

## STAFF OF THE MISSION / POST

### 2. Heads of Diplomatic Missions

#### 2.1 Seeking Agrément

Formal requests for *agrément* for the appointment of a new Head of Mission should be submitted by TPN to the Protocol Division. A formal response can normally be expected within six weeks, but can take longer as there may be unexpected delays.

In the case of resident Heads of Mission, requests may be transmitted through the mission, or directly between Foreign Ministries.

In the case of non-resident Heads of Mission, requests may be submitted through the New Zealand mission in the capital where the Head of Mission resides, or the New Zealand mission accredited to the sending state, or by direct communication from the relevant Foreign Ministry to MFAT.

#### 2.2 Nominees with New Zealand Citizenship or Residence

The New Zealand Government reserves the right not to grant *agrément* for a Head of Mission nominee who holds New Zealand citizenship or is a permanent resident of New Zealand.

Special arrangements apply for representatives from the Cook Islands and Niue.

#### 2.3 Cross-Accreditation to Third Countries

In accordance with Article 5(1) of the VCDR, MFAT requests notification of any proposal by a sending State to accredit concurrently its Head of Mission resident in New Zealand to another country.

#### 2.4 First Arrival in New Zealand

Missions are requested to advise the Protocol Division, with as much notice as possible, of the arrival arrangements proposed for Heads of Mission-designate. They will be met and welcomed in Wellington on arrival by an MFAT representative when the arrival occurs within normal working hours.

The completed Notification of Arrival forms (MFA 600, 601 and 602) should be sent to Protocol Division within 10 days of arrival in New Zealand for all resident Heads of Mission, their family members and Private Domestic Staff. Refer to Chapter 3.

Non-resident Heads of Mission will usually make their first visit to Wellington for the specific purpose of presenting credentials and will be met on this occasion by an MFAT representative (when the arrival occurs within normal working hours). An official car is provided for first arrival.

#### 2.5 Presentation of Credentials

A booklet entitled 'Presentation of Credentials in New Zealand', available from Protocol Division, sets out in detail the procedures and ceremonies followed when Ambassadors and High Commissioners (whose Head of State is not Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II) present their credentials. The following is a summary of the contents of that booklet:

##### 2.5.1 Correct Form of Address on Credentials Documents

Letters of Credence and Letters of Recall should be addressed to the Governor-General of New Zealand. The correct style and title for this purpose is:

*His/Her Excellency The Right Honourable (name and title of current Governor-General),  
Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Realm of New Zealand*

### 2.5.2 Presentation of Working Copies

In New Zealand, the working copies of Letters of Credence and Recall are presented to the Chief of Protocol as the representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. For this purpose, the Chief of Protocol will receive newly arrived Heads of Mission within a working day or two of their arrival in Wellington. This should be the first official call for every Head of Mission, and no official duties may be undertaken prior.

New Zealand adopts a pragmatic approach to the period between the presentation of working copies of Letters of Credence and Recall and the presentation of credentials to the Governor-General. Although, in strictly formal terms the designated Chargé d’Affaires a.i. continues in this role as such, the Head of Mission designate may in large measure undertake normal tasks and responsibilities immediately. This may include introductory calls on diplomatic colleagues and on New Zealand officials, including in MFAT. Calls should not be sought on New Zealand Ministers or Members of Parliament during this period, unless it is agreed that there is a specific urgent piece of government to government business which requires transaction at this level. Heads of Mission-designate would not usually accept invitations to formal functions hosted by the New Zealand Government or other functions (for example, national days) at which they may meet ministers or the Governor-General - the Chargé d’Affaires a.i. would be expected to represent the mission on such occasions during the interim period. Missions are welcome to seek further guidance on these matters from Protocol Division if they require it.

### 2.5.3 Credentials Ceremony

Protocol Division is normally able to provide a date for the credentials ceremony prior to the Head of Mission-designate’s arrival in New Zealand. The Governor-General usually receives credentials at Government House in Wellington although on some occasions may do so at Government House in Auckland. Notice of a ceremony being held in Auckland will be advised at the time of providing dates for the year.

Credentials ceremonies are usually scheduled five times during a year. Normally a maximum of eight Heads of Mission will present credentials on any one occasion and each Head of Mission is received individually. Should there be fewer than three Heads of Mission available for any one ceremony, the ceremony will be deferred to a later date.

In the lead-up to the credentials ceremony the presenting missions will be expected to co-operate closely with the Protocol Division, as delays in providing the relevant information could result in the Head of Mission losing a place in the credentials ceremony. A briefing on the ceremony is scheduled for each Head of Mission (and accompanying spouse and/or officials if they wish to attend) at MFAT the day before the ceremony. Participating Heads of Missions should plan to arrive in New Zealand at least two working days before the credentials ceremony.

High Commissioners of countries for which Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is the Head of State, and who have earlier presented their Letters of Introduction to the Prime Minister (see below), are invited to join the first available credentials ceremony, to participate in the welcoming ceremony, to be formally introduced to the Governor-General, and to join the reception which follows the ceremony. High Commissioners of these countries should not interact with the Governor-General until they have been formally introduced.

### 2.5.4 Attendance at Credentials Ceremonies

The Head of Mission’s spouse, other immediate family members and up to three diplomatic members of the mission are welcome to attend the ceremony. Non-resident Heads of Mission may also include a locally appointed Honorary Consul as part of their suite if they wish. If a Head of Mission is not accompanied by official staff, a member of MFAT’s Protocol Division will provide support at the ceremony.

Also present at the ceremony will be a New Zealand Government representative, usually a Cabinet Minister, members of the Governor-General’s household, military aides-de-camp and staff of MFAT.

### 2.5.5 Dress for Credentials

Dress for the credentials ceremony may be national costume, dark business suit (no decorations), or diplomatic or military uniform with decorations. For women, national costume or day dress is the preferred option. Hats are rarely worn. As part of the ceremony takes place outside, an overcoat may be needed in winter and stiletto shoes are not recommended.

### 2.5.6 Gifts and Photographs

Gifts are not exchanged at credentials ceremonies. Official photographs are taken during and after the ceremony. Government House will forward photographs of the ceremony direct to Heads of Mission at a later date. Photographs may be taken by the delegation outside Government House only. No unofficial photographs are allowed inside Government House.

## **2.6 Letters of Introduction to Prime Minister**

Those High Commissioners whose Head of State is also Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II do not present credentials to the Governor-General. Instead they present a Letter of Introduction from their Prime Minister to the New Zealand Prime Minister. Protocol Division will make arrangements for the High Commissioner to make a brief call on the Prime Minister to present the Letter as soon as possible after arrival in New Zealand. No ceremony is involved. The Chief of Protocol or Deputy Chief of Protocol will escort the High Commissioner for the call.

## **2.7 Order of Precedence**

Ambassadors and High Commissioners who present Letters of Credence and recall to the Governor-General assume their place in the order of precedence upon presentation of their credentials. The presentation of credentials on each occasion is in the order in which Heads of Mission have arrived in New Zealand and this order flows through to the Order of Precedence. In case of arrival at the same time, the date when *agrément* was granted is determinant.

High Commissioners who present Letters of Introduction to the Prime Minister take up their functions upon arrival in New Zealand, and assume their place in the Order of Precedence, from that time.

## **2.8 Calls: Resident Heads of Mission**

As in other jurisdictions, Government Ministers in New Zealand have busy schedules which impact on their ability to receive Heads of Mission. In New Zealand's case the fact that Ministers are also fully active Members of Parliament puts further pressures on their time. The important role that Heads of Mission play in the conduct of international relations is fully appreciated by Ministers and best endeavours are used to provide the access necessary for Heads of Mission to perform their role effectively.

### 2.8.1 Minister of Foreign Affairs

For resident Heads of Mission, an introductory call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs may be requested in writing through the Protocol Division and can be expected to occur within the first six months of an assignment. Timing will be at the discretion of the Minister. Other substantive calls by resident Head of Mission are at the discretion of the Minister and requests should be submitted through the MFAT regional division. Farewell calls on the Minister are not customary.

### 2.8.2 Prime Minister

It is not customary in New Zealand for Heads of Mission to make introductory or farewell calls on the Prime Minister. High Commissioners who present Letters of Introduction are, of course, an exception. If a Head of Mission subsequently has instructions to raise a matter of importance with the Prime Minister, the request for an appointment should be submitted through the relevant MFAT regional division.

### 2.8.3 Other Ministers, Dignitaries and Officials

Following their presentation of credentials, resident Heads of Mission are welcome to seek directly introductory or working calls on other Ministers, dignitaries or senior officials of ministries or departments. Such calls are subject to the normal rule that policy matters are conducted through, or with the knowledge of, MFAT (Article 41(2) of the VCDR refers).

### 2.8.4 Speaker of the House of Representatives

Requests for calls on the Speaker of the House of Representatives should be directed through the Inter-Parliamentary Relations (IPR) Secretariat of the Office of the Clerk at the New Zealand Parliament. An IPR Officer will normally attend the call. International correspondence to the Speaker should also be directed to IPR who will coordinate the response.

### 2.8.5 Inter-Parliamentary Relations

On matters concerning the New Zealand Parliament's official inter-parliamentary programme, inwards and outwards visits, New Zealand's involvement in Inter-Parliamentary Organisations (Inter-Parliamentary Union, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum), Missions should contact the IPR Secretariat. On matters concerning Parliamentary Friendship Groups (PFGs) contact can be made through each PFG's secretariat as outlined on Parliament's website. The IPR Secretariat can link missions if required.

## **2.9 Calls During Initial Visits by Non-Resident Heads of Mission**

As a courtesy, and to enable maximum benefit to be obtained from limited time in New Zealand, the Protocol Division or regional division will, on request, arrange calls and appointments for non-resident Heads of Mission during their initial visit to Wellington to present their credentials. Requests for calls/appointments should be sent to the Protocol Division two to three weeks before the visit.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs will not usually receive non-Resident Heads of Mission during their initial credentials visit. Requests for substantive/issue-specific calls on all Ministers by non-resident Heads of Mission during the initial visit should be submitted well in advance to the Protocol Division.

## **2.10 Working Visits by Non-Resident Heads of Mission**

Non-resident Heads of Mission on subsequent working cross-accreditation visits to New Zealand are expected to make their own arrangements for accommodation and transport. They are also expected to arrange any calls on other Ministers, dignitaries or officials directly in the same way as noted above for resident Heads of Mission. A non-resident mission may be able to make their arrangements through an Honorary Consul, if one has been appointed, or through professional visits managers (the Visits, Events and Logistics Unit of Protocol Division keeps a list of firms able to offer these services).

## **2.11 Absences of Heads of Mission**

During any absence of a Head of Mission, the nomination of a Chargé d'Affaires a.i. or Acting High Commissioner should be made as provided for in Article 19 of the VCDR. This must be notified to the Protocol Division by TPN.

It should be noted that a Chargé d'Affaires/Acting High Commissioner is not permitted to appoint another person as Chargé d'Affaires/Acting High Commissioner. Where the Head of Mission is unable to make the nomination, the nomination must be made by the relevant Foreign Ministry in a direct communication to MFAT's Protocol Division. A Head of Mission may make multiple nominations if a series of absences of mission staff is likely to occur during the period of absence.

It should be noted that only accredited diplomatic officers may be appointed as Chargés d'Affaires or Acting High Commissioners. Members of Service Staff may, if necessary, be designated as being 'in charge' of the day-to-day administrative affairs of the mission.

For each period of appointment, a Chargé d’Affaires/Acting High Commissioner assumes a place in the Order of Precedence below accredited Heads of Mission and in order dating from the time of receipt by the Protocol Division of the TPN notifying the appointment.

## **2.12 Final Departure of Heads of Mission**

The impending departure of a Head of Mission should be notified to the Chief of Protocol as soon as possible in advance. Protocol Division will then arrange a farewell call for the Head of Mission on the Governor-General who, if in Wellington at the relevant time, will usually receive Heads of Mission for a farewell call. The Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs do not usually receive Heads of Mission for farewell calls.

Farewell calls may be requested on the Chief of Protocol and other officials in MFAT such as the relevant regional divisional manager. An MFAT representative will usually farewell a departing resident Head of Mission at the airport, if the departure is in normal working hours.

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