



ACP/078/81 (Secr)
Tr: AD

Brussels, 9 February 1981

**GUIDELINES ON WORKING METHODS* OF THE ACP
COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS AGREED ON BY THE
ACP COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS AT ITS MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH JANUARY, 1981**

* Existing Rules of Procedures attached hereto as Annex I.

I. PREPARATION BEFORE A MEETING IS CONVENED

1. All documents from the Secretariat to the Committee of Ambassadors should, in addition to their other aspects, set out, as far as practicable, the precise recommendations being proposed and where relevant, and possible, the estimated financial implications.
2. As regards the preparation of the agenda, the Chairmen of the various Sub-Committees would be consulted by the Secretariat to determine the items for inclusion in the draft agenda of the Committee of Ambassadors, which the Secretary General would then discuss with the Chairman of the Committee of Ambassadors for final clearance and for submission to the meeting.
3. The items on the agenda of the Committee of Ambassadors should, as far as possible, be classified along the lines of the principles recommended for the Council of Ministers, so as to allow the Committee to know which items are merely for information, or for adoption only, or for discussion and decision.
4. To facilitate and accelerate the deliberations of the Committee of Ambassadors, papers prepared for the consideration of the Committee of Ambassadors and its Sub-Committee, in addition to being circulated in sufficient time, should be the subject of short introduction. Where the matter has already been considered by the relevant Sub-Committee, this function should be undertaken by the Chairman of that Sub-Committee or by a Vice-Chairman of that Sub-Committee.

II THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS AT MEETINGS

5. To reconcile the need to take swift and efficacious decisions with the need to respect the rights of each ACP State to participate in that process, a unanimous recommendation from a Sub-Committee would normally be adopted by the Committee of Ambassadors without debate, where such recommendations had been circulated in writing to the ACP Representatives within the required time. The above provision is without prejudice to the provisions of Article 32 of the Rules of Procedure.
6. Where, however, a delegation, for good reasons, has not had the opportunity to express its views at the level of the Sub-Committee, such delegation shall be entitled to express its views at the Plenary before the Plenary takes its decision.
7. At the end of the deliberations on each item on the agenda, the Chairman of the meeting should state clearly the consensus, which has been reached.

III. **FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS**

8. A specific day shall be designated as "Meeting day" for the Committee of Ambassadors, it being understood that for good reasons, adjustments by way of change in the day, or additional days of meetings, can take place, by decision of the Chairman of the Committee of Ambassadors in consultation with the Secretary General.
9. The Meeting Day presently fixed in accordance with paragraph 8 above shall be fortnightly on Thursdays.

IV **THE RELATIONSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BUREAU, THE ENLARGED BUREAU, AND THE SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS IN RELATION TO THE COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS.**

10. The essential role of the Bureau is to organise the work of the Committee of Ambassadors and to handle such other matters as may not clearly fall within the responsibility of any of the other agencies.
11. The role of the Enlarged Bureau, which comprises the members of the Bureau and the Chairmen of the Sub-Committees, is to act as a Consultative body to allow the Chairmen and other Members of the Bureau of the Committee of Ambassadors to coordinate the substantive work of the ACP Group.

It also allows for exchange of information and coordination of work among the various Chairmen themselves.

The Enlarged Bureau also has responsibility, like any other Sub-Committee, for certain substantive areas of work, such as Information, Legal and Institutional Affairs, etc.

12. All decisions of these bodies are ad referendum to the Plenary of the Committee of Ambassadors
13. To assist the functioning of the Committee of Ambassadors, its meetings shall, as far as possible, be preceded by a meeting of the Enlarged Bureau so that the Chairman and other Members can be briefed by each Sub-Committee Chairman on the issues on the agenda falling within the competence of their Sub-Committee.

V TIME FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF MEETINGS

14. The Committee of Ambassadors shall as far as possible endeavour to commence its meetings punctually at the time specified in the agenda for the meeting.

15. Pursuant to paragraph 14 above, and notwithstanding any existing Rules of Procedure to the contrary pertaining to the requirements of a quorum, a meeting of the Committee of Ambassadors shall be commenced no later than 30 minutes after the commencement time specified in the agenda for the meeting. In such a case the decisions of the meeting would be fully binding unless overturned at the immediately subsequent meeting of the Committee of Ambassadors instituted under the normal provisions in the Rules of Procedure (Article 19).



ANNEX I

ACP/187/78(Amb) Rev.1
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**RULES OF PROCEDURE OF
THE ACP COMMITTEE OF AMBASSADORS**

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GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

The Committee of Ambassadors, hereinafter called "the Committee", shall consist of the Ambassador or other representative of each of the ACP States.

Article 2

The Bureau of the Committee shall be composed of the following members:

- a) 4 Representatives from Africa
- b) 1 Representative from the Caribbean
- c) 1 Representative from the Pacific.

Article 3

The Bureau of the Committee shall meet whenever necessary between sessions of the Committee.

Article 4

The Chairman of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee from among the members of the Bureau on a rotation basis between the 4 regions of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific regions.

The remaining members of the Bureau shall be the Vice Chairmen of the Committee.

Article 5

The Chairman of the Committee shall preside at all meetings of the Committee. In the absence of the Chairman, one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Committee shall act in his stead.

There shall be no meeting of the Committee in the absence of the Chairman and all the five Vice-Chairmen.

Article 6

The Chairman shall be the principal spokesman on the joint positions of the ACP Group during the meetings with the Community.

SESSIONS

Article 7

The Committee shall meet whenever necessary at the initiative of the Chairman in consultation with the other members of the Bureau.

Article 8

Any member of the Committee may also request the Chairman to convene a meeting of the Committee. The Chairman shall, on receipt of such request, convene a meeting of the Bureau to deal with the subject matter necessitating the request. If the Bureau is unable to deal with the subject matter, the Chairman shall convene a meeting of the Committee accordingly.

Article 9

The Secretary General shall notify members at least forty-eight hours in advance of a meeting.

Article 10

The Committee shall meet at the ACP House unless otherwise decided at a previous session or at the request of a majority of members.

Article 11

Unless otherwise specified, meetings of the Committee shall be held behind closed doors and proceedings of the meetings shall be kept secret.

AGENDA

Article 12

- i) The Secretary General shall, in consultation with the Chairman, prepare the draft Agenda of the each meeting of Committee. The draft Agenda shall include any item proposed by a member.
- ii) The Secretary General or the member proposing an item shall provide an explanatory memorandum and where appropriate basic documents or draft decisions, resolution or recommendation.
- iii) The draft Agenda and appropriate documents shall be circulated to members at least forty-eight hours before a meeting is convened.
- iv) The draft Agenda shall be placed before the Committee at the opening of the meeting for adoption.

Article 13

The Bureau of the Committee shall as far as possible consider the draft Agenda before each meeting and make appropriate recommendations through the Chairman to the Committee.

Article 14

Any item may be proposed for inclusion under the item "Any other Business". The Chairman shall however ensure that only decisions or recommendations of a procedural nature shall be taken under this item; and in this regard his decision shall be final.

THE SECRETARIAT

Article 15

The Secretary General, or an authorised representative of the Secretary General shall attend all meetings of the Committee and its sub-Committees; and through the Chairman shall draw the attention of the Committee and the Sub-committee to all relevant facts.

Article 16

The Secretary General shall coordinate the activities of all the organs of the ACP and the institutions set up under the Lomé Convention. He shall prepare and distribute documents in sufficient time and inform the Committee of the schedule of meetings of all organs and institutions and ensure that meetings are scheduled in an orderly and convenient manner.

Article 17

The Secretary General shall keep a record of all the decisions and recommendations of the Committee. At the beginning of each meeting the record of the decisions and recommendations of the previous meeting shall be approved.

Article 18

A report covering each meeting's deliberations shall be drawn up by the Secretariat as soon as possible after the conclusions of the meeting. The reports in question shall be forwarded as soon as possible to all Heads of Missions.

QUORUM

Article 19

The Chairman may declare a meeting open when a simple majority of the members of the Committee is present.

When a meeting has been declared open discussions shall proceed even if the quorum is not subsequently maintained.

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS AT MEETINGS

Speeches

Article 20

- i) No member may address the Committee without having previously obtained the permission of the Chairman.
- ii) The Chairman shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak. He may however give priority to the initiator of a debate or any speaker if in his opinion this will facilitate the work of the Committee.

Article 21

The Chairman may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.

Article 22

The Chairman may summarise the results of a debate if in his opinion a consensus has been reached.

Article 23

The Chairman may modify his summary when this is challenged so that a consensus is reached. He need not re-open the debate to make this modification.

Points of Order

Article 24

- i) During the discussion of any matter, a member may raise a point of order and the point of order shall be immediately decided by the Chairman. The decision of the Chairman shall be final.
- ii) A member raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion.

Time-limit on Speeches

Article 25

The Chairman may propose that a limit be set to the time allowed to each speaker and the number of times each member may speak on a particular question. Should the proposal be accepted, the Chairman shall act accordingly.

Article 26

During the course of a debate the Chairman may announce the list of speakers, and with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed.

The Chairman may, however, accord the right of reply to any member if a speech delivered after he has declared the list closed makes this desirable.

ADJOURNMENT AND SUSPENSION OF DEBATE AND MEETING

Article 27

The Chairman may at any time:

- a) suspend the meeting ;
- b) adjourn the meeting ;
- c) adjourn the debate on the item under discussion.

DECISIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

Article 28

The acts of the Committee shall take the form of a decision, resolution or recommendation.

Article 29

Decisions made by the Committee shall be arrived at on the basis of a consensus of the members present.

SUB-COMMITTEES AND AD HOC WORKING GROUPS

Article 30

The Committee may set up such sub-Committees or ad hoc working groups to undertake such activities as it may define.

Article 31

These Rules of Procedure shall, as far as practicable, apply to the Sub-Committees and ad hoc Working Groups set up by the Committee or its Sub-Committees. Accordingly, where a strict adherence to a rule would lead to absurdity, the Sub-Committee or ad hoc Working Group concerned may adopt suitable modifications as necessary to the rule to facilitate its work.

STATUS OF DECISIONS ETC. OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Article 32

- i) Decisions and Resolutions of Sub-Committees are in the nature of recommendations to the Committee. The Committee may however decide that the results of the meeting of a Sub-Committee be acted upon without reference to it.
- ii) In exceptional circumstances the Chairman may decide that the recommendations of a Sub-Committee be acted upon without reference to the Committee. He shall then make a report on the matter to the Committee at the first opportunity.
