

**Manual of Protocol**

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## **Preface**

This publication is by no means an exhaustive review of protocol matters and diplomatic etiquette. Its objective is to formulate basic guidelines and fundamental norms and practices of protocol and administrative requirements accepted at the United Nations Headquarters.

Much of what is written in the following pages has been gathered over the years from practical experience and common sense successfully applied at the United Nations since its inception. In preparing this manual, important documents such as the Headquarters Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America and legal texts such as United Nations resolutions and other relevant documents have been used. It is recommended that every Permanent Mission and Observer Office keep a copy of this publication, for it contains important information on administrative and diplomatic procedures, compliance with which will greatly facilitate the activities of the diplomatic community stationed at the United Nations Headquarters.

The United Nations Protocol and Liaison Service sincerely hopes that this manual will enhance the co-operation between Permanent Missions, Observer Offices, and the Protocol and Liaison Service, which serves the international community at the United Nations Headquarters.

This manual includes, whenever necessary, references to relevant information provided by third parties, which maybe subject to change in the future by those parties. While

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continuously striving to maintain the accuracy of the information provided, the Protocol and Liaison Service cannot be held responsible for any such changes.

## **I**

### **Functions and Duties**

The Protocol and Liaison Service is a division of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (DGACM) of the United Nations. It is located on the west side of the second floor of the Secretariat Building, near the low-rise elevator bank, in Room S-0200 (Tel: 212-963-7171; website: [www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/protocol](http://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/protocol)).

In accordance with the mandate given by the Secretary-General to the Protocol and Liaison Service, its basic functions and duties include the following:

- (a) To register all diplomatic personnel and support staff of Permanent Missions and Observer Offices; their dependents and household employees; to provide them with proper United Nations grounds passes; to process requests for diplomatic privileges and immunities for diplomatic personnel of Permanent Missions; and to maintain and update files with relevant data on all the members of the Permanent Missions and Observer Offices;
- (b) To register members of the governmental or intergovernmental delegations,



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- (f) To advise Permanent Missions and Observer Offices, specialized agencies and the departments/offices of the United Nations Secretariat on matters of protocol usage and practice and norms of diplomatic etiquette accepted at the United Nations; and to provide briefings and lectures on matters of protocol and diplomatic etiquette.

## II

### **Establishing a New Permanent Mission in New York**

When a country has been admitted by the General Assembly as a Member State of the United Nations, it is expected that it will establish a Permanent Mission at the United Nations Headquarters or at other major United Nations centres, such as Geneva or Vienna, and appoint a Permanent Representative. By its Resolution 257 A (III), the General Assembly expressed its opinion that the presence of the Permanent Mission and the Permanent Representative of a Member State at the seat of the Organization would serve to assist in the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and to keep the necessary liaison between the Member States and the Secretariat.

In conformity with international law and United Nations practice, the term "Permanent Representative" has a clear interpretation. At the United Nations, this term was institutionalized by the General Assembly in its Resolution 257 A (III) wherein it recommended, inter alia, that credentials of newly appointed Permanent Representatives be

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issued by either the Head of State or Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs and that in the case of the temporary absence of the Permanent Representative from the seat of the Organization, the Secretary-General of the United Nations be notified of the name of the person who would be in charge of the Mission as Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the term "Permanent Representative of a Member State to the United Nations" defines a person of the appropriate diplomatic rank who permanently (as distinct from temporarily) resides at the seat of the Organization and is the head of an established permanent representation (Mission) with a postal address, a telephone number and an e-mail address.

### **III**

## **Letters of Credentials**

On 3 December 1948, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 257 (III) A regarding permanent missions of the Member States to the United Nations. The resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

*"Considering* that, since the creation of the United Nations, the practice has developed of establishing, at the seat of the Organization, permanent missions of Member States,

*"Considering* that the presence of such permanent missions serves to assist in the realization of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and, in particular, to keep the



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necessary liaison between the Member States and the Secretariat in periods between sessions of the different organs of the United Nations,

*"Considering* that in these circumstances the generalization of the institution of permanent missions can be foreseen, and that the submission of credentials of permanent representatives should be regulated,

*"Recommends*

"1. That credentials of the permanent representatives shall be issued either by the Head of the State or by the Head of the Government or by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and shall be transmitted to the Secretary-General;

"2. That the appointments and changes of members of the permanent missions other than the permanent representative shall be communicated in writing to the Secretary-General by the head of the mission;

"3. That the permanent representative, in case of temporary absence, shall notify the Secretary-General of the name of the member of the mission who will perform the duties of head of the mission;

"4. That Member States desiring their permanent representatives to represent them on one or more of the organs of the United Nations should specify the organs in the credentials transmitted to the Secretary-General;

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*"Instructs the*

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*Now therefore we ... [name and title] ...*



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established procedure for the presentation of credentials to the Secretary-General. The official portrait of the new Permanent Representative will normally be taken by the United Nations photographer on the same day of the new Permanent Representative's meeting with the Chief of Protocol. After this meeting, the Chief of Protocol will finalize the necessary arrangements, such as confirming the date and time, for the new Permanent Representative to present his/her letter of credentials to the Secretary-General.

The recommended attire for the ceremony of the presentation of credentials is business suit, preferably dark, or national dress.

On the day and time agreed upon, the Chief of Protocol will escort the new Permanent Representative to the office of the Secretary-General for the ceremony of the presentation of credentials. The new Permanent Representative may be accompanied by one or two members of his/her Permanent Mission during the ceremony of the presentation of credentials. The presentation will be recorded by the United Nations visual media.

It is expected that, at the time of the presentation of credentials, the new Permanent Representative will make a brief statement to the Secretary-General.

A press release containing biographical data on the new Permanent Representative and announcing his/her presentation of credentials to the Secretary-General will be issued by the Department of Global Communications on the same day.

It is customary for a newly appointed Permanent Representative to call on the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council, as well as on senior officials of the Secretariat. It is suggested that the new Permanent

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The Protocol and Liaison Service should also be communicated the address and other contact information of the new Observer Office of the organization or entity in New York, including the telephone/facsimile numbers and an e-mail address.

On the day and time agreed upon, the Chief of Protocol will escort the new Permanent Observer to the office of the Secretary-General for the ceremony of the presentation of his/her letter of appointment to the Secretary-General. The ceremony is very similar to the one described above for the presentation of credentials of new Permanent Representatives.

## **VI**

### **Letters and Notes Verbales**

All correspondence addressed to the Protocol and Liaison Service at United Nations Headquarters should be addressed to the Chief of Protocol. Diplomatic appointments, promotions, departures, etc., as well as any personnel movements, should be announced in a letter (not a note verbale) addressed to the Secretary-General. Any official communication containing important information regarding the Governments of the Member States, changes in the official name of the Member States, changes in the national flag of the Member States, etc., should also be communicated in a letter by the head of the Mission.

Notes verbales addressed to the Protocol and Liaison Service are normally used to communicate routine administrative matters other than personnel matters, such as updates of

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Mission contact information and closures of a Mission due to a national holiday. Such notes should depict the official seal of the Mission and bear the initials of the Head of Chancery or the principal administrative officer.

## VII

### **Registration of Members of the Permanent Missions and Observer Offices**

The names of all members of Permanent Missions and Observer Offices, whether diplomatic or non-diplomatic, and of their accompanying family members and/or household employees should, upon their arrival at the United Nations Headquarters, be communicated to the Protocol and Liaison Service. For this purpose, the following documents, as applicable, should be sent to the Protocol and Liaison Service electronically.

**(a) Persons with diplomatic status:**

- (i) An official letter (not a note verbale) addressed to the Secretary-General and signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d'Affaires a.i., stating:
  - a. Name, diplomatic rank, functional title (if any), and date of appointment;
  - b. Request for corresponding diplomatic privileges and immunities;
  - c. Order of precedence at the mission;



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- (i) An official letter (not a note verbale) addressed to the Chief of Protocol and signed by the Head of Chancery or the principal administrative officer, stating

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personnel, both diplomatic and non-diplomatic, who may work simultaneously at the missions and embassies, consulates or other diplomatic, commercial or media representations, should also obtain a prior clearance for dual accreditation from the United States Department of State and submit a copy thereof to the United Nations Protocol and Liaison Service at the time of registration. Those who have dual accreditation will retain their A-1 visa status.

**(e) Interns:**

Interns should be registered with the Protocol and Liaison Service like any other member of the Permanent Missions and Observer Offices. Interns should be at least 18 years of age at the time of registration. Internship is for a short term and the appointment letter must specify the duration of internship and whether or not the intern will be remunerated.

- (i) An official letter (not a note verbale) addressed to the Chief of Protocol and signed by the Head of Chancery or principal administrative officer, stating the name, functional title, starting date and duration of internship;
- (ii) A duly completed typed registration form (Form SG.5) pertaining to the intern, including the requested information on the intern and any family members accompanying and residing with the intern (if any), signed by the Head of Chancery or the principal administrative officer and affixed with the Mission's official seal;
- (iii) One colour passport-size photograph (in ".jpeg" or ".jpg" format) taken within the last six months;

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(iv)

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- (c) All diplomats and non-diplomats are required to register with the Protocol and Liaison Service all members of their immediate families (who are accompanying and residing with the principal) and household employees;
  - (d) The registration form should contain the current private address located within the tri-state area and the telephone number of the person to be registered. The address of the Permanent Mission as the private address is not acceptable unless the person being registered actually resides in a residential unit on the premises of such Permanent Mission;
  - (e) Permanent residents of the United States must include scanned color copies (in “.pdf” format) of the passports of their countries of citizenship and of their alien registration cards along with the registration form (Form SG.5);
  - (f) When a staff member is married to another member of the mission, who is also employed by another or the same mission, both must be registered separately in their corresponding functional capacities.
  - (g) Non-immigrant household employees are granted G-5 visas. If the I-94 forms of those employees are near expiration, employees may apply to the Permanent Mission of the United States of America for extensions prior to the expiration of their authorized duration of stay in the United States. The United States Mission performs that service for G-5 visa holders. There is therefore no need for employees to go directly to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. Such extensions require a completed and signed application (form I-

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539), an arrival and departure record (form I-94) and a letter from the employer confirming continuation of employment of the

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immunities. Upon receipt of the registration papers and scanned color copies (in “.pdf” format) of the corresponding passports, together with the necessary number of photographs, the Protocol and Liaison Service, on behalf of the Secretary-General, will take the necessary steps to include the names of the Permanent Representatives and their spouses on the list of members of Permanent Missions with diplomatic privileges and immunities;

- (b) Diplomatic personnel of Permanent Missions who perform diplomatic functions and hold diplomatic ranks are entitled to the privileges and immunities mentioned above. Permanent Representatives should, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, request that all necessary arrangements be made, specifying the member's diplomatic rank and order of precedence in his/her Mission. The Protocol and Liaison Service will not process applications submitted in the form of a note verbale.

Documents certifying that diplomatic personnel of Permanent Missions are entitled to diplomatic privileges and immunities are issued by the United States Mission to the United Nations within approximately two weeks of the date of the original request.

It is important to note that diplomatic privileges and immunities are not granted to members of diplomatic personnel who are citizens or permanent residents of the United States.



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## IX

### **Categories of United States Visas for Diplomatic and Non-Diplomatic Members of Permanent Missions and Observer Offices, Their Families and Household Employees**

In order to avoid complications on the part of the United States immigration authorities, it is necessary that all staff members of Permanent Missions and their families and household employees have the correct United States visa status. The appropriate categories of non-immigrant visas are as follows:

- (a) G-1 status is accorded to diplomatic and non-diplomatic staff members of the Permanent Missions, representatives of Governments to international organizations recognized by the United States, and members of their immediate families;
- (b) G-2 status is accorded to temporary staff members of the Permanent Missions and temporary members of delegations participating in meetings at United Nations' Headquarters and members of their immediate families, as well as to interns and trainees of the Permanent Missions;
- (c) G-3 status is accorded to members of Permanent Missions and members of their immediate families whose Governments are not recognized by the United States or whose Governments are not members of the United Nations. G-3

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original of the subject passport, together with the requisite change of visa forms, to the United States Mission for the completion of the process.

The United States Mission to the United Nations will notify the Permanent Mission/Observer Office when the passports can be collected. If the applicant has to travel outside the United States to adjust his/her visa status, the Permanent Mission/Observer Office should inform the applicant to apply abroad for the appropriate visa. Once the applicant enters the United States, the Permanent Mission/Observer Office should notify, through the Protocol and Liaison Service, the United States Mission to the United Nations

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## **XI**

### **Temporary Absence of a Permanent Representative / Observer from Headquarters**

Before absenting himself/herself from a Permanent Mission for any length of time, a Permanent Representative is required, in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 257 (III) A, to notify the Secretary-General,

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The Permanent Representative should also notify the Secretary-General of the date of his/her resumption of duties upon the return to the Headquarters.

Heads of Observer Offices are encouraged to follow the same procedures.

## **XII**

### **Notification of End of Duty of Members of the Permanent Missions or Observer Offices**

#### **Permanent Representative**

Before relinquishing his/her post, a Permanent Representative should inform the Secretary-General in an official letter, and at the same time, communicate the effective date of his/her end of duty at the Permanent Mission and the name of the member of the mission who will act as Chargé d'Affaires a.i. pending the arrival of a new Permanent Representative. It is of special importance to note that a Chargé d'Affaires a.i. can not appoint himself/herself and can hold this function only after being appointed by the Permanent Representative or by the ministry of foreign affairs of the Member State concerned.

Heads of Observer Offices are encouraged to follow the same procedures.

#### **Diplomatic personnel and support staff**

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Upon the conclusion of duty of the diplomatic personnel, support staff, their families and/or household employees of the Permanent Mission or Observer Office, the Head of Chancery or the principal administrative officer should send an official cover letter on the subject, addressed to the Chief of Protocol and accompanied by the duly completed typed “Notification of End of Duty of Members of Permanent Missions or Observer Of(Duty )-19(of )-16(Me)3(m

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on the subject, accompanied by the duly completed typed form SG.8, are forwarded to the Protocol and Liaison Service.

## **XIII**

### **United Nations Grounds Passes**

A United Nations grounds pass is required for entry into the Headquarters. Passes for members of the Permanent Missions and Observer Offices differ as to their colour symbols and includes a photograph of the bearer.

In order to obtain a United Nations grounds pass, the Permanent Missions and Observer Offices are requested to proceed as follows:

**(a) Diplomatic personnel**

Applications for grounds passes for diplomatic personnel of Permanent Missions and Observer Offices, as well as their spouses, are authorized by liaison officers of the Protocol and Liaison Service upon receipt of the duly completed typed “Request for United Nations Grounds Pass for Members of Permanent Missions or Observer Offices” form (form SG.32). The form must be accompanied by the official cover letter addressed to the Chief of Protocol, signed by the Head of Chancery or the principal administrative officer, and affixed with the Mission’s official seal. Once the application has been authorized, the diplomat and/or spouse must take the application form in person to the United Nations Pass and ID Office where a photograph will be taken, and the pass issued. Passes for diplomatic personnel and their

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spouses are issued for an initial period of four years and must be renewed accordingly, as necessary.

**(b) Support staff**

In order to obtain a United Nations grounds pass for support staff of Permanent Missions and Observer Offices, a duly completed typed application form (form SG.32) (see the requirements in the section “a” above) must be submitted to the Protocol and Liaison Service. Once these requirements have been met, the grounds pass application will be authorized and must be taken in person to the United Nations Pass and ID Office where a photograph will be taken, and a pass issued. Passes for support staff are issued for an initial period of two years and must be renewed accordingly, as necessary. Missions that require the service of the non-diplomatic staff in restricted areas should make an official written request to the Chief of Protocol to that effect and a special "CONF" pass will be issued.

**(c) Lost grounds passes**

If a grounds pass is lost or stolen, a request for issuance of a duplicate pass must be made in the form of an official letter signed by the Head of Chancery or the principal administrative officer and addressed to the Chief of Protocol. The letter must be accompanied by the duly completed typed “Request for United Nations Grounds Pass for Members of Permanent Missions or Observer Offices” form (



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The renewal of an expired grounds pass for any member of a Permanent Mission or Observer Office must be requested in writing by the Head of Chancery or the principal administrative officer of the mission. The request must mention the duration of time for which the pass should be renewed and accompanied by the duly completed typed form SG.32.

**(e) Former Permanent Representatives**

Former Permanent Representatives and their spouses are entitled to a United Nations grounds pass. Upon a request from the current Permanent Representative or Charge d' Affaires a.i. to the Chief of Protocol, accompanied by the duly completed typed "Request for United

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Registration of the members of

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up to ten (10) days following the receipt of the request by the Protocol and Liaison Service.  
Upon approval of the registration application, an automated e-mail approval for each member



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## XVI

### **Composition of Governments of Member/Observer States**

Permanent Missions of all Member/Observer States are requested to inform the Secretary-General, through the Protocol and Liaison Service, about the composition of their respective Governments and of all changes thereof at the levels of Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs. Communications from the Missions on this subject serve as the basis for all official correspondence between the United Nations and the Governments of the respective Member States. Therefore, missions should pay the utmost attention to the spelling of the names, the correct rendering of the official titles and the effective dates of the appointment of these categories of high-level state officials. The Missions are requested to communicate the aforementioned changes in the composition of

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## **XVII**

### **Change of the Official Name or the National Flag of a Member State**

Permanent Missions of Member States are requested to inform the Chief of Protocol of any change to the official name or the national flag of their respective State.

In the event of a change in the national flag of a Member State, the Permanent Representative or the Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. must inform the Chief of Protocol of the change by letter, including the effective date of the change with a description and interpretation of the colours and symbols of the new national flag. Two samples of the new national flag that correspond to the United Nations flag dimensions of 6 feet (length) by 4 feet (width) for outdoor use and 5 feet (length) by 3 feet (width) for indoor use must also be sent to the Chief of Protocol.

## **XVIII**

### **National Holidays**

Permanent Missions are requested to inform the Protocol and Liaison Service of any changes concerning the date and designation of the national holiday of their respective countries. Forthcoming special observances should be conveyed to the Protocol and Liaison

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Service by the Permanent Mission. On the occasion of the national holiday, cable messages from the Secretary-General will be sent to the Head of State or to the Governor-General.

## **XIX**

The Protocol and Liaison Service publishes on its website, for information purposes only, a document entitled “Permanent Missions to the United Nations”, known as the "Blue Book". In this document, Permanent Missions are listed with their addresses, telephone and telefax numbers, e-mail and website addresses, dates of national holidays, language of correspondence, as well as the names, diplomatic ranks and functional titles, forms of address, etc., of all members of their diplomatic personnel and their spouses. Observer Offices and specialized agencies are also listed in this document. The listings relating to the Permanent Missions, Observer Offices and specialized agencies are based on information communicated to the Protocol and Liaison Service by these Missions and offices and are intended for the use of the delegations and the Secretariat. In order for the listings to be accurate, the names, diplomatic ranks, functional titles and forms of address of the diplomats should be written according to the wishes of the Mission concerned and in conformity with the established norms of the United Nations. The electronic, real-time, version of the “Blue Book” is updated constantly. Additionally, this document will be published in a hardcopy form in a limited quantity.





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- (d) A list of officials accompanying the dignitary to the United Nations with their names and functional titles.

When a Head of State or Government visits the Secretary-General, the Chief of Protocol will greet the Head of State as he/she alights from his/her vehicle and will escort him/her to the office of the Secretary-General.

At the end of the meeting, the Secretary-General will bid farewell to the Head of State or Government. The Chief of Protocol will escort the Head of State or Government either to the General Assembly Hall or to another designated area.

## **XXI**

### **Official Mourning**

Whenever the Secretary-General of the United Nations proclaims that the United Nations is in official mourning, the United Nations flag, wherever displayed, will be flown at half-mast during the period of the official mourning.

In the event of the death of a Head of State or Government of a Member State, after the official communication has been received by the Chief of Protocol, the United Nations flag will be flown at half-mast, in accordance with the United Nations Flag Code and Regulations. No other flags will be flown at that time. If the communication is received after 7:00 a.m., the United Nations flag will be flown at half-mast the following day or on the day of the official funeral, in consultation with the Government concerned.

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Pursuant to the relevant regulations, the United Nations flag may also be flown at half-mast on special instruction of the Secretary-General.

## **XXII**

### **Special Arrangements for Sessions of the General Assembly**

Each Permanent Mission is requested to provide, at the earliest possible date, a complete list, as well as the credentials, of its official delegation to the respective General Assembly session. According to rule 27 of the “Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly”, credentials must be addressed to the Secretary-General and are to be signed either by the Head of State or Government or the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The original hard copy of the credentials should be delivered to the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations. In addition, a scanned copy of the credentials, as well as other communications containing the names of representatives to the respective session of the General Assembly (such as letters and notes verbales from the Permanent Missions), should be submitted through the online platform “e-Credentials” which can be accessed at the e-deleGATE portal (<https://edelegate.un.int>).

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According to rule 25 of the “Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly” (J.T.E.T.00000912 0

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Access to the VIP areas in the General Assembly Hall requires a special courtesy ticket (for the VIP Section A) or a special event ticket (for the 4<sup>th</sup> floor balcony) distributed by the Protocol and Liaison Service. To request these tickets, Permanent Missions are required to submit a corresponding request by completing form SG.40, specifying the names and titles of all attendees (including, where relevant, the spouse of the dignitary speaking) of require

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Identification decals for vehicles with diplomatic plates are issued for a period of 12 months and are renewed before the commencement of each regular session of the General Assembly.

Applications for parking decals of the vehicles registered to individual delegates of Permanent Missions and/or the vehicles registered to Permanent Missions should be submitted directly to the Garage Administration Office for processing (UNITAR Building, 801 United Nations Plaza, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room U-210, New York, NY 10017). The Garage Administration Office can also be reached electronically by sending an e-mail to the following e-mail address: [garage-admin@un.org](mailto:garage-admin@un.org) . All above-referenced applications must bear the signature of the authorizing Mission official and be affixed with the Mission's official seal. In addition, all applications must be accompanied by a copy of valid motor vehicle registration document and – in the case of applications for the vehicles registered to individual delegates of Permanent Missions – a copy of valid UN grounds pass of such delegates. Only one decal will be issued per delegate for use on a vehicle with “D” plates. Decals will be issued only to the members of delegations duly registered with the United Nations.

Diplomatic personnel of Observer Missions or intergovernmental organizations or other organizations with full observer status and maintaining permanent offices at the Heion status and

