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 Third Person Note to Protocol Division via email, attaching a curriculum vitae and a copy of the nominee's passport biodata page containing their legal name. A standard passport is acceptable if a diplomatic passport has yet to be issued. The curriculum vitae should be a maximum of two pages and include:

- Full name of nominee
- Citizenship(s) held, particularly New Zealand citizenship or permanent residence status
- Photo (passport style)
- Chronological listing of employment history with continuous service, if possible
- Education details
- Details of any military service undertaken

A formal response can normally be expected within 12 weeks.

In the case of resident Heads of Mission, requests may be transmitted through the local Diplomatic Mission, or directly from the Foreign Ministry. For non-resident Heads of Mission, requests may be submitted through the nearest New Zealand mission, or directly from the Foreign Ministry.

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 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 (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, including the Cook Islands and Niue.

There is no expectation or universal practice that a State that has diplomatic relations with New Zealand will enter into separate diplomatic relations with the Cook Islands and/or Niue. If the sending State wishes to do so, please see information below.

2.3.1 Accreditation to the Cook Islands

New Zealand and the Cook Islands share a close and unique relationship, founded on close historical ties, unique constitutional arrangements and a common citizenship and currency. The Cook Islands became a dependent territory of New Zealand in 1901 and then 'self-governing in free association' with New Zealand in 1965.

If a sending State wishes to be accredited to the Cook Islands, as above, it should advise Protocol Division of its intention, and can then seek agrément for the Head of Mission directly from the Cook Islands Government.

2.3.2 Accreditation to Niue

New Zealand and Niue also share a close and unique relationship, founded on close historical ties, unique constitutional arrangements and a common citizenship and currency. Niue became a British Protectorate in 1900, was annexed by New Zealand in 1901, and then 'self-governing in free association' with New Zealand in 1974.

If a sending State wishes to be accredited to Niue, it should first advise Protocol Division of its intention. Protocol Division can then advise on the process of accreditation.

2.4 First Arrival in New Zealand

A Head of Mission must arrive in New Zealand on a diplomatic visa; missions must give Protocol Division a minimum of one month's notice of the arrival of a Head of Mission and apply for a diplomatic visa one month in advance of arrival. Please see Chapter 9 on how to apply for a diplomatic visa. Heads of Mission may 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 may be met in Wellington on arrival by an MFAT representative when the arrival occurs within normal working hours. An official car will be provided for non-resident Heads of Mission to and from the airport for their first visit.

2.5 Presentation of Credentials

A brief overview of the presentation of credentials in New Zealand for Ambassadors and High Commissioners whose Head of State is not His Majesty King Charles III is provided below. Detailed information is provided to the relevant missions in the weeks leading up to the ceremony.

2.5.1 Correct Form of Address on Credentials Documents

The Letter of Credence together with the Letter of Recall for the predecessor 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 the Letter of Credence and Letter of 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 Heads of Mission within a few days 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.

In the period between the presentation of the working copies of the credentials letters to the Chief of Protocol and the presentation of credentials to the Governor-General, the Head of Mission-designate may undertake nearly all duties and responsibilities. This may include introductory calls on diplomatic colleagues and on New Zealand officials, including in MFAT. However, calls should not be sought on New Zealand Ministers or Members of

Parliament during this period. Heads of Mission-designate should not accept invitations to functions hosted by the New Zealand Government or diplomatic functions (for example, ANZAC Day or national day receptions) – the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. would be expected to represent the mission on such occasions during the interim period as Head of Mission.

High Commissioners of Commonwealth Realm countries (for which His Majesty King Charles III is the Head of State) do not have the same restriction of duties placed upon them and are able to perform all official functions from the date of their arrival into Wellington.

2.5.3 Credentials Ceremony

Once agrément is granted, Protocol Division is able to provide a date for the credentials ceremony prior to the Head of Mission-designate's arrival in New Zealand. The Governor-General normally receives credentials at Government House in Wellington although, occasionally, may do so at Government House in Auckland.

Credentials ceremonies are scheduled five to seven times a year. 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 His Majesty the King 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 are encouraged to include a locally appointed Honorary Consul as part of their suite if they wish. A member of MFAT's Protocol Division will provide support at the ceremony.

Also present at the ceremony will be 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, formal business attire, or diplomatic or military uniform with decorations. 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 by the Government House official photographer and digital copies will be sent to Heads of Mission after the ceremony. No other photographs can be taken at Government House.

2.6 Letters of Introduction to Prime Minister

Those High Commissioners for which His Majesty King Charles III is Head of State 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 will escort the High Commissioner for the call.

2.7 Order of Precedence

Ambassadors and High Commissioners who present Letters of Credence and Letters of 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 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. The Order of Precedence is published on the Ministry's website:
https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/embassies/order-of-precedence/

High Commissioners who present Letters of Introduction to the Prime Minister assume their place in the Order of Precedence from their arrival date in Wellington.

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 made to provide the access necessary for Heads of Mission to perform their role effectively.

2.8.1 Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Minister of Foreign Affairs does not receive Heads of Mission for introductory calls as a matter of course. Substantive calls by resident Heads 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 calls on the Prime Minister. Commonwealth Realm High Commissioners who present Letters of Introduction are 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. Farewell calls on the Prime Minister are also not customary.

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, Protocol Division or the 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 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 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.

2.11 Absences of Heads of Mission

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

It should be noted that a Chargé d'Affaires ai is not permitted to appoint another person as Chargé d'Affaires ai. 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 ai. 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 ai assumes a place in the Order of Precedence below accredited Heads of Mission and in order dating from the commencement of the absence of the Head of Mission.

2.12 Final Departure of Heads of Mission

The impending departure of a Head of Mission should be notified to Protocol Division via Third Person Note as soon as possible in advance. If the departing Head of Mission wishes to undertake farewell calls a request should be submitted to the regional division approximately two months prior to departure. A request may be submitted directly to Protocol Division requesting a farewell call for the Head of Mission on the Governor-General who, if available, may 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.