Standard Operating Procedure on conducting the work of the Majlis via Web Conferencing

1.Purpose

Due to the ongoing pandemic of covid19, the government of Maldives declared a state of public health emergency across the country to effectively control and minimize the spread of infection by methods of social distancing. This led to a temporary, indefinite closure of the state offices to ensure proper implementation of precautionary measures during these challenging times. Therefore, this would serve as the means to assist the parliament of Maldives in conducting sessions remotely and continuing their workings swiftly until such time the state of emergency order is lifted.

2.Scope

Facilitating a web conferencing medium capable of handling 87 MPs, the secretary-general, the counsel general, and the relevant administrative support staffs, for 92 concurrent participants in a single web conferencing channel. This arrangement is put in place, in adherence to the COVID-19 pandemic safety standards and recommendations to stay at home and establish a safe work from the home protocol.

3.Prerequisites

- Microsoft Office 365 Business Licenses – Already acquired
- Emails created for all MPs and staffs – Done
- Email address and passwords provided to MPs and staffs – Done
- Microsoft Teams installed on devices

4.Responsibilities

Members of Parliament
- Acquire login credentials from Majlis ICT if they have not received or unable to access their Majlis Email
- Install Microsoft Teams and Sign In to the App
- Ensure the MP has been added to the relevant Teams group/channel
- Further instructions will be provided from Table Office and Majlis ICT to MPs

Table Office
- Create Group/Channel on Microsoft Teams for the sitting
- Add/Assign MPs and staffs to group/channel
- Re-confirm all MPs are assigned to the relevant group/channel

ICT
- Ensuring that all MPs receive their login credentials.
- Training relevant table office staffs to operate Microsoft Teams and start/end video conferencing sessions.
- Available on standby for immediate support for Table Office.

Media/Technical
- Broadcasting the web conferencing feed to youtube online live streaming.

Hansard
- Readying the minutes after acquiring the recording from youtube online live streaming.

5.Procedure
- The notice of the Majlis session and the Agenda to MPs will be sent via text message
- MPs will be notified 15 minutes prior to the session by the Secretariat, and notifications will be sent to members 5 minutes prior to the session and also before each vote or if the required quorum is not met.
- Starting the session of the Majlis by the Speaker.
- Attendance: the number of MPs signed in to the TEAMS application at that time.
- Announcing the Agenda
- Conduct the proceedings
- When a matter is opened for debate, MPs should request to speak
- Members should request using the chat function in the application
- Voting : will be a roll call vote based on the Rules and each member's name shall be called out and the response should be either " Yes" or "No" or "Abstain"
- Point of Order can be raised using the chat function
- Members should obey the orders of the Speaker, and Section 65 of the Rules of Procedure shall be applied if there is a failure to do so.
- Ending of the session.

6. Committee meetings
- This SOP shall be applied when holding Parliamentary committee meetings.

7. Definitions
Covid-19 – a highly infectious respiratory disease spreading worldwide

Microsoft Teams - Microsoft Teams is a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines persistent workplace chat, audio and video meetings/conference.

Web Conferencing – online service by which conferences and meetings can be held

YouTube Live Stream – streaming video /audio in real time on YouTube.

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