

**INTERNATIONAL
SEABED
AUTHORITY**



**MANUAL
OF PROTOCOL**

FEBRUARY 2026

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INTRODUCTION

This manual offers general guidance on the norms and practices of protocol and administrative requirements accepted and observed at the Headquarters of the International Seabed Authority (the Authority).

Much of what is contained in this manual has been gathered over the years from practical experience and has been successfully applied by the Authority since its inception.

It is not an exhaustive review of protocol matters or diplomatic etiquette.



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In preparing this manual, important documents such as the Agreement Between The International Seabed Authority and the Government of Jamaica Regarding the Headquarters of the International Seabed Authority ([the Host Country Agreement](#)) and other legal texts such as the Rules of Procedure for both the [Assembly](#) and the [Council](#) of the Authority and the [Protocol on the Immunities and Privileges of the Authority](#) were used. Other equally important documents, such as the [1997 Agreement Concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the International Seabed Authority](#) and the [Manual of Protocol of the United Nations](#) from 23 April 2021, were also consulted.

This manual provides important information on administrative and diplomatic procedures that will facilitate the activities of the diplomatic community stationed in Kingston, Jamaica, regarding the Authority and the participation of the representatives of members and delegates attending the annual sessions of the Authority. Additionally, it will enhance cooperation between permanent missions, observer missions and the Authority.

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PROTOCOL SERVICE

The Authority maintains a Protocol Service at its Headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica, within the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

For inquiries and assistance, please contact:

Protocol Service

Headquarters, International Seabed Authority
14-20 Port Royal Street
Kingston, Jamaica

📞 +1 (876) 922-9105 ext. 250

✉️ protocol@isa.org.jm

The Authority also has a Liaison Office at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

For inquiries and assistance, please contact:

Ms. Asenaca R.B. Navoti

Senior Liaison Assistant

1 UN Plaza, Room 1140
UN Headquarters,
New York, USA

📞 +1 (212) 963-6411

✉️ seaun@un.org

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ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PERMANENT MISSION

The requirements for establishing new permanent and observer missions to the Authority are set out in article 27 of the Host Country Agreement.

A member of the Authority may establish a permanent mission and an observer State may establish a permanent observer mission to represent that State to the Authority. Such mission shall be accredited to the Authority.

When establishing a permanent or observer mission to the Authority, the member of the Authority or observer State to the Authority must notify the Secretary-General of their intention to establish a resident or non-resident permanent or observer mission to the Authority. For resident permanent missions, the Secretary-General will then inform the Government of Jamaica of the intention of the member or observer State to establish a mission in Kingston. After that, the Protocol Service of the Authority will provide adequate guidance throughout the process to the newly established mission.

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APPOINTMENTS AND PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS - NEW PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES AND OBSERVERS

It is advisable that the permanent or observer mission concerned announces its intention to have the appointed permanent representative to the Authority present their credentials to the Secretary-General at the earliest opportunity. This is done after the formal recognition of the permanent mission by the Government of Jamaica. In the rare instances where a member or observer State does not maintain a mission in Jamaica but may be covered by its mission at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the representative must first present credentials to the host country and executive head of the organization to which accredited.

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The Authority accepts dual and multiple accreditations in line with the [Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations](#). In such cases, separate credentials must be addressed to the International Seabed Authority. Though encouraged, it is not a requirement that the dual or multiple accreditations of a permanent representative be indicated in the letter of credentials to the Authority.

The permanent mission should submit, whether by post or electronically, the curriculum vitae and a copy of the letter of credentials of the new permanent representative to the Authority's Protocol Service. An example of a standard letter of credentials is provided below.

The ceremony of presentation of credentials usually takes place at the Headquarters of the Authority in Kingston, Jamaica. On the date and time agreed between the new permanent representative and the Authority, the newly-appointed permanent representative will be welcomed and escorted to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The permanent representative may be accompanied by one or two members of their mission.

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

The presentation of credentials is the opportunity for the Secretary-General to welcome the new Permanent Representative to the Authority.

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It is expected that, at the time of the presentation of credentials, the new permanent representative will deliver a brief statement to the Secretary-General outlining the priorities of their government concerning the work of the Authority.

The Executive Office of the Secretary-General will provide a photographer to take photographs of the new permanent representative while they present their letter of credentials to the Secretary-General. An electronic copy of the photograph will be sent to the mission concerned.

After the presentation of credentials, the Secretariat will issue a press release containing biographical data on the new permanent representative and announcing their presentation of credentials to the Secretary-General. This is also reflected in the Secretary-General's Annual Report on the activities of the Authority.

The Secretariat of the Authority shall also notify the Government of Jamaica, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica, of the name of the new permanent representative and the date on which they presented credentials to the Secretary-General of the Authority.

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APPOINTMENTS AND PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS: PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS OUTSIDE HEADQUARTERS

Member States that maintain a Permanent Mission to the United Nations and wish to establish a non-resident Permanent Mission to the Authority may, for their convenience, arrange for the presentation of credentials to the Secretary-General at the ISA Liaison Office in New York. Such credential presentation ceremonies are subject to the Secretary-General's official travel schedule and must be coordinated in advance through the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

SAMPLE LETTER OF CREDENTIALS

LETTER OF CREDENTIALS

ISSUED BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY

Excellency,

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of _____ has appointed Ambassador _____ as its Permanent Representative to the International Seabed Authority.

The Government of _____ would be grateful if you could grant Ambassador _____ any assistance he may require to carry out his/her duties.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed: by the Minister of Foreign Affairs)

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CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDING ANNUAL SESSIONS OF THE AUTHORITY

Each member and observer to the Authority must submit the signed original of the credentials of representatives granting powers to an accredited representative, who may be accompanied by such alternate representatives and advisers as may be required, to the Secretary-General of the Authority, to be given unconditional admission to the meetings of the Council and/or Assembly during the regular and special sessions of the Authority.

The rules governing the submission of the credentials of representatives attending annual sessions of the Authority are governed by Part IV, Rules 23 to 26 of the [Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Authority](#) and Part III, Rules 16 to 21 of the [Rules of Procedure of the Council of the Authority](#).

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The credentials of representatives and the names of alternate representatives and advisers are to be submitted to the Secretary-General, if possible, not later than 24 hours after the opening of the session of the Assembly or the first meeting of the attended. However, for the meetings of the Council, observers and members of the Authority not represented on the Council attending a meeting of the Council in accordance with Rule 74 must submit credentials for the representative appointed by it for such purpose not less than 24 hours before the first meeting attended.

The credentials are to be issued either by the Head of State or Government, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs or a person authorized by them or, in the case of entities referred to in article 305, paragraph 1 (f) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, by another competent authority.



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CHANGES IN PERMANENT MISSIONS

All Permanent Missions and Observer missions are requested to promptly notify the Secretariat, in writing, of any changes such as promotion or changes of designation, or changes affecting the mission itself, such as change of address, telephone number (official) or email addresses, by email to protocol@isa.org.jm or by post to the Protocol Service of the Authority.

The permanent mission or the permanent observer mission shall also notify the Secretary-General of the names of the members of their missions, as well as the names of spouses and dependent members of their families, which shall be communicated, as may be necessary, to the Government of Jamaica, in keeping with article 27 of the Headquarters Agreement.

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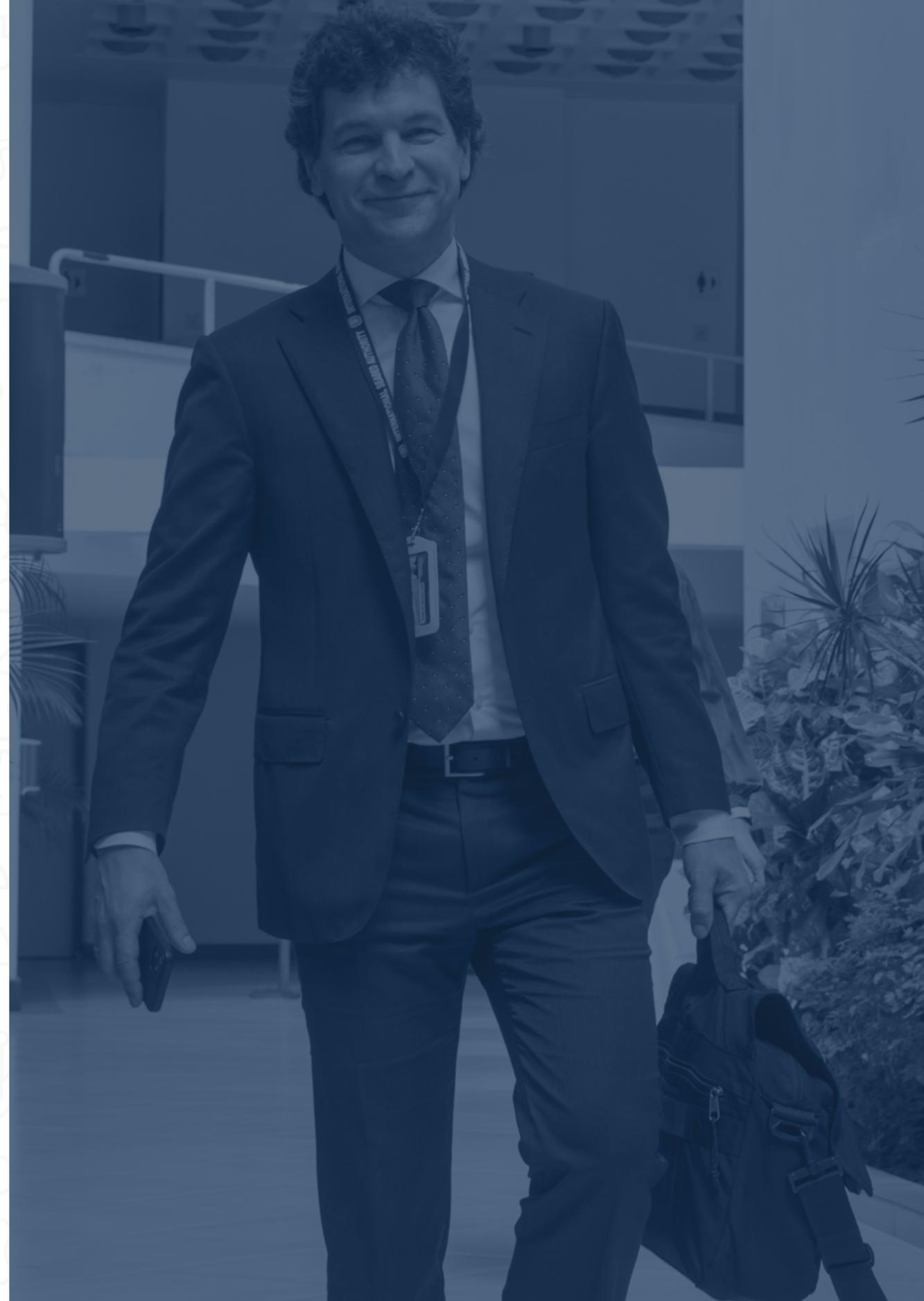
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TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF A PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

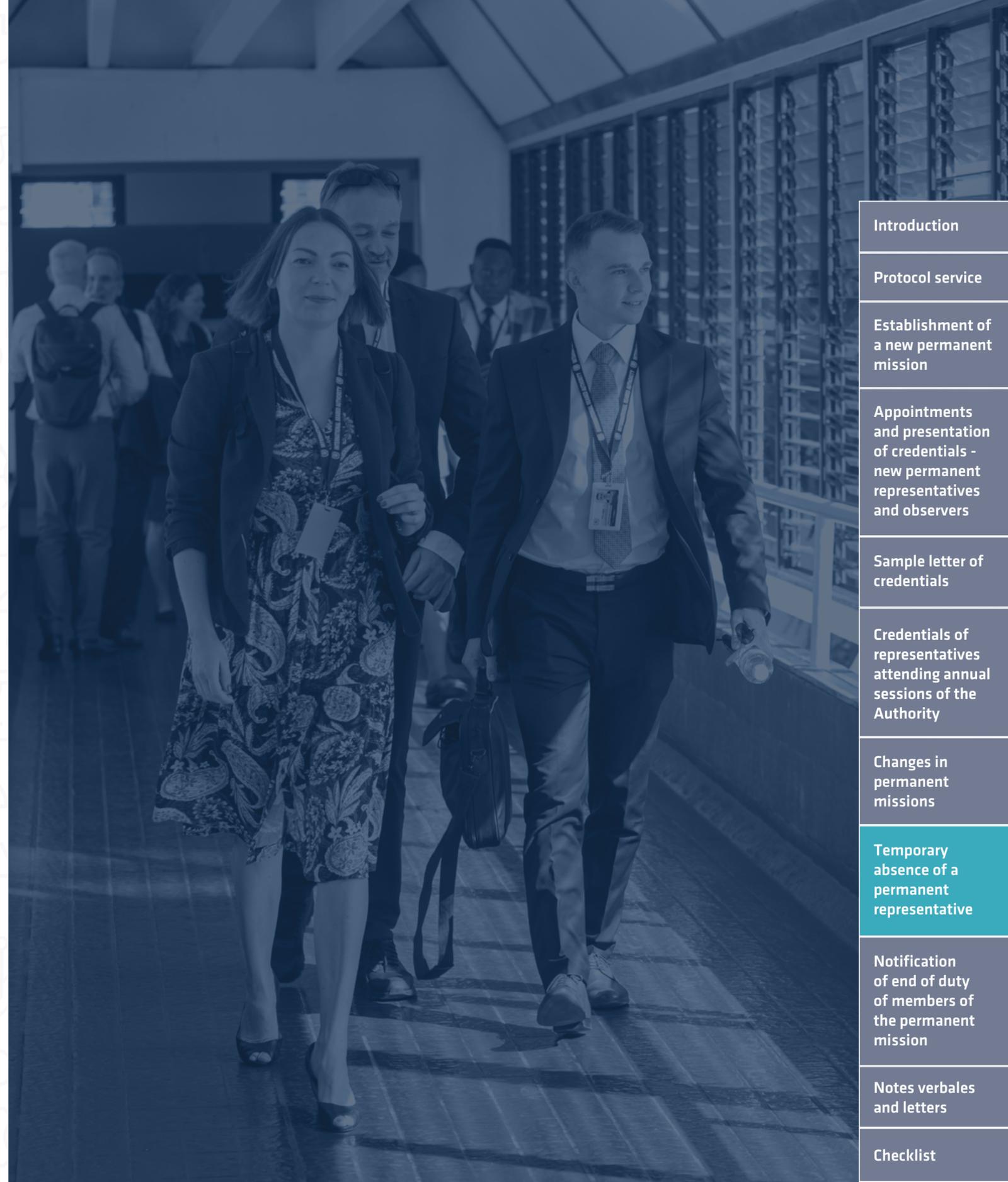
Before absenting themselves from the Permanent Mission for any length of time, the Permanent Representative is requested to notify the Secretary-General of the name of the member of the Permanent Mission who will perform the duties of Head of the Permanent Mission in the capacity of Chargé d'affaires a.i. during the absence of the Permanent Representative.



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A Chargé d’Affaires a.i. cannot appoint themselves or another Chargé d’Affaires a.i. Therefore, if multiple consecutive Chargé d’Affaires a.i. are needed during the absence of the Permanent Representative, their names and the dates of their respective appointments should be communicated to the Secretary-General through the Protocol Service by the Permanent Representative before their departure. However, if the Permanent Representative is already away and it is impossible to obtain a letter from them, the appointment of a Chargé d’Affaires a.i. should be made by a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the country in question to the Secretary-General.

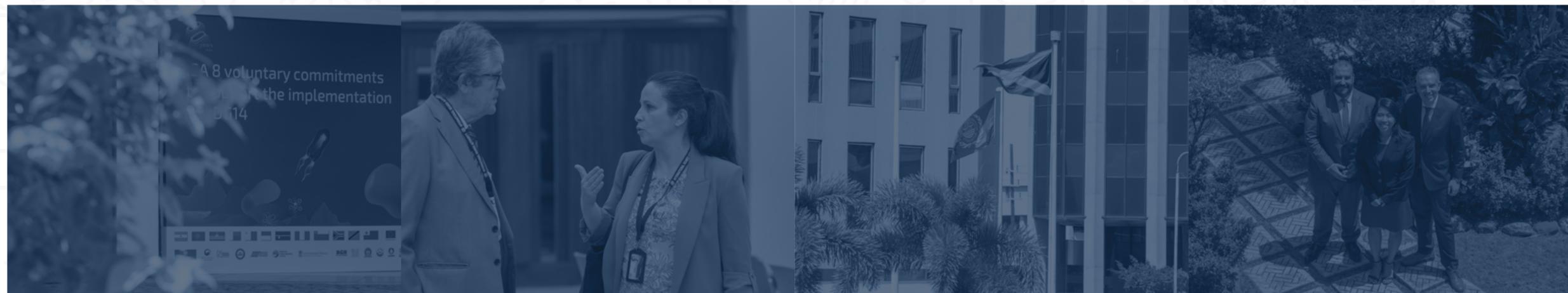
The Permanent Representative should also notify the Secretary-General of the date of their resumption of duties upon return to the Mission.



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NOTIFICATION OF END OF DUTY OF MEMBERS OF THE PERMANENT MISSION

Before relinquishing their post, a Permanent Representative should inform the Secretary-General in an official letter and, at the same time, communicate the effective date of their 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.



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NOTES VERBALES AND LETTERS

All correspondence between the Permanent Missions and the Authority should be addressed to the Secretary-General. Diplomatic appointments, promotions and departures, and 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 Member States, changes in the official name of the Member States, changes in the national flag of the Member States and changes in emails and focal points, etc., should also be communicated in a letter by the Head of the Mission.

Notes verbales addressed to the Secretariat are normally used to communicate routine administrative matters other than personnel matters, such as Mission contact information updates and closures 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.

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Quick checklist reminder: presentation of credentials

The initial stage of the process of presentation of credentials

- ▶ Email the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority, protocol@isa.org.jm, informing of the intention to present credentials and the arrival of the designated Permanent Representative.
- ▶ Establish a mutually agreed date and time to present credentials to the Secretary-General.
- ▶ Send a copy of the designated Permanent Representative's letter of credentials and Curriculum Vitae to protocol@isa.org.jm.

Letter of credentials

- ▶ Addressed to the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority.
- ▶ Issued by the Head of State or the Head of the Government, or the Minister for Foreign Affairs or, in the case of entities referred to in article 305, paragraph 1 (f) of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, by another competent authority.
- ▶ Ensure that the contents, letterhead and seal are in proper order.

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Presentation of credentials ceremony

- ▶ The recommended attire for the ceremony is a business suit, preferably dark or national dress.
- ▶ The new Permanent Representative will be escorted and welcomed to the Office of the Secretary-General for the ceremony and may be accompanied by one or two members of their mission.
- ▶ The new Permanent Representative may wish to make a brief statement to the Secretary-General.
- ▶ A photographer will take an official photograph (electronic copies) of the new Permanent Representative while presenting their letter of credentials to the Secretary-General. Copies of the photograph will be sent to the Mission/Embassy concerned upon request.
- ▶ The Secretariat will issue a press release containing biographical data on the new Permanent Representative and announcing their presentation of credentials to the Secretary-General.
- ▶ The Secretariat will notify the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Jamaica, of the name of the new Permanent Representative.

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