

CREDENTIALS PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Art. 93 of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba defines the functions of the Chairman of the Council of State and Head of Government; under Art. 93 (f), these include "receiving the credentials of foreign heads of mission".

ARRIVAL OF AN AMBASSADOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

The arrival of a new ambassador should be notified by diplomatic note from his/her embassy in Havana. Where there is no embassy, such notice should be sent from his/her foreign ministry or the ambassador's embassy of residence, by fax or electronic mail to Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs; it should state the date, means of arrival and the names and relationship of the ambassador's companions. This information can also be provided through Cuba's diplomatic mission in the state issuing the credentials or in the new ambassador's country of permanent residence. The ambassador and his/her party should ensure beforehand that they obtain any necessary visas.

On arrival in Cuba, the ambassador will receive all the courtesies due to his office and will be welcomed in the Council of State's Protocol Rooms at José Martí International airport. The room in which the ambassador is received will display the flag of his/her nation together with the Cuban flag.

The new ambassador will be notified in good time, by means of a diplomatic note, of the date and time scheduled for his/her reception: by the Assistant Director or Head of the Protocol Ceremony Office for explanations regarding the Republic of Cuba's diplomatic ceremonial; by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for presenting the Style Copies of his/her credentials; and by the Chairman of the Council of State to whom he/she will present the Letters of Credence.

Official dress for the ceremony of presentation of Letters of Credence and Style Copies is as follows:

Women - formal dress, skirt and jacket or national dress of the country she represents.

Men - dark suit or national dress of the country he represents.

PRESENTATION OF THE STYLE COPIES

Presentation of the Style Copies will take place during the week following the ambassador's arrival in the country, in the protocol rooms at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ambassador and his/her retinue, which may comprise up to two officials of his/her embassy, should make their own way to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On arrival at the ministry, the ambassador and his/her retinue will be received by the Assistant Director or Head of the Protocol Ceremony Office.

The interview with the Assistant Director or Head of the Protocol Ceremony Office will be conducted in one of the reception rooms at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the ambassador will be apprised of the most important details of diplomatic ceremonial, in particular the audiences for presentation of his/her Style Copies and his/her Letters of Credence and other details relating to protocol and of general benefit for facilitating his/her mission.

Following the meeting with the Assistant Director or Head of the Protocol Ceremony Office, the ambassador and his/her retinue will be accompanied by the Assistant Director or Head of the Protocol Ceremony Office to the Room of Mirrors at the ministry for a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs accompanied by the official responsible for relations with the new ambassador's nation. The flags of both nations will be on display in this room.

The ambassador will be introduced to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, will greet the latter and the ministry official and, with a few words, will hand the former the Style Copies and copies of the Letters of Recall of his/her predecessor, if appropriate, and will introduce his/her accompanying official.

Following the greetings, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs will invite the ambassador to be seated and will initiate a conversation, which may cover matters of common interest.

An official ministry photographer will make a photographic record of the ceremony.

CEREMONY FOR PRESENTATION OF AMBASSADORIAL CREDENTIALS

For the purposes of presenting his/her credentials at the Palacio de la Revolución, the ambassador will attend with one companion.

The Protocol Section will provide an official car for the ambassador's journey. His/her companion will travel in a second car, to be provided by the embassy (or rented in the case of concurrent ambassadorship). This shall not be an antiquated vehicle or a taxi.

On the day and at the time appointed for the credentials presentation ceremony, a protocol official accompanied by an aide-de-camp will present him/herself at the ambassador's official residence (or hotel, in the case of a concurrent ambassador).

On the journey to the Palacio de la Revolución, the ambassador will be carried in the right-hand rear seat of the official car with the protocol official on his/her left. The front [passenger] seat will be occupied by the aide-de-camp. The ambassador's companion will be carried in an embassy car (or rented car in the case of concurrent ambassadorship).

Throughout the journey, the cars will have motorcycle escorts provided by the national police force's Ceremonial Unit; their personnel will be in dress uniform.

On arrival at the Palacio de la Revolución, the ambassador and his/her companion will be received by the Head of the Protocol Ceremony Department. The party will leave their vehicles and form up as follows: the ambassador on the right of the Head of the Protocol Ceremony Department, his/her companion behind in the center, to his/her right the aide-de-camp and to his/her left the protocol official.

In this formation, the party will enter the hall on the ground floor of the Palacio and take up position on the red carpet in front of the guard of honor and the flags of the two nations. The guard of honor will then perform the official salute and the band will play the national anthems of the two nations.

Following the playing of the national anthems, the ambassador and his/her companion, the Head of the Protocol Ceremony Department, the aide-de-camp and the protocol official, in the same formation, will proceed to the elevator, which will take them to the floor above. On arrival, they will be conducted to the waiting room, where they will remain until the initiation of the credentials presentation ceremony.

Following the reception of the new ambassadors, they will be invited, one at a time and in order of precedence, to enter the 'Sol de América' Stained-Glass Room from whence they will be conducted by the Chief of Protocol to the National Heroes' Room to present their Letters of Credence to the Chairman of the Councils of State and of Ministers.

On entering the National Heroes' Room, the ambassador will stop at one yard's distance in front of the Chairman of the Councils of State and of Ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and make a brief statement: **“Your Excellency Mr. Chairman of the Councils of State and of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, I have the honor to present to Your Excellency the Letters of Credence accrediting me as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotenciary of (official name of the country) to the Government of the Republic of Cuba and the Letters of Recall of my predecessor”**.

Thereafter he/she will hand the Letters of Credence, greet the Chairman of the Councils of State and of Ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and present his companion.

Following the greetings, the ambassador will have up to five minutes for conversation with the Chairman of the Councils of State and of Ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Thereafter, the ambassador and his companion will be invited to be photographed.

After the official photograph, the Chief of Protocol will conduct the ambassador and his companion to the exit, where the Head of the Protocol Department, the aide-de-camp and the protocol official will be waiting to accompany them to the elevator, which will return them to the Palacio's ground floor.

The Head of the Protocol Ceremony Department will take his/her leave of the ambassador and his/her companion, who will be accompanied by the protocol official and the aide-de-camp to the exit from the Palacio, where they will return to their cars, adopting the same seating arrangements as before.

The car carrying the ambassador will fly the Cuban flag on the right and the flag of the ambassador's nation on the left.

CEREMONY OF FLORAL TRIBUTE TO JOSÉ MARTÍ, NATIONAL HERO OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

Should the new ambassador decide to place a floral tribute to José Martí following the accreditation ceremony, the party's vehicles will proceed directly to the José Martí monument in the Plaza de la Revolución, for the placing of the tribute.

On arriving at the foot of the monument, the ambassador will stand in the center, facing the monument, with the protocol official and aide-de-camp beside him/her to his/her right and left respectively. The ambassador's companion will stand behind him/her.

Two officials of the guard of honor will bring the tribute. As these pass in front of the ambassador, the latter, accompanied by the protocol official and the aide-de-camp, will step towards the monument and stop at a point some two yards from where the tribute is placed. Following the commands pronounced by the official presiding at the ceremony, the ambassador will arrange the ribbon showing the phrase "To José Martí" and the remaining dedication by the ambassador. An official photograph of the participants at the ceremony will be taken at this point.

The diplomatic mission (or the ambassador him/herself, in the case of concurrent ambassadorship) will order the floral tribute at its/his/her expense, from the designated garden in consultation with the Ceremonial department, for delivery to the monument at the Plaza de la Revolución an hour before the ceremony.

The ambassador may, if he/she wishes, visit the José Martí monument, whose base bears a memorial displaying his name, an outline of his life and work and the history of the place.

Following the ceremony, the party will return to the ambassador's residence (or hotel in the case of a concurrent ambassadorship) in their cars, with motorcycle escort, in the same order and positions as before.

Where no floral tribute ceremony is proposed, the party will return directly to the residence (or hotel) as just described.

TOAST, COCKTAIL PARTY OR RECEPTION (OPTIONAL)

Following the credentials presentation ceremony, the ambassador may, if he/she wishes, propose a toast or give a cocktail party, or even hold a reception. He/she will arrange the date and time of the event with the Protocol Section.

GENERAL POINTS

On the day on which the ambassador presents his/her credentials, a recording of the ceremony will be broadcast on the evening national television news. On the following day, a note of the event will appear in the official press organ.

Also, as a courtesy, the Protocol Section will arrange for the new ambassador to receive a CD containing the photographs taken during the ceremony.

In cases where the services of an interpreter are required, the Protocol Section will make the necessary arrangements.