



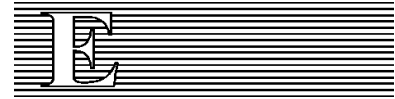
**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**



AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

First Joint Session of the Committee of Directors General
of National Statistics Offices and the Statistical
Commission for Africa

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Rules of procedure

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I. Representation

1. Each country participating in the Joint Session of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices and the Statistical Commission for Africa, hereinafter referred to as the Joint Session, shall be represented by an accredited head of the national statistical office. Each delegation may include such representatives, advisers and experts as may be required.

II. Sessions

A. Number of sessions

2. Unless the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission both decide otherwise, the Joint Session shall meet every year for four days.

B. Dates of sessions

3. The dates of each session of the Joint Session shall be decided on by the secretariat, taking into account any recommendations of the Bureau and subject to the availability of conference facilities. The session shall be held before the annual session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, which is usually held in February or March, and before the Joint Annual Meetings of the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and African Union Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance (hereinafter referred to as the Conference of Ministers), which usually takes place in March or April.

C. Place of sessions

4. The secretariat shall decide where the sessions shall be held. The secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, may accept a request from an African Government to host a session in its country. In such cases, the host country shall provide the following at its own expense:

- Equipment for simultaneous interpretation
- Tea, coffee and lunch
- Sufficient conference rooms and offices
- Equipment for the secretariat
- Transportation of participants to/from the airport and hotels
- Transportation of participants to/from hotels and the conference venue
- Visa facilitation

D. Notification of the opening date of sessions

5. The secretariat shall notify the ministries of foreign affairs of African countries of the date and place of the session at least eight weeks in advance, and send a copy of the letter of invitation to their embassies based in Addis Ababa. The secretariat will also invite them to provide a list of their representatives and any other delegation members.

E. Organization of the sessions

6. Work at the sessions shall be organized in plenary meetings. Committees could be set up in parallel sessions in order to discuss specific issues and draft resolutions of the Joint Session, if need be. The secretariat shall announce the working hours on the first day of the session.

III. Agenda

A. Drawing up of the provisional agenda

7. The secretariat, in consultation with the Chair and the Bureau whenever possible, shall draw up the provisional agenda prior to each session.

8. The provisional agenda may include items:

(a) Proposed by the Joint Session at previous sessions and, for the first session of the Joint Session, agenda items carried over from previous meetings of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices and the Statistical Commission for Africa;

(b) Requested by the Conference of Ministers;

(c) Requested by the African working groups;

(d) Requested by the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission or the African Development Bank;

(e) Requested by the African Statistical Coordination Committee;

(f) Proposed by African countries, the regional economic communities, the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development, the Forum on African Statistical Development, the Economic and Statistical Observatory of Sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT), and any other relevant African statistical bodies;

(g) Recommended by the Bureau of the Joint Session;

(h) Requested by the United Nations Statistical Commission;

(i) Suggested by the United Nations Statistics Division, specialized agencies of the United Nations and other relevant international institutes.

9. Items proposed for inclusion in the provisional agenda shall be submitted together with basic documents to the secretariat no less than seven weeks before the start of the session.

10. Any organization not covered under paragraph 8 may propose items for inclusion in the provisional agenda provided that:

(a) It informs the secretariat of its intentions at least eight weeks before the start of the session and that, before formally proposing an item, it gives due consideration to any comments made by the secretariat;

(b) It submits the formal proposal together with basic documents no less than seven weeks before the start of the session.

11. An item proposed in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 10 shall be included in the provisional agenda of the Joint Session if it is approved by the Bureau.

12. In the interests of efficiency and effective time management, the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, shall classify the items of the provisional agenda as either items for discussion or items for information. Information items will not be introduced and the Joint Session will take note of them without further debate.

13. The provisional agenda shall reflect the multi-year programme of work developed by the African Centre for Statistics, the Statistics Division of the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank.

B. Communication of the provisional agenda

14. The secretariat shall, no less than six weeks before the start of the session, put up the provisional agenda and the titles of the basic documents related to each agenda item on the websites of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission. It shall also inform national statistics offices and other stakeholders mentioned in paragraph 8 of the availability of those documents on the Internet.

C. Adoption of the agenda

15. The Joint Session shall, at the beginning of each session, after the election of its officers, adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda.

D. Revision of the agenda

16. During a session, the Joint Session may decide to add additional items to the agenda, based on documentation and discussion at the session, and priorities or problems that may arise. Only important and urgent items shall be added to the agenda during a session. On the basis of this, and at the request of the Chair, the secretariat shall prepare a revised agenda.

E. Draft provisional agenda for subsequent sessions

17. At the end of each session, the secretariat shall submit a draft provisional agenda for the Joint Session's subsequent session, indicating in respect of each agenda item the documents to be submitted under that item and the legislative authority for their preparation, in order to enable the Joint Session to consider the documents from the point of view of their contribution to its work and of their urgency and relevance.

IV. Documentation

A. Session documents

18. The secretariat shall, no less than four weeks before the start of the session, make the basic documents related to each item of the provisional agenda available on the Internet, and shall inform national statistical offices and other stakeholders mentioned in paragraph 8 of the availability of those documents.

19. In exceptional circumstances, the secretariat may upload the basic documents relating to some of the items on the provisional agenda after the four-week deadline has passed, but no less than two weeks before the start of the session.

20. Documents shall be limited to 10 pages in length and where possible they should be well below this limit. They shall be concise and action-oriented, and available in English and French.

21. As a general rule, no substantive discussion shall be initiated unless an appropriate document is available.

B. Background documents

22. Each African country shall submit a progress report of its activities to the secretariat at least four weeks before the start of each session.

23. Other background documents can also be made available to the Joint Session. Such documents shall be cleared by the secretariat before they are posted on the websites of the Joint Session and distributed to participants at the sessions, where applicable. They can be in any working language and shall be circulated only in the language(s) provided by the author. The secretariat shall not be responsible for the translation of such documents.

V. Bureau

A. Officers and terms of office

24. At the start of the first regular meeting of a session, the Joint Session shall elect a Bureau comprising a Chair, First and Second Vice-Chairs, and First and Second Rapporteurs, from the members of the Joint Session, for a term of one year. The election of the officers shall, to the extent possible, take into consideration geographical distribution, languages and gender balance. Election shall be by acclamation.

25. The newly elected Bureau shall take up its duties once the regular meetings of the session at which it was elected have begun, and shall remain in office until the election of the next Bureau.

26. The Chair shall preside over the plenary meetings of the session. If the Chair is absent during a meeting or any part thereof, he or she shall designate the First or the Second Vice-Chair to take his or her place.

27. The members of the Bureau may be re-elected for two successive terms. Anyone who has been a member of the Bureau for two successive terms may not be elected until two years have elapsed since the end of that person's last term of office.

28. If a member leaves the Bureau, his or her successor shall continue to serve until the end of the term. If a successor is not announced within three months, a new member may be co-opted by the Bureau from the members of the Joint Session until the time of the next session, when a new Bureau member will be elected.

B. Role and duties of the Bureau

29. The Bureau shall serve as a steering body of the Joint Session. The members of the Bureau undertake to devote the time necessary to perform their duties adequately during their term in office.

30. The Bureau shall have the following duties:
- (a) To carry out the tasks assigned to it by the Joint Session;
 - (b) To ensure that the objectives and activities listed in the terms of reference of the Joint Session are realized;
 - (c) To work with the secretariat in the preparation of the provisional agenda and in classifying the documents into items for discussion and items for information;
 - (d) To follow up the implementation of the agreements reached at the Joint Session and to carry out the tasks entrusted to it by the Joint Session;
 - (e) To decide on the documentation required for sessions (as a general rule, no substantive discussion shall be initiated by the Bureau unless an appropriate document has been made available to the Joint Session);
 - (f) To convene, in consultation with the secretariat, special meetings in the interval between regular sessions, when required;
 - (g) To work with existing and future task teams, as referred to in the terms of reference of the Joint Session.

C. Meetings of the Bureau

31. Meetings of the Bureau shall be convened in conjunction with the regular sessions of the Joint Session and during the interval between the regular sessions, preferably in April or May of each year. The venue for the meeting shall be decided by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau, taking into account the subjects to be discussed, the need to ensure the availability of all secretariat experts and cost considerations.
32. Additional Bureau meetings may be convened in conjunction with other African statistical initiatives. Further meetings of the Bureau could be determined by the Bureau members or the Chair of the Joint Session, if necessary.
33. The secretariat shall announce Bureau meetings no less than six weeks in advance. The documentation necessary for the meetings shall be determined by the Bureau members and the secretariat. As a general rule, the secretariat should make all documentation available to the Bureau and other participants via e-mail at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
34. The Bureau may invite to its meetings any experts or representatives of countries and organizations who can contribute to the fulfilment of its duties.

VI. Secretariat and its duties

35. The Statistics Division of the African Union Commission and the African Centre for Statistics of the Economic Commission for Africa shall jointly serve as the secretariat of the Joint Session.

36. The secretariat will service the administrative needs of the Joint Session. Its duties shall include:

- (a) Providing appropriate conference facilities and interpretation services;
- (b) Handling official correspondence with governmental and nongovernmental experts, as well as with experts from the international agencies involved;
- (c) Developing and maintaining the websites of the Joint Session;
- (d) Providing registration services and ground passes for admission to the conference rooms;
- (e) Examining the credentials of representatives of countries and organizations, and reporting to the Bureau;
- (f) Making oral or written statements concerning any questions under consideration;
- (g) Drawing the attention of the Joint Session to recommendations that have financial implications for the Economic Commission for Africa or for the African Union Commission;
- (h) Organizing side events and exhibitions with the support of the African working groups;
- (i) Assisting the Rapporteurs in preparing draft recommendations for adoption by the Joint Session and preparing the report of the Joint Session;
- (j) Following up on the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Session;
- (k) Monitoring matters that may affect the implementation of the work programme of the Joint Session, or other issues of interest to the Joint Session and the Bureau;
- (l) Printing, publishing, circulating and archiving as appropriate the report and the resolutions of the Joint Session and the required documents;
- (m) Performing all other work that may be required for the smooth functioning of the Joint Session.

VII. Pan-African institutes

37. The Joint Session shall work with the African Development Bank, the African Capacity Building Foundation and the regional economic communities, with a view to achieving sustainable statistical development on the continent.

38. The Bureau and the secretariat shall cooperate with the pan-African institutes and the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development with respect to the work of the Joint Session.

VIII. Permanent observers and other participants

39. Standing invitations shall be extended to the United Nations Statistics Division, AFRISTAT, Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (Paris21), statistical training centres and young African statisticians to participate in all meetings of the Joint Session.

40. The statistical entities of other African regional and subregional organizations, African training institutions, representatives of data users from African countries, African intergovernmental organizations, agencies of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and non-governmental organizations active in statistical work shall be invited to the meetings of the Joint Sessions as observers.

IX. Working languages

41. The working languages of the Joint Session shall be English and French. Countries shall inform the secretariat which of these two languages they will use for the business of the Joint Session.

42. Speeches made in one working language shall be interpreted into the other working language.

43. A speaker may use a language other than one of the two working languages if he or she provides for interpretation into one of the working languages and obtains the consent of the secretariat prior to the start of the session. Interpretation into the other working language by the interpreters provided by the secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first language.

44. All resolutions, recommendations and other formal decisions of the Joint Session shall be made available in the two working languages.

X. Reporting

45. The Joint Session shall, through the secretariat, submit a report on each session to the Conference of Ministers. The report shall be made available in the working languages of the Joint Session.

46. The final report of the Joint Session shall be prepared by the Rapporteurs, with technical and administrative support from the secretariat. The report shall be distributed as soon as possible to all members of the Joint Session and to all other participants, who may within one week of receiving the report submit corrections to the secretariat. In special circumstances, the Chair may, in consultation with the secretariat, extend the time for submitting corrections. Any disagreement concerning such corrections shall be decided on by the Chair, after consulting, where necessary, the sound recordings of the proceedings.

47. The report shall contain an account of the Joint Session's proceedings and the actions taken on each agenda item. The report, which shall normally not exceed 30 pages, shall be in the form of draft resolutions and recommendations to member States, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Statistical Commission, the agencies of the United Nations

or any other relevant body. As far as practicable, the recommendations and resolutions shall be framed in the form of drafts for approval by the Conference of Ministers.

48. The secretariat shall bring to the attention of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission any recommendations that have financial implications before the Joint Session's report is submitted to the Conference of Ministers for adoption.

49. The draft and the final report shall be posted on the websites of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission as soon as they are ready.

XI. Conduct of business

A. Public or private meetings

50. Unless the Joint Session decides otherwise, its meetings shall be held in public.

B. Quorum

51. A simple majority of the representatives of African countries present at a session of the Joint Session shall constitute a quorum.

C. General powers of the Chair

52. In addition to exercising the powers conferred upon him or her elsewhere by the present rules of procedure, the Chair shall open and close each session, direct the discussions, accord the right to speak and ensure the observance of the rules of procedure. The Chair, subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings of the Joint Session and over the maintenance of order at its meetings.

53. The Chair may, in the course of the discussions, propose to the Joint Session the closure of the list of speakers, a limitation on the time allowed to speakers, a limitation on the number of times the representative of each member State may speak on an item, or the closure of the debate. He or she may also propose the adjournment or closure of the debate on the item under consideration, or the suspension or adjournment of a meeting. The Chair may also call a speaker to order if his or her remarks are not relevant to the matter under consideration.

54. During the course of the debate, the Chair may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Joint Session, declare the list closed. The Chair may, however, accord the right of reply to any representative if, in his or her opinion, a speech delivered after the list has been declared closed makes this desirable.

55. When the debate on an item is concluded because there are no other speakers, the Chair shall declare the debate closed. Such closure shall have the same effect as closure by the consent of the Joint Session.

56. The Chair, in the exercise of his or her functions, remains under the authority of the Joint Session.

D. Rapporteurs

57. The Rapporteurs shall, with the support of the secretariat, be responsible for preparing and finalizing the report of the Joint Session.

58. On the last day of each session, the Rapporteurs shall, with the assistance of the secretariat, provide the printed text of the draft decisions, recommendations and requests made during the session for adoption by the Joint Session. The decisions and recommendations shall form part of the report of the Joint Session and shall be submitted to the Conference of Ministers for consideration and adoption.

E. Speeches and statements

59. No one may address the Joint Session without having previously obtained the permission of the Chair. He or she shall call upon speakers in the order in which they indicate their desire to speak. The Chair shall call for focused, issue-oriented and succinct statements by those participating in the discussions. The Chair shall also emphasize that detailed expositions of methodology or the reporting of routine activities should not be presented orally but instead be submitted in writing as background documents, which can be made available to participants.

F. Voting

60. The Joint Session shall conduct its business by consensus to the extent possible, but when it becomes necessary, voting will be instigated by a simple majority of those African countries present and voting. Each official delegation of a country present shall have one vote.

G. Points of order

61. During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time raise a point of order, which shall be immediately decided on by the Chair in accordance with the present rules of procedure. A representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chair. The appeal shall be immediately put to the vote, and the ruling of the Chair shall stand unless it is overruled by a simple majority of the members present and voting. A representative may not, in raising a point of order, speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

H. Adjournment of debate

62. During the discussion of any matter, a representative may at any time move the adjournment of the debate on the item under discussion. Any such motion shall have priority. In addition to the proposer of the motion, one representative shall be allowed to speak in favour of the motion and one representative against, after which the motion shall be put to the vote.

I. Closure of debate

63. A representative may at any time move the closure of the debate on the item under discussion, whether or not any other representatives have expressed their wish to speak. Permission to speak on the closure of the debate shall be accorded only to two representatives opposing the closure, after which the motion shall be immediately put to the vote.

J. Withdrawal of proposals and motions

64. A proposal or a motion may be withdrawn by its sponsor at any time before voting on it has commenced, provided that the motion has not been amended. A proposal or motion thus withdrawn may be reintroduced by any representative.

K. Reconsideration of proposals

65. When a proposal has been adopted or rejected, it may not be reconsidered at the same session unless the Joint Session, by a majority of two thirds of the representatives present and voting, so decides. Permission to speak on a motion to reconsider shall be accorded only to two representatives opposing the motion, after which it shall be immediately put to the vote.

L. Congratulations and condolences

66. Congratulations to newly elected officers shall be expressed only by the outgoing Chair or a member of his or her delegation, or by a representative designated by the outgoing Chair.

67. Condolences shall be expressed solely by the Chair on behalf of all members. The Chair, with the agreement of the Joint Session, may dispatch a message on behalf of all members of the Joint Session.

M. Other matters

68. Member States and agencies shall bear the cost of their attendance at the sessions of the Joint Session.

N. Amendments and other procedural matters

69. The present rules of procedure may be amended by a decision of the Joint Session.

70. The Joint Session shall act within the framework of the policies and procedures of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission.