary for members and repay the expenses directly attributable to their parliamentary work after approval by the Assembly's President.

Rule 122: Facilities and Security

The Bureau of the Assembly shall liaise with the government to provide necessary facilities for members of the Assembly to perform their duties anywhere and to provide appropriate security.

These rules apply equally to members of the Assembly when travelling abroad.

Rule 123: Termination of Membership and Vacancy

Membership of the National Constituent Assembly shall terminate before end of the electoral term in case of death, resignation or disqualification. Any vacancy shall be filled by the next candidate following in order on the same candidates' list pursuant to the decree number 35/2011 dated 10 May 2011 on the election of the National Constituent Assembly.

Rule 124: Prohibition on Conflict of Interest

It is prohibited for any member of the National Constituent Assembly to make use of his public office in any business related to financial, industrial, vocational or trade projects.

It is also prohibited for members of the National Constituent Assembly to contract with the State or public establishments or facilities.

A lawyer or a court expert who is a member of the National Constituent Assembly may not, while exercising his profession, perform or take any action against the State or public establishments and facilities with effect from the date of the approval of these Rules.

Rule 125: Member Attendance

Assembly members shall attend regularly the meetings of the Assembly and of the committees of which they are members. A member of the Assembly shall be regarded as absent with leave if he is a government member or is assigned to duties preventing his attendance at sittings.

Rule 126: Member Absenteeism

A member may not absent himself without prior notice.

The Assembly President may permit a member to be absent for a limited time, but an indefinite absence is not allowed except in case of illness.

When a member is absent without prior notice, the president may give him notice; if the absence is repeated the member shall receive written warning.

If absenteeism without notice exceeds three sittings in the same month, the Bureau may deduct a sum of money equivalent to the period of absence. If a member of the Assembly is absent without leave for three months or more in a year, the Bureau may propose to the Assembly that the member concerned should be regarded as having resigned. The Assembly shall decide on this by secret ballot and an absolute majority of members.

Rule 127: Smoking Prohibition

Smoking is prohibited in non-smoking areas in the Assembly's premises.

Chapter 8: Immunity

Rule 128: Member Immunity

Members of the National Constituent Assembly shall enjoy immunity in accordance with the provisions of chapter 8 of the interim law on the Provisional Regulation of Public Authorities.

Rule 129: Lack of Member Immunity

The removal of immunity shall be considered upon a request submitted by the Judiciary, with the case file attached thereto.

The member concerned has the right not to invoke immunity for protection.

The Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee shall examine all files submitted thereto and submit reports thereon within a maximum period of 15 days from the referral date.

Rule 130: Committee Meeting Accessibility

A member who is not a member of the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee may not attend its meetings except for the purpose of giving testimony or answering questions put forward by the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee, within the time limit needed to provide his testimony.

Rule 131: Committee Member Immunity

When the member of the Assembly to whom the request to lift immunity relates is a member of the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee, his membership of the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee shall be temporarily suspended until a report thereon is submitted.

The President of the Assembly shall notify the member concerned of any request for the lifting of immunity, and shall refer the aforementioned judicial request and attachments thereto to the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee, which shall examine the same. A fellow member of the Assembly may be nominated to communicate the statement of the member in question before the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee.

The Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee shall submit its report to the plenary Assembly.

Rule 132: Request to End Member Detention

A request to end the detention of a member shall be made upon a proposal submitted by one or more members and upon a decision taken by the Assembly in light of the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee's report. Such report shall be submitted within a maximum period of 48 hours and after questioning the member who made the proposal or the first to initiate the submission thereof.

Rule 133: Consideration of Request to End Member Detention

The Assembly shall examine such requests in light of the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee's report, which shall be distributed to all members before the convening of the plenary sitting.

The Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee's report shall be heard, and then followed by a statement by the member in question or by a fellow member nominated by him.

The Assembly shall make its decision with regard to the request to lift immunity or to end suspension by a majority of members present.

The President shall notify those concerned of the Assembly's decision.

Rule 134: Denial of Request

Should the Assembly decide to deny the request to lift immunity or the proposal to end suspension, no other request or proposal on the same subject of the initial request or proposal may thereafter be submitted.

Chapter 9: Representation in National and International Organisations, and International Relations

Rule 135: Appointments

The Bureau shall appoint members to represent the Assembly in national, Arab and international bodies and councils, ensuring the participation of members of the different parliamentary groups, according to their size, but also taking account of the relevant qualifications and experience of the members concerned.

The President of the Assembly shall announce such appointments to the plenary Assembly, and shall duly notify the organisations concerned.

Every member representing the Assembly in any of the aforementioned bodies shall prepare a periodic report on his activities therein which shall be submitted to the Bureau no more than two weeks after the event. The same procedures shall be followed with regard to parliamentary delegations.

Rule 136: Parliamentary Friendship Groups and Twinning Agreements

The Bureau shall develop a list of parliamentary friendship groups and twinning agreements, and shall consider requests to establish or join such groups or agreements without regard to political representativity.

Every member is entitled to join as well as to withdraw from any parliamentary friendship group by notifying the President of the Assembly in writing.

Every parliamentary friendship group shall, from among its members, establish a bureau comprising a president, a deputy president and a rapporteur. The political representation of parliamentary groups shall be disregarded when making such appointments.

Every member may join more than one parliamentary friendship group but may be a member of the bureau of only one such group.

The President of the Assembly shall notify the plenary Assembly of the list of parliamentary friendship groups, the composition of their bureaux, and any subsequent changes.

Chapter 10: The Administrative and Budgetary Autonomy of the Assembly

Rule 137: Autonomy

The National Constituent Assembly shall enjoy administrative and financial autonomy within the state budget.

Section 1: Administrative Regulation

Rule 138: Regulatory Areas

The Assembly shall make regulations governing the qualifications for employment in the parliamentary offices and administrative services of the Assembly, without prejudice to the general principles governing public sector employment.

The NCA shall also make regulations concerning employment in the different departments of the parliamentary service.

Rule 139: Structural Organization and Appointments

The Bureau of the Assembly shall be responsible for developing the structural organization of departments of the Assembly.

The President of the Assembly shall make appointments to positions related to the core administration of the Assembly's services, with the approval of the majority of the members of the Bureau of the Assembly.

Section 2: Preparation of the Budget of the Assembly

Rule 140: Budget Committee

The Bureau of the Assembly shall establish a committee to develop a preliminary draft of the budget of the Assembly. Members of the budget committee shall be chosen from among members of the Assembly, together with appropriate senior staff, without prejudice to proportional representation of the parliamentary groups.

The budget committee shall develop a preliminary draft of the budget of the Assembly in accordance with the applicable legislation and within the time limit specified for such purposes.

The President of the Assembly shall submit the preliminary draft of the budget to the Bureau, which shall examine and make any necessary changes. The final draft budget shall

be submitted to the plenary Assembly and shall require an absolute majority of the members of the Assembly for its adoption.

Chapter 11: Revision of the Rules of Procedure

Rule 141: Amendment Proposals

Any ten or more members may submit to the Assembly written proposals for the amendment of these Rules of Procedure.

The President of the Assembly shall refer any such proposal, submitted in the required form, to the Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee.

The Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee may also take the initiative in proposing amendments to the Rules of Procedure.

Rule 142: Consideration and Adoption of Amendment Proposals

The Rules of Procedure and Immunity Committee shall examine any such proposals, and prepare a report thereon to be submitted to the plenary Assembly. If adopted, the amended version of the Rules shall be effective from the date of their adoption by the Assembly, and shall be published in the official gazette of the Tunisian Republic.

Rule 143: Effective Date and Publication

These Rules of Procedure shall enter into effect from the date of their adoption by the National Constituent Assembly, and shall be published in the official gazette of the Tunisian Republic.

* * *