

**III. MOTION: Be it Resolved that this august Assembly do consider and approve: The Motion to amend the Standing Orders of the National Assembly [2019 Edition] [By: Hon. Sidia S. Jatta, Chairperson Standing Orders Committee]**

**HON. SADIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]:** Madam Speaker, allow me to come back again to lay before this Assembly the proposed amendments of our Standing Orders. When we first laid the amendments before you some time ago, they were debated, and suggestions were made. The Committee decided to go back to the drawing table to consider your suggestions and tidy the proposed amendments. I think you all have copies of the proposed Amendments.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: ?

Standing Orders [2019 Edition] of the National Assembly [Amendment] Motion,

**1. A Motion to amend the Standings Orders [2019 Edition] of the National Assembly in accordance with Clause 110[2] of the Standing Orders**

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

**2. Amendments of the Standing Orders**

The Standing Orders [2019 Edition] of the National Assembly [in this Motion referred to as "the Standing Orders"] is amended as set out in this motion.

**3. Amendment of Standing Order 16**

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: s

**Standing Order 16 [voting] is amended by-**

- a. **Deleting the letter "[b]" in sub-paragraph 13;**
- b. inserting after paragraph [14], the following new paragraph [15]- *"In any instance where the Constitution requires a fixed majority to decide on a question, the Assembly shall not proceed to a vote on that question unless and until a number of Members equivalent to such fixed Majority is present at the time for voting."*

**4. Amendment of Standing Order [53]**

Formatted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: Font: Bold

Standing Order 53 [Motion which may be made without notice] is amended by-

- a. Inserting the words "or motion" immediately after the word "Bill" in paragraph [e];

b. Replacing the number "9" with number "13" in paragraph [1].

The Honourable Member for Brikama North had some problem but we had a discussion with him and then he now sees what exactly it is meant.

## 5. Amendment of Standing Order 61

Standing Order 61 [Debate of Motion and Amendment] is amended by-

a. Inserting after paragraph [1], the following new paragraphs [2] and [3]-

*[2] The Assembly may, on a Motion made by the Assembly Business Committee in accordance with this Standing Order, impose a limit in respect of debating any particular Motion or Bill that allotting a limited period of time for such debate or by limiting the time during which Members may speak in such debate or by imposing both such limitations.*

*[3] A motion for limiting debate under this Standing Order may be made without notice. Provided that such motion shall not be made in the course of the debate to which refer unless it is moved after adjournment of such debate and before the debate is resumed.*

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: s

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: :

## 6. Amendment of crossheading [other Orders]

Standing Order [other orders] is amended by-

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: s

Inserting immediately before sub-heading 143 [Visiting Dignitaries] the following new subheading and paragraphs-

[143] Members traveling outside The Gambia

[a] in an official capacity, shall give notices to the Speaker to that effect

[b] in private capacity that affect his/her official functions, shall give notice to the Speaker to that effect.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: t

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: s

[c] or in any other capacity, may give notices to the Speaker to that effect indicating [1] The purpose and destination intended to be visited. [2] The date of intended travel and period of absence. [3] The telephone contact and post, postal or physical address of their stay during the period of absence. [4] All information subject submitted under the

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: t

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: c

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: t

Standing Order shall be kept in a register which the Clerk shall maintain for that purpose and shall not be disclosed to any person without the permission of the Speaker.

#### **7. Amendment of Standing Order 97 crossheading [Remit of all Committees]**

Standing Order 97 [Remit of all Committees] is amended by inserting immediately after subheading 97 [Remit of all Committees] the following new subheadings and paragraphs-

98. Vote of no confidence in the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson and Head of Delegations to International Institutions.

[1] a Committee or delegation made by resolution supported by majority of its Members passed a vote of no confidence on the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Head of Delegation, on the grounds to be specified in paragraphs 3 of this Standing Orders and such resolution shall be reported to the Committee of Selection which shall as soon as it is practicable, arrange for the election of a new Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Head of Delegation from among Members of the Committee or Delegation as the case may be.

[2] The Members desiring to make a resolution under paragraph one, shall serve the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Head of Delegation with a written notice and may, if they constituted a majority, request the Clerk to call for a meeting at the expiry of three days after the giving of such notice.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: ing

[3] A vote of no confidence on the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Head of Delegation under paragraph 1, may only be initiated on the following grounds;

- a. Abuse of the position or violation of any provision of this Standing Orders.
- b. Incompetence, including impartiality of judgment.
- c. Conduct herself/himself in a manner which brings or is likely to bring his/her position or the Committee into contempt or disrepute.

d. Dishonesty or any other action or factors which impedes the effective operations of the Committee.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: l

## 99. Report of Committees

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: s

[1] The Report of the Committees shall be signed by the Chairperson on behalf of the Committee provided that if the Chairperson is absent or is not readily available, the Vice Chair shall sign and in the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, the Committee shall nominate another Member to sign the report.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: t

2] A Committee shall adopt its report in a meeting attended by majority of its Members before it is tabled at the Assembly.

## Minister's Report

[1] Within thirty days of a resolution of the Assembly or adoption of any Report of a Committee, the Minister under whose portfolio the matter raised in the report or contained in the assurance or resolution fall, shall provide the report to the Assembly.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: e

[2] A Minister who fails to submit a report under this Standing Order, shall be deemed to be in contempt of the Assembly within the meaning of section 75 [6] of the Constitution, [misconduct in office]

## 8. Correction of the Referencing and Numbering

All the referencing, cross-referencing and numbering in the Standing Orders affected by this Amendment, motion to be reflected and corrected by the Clerk accordingly.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

## Objects and Reasons

The amendment motion seeks to amend the Standing Orders to National Assembly [2019 Edition], to grant further independent authority to Honourable Members of the Assembly in the conduct of its businesses and also harmonize the recent precedents of the Assembly and for Matters connected.

The amendment also seeks to provide no clarity and procedure on the powers of Members in electing and removing [vote of no-confidence] Chairpersons, Vice

Chairpersons of Committee and the Heads of Delegation. It places an obligation on Ministers to provide updates to the Assembly on any report or resolution adopted by the Assembly.

Honourable Speaker, I beg to move.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Any seconder?

**HON. ALHAGIE MBOW [UPPER SALOUM]:** Thank you Honourable Speaker. I rise to second the Motion and I want to take this opportunity to thank the Standing Orders Committee for really listening to the Members of this Parliament. I think section 108[1] 1997 Constitution is really very clear. It gives parliamentarians the responsibility to regulate its own procedures and I think this is exactly what the committee is doing.

Honourable Speaker, I have two areas that I wanted the mover of the Motion to help me understand. The first one is on page 1, amendment number 3, which is saying a Motion for limitation of debate under this Standing Orders may be made without notice. Also if you look at our current Standing Orders, clause [53] is also indicating motions that do not need notices. So, I am not too sure whether clause 61 or 53 is the appropriate place to put it, I wanted him to explain to me why they prefer to put it under clause 61 instead of clause [53] that gives a kind of motion that you can make without notice.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: s

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

On page 3, Ministers Report, No. 1, within 30 days of resolution of the Assembly or adoption of any report of a Committee, the Minister under whose portfolio the matter raised in the report or contain in the assurance or resolution shall provide a report to the Assembly. It is not very clear about what it really meant. Are you talking about the report or the response? This year they indicated a report to the Assembly, so I am not sure if this choice is the right one, is it a report or a response. So, I really need clarification. I am okay with the amendments, but these are the two areas that I wanted more explanations from the Chairperson. Thank you very much

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: ,

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: ?

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. It has been moved and seconded that this Honourable Assembly do consider the Motion to amend the Standing Orders of the National Assembly [2019 Edition].

*[Question Proposed]*

Any Honourable Member who wishes to take part in the debate may do so now and I call on the Honourable Member for Brikama North.

**HON. ALHAGIE S. DARBO [BRIKAMA NORTH]:** Honourable Speaker, Chairperson of the Committee, I rightly indicated after the debate that I did a consultation with him and the Secretary to the Committee. Clarification was made on the point that I observe under Standing Order 53 that is supposed to be amended. I will say there is no numbering, but number 9 is reflected under paragraph 1 and that is what is requested to be changed to number 13. Standing Order number 9 is referring to the vacancy in the position of the Speaker, where 13 is referring to the adjournment. So, that was a wrong numbering in the Standing Orders that they are trying to correct. It is well noted, correct and it is in line.

Honourable Speaker, during the course of the debate, there was a concern on the Vote of no Confidence on the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and suggestions were made for grants to be established. I think there had been some developments and grants are provided as to what should result to the need for passing resolution to remove the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Perhaps, if I got the Honourable Member for Jarra East right, his concern was, the ordinary Members.

If you go to amendment 99 (1) to (2), on the signing of the report of the Committee, I think suggestion when further to say, in the absence of the Chairperson, The Vice Chairperson can come and in the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson, we take the high ranking in the Committee instead of opening it to any Member, we give chance to rapporteurs. I think this is the only observation as far as I could recall. On that, I thank the Committee for capturing all the observations that were made by the plenary.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: 3

**HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [CENTRAL BADDIBU]:** Honourable Speaker, I think the Standing Orders Committee did a great job because by looking at the recommendations put up by the Honourable Members on the floor of the National Assembly here, most of the issues raised are addressed very well.

Notwithstanding I have a concern on the amendment of Standing Order 61, Debate of Motion and Amendment, which is amended by inserting after paragraphs 1, 2 and 3. Honourable Speaker, as far as I am concerned there is no need for the amendment of this particular Standing Order. As it is, I am really comfortable with it, because I think Members should be given the liberty to express themselves. Sometimes you might have a very important Motion to debate on or issues to discuss and do you know we have distractors? Sometimes some people come only to distract, if such motions are available, they can come up with those motions to limit people to talk on essences. So, what I am saying is to leave it as it is, where it is stated with your permission, "when the motion has been moved and seconded in the Assembly, the Speaker shall put the question thereon to the Assembly in the same terms as the motion, the debate may then take place upon the question and may continue so long as any Member wishes to speak, who is entitled to do so. Subject to any time allocations applied by the Assembly Business Committee".

Sometimes you might like to convince the House on something but if you are not given time, you cannot. We have been seeing some time, the mover himself will be hot or in high gear to put up a case. So, if this thing is available, unless I am not well enlightened about it I see it as a restriction. So, I think Members should be given that opportunity to be able to dwell more on the issue. That is my own understanding unless the mover enlightens me more on the need for it.

Now coming into the situation where a Chairperson is not present or the Vice Chairperson and the rapporteur. In a situation where you do not have the rapporteur where will you move? In some Committees rapporteurs are not functional. Some of the Committees in fact have declined totally, saying once secretaries are there, they are not going to do any work. So, for me, we make it open. That is my observation.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

**HON. SAINÉY TOURAY [JARRA EAST]:** Madam Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the floor. I attended the meeting of the Standing Orders Committee at the instance of the Chairperson. When I was looking for my good friend and Colleague Honourable Saho, I bumped into them where they were having a meeting and the Chairperson welcomed me. I must thank the Chairperson for that.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: t

Honourable Speaker, I am very much satisfied with the recommendations of this report. It goes without saying, seeing is believing and he who wears the shoe knows where it pinches. I was there so I can give an eyewitness account.

Madam Speaker, I have no problem with this report as far as I am concerned. The only problem I have is [Laughing] I am seeing these Standing Orders as a plan of action for members of this August Assembly. The essence of having a plan is to allow the plan to regenerate into action then it becomes a good plan. If a plan is there and the plan is not catalysed into action, it is as futile as it is non-existent.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: A

When you have Standing Orders, you have a Constitution. They must be obeyed in toto, that is the long and short of it. Many a time Members will be in contravention of clause 26 [2] and 29 [4] of the Standing Orders, which reads 29[4] "It shall be out of order to use offensive and insulting language about Members of the Assembly." This is self-explanatory. In essence, what this clause is telling us is that the activities of this National Assembly should be characterized by temperate language as opposed to intemperate language.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: ,

Honourable Speaker, I think Members will take cognizance of this and I keep saying if laws for regulation are printed on letters of gold and you fail to execute them to the letter, they have no use. It goes without saying charity begins at home. What is very important and quite significant as National Assembly Members, we may be seen as pacesetters. If we are seen as pacesetters, others will emulate us and copy us. We are human beings, at times some people fail to rise up and address the Speaker inadvertently, that is human but some as I always said are perpetual in terms of abusing. I think we should be mindful of such things because when you make rules

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: al

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: a

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: d

and regulations, you must not be found wanting in terms of violating them. If an outsider violates, we may use the operandi of this House that will not be seen as something great but if an insider violates, that might be tantamount to a great violation. So I believe all of us be cognizant and remind ourselves always that we are here to serve and we will serve diligently.

Honourable Speaker, I raise an alarm with regards to the grounds for removal of Chairpersons. Most of my colleagues jokingly thought that I was afraid, no, I was not afraid. In fact, I am trying to help my opposite numbers, Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons, because a rule for one is a rule for all. I believe all of us will do our utmost best to make sure we live up to expectation but we can only live up to expectation Madam Speaker, if we respect these documents that is termed as the Bible and the Quran [Constitution and Standing Orders]. This is very comprehensive, and we are the authors of this document. So, it is therefore expected for us to respect the contents that are embedded in this document.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: lift  
Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: the  
Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: lift  
Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: the  
Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: you

Honourable Speaker, it must not be difficult for us to give respect to this document, because we are the architect. So, who is to be blamed when the document is thrown? Our very self. I think the best thing for us to do, is to rise to the occasion and hold it firm so that this document will be given its meaning. I hope that will be done because the Assembly is composed of men and women of integrity, men, and women of sharp intellect and profound ability, and I hope you will not let me down. Thank you.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:  
Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

**HON. ALFUSAINY CEESAY [SAMI]:** Honourable Speaker, I would like to thank the Standing Orders Committee for a job well down. I also want to look at page1 No. 5 that is an amendment of Standing Order No [61] No. 1, 2 and 3. I want to look at No. 2 which is limiting the time for the intervention of the National Assembly Members to a particular Bill or Motion. I think the way it is, it should be like that so that Members will be able to express their views. We should not be in a rush just to put a timeframe and say yes, this is the timeframe even if you do not put your ideas across, we will close. I think we should do things correctly, there should not be any timeframe. If the Member is not putting things in order, it is the duty of the Speaker to put him or her in the right

place, to say that yes you are deviating, concentrate on this, this is what we are discussing. I think that is the right thing rather than limiting the intervention of Members.

Honourable Speaker, I would want the mover to please explain these two things for me; page 2 No. 143, traveling outside The Gambia. Number 1[a], in an official capacity, shall give notice to the Speaker to that effect. Yes, we know that when we are on a Session, and you want to go, you know that it is the duty of the Assembly that processes that. B, in your private capacity that affects his/her official function, should give notice to the Speaker at that effect. I want the mover to explain because these two things you are giving "shall", so what about in an event you are going for a private thing and you do not inform the Speaker. I want that area to be explained... *[Interruption]*.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: s

Honourable Speaker, on the same page, Standing Order [98] Vote of no confidence for the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. As others have put it, we have Members here who are in a particular Committee, and they are not attending those Committee Meetings and there was something that happened here, and we are not talking about that. We have to be transparent in anything that we are doing. This office does not belong to anybody, it belongs to all of us. We all want to see this country move forward but anything that we are doing let us consult each other. We are not anti to anybody but if I am with you in whatever you are doing, I will put in the picture to know that yes this is actually what is happening. The issue of the Chairperson should come to this House so that we can debate about it, but it was not debated. We just see things like this, and it is still going on. After the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson, there is the rapporteur and you said there is a report that indicated if the Chairperson is not there the Vice Chairperson took over and thereafter any other Member while the rapporteurs are there. The reason why the rapporteurs are not functioning is simply that they are not given their dues. If you put a sort of encouragement for the Chairperson and you leave the rapporteur, do you think they will perform? They will not perform Madam Speaker, let us see and put something for them and see whether they will not perform,

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

they will perform. Therefore, when there is a report, if the Chairperson is not there and the Vice Chairperson is there, let them give it to the Vice or to the Rapporteurs but we cannot just leave it open like that and say any other person. What is their function then? Because we do not give them something that is why they are relaxing. Let us give them something to do so that they can also participate to reach up to expectation.

Honourable Speaker, I think I have exhausted all my points. Thank you.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

**THE SPEAKER:** You see, speaking for five minutes, you can say a lot in five minutes, you see you got carried away. *[Laughing]*

**HON. SUWIBOU TOURAY [WULI EAST]:** Thank you Honourable Speaker, I have only two issues, about rapporteurs. I believe rapporteurs [take notes] play a very important role in meetings. I am the rapporteur of the Committee on Environment. I take every note and engage in report writing and my Chairperson can attest to that. So, rapporteurs are engaged in all aspects of report writing and a lot of editing. If you do a job as a rapporteur, you do a lot of work. So, I think this Assembly should recognize them, we should not just put them there, but we should recognize them so that they play their role. I am not talking about the money aspect but at least the signing of a report, I think should be given to them in case the Chairperson or the Vice chairperson is not present.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: :

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: ,

Also in 98 [2](d), I believe should be read as "dishonesty" instead of "dishonestly".

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: ]

**THE SPEAKER:** Any other intervention?

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: ant

**HON. OMAR CEESAY [NIAMINA EAST]:** Honourable Speaker, I just need one clarification regarding the issues of traveling. If any Member is traveling within or outside the country whether, in an official mission or a private mission, I do not know the means in which one can use in order to relate that communication in the way in which we are doing it. Now is to test the individual or if there is any specific email that one can use, because sometimes writing a document while you have an emergency issue going out somewhere when actually you were supposed to come on a Sitting and

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: other

you could not come. Would there be a specific email that one can use to relate such information in case there is that emergency and you do not have the opportunity to write or drop a letter to office of the Speaker? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I then invite the Chair of the Standing Orders Committee.

**HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]:** Thank you Madam Speaker. I forgot to say so but I think I will begin my responses by first thanking the Member for Jarra East and Member for Baddibu Central. They were co-opted when we were having our last meeting. They participated very actively in the discussions, and we are very grateful to you for that.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Honourable Speaker, the issues raised by almost everybody on the amendment of 61 is the time. There are many occasions in which we speak here, we speak on substantive motion and on other matters which are not necessarily substantive as for example speaking on a Budget or a Bill. I do not think that is what the reference is about but there is also a provision in the Standing Orders where your time is limited, for example when Ministers come here for questioning. The whole intention here is to render the work of this Assembly effective and efficient. We must know that this Assembly operates in a different way from other Assemblies. In Ghana, for example, they do not sit for every three months; they sit every month throughout. So, they have lot of time to talk and lot of time to work. We are here for the whole of this month, to deal with all these matters and the time is very short. The matters that we are dealing with in one month is too much. So, in some cases, why it is not necessary for me to speak for 15, 10, 30, or even in an hour. I used to speak for two hours in that Assembly on certain matters and somebody else speaks almost three hours on some other matters. If you feel that [because we are just trying to see how efficient we can do things in this Assembly] we should not speak as we want, because sometimes we do speak unnecessarily. I am very sorry to say that we speak unnecessarily. Sometimes we hear somebody saying well I do not have much to say I agree with this, sit down then! *[Laughing]*. That is what we are trying to avoid. Like Madam Speaker has just said in 5, 3 minutes I can say almost everything that I want to say in substance. So, it is up to us

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: e

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: s

to consider. Do you want to spend the whole day here on a matter which we can deal with within an hour? Sometimes we spend hours on something that we can deal within only one hour, just think about it yourself. So, it is up to you to decide. Do you want us to stay here the whole day when you should be there just for one and a half hours? It is up to you.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: be

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: with

The Honourable Member for Upper Saloum, I understand what you have said. I think it is not a report but the Minister responding to that report is what we mean. So, we will change the wording there.

Now this question of signing the report, you talked about rapporteurs, I am very sorry to say, I am a chair of two Committees and a Vice Chairperson of one. I am a Member of other Committees, none of these, does a rapporteur do what he or she is expected to do.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: es

The Honourable Member for Wuli East is different, I know what he said is correct, he does it, but he is one out of all the others. I have not come across anyone who does what he said he is doing, and I know he is doing it. Rapporteurs complained that they are not being given anything so they will not do anything that is what they are saying.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: en

The essence of the rapporteur is to take notes intact. In my first year, I was a rapporteur for five years for the Education Committee. I was writing the report in collaboration with a secretary. He/she will write, I will also write, we compare our notes and then compile them to have a report. That is the essence of it but here that is not happening. So, the issue of signing is very simple. The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, or any Member of the Committee, what problem do we have with that, functions of a rapporteur is part of that? A rapporteur is part of any Member of the Committee, particularly when he/she is doing his/her job efficiently, automatically everybody will say okay the rapporteur can sign but if they are not, they are like anybody in the Committee, no difference. So, for us, any Member of the committee is enough.

I agree with the Member for Jarra East, you do not make laws/rule for the idea of making laws, we make laws/rules to guide us to actions, to help us not to commit errors, do what we are doing in an efficient way. If we make them without respecting them or you do not read them, because these Standing Orders should be read to understand them. There is an interconnection among others; like the interconnection between standing Order 53 [c] and 97. If you just sign 53 [c] and 97, that is the end of it, you are making your mistake like somebody was arguing the other day wrongly and the Speaker corrected him. So, I think we need these laws for us to embrace them, to read them to know them. In fact, the correct thing is when you are saying Point of Order, you must cite an order for which you are going to base yourself, but you just cannot jump and say Point of Order. No! "s'pas com\_sa", it cannot be like that. Like lawyers in Court, they always back themselves with citations from authorities. You can't just say this, you must back it up and then that means you are convincing me to accept what you are saying but you have no basis or mutual understanding to attack me, I will attack you also. So, I agree with him 100% that, we have two fundamental documents, the constitution should be our Bible, the Standing Orders must be our Bible so that when you cite something nobody will attack you unnecessarily, you will always hammer him or her. When the Minister of Agriculture was here, you know she hammered the Member's head, the Honourable Member for Sandu also hammered the Member for Lower Nuimi. She [Minister] was telling the Members that I know it better than you, so this is what we must not allow.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: Je

On the issue of traveling, we must read and try to understand what we read. It is very clear, what we are saying here. When you are traveling in your official capacity no problem because you cannot go without them. It is them who prepare everything, your ticket, your arrangements, the office of the Clerk does everything for you. So you cannot go without notice that is automatic and it is obligatory.

The other thing is when you are traveling and it affects your official functions. I will give you an example, yesterday afternoon you did not see me here. Did you? I did not just jump out, I took permission from the Honourable Speaker because one of my

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Constituency wives passed away in the hospital and my question was whether the dead body was going to be taken to Wuli or going to be buried here. So, I took permission, it was private but it affects my function officially. So, I had to take permission that is what we mean. It is obligatory for me, I cannot just jump out of this parliament, that is very rude. It means I am irresponsible, I am not even a Member, that is an insult to the Assembly itself, just to walk out and think you are free to go. No! There is somebody here who is exercising authority over us as far as our presence is concerned. So, you must take permission from that person, if you said the Speaker, is because the Speaker is the authorizing person. The law said you must get permission from him/her.

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: t

The third one is, you are in your home Baddibu Central or Salikene for example, there is no Session but you want to travel. You had a good mind and say well, I am traveling but anything can happen, let me just inform the office where I am going so that in case they need me or somebody needs me through them, they will give that person the correct information about me, that is what we mean. It is not obligatory, if you do not like it, do not do it but the other two are "shall", you must. I could not have gone out here yesterday without informing her prior, because I was here officially but where I was going is private to me. The two connived, the one affects the other so I must get permission and the authority says you can go even though you are in Session, but this is important. That is what it means. You cannot have a problem with that for 100% sure. Basically, your queries centred on these main points here... *[Intervention]*

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: n

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

*[Point of Observation]*

**THE SPEAKER:** I think he was just telling us that you need to cite... *[Laughing]*

**HON. SULAYMAN SAHO [BADDIBU CENTRAL]:** Honourable Speaker, if you look at Standing Order 46 where we have the question for written answer. I want to remind Honourable Jatta whether there is a need for us to be given written answers because I could remember previously that had helped us to prepare ourselves in the Supplementary Question rather than the Minister's coming up with the Oral Answers. Previously, there used to be a part for written answers and these written answers

helped us to prepare ourselves with the Supplementary Question. I thought we can still include that in the Minister's response to provide us with written answers. I think that should be part of these recommendations. I could remember during the meeting we really talked about it, I do not know whether it was an oversight.

**THE SPEAKER:** You just introducing a new element as per the Standing Orders.  
*[Laughing]*

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

**HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]:** The Honourable Member thinks he is very cute, but currently, there are three ways of asking questions or even more if my memory serves me well. What you are talking about is one and there is another one, you can write written questions to a Minister with written answers to you even out of Session and he or she is bound to answer within 10 days. Now the current practice is, you ask your questions but in fact, when you are writing your question, it is said Oral Questions, it is a contradiction in any way. It is not an Oral Question because you write and you read. That is how we call them but to be franked you write your answer and the Minister comes, he or she writes their answers and reads it, because for me they read their answers. They come here with prepared answers with them. I was complaining the other day because if you go by language to say oral question, it means I just come and stand and say Minister so and so without any written question. I said why is it that your experiment is failing? The teaching of National Languages, why is it failing? And they speak without paper, he will also stand and say, it is failing because we do not have money or we do not have qualified personnel that I understand to be Oral Question. So, afterward, they give you their answers after the process. So, you are free again to look at those answers and that is why writing in question is important. If you look at the answers and you feel that there is a lacuna in the answers, you can write a written question to the Minister concerned and he or she is bound to write to you back and send it with written answers. It is up to you again, if you think that is not satisfactory to you, well you can come up with whatever you have but for me, I have no problem with it. The only problem I have is when we said oral when it is written, there is no orality there.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think we are being overgenerous with the Honourable Member.

**HON. SIDIA S. JATTA [WULI WEST]:** Yes! The Honourable Member for Niamina East, you see there are many ways of informing. The other one is obligatory, you know that if you are traveling you do not even need to inform them because they already know. It is them who informed you that you are traveling, they arrange that, but if you are here like we are in Session now, you want to go and you want permission to go, you have to write or if you can physically go and speak to the Speaker fine, if you cannot you have your telephone, you can send an email and you can also write in whatever means you can. In fact, you must get an answer permitting you to go where it is obligatory. Where it is optional, you are private, you have no Session, you are in Niamina East and you want to go to Wuli, if you like you can say okay Clerk I want to inform the Speaker that I am traveling to Wuli or you take your telephone to send a Whatsup or whatever. Where even if you do not get an answer, it cannot prevent you from going. Is not necessarily taking permission but you are informing them of your whereabouts. The other two, you are seeking permission which is obligatory. I want you to understand these three things. The second one you must get permission, the third one is just information so that they know where you are in case somebody wants you or needs so that the office will know where to contact you. The two are the same, you must get permission, the last one is just information. It is not a question of asking them to permit you to move about then they will be tampering with your freedom of movement. Have I answered your question?

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]: are

Deleted[Alhagie M. Dumbuya]:

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much Honourable Chairperson and thank you very much Honourable Members.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*The Motion to amend the Standing Orders of the National Assembly 2019 Edition has been adopted]*

***Adjournment***

*[The House stands adjourned until Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020, at [10:00](#) a.m. Prompt].*