

AFRICAN UNION

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UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

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**RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
OF AMBASSADORS IN BRUSSELS**

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE AFRICAN GROUP OF AMBASSADORS IN BRUSSELS

CHAPTER I - OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS

Rule 1 : The Representatives of the African Union, (AU)) Member States in Brussels hereby constitute within the framework of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, a body known as the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels, and commonly called the African Group of Brussels .

Rule 2 : In compliance with the objectives and principles defined in Articles 3 and 4 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, the African Group of Brussels shall undertake the following activities :

1. Demonstrate and promote at all times active and effective solidarity as well as the will to act within the framework of intra-African co-operation
2. Promote the unity of action and effective solidarity of AU Member States with regard to all matters of common concern with the Belgian Authorities and the European Union.
3. Exchange information and views on matters of common interest, including co-operation with the European Union and other regional and sub-regional groups, in accordance with the AU relevant Policy.
4. Maintain and develop contacts with various organizations or associations based in Brussels whose objectives are intended to lend active support to the AU in its efforts to promote the political, economic and cultural independence of the African States and peoples.
5. Take appropriate protocol measures during visits to Brussels of Heads of State and Government of AU Member States.
6. Take appropriate protocol measures on the occasion of the departure of Heads of African Diplomatic Missions.
7. Support African cultural and social activities or activities of particular interest to Africa.

Rule 3 : Any important issue concerning Africa may be considered by the Group with a view to adopting a common stand as a basis for concerted action, when necessary.

CHAPTER II - STRUCTURE - DESIGNATION - COMPOSITION

Rule 4 : The Headquarters of the African Group of Brussels shall be established in Brussels.

Rule 5 : The African Group of Brussels shall be responsible to the AU Executive Council.

Rule 6 : Any diplomatic Mission of an AU Member State accredited to Brussels shall be a member of the African Group of Brussels.

Rule 7 : Within the framework of the activities of the Representatives of AU Member States in Brussels, the AU Group in Brussels may set up, as and when necessary, mechanisms such as : Ad Hoc committees and working groups.

Rule 7bis : In accordance with Article 7 of these Rules of Procedure, a Follow up Committee on the ACP-EU Relations shall be established at the level of the Member States of the Group, parties to the Cotonou Agreement.

Rule 8 : All Missions of AU Member States, in Brussels, shall be represented at the meetings of the Group by Heads of mission or where this is not possible, by their representatives.

CHAPTER III – ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONING

Rule 9 : The structure of the African Group of Brussels shall be as follows:

1. The Group shall comprise the Representatives of all the AU Member States accredited in Brussels.
2. The Group shall function under a Bureau made up of :
 - i) A Chairman appointed for three (3) months on a rotational basis according to the French alphabetical order of the Missions represented in Brussels. The Chairmanship shall be held by an Ambassador resident in Brussels.
 - ii) Five Vice-Chairpersons for the same period, to be chosen by the five regions, on the basis of the same system of rotation and alphabetical order mentioned above.
 - iii) The Troïka consisting of the Current Chairperson, the Outgoing Chairperson and the Incoming Chairperson of the Bureau.

- iv) The Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps, as the Honorary Chairman of the Group.
- v) The Representative of the AU Current Chairman, as an ex-officio Member of the Bureau.

CHAPTER IV - BUDGET

Rule 10 :

1. The African Group shall maintain an annual budget of its own, to finance its activities, starting on 1 January and ending on 31 December.
2. The budget of the African Group shall be financed by the statutory contributions of its Members as well as voluntary contributions and/or donations generously made by its Members or any other donor acting in accordance with the objectives of the Group, as defined in Chapter I of these Rules of Procedure.
3. The statutory contribution shall be determined by the Group of the whole.
4. The Executive-Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the African Union in Brussels shall act as Secretary and Treasurer of the Group. As such, he shall prepare the draft budget of the Group, in close consultation with the Chairman of the Group. He shall be, with the Chairman of the Group, a co-signatory of all the financial documents relating to the management of the Bank account of the Group.
5. The auditing of the accounts of the Group shall be carried out at the end of each financial year by three representatives of the Member States of the Group, appointed by the latter.

CHAPTER V – ORGANIZATION OF MEETINGS - DELIBERATIONS

Rule 11 :

1. The African Group in Brussels shall meet in ordinary session, at least once every month.
2. In case of an emergency, the Chairman of the Group may convene an extraordinary session at the specific request of a representative of a Member State or the Executive-Secretary of the AU Permanent Mission in Brussels, after consultation with the Members of the Bureau.

3. The Chairman of the Group, in consultation with the Executive-Secretary of the AU Permanent Mission in Brussels, shall determine the date and draft Agenda of the meetings.
4. The meetings of the African Group of Brussels shall be held at the Permanent Mission of the AU in Brussels or at any other suitable venue as may be indicated in the agenda for the meetings.
5. Unless the Group decides otherwise, all meetings shall be held in closed session (private).
6. The working languages for the meetings of the Group shall be those of the AU : Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

Rule 12 :

1. The meetings shall be presided over by the Chairman of the Group and in his absence by one of the Vice-Chairmen.
2. The Executive-Secretary of the AU Permanent Mission in Brussels shall act as Secretary/Rapporteur of the Group at meetings of the Group.
3. The Chairman shall open and close meetings, conduct discussions, summarize debates at the appropriate time and submit decisions or recommendations for adoption, in conformity with the provisions of these Rules of Procedure.

Rule 13 :

1. The draft agenda for the meetings prepared according to Article 11 (3) of these Rules of Procedure shall be communicated to members of the Group by the AU Permanent Mission in Brussels, at least three(3) days before the ordinary meetings, and one(1) or two(2) days in the case of extraordinary meetings.
2. The agenda for an extraordinary meeting shall only comprise the item(s) submitted for consideration in the request for the convening of the meeting.

CHAPTER VI - PROCEDURE

Rule 14 :

1. A quorum shall be reached if the simple majority (50% + 1) of the members of the group is present.

2. No representative shall take the floor without the consent of the Chairman.
3. The Chairman shall give the floor to speakers in the order in which it is requested. He may call to order any representative whose contribution has no bearing on the issue under discussion.

Rule 15 :

1. During the debate, the Chairman may read out the list of speakers and, with the consent of the participants, declare the list closed. He may, however, accord to any Member upon request the right to reply if a statement made after the closure of the list of speakers justified such a procedure.
2. When an issue is sufficiently discussed, the Chairman may declare the debate closed at the request of a representative or upon his own initiative.

Rule 16 :

1. The Chairman may limit the time allowed to each speaker whatever the issue under discussion. On matters of procedure, the Chairman may limit each statement to a maximum of five(5) minutes.
2. When the limited time allocated for a debate has elapsed and a representative moves the adjournment of the debate, suspension or the adjournment of the meeting, the motion shall be put to the vote immediately.

Rule 17 :

1. During the debate, any representative may raise a point of order on which the Chairman shall immediately rule, in compliance with the rules of procedure. Any representative may appeal against the ruling of the Chairman. The appeal shall immediately be put to the vote. A final decision shall then be taken by a simple majority of members present and voting.
2. A representative raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the issue under discussion.

Rule 18 :

Subject to Rule 16, the following motion shall have precedence in the following order over all proposals or motions before the meeting :

1. to suspend the meeting;
2. to adjourn the meeting;
3. to adjourn the debate on the issue under discussion;

4. to close the debate on the item under discussion.

Rule 19 :

1. Decisions of the Group on major issues shall normally be taken by consensus. In the absence of such a consensus, the Chairman of the Group shall be requested to hold consultations, with a view to establishing the basis of an agreement generally acceptable to the Group.
2. Should these consultations fail, decisions shall be taken by a two-thirds(2/3) majority of members present and voting except on simple procedural questions in which case a simple majority shall suffice.
3. Each Member State of the Group shall be entitled to one vote.

CHAPTER VII - RELATIONS BETWEEN THE AFRICAN GROUP AND THE MISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION IN BRUSSELS

Rule 20 :

1. The AU Mission in Brussels shall be the administrative organ of the African Group in Brussels.
2. The Executive Secretary of the Mission shall work in close co-operation with the Representatives of the AU Member States in Brussels.
3. To this end, the Executive-Secretary shall inform the Representatives of Member States of the African Group in Brussels of the AU activities by ensuring a wide dissemination of information and the main documents relating to the African union.
4. The Executive Secretary shall ensure, with members of the Group, the follow up and implementation of the decisions and stands adopted by the African Union.

CHAPTER VIII - AMENDMENTS - MODIFICATIONS

Rule 21:

These rules of Procedure may be modified or amended by members of the Group in Brussels by two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present and voting.

Rule 22:

These Rules of Procedure shall be enter into force as from the date of their adoption by the group of the whole.

Done and adopted in Brussels on 15th September 2015.

Rev. 1: 17 June, 1992
Rev. 2: 29 June, 1998
Rev. 3: 22 January 2003
Rev. 4: 15 September 2015

2015-09-15

Rules of Procedure of the African Group of Ambassadors in Brussels, Revision 4 of 2015.

Permanent Mission of the African Union

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