

Process Convention

Priority Setting and Reporting

Preamble

The priorities determined at the beginning of a Legislative Assembly guide the work of all Members over the term of an Assembly. At the same time, each Legislative Assembly builds on the legacy of previous assemblies as reflected in existing laws, policies, programs, and services, although no Assembly can be bound by the decisions of a previous Assembly.

Consensus government is a form of responsible government. The Executive Council provides overall leadership and direction, and is responsible to the Legislative Assembly for its decisions. Regular Members of the Legislative Assembly review and monitor these decisions in order to hold the government to account. The Executive Council must maintain the confidence of the Legislative Assembly. This is the essence of responsible government.

Guiding Principles

This process convention will be implemented in accordance with the following Caucus approved guiding principles for consensus government in the Northwest Territories:

1. The role of the Caucus is fundamental to the effectiveness of consensus government. Caucus provides a venue for all Members to set a broad mandate for a Legislative Assembly and discuss matters of widespread importance to the Northwest Territories as they arise.
2. The Premier and Cabinet are appointed by the Members of the Legislative Assembly to provide overall leadership and direction in accordance with the broad strategic direction set by the Caucus. Cabinet must have the ability to implement this mandate effectively and efficiently but in a way that reflects the concerns of Regular Members and maintains their support.
3. As with all parliamentary systems of government, a healthy level of tension must exist between Cabinet and Regular Members. While the ultimate goal of the Regular Members is not to defeat or discredit Cabinet, it is their responsibility to review and monitor the leadership and direction of Cabinet and hold it to account.

Authority

This Process Convention is established under the authority of Caucus and may be amended at any time by agreement of the full Caucus.

Process

Priority Setting

1. At the beginning of a Legislative Assembly, after the orientation of Members-elect, each Member shall be invited by the Clerk to make a public statement about what the Member believes should be the priorities for the forthcoming legislative term. These statements shall be transcribed and the transcriptions made public.
2. Following a public statement of priorities by each individual Member, the Clerk shall convene a meeting of Caucus in order for the Caucus to establish a collective statement of priorities for the forthcoming legislative term. In establishing this collective statement of priorities, Caucus shall take into account the transcribed statements of all Members of the current Assembly as well as the Report of the Special Committee on Transition Matters tabled during the last sitting of the previous Assembly.
3. The Caucus statement of priorities will be tabled in the first session of the Legislative Assembly.

Establishing a Mandate

4. Following the conclusion of the Territorial Leadership Committee and the swearing-in of Members of the Executive Council, the Premier shall promptly convene a meeting of the Executive Council to discuss a draft mandate for the forthcoming legislative term. This discussion shall take into account the stated priorities of all Members of the current Assembly as well as the Report of the Special Committee on Transition Matters tabled during the last sitting of the previous Assembly.
5. The Premier shall request that the Chair of Caucus convene a meeting of Caucus so that the Executive Council may present to Caucus a draft mandate for the forthcoming legislative term and to solicit feedback from all Members on the draft mandate.

6. The Premier shall schedule a subsequent meeting of the Executive Council to consider feedback from all Members expressed in Caucus and to discuss possible amendments to the draft mandate.
7. Caucus and/or the Executive Council may meet as often as is necessary before the Executive Council is satisfied that the draft mandate is sufficiently responsive to the stated priorities of all Members and sufficiently feasible for implementation by government.
8. The mandate shall form the basis for the Commissioner's Address made at the opening of the second session of a Legislative Assembly.
9. The mandate of the Executive Council shall be tabled by the Premier during the second session of a Legislative Assembly.
10. Once tabled, the mandate of the Executive Council shall be referred to Committee of the Whole and debated, prior to adoption by the Legislative Assembly.

Reporting

11. The Executive Council will be held to account for its progress implementing the mandate through the debate of its budgets, oral questions, meetings of legislative committees, and meetings between the Premier and Regular Members.
12. The Executive Council shall maintain a report on progress on the implementation of the mandate, and provide that report to the Standing Committee on Priorities and Planning not less than once every 12 months. The same progress report shall also be made available to the public in a timely manner.
13. At the mid-point of a legislative term, the Legislative Assembly will be prorogued to allow for Caucus to discuss the priorities, the mandate and progress made towards implementation.
14. The Legislative Assembly will resume with a Commissioner's Address that will reflect any adjustments to the priorities or the mandate.
15. No less than four months before the dissolution of an Assembly, the Legislative Assembly should establish, by motion, a joint Special Committee on Transition Matters to prepare a report with recommendations on the transition process and major priorities for consideration by the next Assembly.

16. Prior to the last sitting before dissolution of an Assembly, the Executive Council shall provide to Caucus a report on the actions undertaken to implement the mandate. This report will be tabled in the final sitting of a Legislative Assembly.

17. The report of a Special Committee on Transition Matters will be tabled in the final sitting of a Legislative Assembly.

Angela Munn
Chair, Caucus

Deputy Chair, Caucus.

Sept. 15/15.
Date