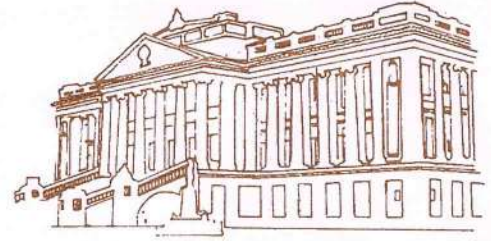




**ජනාධිපති කාර්යාලය**  
**சனாதிபதி அலுவலகம்**  
**PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT**



**Circular No: PS/SB/Circular/1/2025**

January 01, 2025

**Secretaries to Ministries**  
**Chief Secretaries of Provincial Councils**  
**Secretaries to Governors of Provinces**

**Interactions by Government Ministries/ Institutions with Foreign States, International Organizations, Diplomatic Missions accredited to Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Missions Abroad**

This Circular, amending Circular No. PS/EAD/Circular/16/2022 dated January 09, 2023 issued by the Secretary to the President, will be in force from January 01, 2025.

The Circular sets out guidelines to be followed by government institutions in their interactions with Foreign States, International Organizations Diplomatic Missions accredited to Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka Missions Abroad. It will streamline and systematize formal and functional contacts between various organs of the Sri Lankan State (i.e. Ministries, Provincial Councils, Departments) and foreign governments, institutions and their diplomatic representations.

The Hon. President has directed that the following guidelines be strictly complied with. Therefore, you are kindly requested to bring the contents of this Circular to the attention of your Hon. Minister/ Hon. Governor/ Hon. Deputy Minister/ Hon. Chief Minister and the relevant officials of your Ministry/Provincial Council/Departments and institutions under your purview.

**1. GENERAL**

In accordance with Article 41(2) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), and internationally accepted practice, the principal institution for the conduct of foreign relations is the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs. This is to ensure that in the conduct of foreign relations, the various entities of the State act synchronously.

**2. CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA AND FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS/ENTITIES**

2.1 All communications with foreign governments and entities must, in principle, be channeled through the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs, subject to the following:

2.1.1 All communications with foreign governments where Sri Lanka is represented and which involve negotiations or issues of policy, as well as communications which are not such, but could lead to them, should be made only through the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

- 2.1.2 No communication, of whatever nature, to the government of a foreign country where Sri Lanka has no locally established Mission or is not represented through an accredited Mission from another country, shall be addressed directly by any Government institution, except the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.
- 2.1.3 Correspondence with foreign governments, missions, resident representatives of regional and international organizations and all other diplomatic officials made on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka must be communicated through the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs in keeping with diplomatic practice. The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs may provide necessary advice or suggestions to the institution concerned with regard to such correspondence.
- 2.1.4 Provincial Councils and Local Government bodies including Municipal Councils should not establish direct contact or correspond directly with foreign governments/ missions accredited to Sri Lanka and other international organizations.
- 2.1.5 Direct interaction on specialized areas such as defence and foreign funding, between the line Ministries/institutions and foreign diplomatic missions accredited to Sri Lanka and related entities, and also with Sri Lanka Missions abroad may be desirable on following instances, taking into account special imperatives and circumstances. It is nevertheless essential that the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs be kept informed of all such interactions, especially those relating to Agreements/MoUs:
- (a) The Ministry in charge of the subject of Finance may deal directly with the concerned foreign governments/international organizations on the following aspects, with the stipulation that major policy issues bearing political/strategic repercussions would be pursued in consultation with the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs:
- Negotiating loans from multilateral/regional financial institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, IDA, ADB and AFBD;
  - Processing of bilateral cooperation assistance, in the form of both loans and grants except with regard to proposals for such assistance to neighbouring countries. Initial processing of bilateral assistance to other countries also will need to be done by or in consultation with the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs;
  - Matters relating to external commercial borrowing/external debt;
  - Purely economic issues with external financial ramifications without political overtones; and
  - Management of foreign exchange resources.

The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs should be kept informed of discussions on all above technical matters on a regular basis.

- (b) The Ministry in charge of the subject of Defence may correspond with foreign governments/their Diplomatic Missions in Sri Lanka on technical and logistical details only after the agreements on main/principal issues have been signed with the concurrence of the Ministry in charge of the

subject of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs should be kept informed of discussions on these technical matters on a regular basis.

- 2.1.6 Ministries/Departments will continue to correspond directly with the concerned UN agency office in Sri Lanka on technical cooperation, aid and assistance which have already been finalized in coordination with the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs. However, any matters involving fresh policy initiatives which have inter-sector or inter-UN agency implications should be endorsed by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs. This procedure should also be applied to publications/reports coordinated by line agencies with UN and other inter-governmental originations on subjects such as women, children, food security and climate change. In particular, the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs should be included in the consultation process in the preparation of such publications/reports.
  - 2.1.7 Informal correspondence or discussions on routine or technical matters, which do not involve negotiations or questions of policy, may be undertaken directly by Ministries with representatives of Foreign Diplomatic Missions in Sri Lanka, and also Sri Lanka Missions abroad. Ministries may decide whether copies of such informal communications are to be communicated to the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.
  - 2.1.8 If and when Foreign Diplomatic Missions in Sri Lanka contact an official of a Ministry/ Department which initially may seem a routine matter, but which may subsequently develop into a more important policy issue, it is essential that the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs is informed of the matter at the earliest possible instance.
  - 2.1.9 After initial arrangements have been made through the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs on a particular subject, direct correspondence on that subject matter between technical officers of various Ministries/agencies with representatives of foreign diplomatic missions or international/non-governmental organizations in Sri Lanka on matters of technical nature is permissible. However, the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs should be kept informed of all such communications.
  - 2.1.10 Even in cases of specific exigencies and when special requirements are present for a Diplomatic Mission in Colombo to approach a line Ministry/ Department/ Government Agency, the Foreign Missions have been advised to channel the request through the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs with a copy to the relevant line Ministry. The respective Sri Lankan Government institution when attending to a request by the diplomatic mission, should verify if the said procedure has been upheld.
- 2.2 Adherence to the above procedure is important since, in the event of an impasse, which has happened on many occasions in the past, the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs would be required to assist, on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka, as the intermediary between the national institution concerned and the foreign Government in order to settle outstanding issues. Such issues, if left unresolved or allowed to escalate, could become irritants or inter-State disputes, which adversely affect the overall bilateral

relationship between Sri Lanka and the foreign State or organization concerned. The prolongation of such situations, could even lead to retaliatory action being threatened or applied by the concerned foreign government or entity, in an area of vital interest to Sri Lanka.

**3 MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS, AMBASSADORS OR SENIOR OFFICIALS OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS**

Ministers/ line agencies and officers holding Public Office under the Government of Sri Lanka should invite a representative of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs and other related Ministries when meeting with visiting Ministers, dignitaries, delegations, Ambassadors or Senior Officials of foreign governments. In the event this stipulation is observed in the breach, the agency concerned should at least make available to the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs a summary report of the discussions at the meeting.

Depending on the level and significance of the meeting to be held with foreign visitors, the government institutions concerned should seek the advice of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs for related information and matters to be raised during such discussions.

**4 ENGAGING WITH STATES/GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE NOT RECOGNIZED OR WITH WHOM SRI LANKA HAS NOT ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

It has been observed in the recent past that there were instances where Sri Lanka government dignitaries/senior officials had attended events organized by representatives of States/Governments which do not have diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka or are not recognized by Sri Lanka. This has led to compelling bilateral and multilateral issues of concern. In order to avoid such situations, no government entity should accept/extend invitations for events or engagements with such representatives. The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs may be consulted if any clarifications are required in this regard.

For inquiries: Protocol Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism

Tel: 011 2421816 / 011 2327048

Email: [cprot@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:cprot@mfa.gov.lk), [protocol@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:protocol@mfa.gov.lk)

**5 MEDIA STATEMENTS ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

No media statements, of whatever nature (interview, social media, print media, digital/electronic media inspired articles) concerning foreign policy and relations of Sri Lanka, issues related to foreign countries, foreign Missions accredited to Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Missions overseas etc should be issued by Ministries/agencies without written clearance from the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs. This is in order to prevent any unwarranted bilateral or multilateral developments that may emerge, and to streamline a consistent approach towards Sri Lanka's foreign policy.

Hon. Ministers, Hon. Deputy Ministers, Hon. Members of Parliament and Senior officials are requested to observe utmost caution in making similar media statements.

For inquiries: Public Diplomacy Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism

Tel: 011 2437633

Email: [publicity@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:publicity@mfa.gov.lk)

## 6 **INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS/MOUs**

### ***(a) Negotiations by line ministries relating to bilateral, regional and multilateral Agreements/MoUs and entering into same with foreign entities***

- (i) As per the Cabinet decision dated 21<sup>st</sup> August 2002, any formal proposal involving treaty negotiations with the authorities of foreign States made by line Ministries and Departments of the Government of Sri Lanka should first be brought to the attention of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

When entering into Agreements/MoUs with foreign entities, it is mandatory that such legal instruments are cleared with the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs, which would examine, *inter-alia*, whether there are foreign relations sensitivities and implications from policy and legal perspectives. If there are legal implications for which the Hon. Attorney General needs to be consulted, upon the recommendation of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs, the line Ministry may refer such Agreements/MoUs to the Hon. Attorney General, other than the Agreements/MoUs on which the line Ministries/agencies/directly liaise with the Attorney General's Department.

The Ministry in charge of the subject of Finance and the External Resources Department which are responsible for securing foreign financing, borrowing arrangements, credit lines and other similar types of instruments, will engage in related activities, subject to the relevant guidelines and the clearance of the Hon. Attorney General and the Cabinet of Ministers. The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs should be informed in detail of such engagements and conclusions of any instruments.

- (ii) A circular No. MF/ERD/2023/01 dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023 has been issued by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies in order to provide necessary guidelines for all the agencies under the Central Government and Provincial Councils in relation to various financing programs, borrowing arrangements, credit lines and other similar types of instruments and entering into various MoUs and Agreements.
- (iii) Provincial councils, Provincial Ministers and conclusion of Agreements with Foreign Governments :

Under the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, the subject of entering into and implementing Treaties, Agreements/MoUs and Conventions with foreign countries is

included in the Reserved List and is assigned under Article 44 of the Constitution, to the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Governors/ Hon. Chief Ministers/Hon. Ministers of Provincial Councils when on official visits abroad should not conclude legal instruments, even Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with provincial entities of foreign countries, without prior consultation with the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

In view of the existing constitutional requirements, it is mandatory that such Agreements/MoUs be cleared at the very outset by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs, which would examine, *inter-alia*, whether there are foreign relations sensitivities and implications from policy and legal perspectives. If there are legal implications for which the Hon. Attorney General needs to be consulted, upon the recommendation of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs, the line Ministry of the respective Provincial Council may refer such envisaged legal instrument to the Hon. Attorney General.

The Provincial Council concerned should proceed thereafter with the concurrence of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

- (iv) When entering into foreign investment proposals, financing proposals or bilateral or multilateral funding arrangements on public investment projects, either in the form of grant aid or foreign loans, the prior approval of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Finance should be obtained. Before concluding such Agreements/MoUs, it is mandatory to seek prior approval of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Hon. Attorney General. Subsequent to the signing of such legal instruments/frameworks they should be brought to the attention of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs, in order to update the Treaty Index.

#### ***(b) Cabinet Approval***

Once the text of an Agreement is established, the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers needs to be obtained by the relevant line Ministry/Department before action is taken to commit the Government. Once Cabinet approval is obtained, action will be taken by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs together with the line Ministry/ institution, to prepare the text granting Full Powers, which designates a person to sign on behalf of the Government. This requirement applies to all instruments whether it is titled an 'Agreement', 'Memorandum of Understanding', 'protocol' etc.

#### ***(c) Full Powers***

Only the Head of State or Government and the Minister in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs may commit the Government to any international obligation without written authority from any persons. All other persons need written authorization (Full Power) from the Minister in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs before signing any international agreement. Therefore, the relevant line Ministry/Department/institution should submit a copy of the Cabinet Approval well in advance of the date of signing (at least 2 weeks) in order to enable the preparation of the instrument of Full Powers for the signature of the Minister in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

#### ***(d) Credentials***

In the case of the negotiation of multilateral Agreements as well as participation at multilateral fora, credentials designating the Government's representatives and establishing the scope of their authority would be required. In instances where the delegation is led by a Minister, such credentials will be effected by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs once the delegation has been approved by the Hon. President. With regard to an official level delegation, credentials will be prepared once the delegation has been approved by the Secretary of the relevant line Ministry. Requests for credentials, together with a copy of such approval should be submitted well in advance (at least 2 weeks) in order to enable the credentials to be prepared for the signature of the Minister in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

#### ***(e) Parliamentary approval***

According to the practice followed by Sri Lanka, the conclusion of international agreements requires only the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers. However, there are, generally, four instances where Agreements/MOUs need to be brought before the Parliament. These are:

- (i) Where an Act of Parliament specifically requires Parliamentary approval. For instance, in terms of Article 157 of the Constitution, Agreements for the Promotion and Protection of Investments are required to be presented to Parliament for its approval, in order to secure the Constitutional protection guaranteed under the said Article.
- (ii) Extradition and Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreements
- (iii) Where legislative implementation is required to give effect to the Agreement at the domestic level.
- (iv) Where the subject matter of a treaty is of such overriding political importance that it should be placed before Parliament for its information.

The relevant line Ministry will, in such instances, take appropriate action to have the relevant agreement placed before Parliament.

#### ***(f) Depository Functions***

The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs is the depository of international agreements concluded by Sri Lanka. The original copy of any Agreement signed on behalf of Sri Lanka should therefore be transmitted to the Ministry for retention by the Legal Division of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs. Where considered necessary, important Agreements will be published in the Sri Lanka Treaty Series.

For inquiries: Legal Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism  
Email: [legal@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:legal@mfa.gov.lk)

## 7 VISITS ABROAD

On several occasions requests have been made to the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs at very short notice to arrange official meetings with foreign dignitaries for Sri Lankan Ministers and other senior officers travelling abroad. There have been instances where several Ministerial and other dignitary visits from Sri Lanka have taken place to a single foreign capital successively. On some occasions, these multiple visits have prompted the foreign States concerned to query the rationale and the need for such, often for the same purpose. Furthermore, as Sri Lanka's Missions Abroad function with limited staff and resources especially under the current circumstances, requests for Mission facilitation, without adequate prior notice, would place the Mission in an extreme difficult situation, and a tardy outcome.

It is noted that sometimes Sri Lanka Missions are not informed at all regarding the visits to their countries of accreditation, of Hon. Ministers, Hon. Deputy Ministers. This may lead to unwarranted situations and the Mission may not be in a position to extend any assistance exigencies.

It has also been noted that certain Ministries make direct requests to Sri Lanka Missions abroad, and in certain instances, to entities of foreign governments, requesting facilities and arrangements for Sri Lankan VIPs to make official/non-official visits to those countries. This practice is inappropriate both from administrative and protocol aspects as well as foreign relations point of view. All requests for visits abroad need to be channeled only through the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Missions Abroad have been informed to refrain from entertaining any direct requests except in emergency situations, and that too in consultation with the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

In order to avoid unpleasant situations, it is necessary for all visit requests to be rationalized and submitted well in advance and henceforth channeled through the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs. These requests will be processed by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs, taking into account, the foreign relations implications, and advise the Missions abroad on the action to be taken. Ministerial and other high level appointments in many countries require adequate lead time for their own processes of coordination.

Steps should also be taken to secure the prior approval of the Hon. President to undertake respective visits abroad.

Furthermore, before an invitation is extended to a foreign dignitary to visit Sri Lanka during discussions abroad by a Minister/senior official, prior concurrence of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs needs to be obtained. This is necessary primarily to determine whether such a visit is desirable in the context of Sri Lanka's relations with the State of the concerned dignitary, and in the context of Sri Lanka's overall foreign policy considerations at the relevant time. The possible benefit for Sri Lanka from such a visit and also the proper scheduling of same in view of the limited resources available, are also matters that would have to be examined.



## **8 VISAS**

The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs and Sri Lanka Missions abroad receive several requests to obtain visas and/ or to support these applications in respect of both official and private travel.

The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs has no authority to facilitate visas for private travel including of those holding official positions. No government institution should issue official letters supporting visa applications for private travel. If the intended travel is of an official nature by Ministers, Deputy Ministers or government officials, such information should be furnished to the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs well in advance, at least four weeks prior to the date of the visit. The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs will, in turn, issue a Third Person Note supporting the request for a visa for official purposes, provided the clearance of Hon. President has been obtained for such travel. In the case of Members of Parliament, the request for visa assistance should be made by the Secretary-General of Parliament.

In the event the visa for official travel is to be obtained through a Sri Lanka Mission abroad, such request should be made at least three weeks before the intended date of travel.

For inquiries: Travel Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism  
Tel: 011 2423900 / 011 2328753  
Email: [dgoamd@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:dgoamd@mfa.gov.lk), [travel@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:travel@mfa.gov.lk)

## **9 ATTENDANCE AT DIPLOMATIC FUNCTIONS**

The Cabinet of Ministers decides on the nomination of a Minister each month or on event basis to represent the Government at National Day functions of a foreign State. Where such nomination is made, it is essential to ensure the personal participation of the nominated Minister since the Sri Lanka Government needs to be represented at National Day functions at an appropriate level. In the event of any difficulty with regard to the designated Minister's attendance, the Protocol Division of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs should be informed in advance, ideally at least two weeks before, in order to make alternative arrangements.

A brief statement to be read out on the occasion will be prepared by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs and transmitted to the relevant Minister.

The monthly schedule of National Days will also be conveyed to the relevant Minister.

For inquiries: Protocol Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism  
Tel: 011 2421816 / 011 2327048  
Email: [cprot@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:cprot@mfa.gov.lk), [protocol@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:protocol@mfa.gov.lk)

It is required that any representation/participation from the Ministries / agencies at diplomatic functions should be at a high level, i.e. Director and above.

## **10 INVITATIONS BY DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS**

It is also important to ensure that Ministers do not accept invitations for receptions and luncheon/dinner engagements extended by a diplomatic mission at a level below the rank of Ambassador/High Commissioner or Head of Mission. This is in keeping with internationally accepted Protocol, which is important to be maintained, in order to safeguard the status due to Sri Lanka as a sovereign state and host country.

Any invitations by Diplomatic Missions/Posts in Sri Lanka on behalf of their Governments, Organizations or Institutions to the Hon. President, Hon. Prime Minister, Hon. Ministers, Hon. Governors, Hon. Members of Parliament, and Senior Officials of Central/ Provincial/Local Governments as guests of their countries for attending conferences, or for any other purpose, should not be accepted without the concurrence of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

## **11 HOSTING OF INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL CONFERENCES, SEMINARS ETC.**

It is necessary to streamline the procedure with regard to the hosting of international/regional conferences, seminars, etc. Before a commitment is made to a foreign State or Organization to host such an event in Sri Lanka, the concurrence of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs should first be obtained. A request for concurrence should set out briefly, the objectives of the conference or seminar, envisaged outcome and advantages to Sri Lanka, financial outlay for hosting, list of participating States/Organizations, any assistance required to be given by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs by way of facilitating visas, protocol assistance, etc. Such requests should be made to the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs at least one month prior to extending the offer to enable the Ministry to liaise with the relevant Sri Lanka Diplomatic Missions abroad to make a considered decision.

## **12 PROGRAMMES IN SRI LANKA FOR VISITING DELEGATIONS FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

It has been noted that Ambassadors/Heads of Missions resident in Colombo directly seek appointments for visiting delegates from their countries, with Sri Lankan Ministers/dignitaries and senior officials. This is contrary to accepted diplomatic practice and procedure. Ambassadors/ Heads of Missions are required to first inform the Protocol Division of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs regarding the programme required for their visiting delegations and the appropriate appointments will be sought with Sri Lankan authorities by the Protocol Division. The same practice should be followed by Governors and Provincial Ministers. Similarly, any appointments sought by Ambassadors/ Heads of Missions in Sri Lanka directly with Governors or Provincial authorities for themselves or for staff of their Missions should be referred to the Protocol Division of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs, and concurrence sought.

## **13 MEETINGS WITH VISITING FOREIGN DIGNITARIES**

With regard to calls on the Hon. President, Hon. Prime Minister or Hon. Ministers by visiting delegations or by Ambassadors/ Heads of Missions resident in Colombo, advice of the Ministry

in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs on the appropriate level of such meetings needs to be sought. Lower ranking officials from Embassies and visiting foreign delegations including the UN, should not be facilitated to meet the Hon. President, Hon. Prime Minister or Hon. Ministers.

For inquiries: Protocol Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism

Tel: 011 2421816 / 011 2327048

Email: [cprot@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:cprot@mfa.gov.lk), [protocol@mfa.gov.lk](mailto:protocol@mfa.gov.lk)

#### **14 FACILITIES TO BE EXTENDED BY MISSIONS ABROAD TO DIGNITARIES AND SENIOR OFFICIALS VISITING FROM SRI LANKA**

The Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs as well as Sri Lanka Missions abroad often receive requests from Hon. Ministers, Hon. Deputy Ministers, Hon. Members of Parliament and Senior Officials travelling from Sri Lanka for official or private purposes to arrange facilities during arrival, transit, departure and their stay for VIP lounge, accommodation, transport arrangements etc.

It may be noted that the provision of the VIP lounge by foreign governments except on exceptional situations, is mostly on payment basis. Therefore, Sri Lanka Missions overseas will not be able to make this facility available on a free of charge basis. In this context, the line ministry/institutions of the relevant minister/dignitary/officials who wish to avail of the VIP lounge facilities abroad should make the payments in advance to the Sri Lanka Missions Abroad through the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

Protocol assistance and transport arrangements to hotel from the airport and vice-versa will be extended to visiting dignitaries by Sri Lanka Missions abroad for official purposes only, where Sri Lanka has a resident Mission. According to existing guidelines, during private visits, protocol assistance will be extended only to the Hon. President, Hon. Prime Minister, Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Chief Justice, Hon. Leader of the Opposition and Hon. Cabinet Ministers.

Further, in line with current circulars, during private visits, the Mission will facilitate Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Chief Justice, Hon. Leader of the Opposition and Hon. Cabinet Ministers, with transport arrangements to the hotel from the airport and vice-versa, on the instructions of the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs. Therefore such travel would need to be notified to the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs in a timely manner. Any other related costs will not be met by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs nor the Missions abroad. Separate arrangements will be in place by the Missions for the Hon. President, Hon. Prime Minister and Hon. Minister in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs.

Accordingly, alternative transport arrangements for other engagements should be made by the relevant Ministries/Institutions in coordination with Sri Lanka Missions abroad and the expenditure is to be borne by the line Ministry/Institution.

The Mission is not expected to pay any bills for accommodation, telephone calls, transport, portage etc and release cash advance unless specifically instructed to do so by the Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs. No exceptions should be made under any circumstances in this regard. When official visits are arranged at the request of a Hon. Minister, Hon. Deputy Minister, Ministry, Institution etc, all expenses in connection with such visit should be borne by the line Ministry/Institution making such request.


#### **15 MONITORING THE OBSERVANCE OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE CIRCULAR**

A High-Level Committee to monitor the compliance of this Circular will be established comprising the following members.

- Hon. Minister in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs
- Secretary to the President
- Secretary to the Cabinet
- Secretary / Ministry in charge of the subject of Foreign Affairs
- Secretary / Ministry in charge of the subject of Public Administration and Home Affairs

The Committee shall call meetings as and when necessary, and invite officials or individuals to participate in the meetings, as deemed appropriate. The Committee may, as necessary, draw the attention of relevant Ministries, and other government institutions, verbally or in writing, on the status of compliance of the guidelines contained herein.

Your cooperation in complying with the provisions of this Circular is greatly appreciated.



**Dr N S Kumanayake**  
Secretary to the President

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Email: [prsec@presidentsoffice.lk](mailto:prsec@presidentsoffice.lk)

Cc:

1. Hon. Attorney General
2. Secretary to the Prime Minister
3. Secretary to the Cabinet of Ministers
4. Governor of the Central Bank
5. Commissioner General of Elections
6. Auditor General
7. Secretary General of Parliament
8. Registrar of the Supreme Court
9. Secretary to the Leader of the House of Parliament
10. Secretary to the Chief Government Whip