



FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**PROTOCOL AND ETIQUETTE GUIDE
FOR INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS**

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PREFACE

The National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has increasingly become an active participant in International parliamentary diplomacy. The National Assembly continues to contribute meaningfully to the promotion of democratic governance, legislative cooperation, and mutual understanding among nations through its engagements with global and regional parliamentary institutions, bilateral parliamentary exchanges, and the hosting of foreign delegations.

The need for clear and consistent standards of protocol, etiquette, and institutional representation has become increasingly important as the scope and frequency of these engagements expand. Proper protocol and etiquette are not merely ceremonial; they reflect the dignity of the institution, demonstrate respect for partners, and reinforce the credibility of the Parliament on the international stage.

This Protocol and Parliamentary Engagements Manual has therefore been developed to provide practical guidance for Members of the National Assembly, Legislative Aides, Committee Clerks, and Staff involved in organizing parliamentary events and managing engagements with international dignitaries.

The manual outlines the principles of parliamentary protocol, standards of diplomatic etiquette, and procedures for organizing official visits, conferences, and parliamentary exchanges. It also provides operational tools—including templates, checklists, and seating arrangements—to support the effective planning and execution of international parliamentary engagements.

This Manual will promote professionalism, consistency, and institutional excellence in the conduct of the National Assembly's engagements both within Nigeria and internationally.

All Members and Staff of the National Assembly and the public will benefit immensely from using the manual as a practical reference in the performance of their duties.

Kamoru Ogunlana

Clerk to the National Assembly

April 2026

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The development of the Parliamentary Engagements and Protocol Manual of the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria reflects the collaborative efforts of key institutions and individuals committed to strengthening the National Assembly's capacity for effective parliamentary diplomacy.

The Directorate of Interparliamentary Relations & Protocol expresses its sincere appreciation to the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) for its significant role in the production of this manual, as part of its continued support to the National Assembly in promoting institutional development and strengthening parliamentary practice.

The National Assembly gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Government of Switzerland, the Swiss Embassy in Nigeria, and the Federal Assembly of Switzerland, whose initiative and funding made this partnership and the production of this manual possible.

Special acknowledgement is extended to the Clerk to the National Assembly for his support throughout the partnership and the development of this manual.

The Directorate further recognizes the insights drawn from established international parliamentary practices, including those of the United Kingdom Parliament and the United States Congress, which provided valuable reference points in shaping this document.

The contributions of Mr. Anthony Ikem and Mr. Idowu Bakare are gratefully acknowledged for their research support and practical input. Appreciation is also extended to Ms. Aisha Kotoko, the coordinator of the Switzerland-Nigeria collaboration and Mr. Godwin Ekpenyong (Former Secretary, Directorate of Interparliamentary Relations and Protocol, for their roles in supporting this initiative.

It is expected that this manual will serve as a valuable institutional resource for enhancing the planning and execution of the National Assembly's international parliamentary engagements.

Dr. (Mrs.) Fortune Ihua-Maduenyi

Secretary, Directorate of Interparliamentary Relations and Protocol



INTRODUCTION

Parliaments across the world have increasingly become active participants in international diplomacy. Parliamentary diplomacy complements traditional state diplomacy by facilitating the use of dialogue; negotiation and cooperation between parliaments and legislators from different countries to promote mutual understanding, influence international relations and address global issues.

Parliamentary diplomacy focuses on issues such as democracy and governance, peace and conflict resolution, security, trade, international cooperation on global challenges like climate change, human rights and trade, development, and democratic accountability.

The National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria participates actively in international parliamentary institutions including:

- The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
- The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
- The Pan-African Parliament (PAP)
- ECOWAS Parliament, and
- Various other bilateral parliamentary friendship groups and associations.

The National Assembly, also, frequently hosts foreign parliamentary delegations, ambassadors and high commissioners, international organizations, development partners, and high-level government officials.

These interactions require careful observance of protocol, etiquette, and diplomatic norms. Failure to observe proper protocol may undermine institutional credibility and create avoidable diplomatic misunderstandings.

This manual provides a practical guide for ensuring that engagements of the National Assembly are conducted with professionalism and respect consistent with international parliamentary practice.

PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

This manual seeks to:

1. Establish standardized protocol procedures for parliamentary engagements.
2. Guide Members and Staff on appropriate etiquette when interacting with dignitaries and delegations.
3. Provide practical tools for organizing parliamentary events.
4. Promote consistency in hosting both domestic and international visitors.
5. Strengthen Nigeria's parliamentary diplomacy and global institutional reputation.

SCOPE OF THE MANUAL

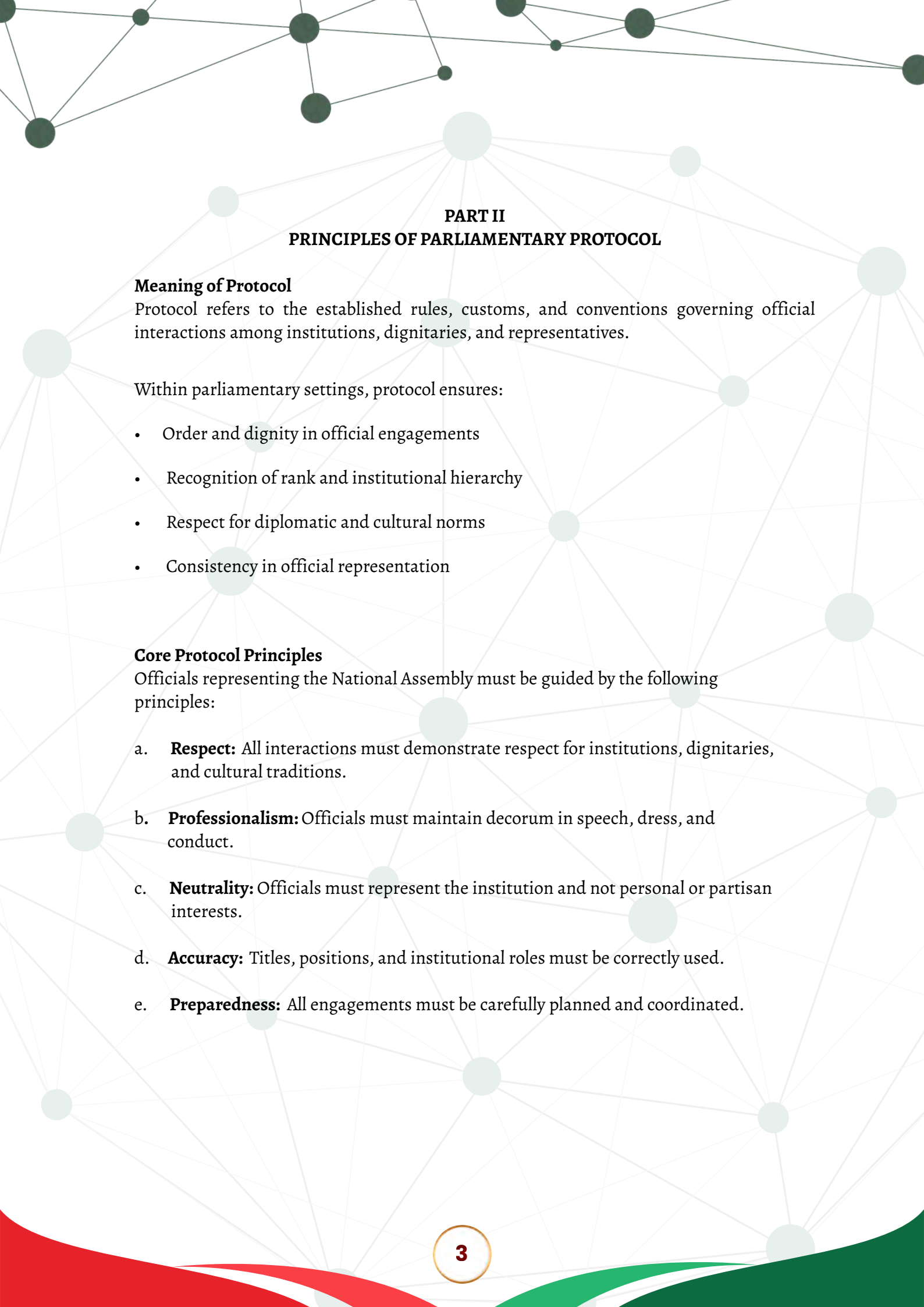
This manual applies to:

- Members of the National Assembly
- Committee Clerks
- Legislative Aides
- Staff of the National Assembly Service
- Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary Relations
- Protocol Unit
- Committees organizing public hearings and conferences

The manual covers protocol requirements relating to:

- International parliamentary engagements
- Visits by foreign delegations
- Visits by ambassadors, high commissioners and diplomats
- Parliamentary conferences and workshops
- Committee public hearings
- Legislative retreats
- Visits by Governors, Ministers and senior government officials





PART II

PRINCIPLES OF PARLIAMENTARY PROTOCOL

Meaning of Protocol

Protocol refers to the established rules, customs, and conventions governing official interactions among institutions, dignitaries, and representatives.

Within parliamentary settings, protocol ensures:

- Order and dignity in official engagements
- Recognition of rank and institutional hierarchy
- Respect for diplomatic and cultural norms
- Consistency in official representation

Core Protocol Principles

Officials representing the National Assembly must be guided by the following principles:

- Respect:** All interactions must demonstrate respect for institutions, dignitaries, and cultural traditions.
- Professionalism:** Officials must maintain decorum in speech, dress, and conduct.
- Neutrality:** Officials must represent the institution and not personal or partisan interests.
- Accuracy:** Titles, positions, and institutional roles must be correctly used.
- Preparedness:** All engagements must be carefully planned and coordinated.



PART III

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE AND OFFICIAL RANK

Importance of Order of Precedence

Order of precedence is the arrangement and recognition of officials according to their official rank and status. It is used in determining:

- Seating arrangements
- Order of introductions
- Speaking order
- Placement during ceremonies
- Protocol reception lines

Respecting the order of precedence ensures that institutional hierarchy is recognized and that engagements proceed without embarrassment or misunderstanding. The non-adherence or failure to observe proper precedence can lead to diplomatic discomfort or institutional disrespect.

Order of Precedence within the National Assembly

The following general order of precedence shall apply for parliamentary events and official engagements within the National Assembly:

- 1 President of the Senate
- 2 Speaker of the House of Representatives
- 3 Deputy President of the Senate
- 4 Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives
- 5 Leader of the Senate
- 6 Leader of the House of Representatives
- 7 Principal Officers of both Chambers
- 8 Chairmen of Committees
- 9 Members of the National Assembly
- 10 Clerk to the National Assembly
- 11 Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives
- 12 Secretaries of Directorates, and
- 13 Directors and Senior Officials

Diplomatic Precedence

When foreign diplomats are present, precedence is determined according to diplomatic conventions.

General diplomatic order:

Rank Office

- 1 Head of State or President of a country
- 2 Presiding Officers of Parliament
- 3 Ambassadors
- 4 High Commissioners
- 5 Heads of International Organizations
- 6 Senior Government Officials
- 7 Parliamentary Delegations

When foreign Speakers or parliamentary leaders visit the National Assembly, they should be accorded status equivalent to the presiding officers of the host parliament.

PART IV

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS AND PROTOCOL POSITIONS

Seating arrangement is a critical component of parliamentary protocol, reflecting hierarchy, respect, and institutional order. It shapes interaction and the tone of engagements, and must align with the purpose of the meeting. In all cases, the position of the host, the placement of the guest of honour, and the arrangement of participants should strictly follow the established order of precedence and diplomatic norms.

Principles of Seating Arrangements

Seating arrangements reflect hierarchy and respect for rank.

The following principles should guide seating arrangements:

- The most senior host occupies the central position
- The guest of honour sits to the immediate right of the host
- The second-ranking guest sits to the immediate left
- Alternation of host and guest positions is encouraged where appropriate
- Senior officials should be seated closer to the host

Key Factors in Selecting Seating Arrangements

Before selecting a seating format, the following factors should be considered:

1. Purpose of the Engagement

- Formal address or presentation → Auditorium / Theatre style
- Negotiation or bilateral meeting → Boardroom / Rectangular
- Interactive discussion or workshop → U-shaped or roundtable

2. Level of Interaction Required

- High interaction → Roundtable / U-shape
- Moderate interaction → Boardroom
- Low interaction → Auditorium

Seating affects how people communicate and engage with one another

3. Size of the Audience

- Large audience → Auditorium or theatre-style seating
- Medium group → Classroom or U-shape
- Small group → Boardroom or roundtable

4. Nature of Participation

- Listening-focused → Theatre-style
- Discussion-focused → U-shape / roundtable
- Mixed (presentation + interaction) → Chevron or classroom

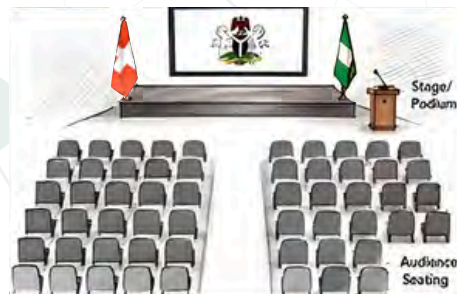
Common Seating Arrangements Used in Parliamentary Settings

The following seating formats are commonly used in parliamentary engagements:

1. Auditorium (Theatre) Style: Rows of seats facing a podium or stage

Suitable for:

- * Conferences
- * Public hearings
- * Official ceremonies



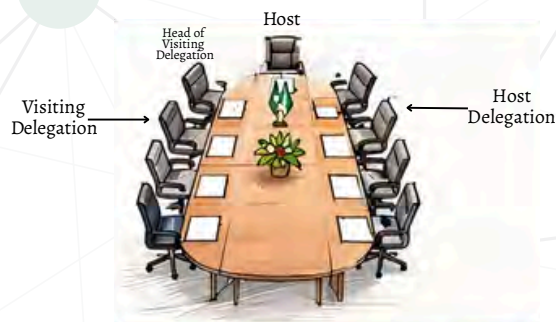
✓ Best for large audiences

✗ Limited interaction

2. Boardroom / Rectangular Table: Participants seated around a rectangular table

Suitable for:

- * Bilateral meetings
- * Committee meetings



✓ Encourages structured discussion

✓ Clear hierarchy

3. U-Shaped Arrangement: Tables arranged in a "U" with an open end

Suitable for:

- * Workshops
- * Interactive sessions
- * Legislative retreats



✓ Allows participants to see each other

✓ Supports discussion and presentation

4. **Banquet Style Arrangement: Participants seated around a circular table**

Suitable for:

- * Official dinners and state banquets
- * Networking sessions during conferences
- * Diplomatic receptions
- * Social events accompanying parliamentary engagements



✓ Encourages informal interaction

✓ Useful for networking sessions

In cases where there are multiple delegations or a large number of participants, more than one table may be designated as a Table of Honour. Each table of honour should be led by a Principal Officer or designated senior Member of the National Assembly, who serves as host to the guests seated at that table.

This approach ensures:

- * Proper distribution of protocol responsibilities
- * Adequate attention to visiting delegations
- * Balanced representation and engagement across all tables

Care should be taken to assign guests to tables in a manner that reflects order of precedence, diplomatic balance, and the purpose of the engagement.

5. **Classroom Style: Rows of tables with forward-facing seating**

Suitable for:

- * Training sessions



✓ Allows note-taking

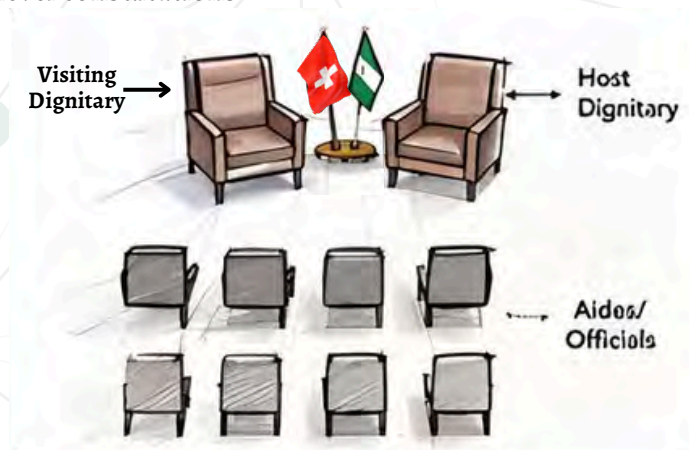
✗ Limited interaction

6. Bilateral Seating

Two seats are placed opposite or adjacent to each other for a one-on-one engagement between the host and a visiting dignitary. It is the simplest form of diplomatic seating and is commonly used for brief, high-level interactions.

Suitable for:

- * Courtesy visits
- * One-on-one diplomatic meetings
- * High-level consultations



The Seat of Honour

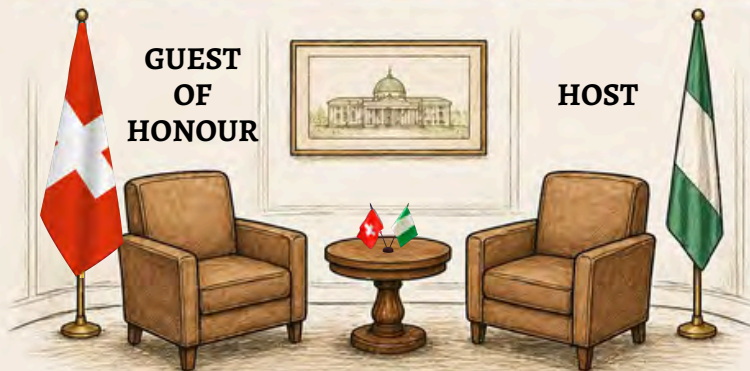
The seat of honour is the most prominent position at a meeting or event.

Key rules:

- It is typically the central seat facing the audience
- The host or presiding officer occupies this position
- The guest of honour sits to the right side of the host

BILATERAL SEATING (TWO SEATS)

PLAN • RESPECT • ENGAGE



**GUEST
OF
HONOUR**

HOST

DESCRIPTION

This arrangement consists of two seats placed opposite or adjacent to each other for a one-on-one engagement between the host and a visiting dignitary.

The host occupies the principal position, while the visiting dignitary is accorded the position of guest of honour, typically seated to the immediate right of the host or directly opposite, depending on the setting.

This arrangement promotes direct communication, privacy, and focused engagement.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Simple and flexible arrangement
- ✓ Enhances privacy and direct communication
- ✓ Suitable for high-level and confidential discussions
- ✓ Reflects equality and mutual respect

SUITABLE FOR

- Courtesy visits
- One-on-one diplomatic meetings
- High-level consultations
- Pre-meeting or side discussions during larger engagements

★ **GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** Simplicity, respect and focused engagement.

CLASSROOM SEATING

PLAN • RESPECT • ENGAGE



DESCRIPTION

In classroom seating, participants face the front of the room where the speakers or facilitators are located.

Tables are arranged in rows to provide structure, focus and clear visibility.

This layout supports note-taking, learning and effective communication.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Promotes focus on speakers and presentations
- ✓ Encourages a learning and training environment
- ✓ Provides clear sightlines to the front
- ✓ Supports note-taking and attention
- ✓ Ideal for structured sessions and briefings

SUITABLE FOR

- Briefings and presentations
- Training sessions and workshops
- Seminars and capacity building
- Lectures and educational programs
- Internal meetings and information sessions

★ **GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** Clear focus, effective communication, and purposeful engagement.

ROUND TABLE ARRANGEMENT

PLAN • RESPECT • ENGAGE



DESCRIPTION

In a round table arrangement, participants are seated around a circular table with no head or fixed positions.

This layout promotes equality, open dialogue and inclusive participation.

It encourages interaction, collaboration and the free exchange of ideas among all participants.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Promotes equality and inclusive participation
- ✓ Encourages open discussion and collaboration
- ✓ Facilitates interaction and idea sharing
- ✓ No head position – all seats are equal
- ✓ Creates a friendly and non-hierarchical environment
- ✓ Ideal for group engagement and consensus building

SUITABLE FOR

- Group discussions and deliberations
- Working group and committee meetings
- Policy dialogues and brainstorming sessions
- Multi-stakeholder engagements
- Informal consultations and workshops
- Team building and collaborative sessions

★ **GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** Equality in seating, openness in dialogue, and unity in purpose.

U-SHAPED ARRANGEMENT

PLAN • RESPECT • ENGAGE



DESCRIPTION

In a U-shaped arrangement, participants are seated around three sides of a table, facing the open end where the speakers, facilitators or presentation area is located.

This layout allows for visibility, interaction and engagement between all participants and the presenters.

It creates a focused yet inclusive environment that encourages participation and discussion.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Ensures visibility of speakers and presentations
- ✓ Encourages interaction and active participation
- ✓ Supports open discussion and engagement
- ✓ Provides easy communication among participants
- ✓ Facilitates exchange of ideas and feedback
- ✓ Flexible and adaptable to different settings

SUITABLE FOR

- Workshops and training sessions
- Meetings and discussions
- Seminars and presentations
- Committee and working group meetings
- Policy reviews and consultations
- Engagements requiring interaction and dialogue

★ **GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** Visibility, interaction and inclusion drive effective engagement.

BOARDROOM / RECTANGULAR ARRANGEMENT

PLAN • RESPECT • ENGAGE



DESCRIPTION

In a boardroom (rectangular) arrangement, participants are seated around a rectangular table with a defined head position.

The host occupies the head position, while the guest of honour is seated to the immediate right of the host.

This layout promotes structure, order and effective discussion among participants.

It is ideal for decision-making, deliberations and high-level meetings.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Clear hierarchy and order of precedence
- ✓ Host at the head, guest of honour to the right
- ✓ Facilitates focused discussion and decision-making
- ✓ Encourages participation and accountability
- ✓ Provides visibility and easy communication
- ✓ Suitable for formal and official engagements

SUITABLE FOR

- Board meetings and executive sessions
- High-level decision-making meetings
- Policy discussions and strategic planning
- Official meetings with visiting delegations
- Interdepartmental and committee meetings
- Formal negotiations and consultations

★ **GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** Structure, clarity and respect ensure productive engagement.

RECTANGULAR (CONFERENCE) ARRANGEMENT

PLAN • RESPECT • ENGAGE



DESCRIPTION

In a rectangular (conference) arrangement, delegates are seated on opposite sides of a long table, facing one another.

There is no head position. Delegations are seated according to their internal order of precedence.

This layout encourages dialogue, comparison of perspectives and formal negotiations in a balanced setting.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Delegations face one another across the table
- ✓ No head position – equality between sides
- ✓ Seating follows internal order of precedence
- ✓ Encourages dialogue, negotiation and consensus
- ✓ Facilitates clear communication and eye contact
- ✓ Suitable for formal and official engagements

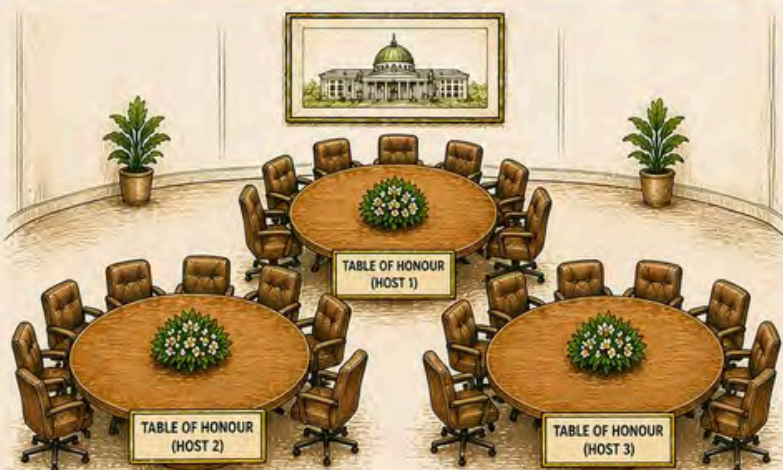
SUITABLE FOR

- Bilateral and multilateral meetings
- Diplomatic talks and negotiations
- Intergovernmental and interdepartmental meetings
- Treaty discussions and policy negotiations
- Cross-functional or committee meetings
- Engagements requiring balanced participation and mutual understanding

★ **GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** Equality in dialogue, respect in engagement, balance in outcome.

ROUND TABLE ARRANGEMENT (MULTIPLE TABLES)

PLAN • RESPECT • ENGAGE



DESCRIPTION

In this arrangement, participants are seated around multiple round tables within the same venue. Where appropriate, more than one table of honour may be designated, each hosted by a Principal Officer or designated senior Member of the National Assembly.

This layout is particularly suitable for engagements involving multiple visiting delegations or a large number of guests.

It promotes interaction, balanced representation and ensures that all guests receive appropriate attention in line with established protocol.

KEY FEATURES

- ✓ Allows for more than one table of honour
- ✓ Each table is led by a Principal Officer or senior Member
- ✓ Encourages interaction and inclusive participation
- ✓ Ensures balanced attention to all delegations and guests
- ✓ Facilitates hospitality for large or multiple delegations
- ✓ Maintains protocol and order across all tables

SUITABLE FOR

- Receptions with multiple visiting delegations
- Large state banquets and official dinners
- Parliamentary and diplomatic engagements
- Events hosted by the National Assembly
- High-level functions with many distinguished guests
- Occasions requiring multiple tables of honour

★ **GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** Hospitality in unity, respect in diversity, equal attention for all.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND PARTICIPATION IN PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENTS

1. Introduction

Participation in international parliamentary engagements is a key component of the National Assembly's role in advancing legislative diplomacy, fostering cooperation, and representing the interests of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the global stage. Such engagements include conferences, assemblies, study visits, bilateral meetings, and other forms of inter-parliamentary exchange.

These activities require careful coordination, adherence to protocol, and a clear understanding of the responsibilities of participants. This Part provides guidance on the processes, standards, and expectations governing official international travel and participation in parliamentary engagements.

1. Nomination and Approval for International Travel

All international engagements undertaken by Members, legislative aides, and staff must receive prior approval through the appropriate institutional channels.

Nominations for participation should be based on:

- * Relevance of the engagement to legislative responsibilities
- * Official designation or invitation
- * Institutional priorities and representation balance

Formal approval must be obtained from the appropriate authority before any travel arrangements are made.

2. Pre-Travel Preparation and Briefing

Effective participation requires adequate preparation. Prior to departure, participants shall be provided with relevant briefing materials, including:

- * Background information on the host country and institution
- * Objectives of the engagement
- * Programme schedule and expected outcomes
- * Protocol and cultural considerations

Where necessary, pre-departure briefings may be organized to ensure alignment of positions and clarity of roles.

3. Representation and Conduct During Engagements

Participants in international engagements act as representatives of the National Assembly and the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Accordingly, they are expected to:

- * Conduct themselves with professionalism, decorum, and respect
- * Adhere to established diplomatic and parliamentary protocol
- * Present positions that reflect institutional and national interests
- * Engage constructively and respectfully with counterparts

Participants should also ensure punctuality, appropriate dressing, and effective communication in all official interactions.

4. Use of Diplomatic and Official Passports

Diplomatic and official passports are instruments of the State issued to facilitate official international travel. Their use signifies formal representation and carries a responsibility to uphold the dignity and image of the country.

Diplomatic passports are typically issued to Principal Officers, Members, and designated senior officials, while official passports are issued to staff undertaking official assignments. These passports shall be used strictly for authorized official travel and in accordance with applicable regulations.

Holders are required to:

- * Safeguard the passport at all times
- * Use it solely for official purposes
- * Conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on Nigeria
- * Report any loss or misuse promptly through appropriate channels



5. Visa, Immigration and Entry Requirements

Possession of a diplomatic or official passport does not automatically guarantee visa-free entry into all countries. While some destinations may offer visa waivers or visa-on-arrival privileges, these are subject to bilateral arrangements and may change.

Participants are required to verify visa and entry requirements in advance through:

- * The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- * The Nigerian Immigration Service
- * Relevant embassies or high commissions

All travel documentation must be valid and compliant with the requirements of the destination country.

6. Logistical Arrangements

All logistical arrangements for international travel shall be properly coordinated in advance. This includes:

- * Travel bookings (flights and local transportation)
- * Accommodation: where possible, ensure all delegates are accommodated in one accommodation
- * Protocol arrangements and reception
- * Communication with host institutions

Where applicable, the Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary Relations shall coordinate these arrangements in liaison with relevant authorities.

7. Post-Visit Reporting and Accountability

Participants are required to submit a post-visit report upon completion of the engagement. The report should include:

- * Summary of activities and key discussions
- * Outcomes and recommendations
- * Relevance to legislative work and institutional development

This ensures accountability and enables the National Assembly to derive maximum value from international engagements.

Guiding Principle

International parliamentary engagements must be conducted with professionalism, discipline, and a clear commitment to advancing Nigeria's legislative interests and institutional reputation.

PART V

HOSTING INTERNATIONAL DELEGATIONS

Hosting international delegations is a critical function of parliamentary diplomacy and a direct reflection of the National Assembly's institutional standing. Each engagement presents an opportunity to strengthen relationships, advance legislative cooperation, and project Nigeria's parliamentary values on the global stage.

Effective hosting demands careful planning, coordination, and strict adherence to protocol. From programme design to seating, communication, and overall engagement, every detail must be managed with precision to ensure order, respect, and professionalism.

Beyond procedure, hosting is an act of representation. Officials must demonstrate professionalism, cultural awareness, and clarity of institutional purpose. When well executed, such engagements build trust, deepen cooperation, and enhance the National Assembly's international credibility.

Types of Official Visits

Official visits to the National Assembly take different forms depending on the purpose and reason for the visit. Visit by International delegations to the National Assembly may take the following forms:

- **Courtesy visits by Ambassadors and Heads of Foreign Missions:** These are visits to the Presiding Officers, basically for courtesy. Such visits are usually hosted in the office of the Presiding officer or the Conference Room depending on the size of the delegation.
- **Bilateral parliamentary delegation visits:** Bilateral delegation visits are usually initially hosted by the Clerk to the National Assembly who directs and schedules the itinerary of the visit. The delegation is then scheduled to meet with the Presiding officers, observe parliamentary proceedings of the Senate and/or House of Representatives.
- **Study visits by foreign legislatures:** Study visits by foreign legislatures are usually hosted and itinerary scheduled by the Clerk to the National Assembly or designated officers. Study visits are usually undertaken by Legislative Staff of foreign legislatures, sometimes including Legislators. Such visits are usually aimed at understudying the parliamentary processes of the National Assembly

• **Visits by international organizations:** These are visits by international organizations or agencies for example, the World Bank, United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), etc,. Visits by Heads or Officials of International organisations are akin to courtesy visits and as mentioned earlier they are hosted either in the Presiding Officer's office or conference room depending on the size of the delegation.

• **Parliamentary cooperation missions:** Parliamentary cooperation missions is that by members of the parliament of another country or international body essentially to enhance relationships, exchange knowledge and promote collaboration on legislative and political matters. The visit which is usually a series of meetings is coordinated by the office of the Clerk to the National Assembly

• **Development partner consultations:** These consultations are basically meetings with development partners such as donor agencies, international agencies and NGOs. These consultations are coordinated by the office of the Clerk to the National Assembly and designated Departments in the National Assembly. Such collaborations are to share progress, streamline priorities, and mobilize resources to achieve some developmental goals.

NOTE: Topics to Avoid in Informal Conversations

While engagements with visiting delegations may include moments of informal interaction or small talk, such exchanges must be conducted with care, professionalism and sensitivity. Participants should avoid sensitive or potentially controversial topics that may cause misunderstanding or diplomatic discomfort.

These include:

- * Domestic political controversies
- * Security-related matters
- * Religious or ethnic issues
- * Unverified or speculative information
- * Personal or intrusive questions

Members and staff should also refrain from expressing personal views as official positions.

Guiding Principle

Informal conversations are extensions of official engagement and must be conducted with the same level of care, discretion, and respect for diplomatic sensitivities.

Role of the Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Protocol

The Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Protocol serves as the central coordinating unit for international parliamentary engagements.

Its responsibilities include:

- Coordinating official invitations
- Liaising with foreign parliaments and organizations
- Advising on protocol and diplomatic etiquette
- Preparing programmes and schedules
- Coordinating reception and logistics
- Preparing briefing notes
- Documenting visit outcomes

15. Steps in Organizing a Delegation Visit

Step 1: Confirm Visit Details Confirm:

- Size and number of visiting delegates.
- Purpose of visit
- Preferred dates of visit.
- Required and or requested meetings

Step 2: Prepare Visit Programme

- Courtesy visit to presiding officers
- Bilateral meetings with relevant committees
- Technical sessions
- Media engagements (if necessary)

Step 3: Arrange Protocol Logistics

- Meeting venue
- Seating arrangements
- Nameplates of visiting delegation and members/officials
- National flags of both the visiting country and Nigeria
- Interpretation services (if required)

Step 4: Prepare Briefing Materials

- Background information on the visiting delegation
- Objectives of the visit
- Suggested talking points, and other
- Institutional background notes

Step 5: Reception and Hosting

Reception arrangements should include:

- Designated reception point
- Protocol officers to guide guests
- Escort officers for delegation members

PART VI

ORGANIZING PARLIAMENTARY EVENTS

Organizing parliamentary events is a core administrative function that reflects the efficiency, professionalism, and institutional character of the National Assembly. Whether formal hearings, conferences, retreats, or high-level visits, these events serve as platforms for legislative engagement, public interaction, and diplomatic exchange. Their success directly impacts the credibility and public perception of the institution.

Effective event management requires deliberate planning, coordination, and strict adherence to established protocol. From defining objectives and designing programmes to managing logistics, participants, and communication, each stage must be executed with precision. Clear roles, proper sequencing of activities, and attention to detail are essential to ensuring that proceedings are orderly, purposeful, and aligned with institutional standards.

Beyond logistics, parliamentary events are instruments of representation. They provide an opportunity to demonstrate respect for participants, uphold parliamentary dignity, and project the values of transparency, inclusiveness, and accountability. Well-organized events not only achieve their immediate objectives but also strengthen institutional confidence and reinforce the National Assembly's standing in both national and international contexts.

This section applies to:

- Committee public hearings
- Legislative retreats
- Conferences
- Workshops
- Stakeholder engagements

Event Planning Checklist

Before the event:

- ✓ Confirm event objective
- ✓ Identify speakers
- ✓ Prepare agenda
- ✓ Send invitations
- ✓ Prepare briefing notes
- ✓ Arrange venue logistics
- ✓ Prepare media coverage plan

Invitations

Official invitations must:

- Clearly state the purpose of the event
- Include date, time, and venue
- Be issued sufficiently in advance
- Use official letterhead

It must also clearly state the role expected of the invited delegation



INVITATION

Sample Invitation Letter

Subject: Invitation to Parliamentary Stakeholder Engagement

The House Committee on _____ respectfully invites you to participate in a stakeholder engagement scheduled as follows:

Date:

Time:

Venue:

The engagement will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to discussions on _____.

Please accept the assurances of our highest consideration.

PART VII PARLIAMENTARY ETIQUETTE

Dress Code

Officials representing the National Assembly should maintain appropriate professional appearance.

The recommended attire is:

For Men

- Business suits
- National attire, and

For Women

- Professional business attire
- National attire

Casual dressing is discouraged during official engagements.

Forms of Address

It is very important that correct titles must always be used when addressing host and visiting dignitaries.

Examples:

Title

Senate President

Speaker

Ambassador

Committee Chairman

Form of Address

Distinguished Senate President

The Right Honourable Speaker

His/Her Excellency

Distinguished/Honourable Chairman

PART VIII GIFT PROTOCOL

Gift exchanges during parliamentary engagements are symbolic gestures of goodwill and mutual respect. It should be conducted with discretion, ensuring that gifts are modest, culturally appropriate, and free from any perception of undue influence or personal benefit. All gifts presented or received on behalf of the National Assembly should reflect institutional dignity and, where applicable, be properly recorded in line with established procedures.

Examples of acceptable gifts:

- Nigerian artworks
- Cultural artifacts, and
- Official publications



PART IX REPRESENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

Representation in international engagements requires that Members, legislative aides, and staff act as ambassadors of the National Assembly and the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Participants are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, adhere to established protocol, and communicate positions that accurately reflect institutional and national interests. Effective representation demands proper preparation, disciplined engagement, and clear reporting, ensuring that each participation contributes meaningfully to strengthening parliamentary cooperation and enhancing Nigeria's standing in the global parliamentary community.

Pre-Delegation Briefing Template

The representative delegation of the National Assembly at any international engagement should receive pre-delegation briefing materials covering:

- Purpose of visit
- Delegation composition
- Nigeria's position on agenda items
- Key talking points
- Protocol expectations

Post-Visit Reporting Template

After attending international engagements, the delegations should submit a report on the visit or engagements which should include:

- Summary of meetings
- Key discussions
- Agreements reached, and
- Recommendations for follow-up

PART X

RECEPTION AND ARRIVAL PROTOCOL FOR DIGNITARIES

Importance of Reception Protocol

The reception of dignitaries is often the first official interaction between visiting guests and the National Assembly. It therefore sets the tone for the entire engagement.

Reception arrangements should demonstrate:

- Professionalism
- Respect for institutional hierarchy
- Cultural sensitivity
- Efficiency and organization

Proper reception protocol enhances the reputation of the National Assembly and reinforces Nigeria's commitment to diplomatic courtesy.

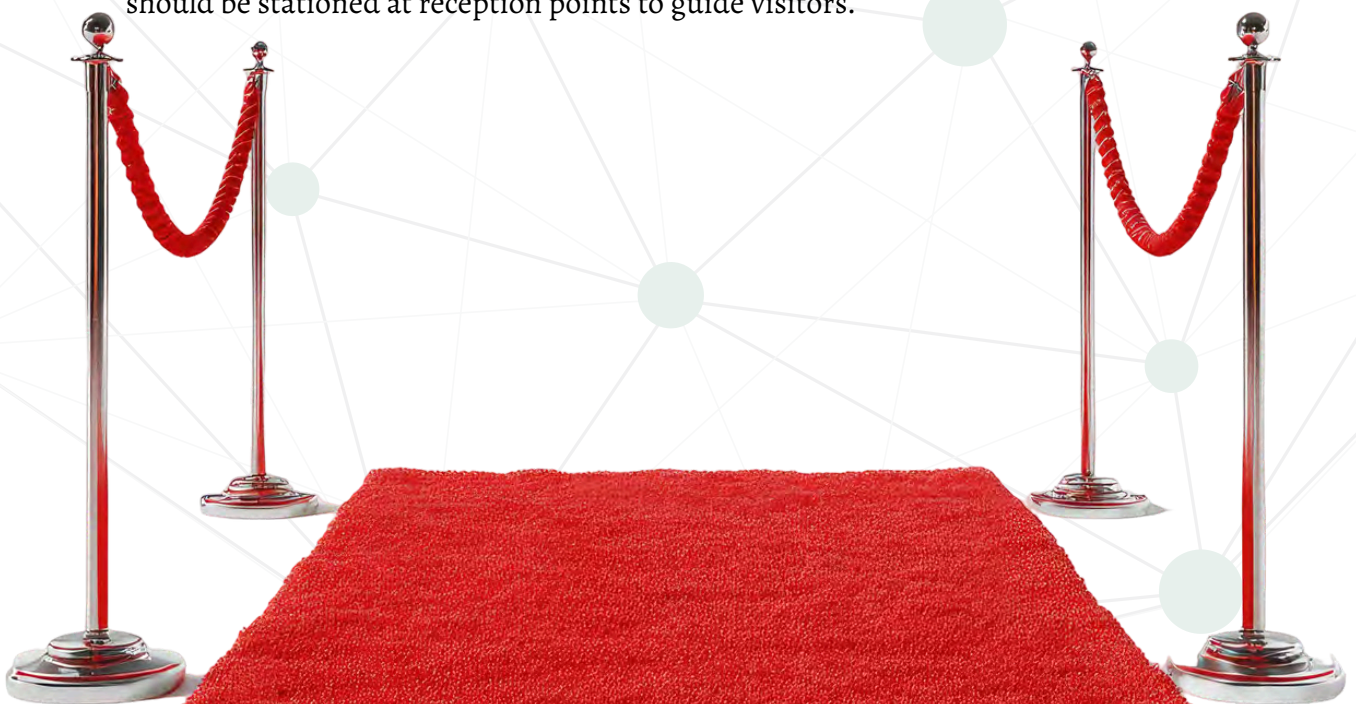
Reception Points within the National Assembly

Designated reception points should be identified in advance for visiting delegations.

These may include:

- Main entrance of the National Assembly Complex
- Committee building entrances
- Conference venue entrances

Protocol officers from the Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Protocol should be stationed at reception points to guide visitors.



Arrival Procedure for Visiting Delegations

Upon arrival of a visiting delegation, the following procedure should be observed:

- 1. Reception by Protocol Officers:** Protocol officers should receive the delegation and confirm identities of delegation members.
- 2. Escort to Reception Area:** The delegation should be escorted to a designated reception area or waiting lounge.
- 3. Introduction to Host Officials:** Visiting dignitaries should be formally introduced to the host officials according to the established order of precedence.
- 4. Courtesy Exchange:** Initial greetings should be brief and cordial before proceeding to the meeting venue.

Escort Protocol

A designated escort officer should accompany visiting dignitaries throughout their visit.

Responsibilities of escort officers include:

- Guiding visitors through the National Assembly complex
- Ensuring adherence to scheduled programme
- Coordinating movement between venues
- Providing clarification on logistics or arrangements

Escort officers should remain professional, attentive, and discreet.



PART XI

FLAG PROTOCOL AND NATIONAL SYMBOLS

The use of flags and national symbols in parliamentary engagements represents the sovereignty, identity, and dignity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and its partners. Proper display and handling of these symbols is essential to maintaining respect and avoiding diplomatic error. All arrangements must ensure correct placement, order, and condition of flags in accordance with established protocol, reflecting both institutional standards and international practice.

Importance of Flag Protocol

National flags are powerful symbols of sovereignty and national identity. The incorrect display or positioning of a flag may cause diplomatic embarrassment. Officials responsible for organizing events must ensure that national flags are displayed properly.

General Rules for Flag Display

When two national flags are displayed:

- The host country's flag occupies the position of honour
- The visiting country's flag should be placed to the right of the host flag (from the audience's perspective)

When multiple flags are displayed:

- Flags should be arranged alphabetically or according to protocol rank
- All flags must be equal in size and height

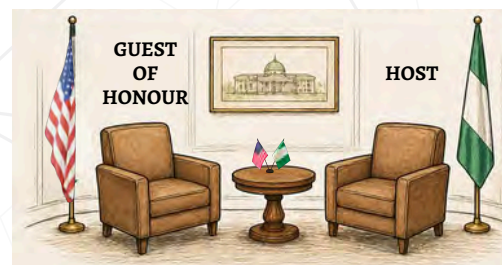
Flags must always be displayed in clean and undamaged condition.

Placement of Flags at Meetings

For bilateral meetings:

- The Nigerian flag should be placed behind the host official.
- The visiting country's flag should be placed behind the visiting delegation leader.

Example arrangement:



Flag Use in Conferences

For conferences involving multiple countries:

- National flags may be displayed behind the podium.
- Flags may also be arranged along the conference hall in alphabetical order.



PART XII

MEDIA AND PHOTOGRAPHY PROTOCOL

Role of Media in Parliamentary Engagements

Media coverage enhances transparency and public awareness of parliamentary activities. However, media presence must be carefully managed to ensure that official proceedings are not disrupted.

Media participation should be coordinated in collaboration with the relevant media and public affairs units of the National Assembly.

Media Access

Media access may be granted for:

- Opening ceremonies
- Courtesy visits
- Signing ceremonies
- Group photographs

Media should not be present during:

- Closed-door negotiations
- Sensitive discussions
- Confidential briefings

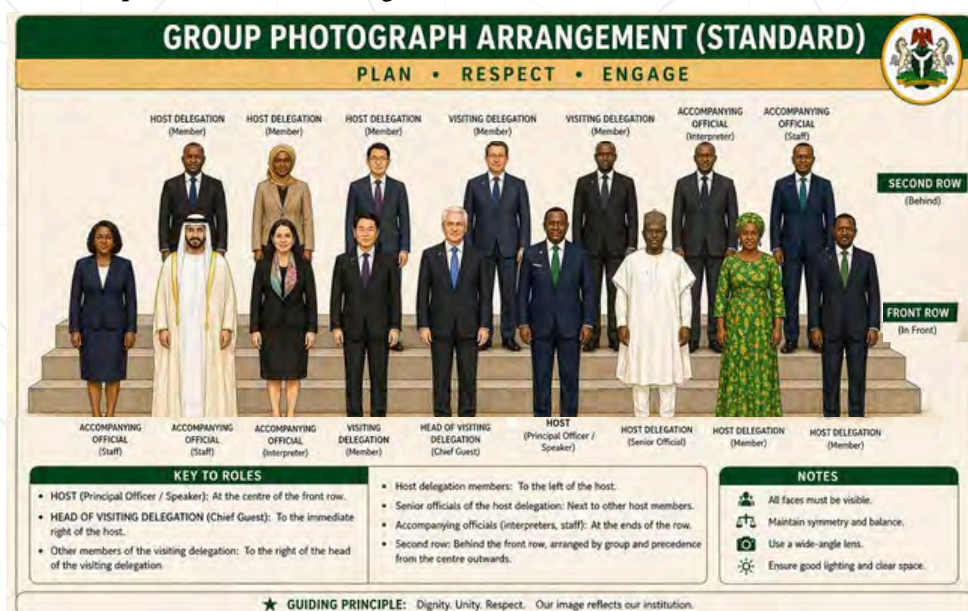
Official Photography

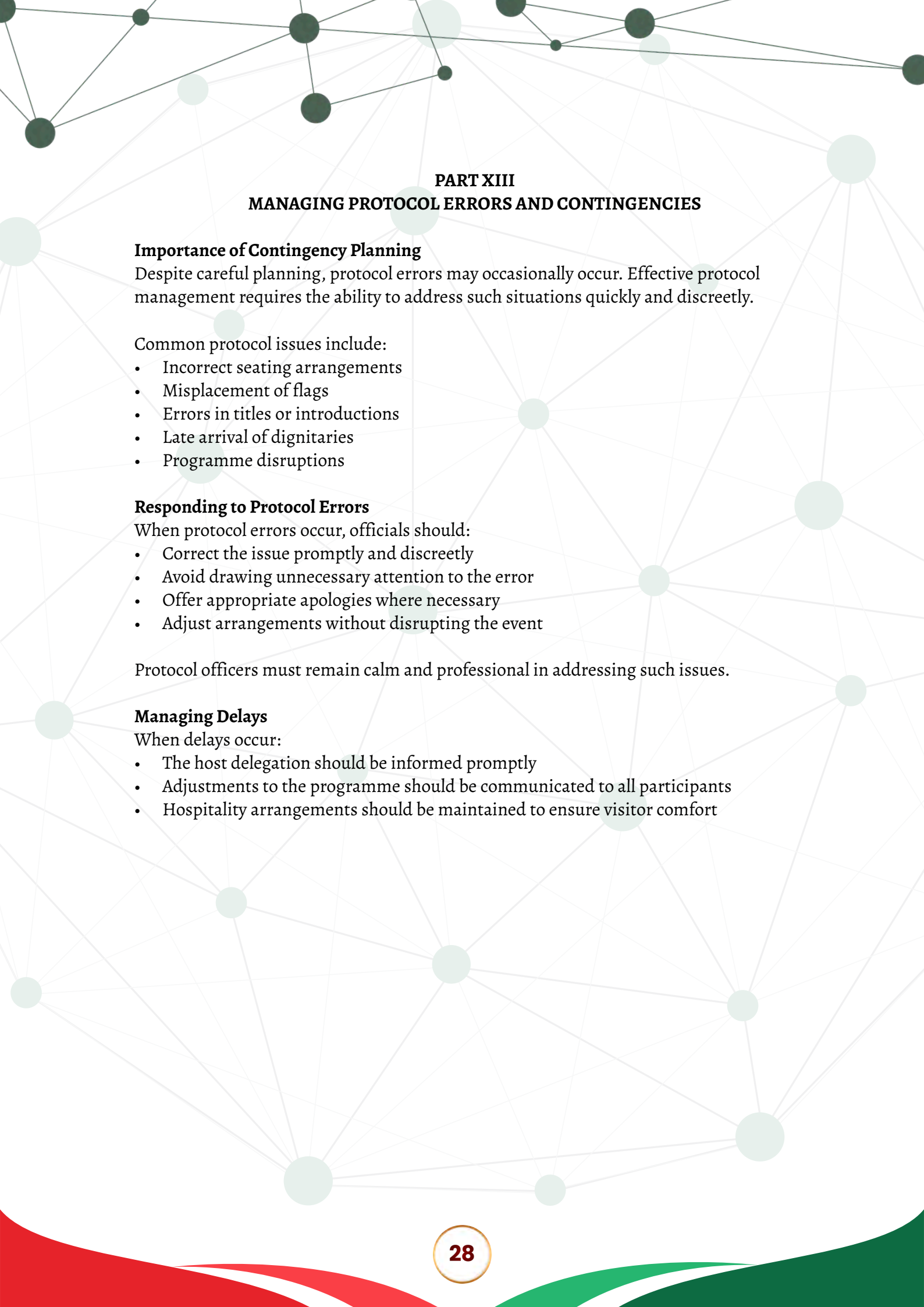
Official photographs should be taken:

- At the start of meetings
- During signing ceremonies
- At the conclusion of visits

Photography arrangements should ensure:

- Proper positioning of dignitaries
- Visible display of national flags
- Balanced representation of delegations





PART XIII

MANAGING PROTOCOL ERRORS AND CONTINGENCIES

Importance of Contingency Planning

Despite careful planning, protocol errors may occasionally occur. Effective protocol management requires the ability to address such situations quickly and discreetly.

Common protocol issues include:

- Incorrect seating arrangements
- Misplacement of flags
- Errors in titles or introductions
- Late arrival of dignitaries
- Programme disruptions

Responding to Protocol Errors

When protocol errors occur, officials should:

- Correct the issue promptly and discreetly
- Avoid drawing unnecessary attention to the error
- Offer appropriate apologies where necessary
- Adjust arrangements without disrupting the event

Protocol officers must remain calm and professional in addressing such issues.

Managing Delays

When delays occur:

- The host delegation should be informed promptly
- Adjustments to the programme should be communicated to all participants
- Hospitality arrangements should be maintained to ensure visitor comfort

PART XIV

DOCUMENTATION AND INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY

Importance of Documentation

Documentation ensures that institutional knowledge is preserved and can be used to improve future engagements.

The Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary Relations should maintain records of:

- Visiting delegations
- International engagements
- Conference outcomes
- Bilateral parliamentary meetings

Visit Report Template

After each international engagement, a report should be prepared including:

- Date and purpose of visit
- Delegation members
- Meetings held
- Key outcomes
- Follow-up actions

These reports should be submitted to the Office of the Clerk to the National Assembly.

PART XV

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Protocol Training

Regular training programmes should be organized for:

- Committee Clerks & Clerks of Parliamentary Friendship Groups
- Legislative aides
- Protocol officers & Desk Officers of Interparliamentary Associations
- Other staff involved in parliamentary engagements

Training should focus on:

- Diplomatic etiquette
- Strategic Communication
- Event management
- International parliamentary procedures
- Communication and cultural awareness

PART XVI

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION IN INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

Purpose of the Code

This Code of Conduct establishes guiding principles for Members of the National Assembly, Legislative Aides, Committee Clerks, and Staff representing the National Assembly in international engagements.

The Code seeks to ensure that Nigeria's Parliament is represented with professionalism, integrity, and respect in all interactions with foreign counterparts and international institutions.

Principles of Representation

Officials participating in international engagements shall be guided by the following principles:

1. Integrity

Participants shall conduct themselves with honesty, integrity, and respect for the values of the National Assembly.

They shall avoid any conduct that could compromise the reputation or credibility of the institution.

2. Respect for Institutional Mandate

Participants shall represent the official positions and interests of the National Assembly and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Personal views or partisan positions should not be presented as official positions unless explicitly authorized.

3. Professional Conduct

Participants shall demonstrate utmost professionalism in their interactions, including:

- Appropriate dress
- Courteous communication
- Respect for cultural and diplomatic norms
- Punctuality and discipline in official engagements

4. Respect for Protocol

Participants shall adhere strictly to diplomatic and parliamentary protocol, including:

- Observing proper forms of address
- Respecting seating arrangements and precedence
- Complying with established meeting procedures

5. Confidentiality

Participants shall treat sensitive information obtained during meetings or negotiations with discretion. Confidential discussions should not be disclosed without appropriate authorization.

6. Responsible Communication

Participants should exercise caution when communicating publicly about international engagements. Statements made to the media or public platforms should reflect the official position of the National Assembly.

7. Ethical Conduct

Participants shall avoid conflicts of interest and shall not solicit or accept gifts or benefits that may create the perception of improper influence. All official gifts received should be declared in accordance with established institutional procedures.

Responsibilities of Delegation Members

Members of delegations representing the National Assembly shall:

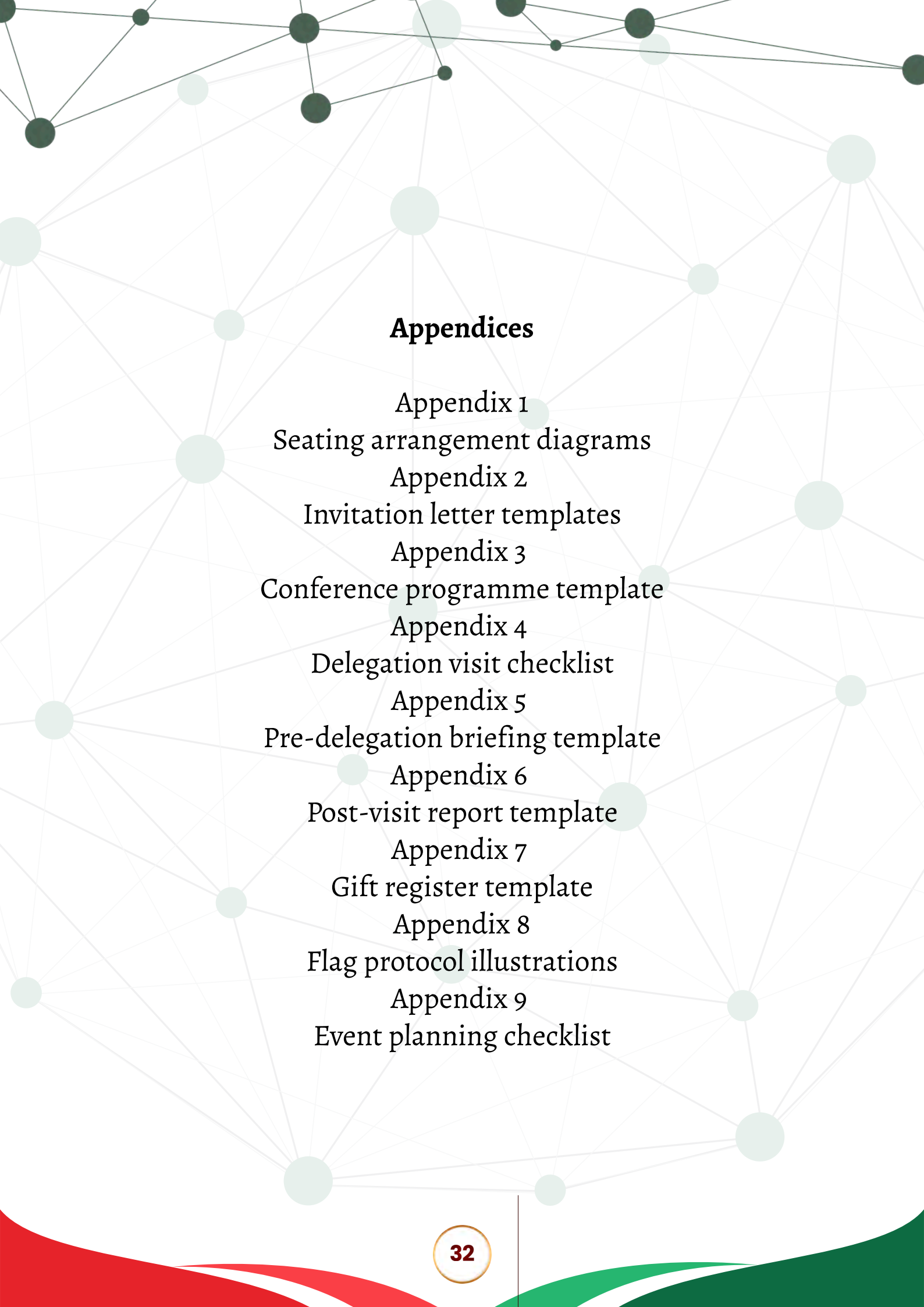
- Participate actively in official programmes
- Contribute constructively to discussions
- Respect the authority of delegation leadership
- Promote Nigeria's interests and legislative priorities

Post-Engagement Responsibilities

Following international engagements, delegation members shall:

- Submit reports detailing the outcomes of meetings
- Identify opportunities for follow-up cooperation
- Provide recommendations for strengthening parliamentary relations

These reports contribute to institutional learning and support future engagements.



Appendices

Appendix 1

Seating arrangement diagrams

Appendix 2

Invitation letter templates

Appendix 3

Conference programme template

Appendix 4

Delegation visit checklist

Appendix 5

Pre-delegation briefing template

Appendix 6

Post-visit report template

Appendix 7

Gift register template

Appendix 8

Flag protocol illustrations

Appendix 9

Event planning checklist

APPENDIX 1

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

This checklist should be used when organizing committee hearings, international conferences, retreats, workshops, or diplomatic visits hosted by the National Assembly.

A. PRE-EVENT PLANNING

- ✓ Define the purpose and objectives of the event
- ✓ Identify host committee or department
- ✓ Confirm event date and time
- ✓ Identify venue within the National Assembly complex
- ✓ Prepare preliminary event budget (if required)

B. PARTICIPANTS

- ✓ Identify key participants and stakeholders
- ✓ Confirm dignitaries attending
- ✓ Prepare official guest list
- ✓ Confirm speakers and moderators
- ✓ Confirm foreign delegations (if applicable)

C. OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

- ✓ Draft invitation letters
- ✓ Send invitations well in advance
- ✓ Confirm attendance (RSVP)
- ✓ Prepare briefing materials for host officials
- ✓ Prepare talking points for presiding officers

D. PROTOCOL ARRANGEMENTS

- ✓ Determine order of precedence
- ✓ Prepare seating arrangement
- ✓ Prepare nameplates for speakers and dignitaries
- ✓ Arrange national flags (if international event)
- ✓ Confirm dress code

E. VENUE PREPARATION

- ✓ Confirm venue capacity
- ✓ Arrange seating layout
- ✓ Test microphones and sound systems
- ✓ Arrange podium and lectern
- ✓ Ensure proper lighting and visibility

F. MEDIA AND DOCUMENTATION

- ✓ Inform National Assembly media unit
- ✓ Arrange official photography
- ✓ Prepare press briefing if required
- ✓ Prepare event programme

G. HOSPITALITY

- ✓ Arrange reception area
- ✓ Provide refreshments or meals where appropriate
- ✓ Prepare welcome materials for guests

H. POST-EVENT ACTIVITIES

- ✓ Prepare event report
- ✓ Document outcomes and recommendations
- ✓ Send appreciation letters to participants
- ✓ Archive event documentation

APPENDIX 2

INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION VISIT PLANNING TEMPLATE

This template should be used when organizing visits by foreign parliamentary delegations, diplomats, or international organizations.

1. VISIT INFORMATION

Name of Visiting Delegation:

Country / Organization:

Purpose of Visit:

Proposed Visit Dates:

2. DELEGATION MEMBERS

Name	Position	Organization
------	----------	--------------

3. HOST OFFICIALS

Name	Position
------	----------

4. PROPOSED PROGRAMME

S/N	Date	Time	Activity
-----	------	------	----------

Example activities:

- Courtesy visit to Presiding Officer
- Meeting with Committee leadership
- Bilateral discussions
- Technical presentations
- Press briefing
- Facility tour

6. LOGISTICS

- ✓ Meeting venue reserved
- ✓ Transportation arrangements
- ✓ Security clearance
- ✓ Hospitality arrangements

5. PROTOCOL REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ National flags
- ✓ Nameplates
- ✓ Seating arrangement
- ✓ Interpretation services (if required)

7. DOCUMENTATION

- ✓ Prepare briefing notes
- ✓ Prepare background information on visiting delegation
- ✓ Prepare meeting agenda

APPENDIX 3

PRE-DELEGATION BRIEFING TEMPLATE

Before any international engagement, members of the delegation should receive a structured briefing as follows:

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Name of Event / Meeting:

Host Organisation:

Location:

Dates:

B. OBJECTIVES OF PARTICIPATION

Nigeria's objectives for participation should be clearly stated.

For Example:

- Strengthen parliamentary cooperation
- Promote Nigeria's legislative priorities
- Exchange experiences on governance reforms
- Develop bilateral partnerships

C. DELEGATION COMPOSITION

S/N	Name	Position	Role
-----	------	----------	------

D. AGENDA ITEMS

S/N	Agenda Topic	Nigeria's Position
-----	--------------	--------------------

E. KEY TALKING POINTS

Talking points should include the following, among others:

- Nigeria's policy positions
- Relevant legislative initiatives
- Areas of potential collaboration

F. PROTOCOL GUIDANCE

Delegates should be reminded to:

- Observe diplomatic etiquette
- Use correct titles and forms of address
- Maintain professional conduct
- Respect programme schedules

APPENDIX 4

POST-VISIT REPORT TEMPLATE

After an international visit, the delegation should submit a report to the Office of the Clerk to the National Assembly. The post visit template is as below:

1. BASIC INFORMATION

Name of Event:

Location:

Dates:

Host Organization:

2. DELEGATION MEMBERS

S/N	Name	Position
-----	------	----------

i.

3. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Provide a brief overview of:

- Meetings attended
- Presentations delivered
- Bilateral discussions

4. KEY OUTCOMES

Highlight:

- Agreements reached
- Partnerships explored
- Lessons learned

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Provide recommendations for:

- Follow-up actions
- Future engagements
- Institutional improvements

APPENDIX 5

GIFT REGISTER TEMPLATE

All official gifts exchanged during parliamentary engagements should be recorded. Detail should include:

Date
Event
Gift Received
Presented From / To
Description

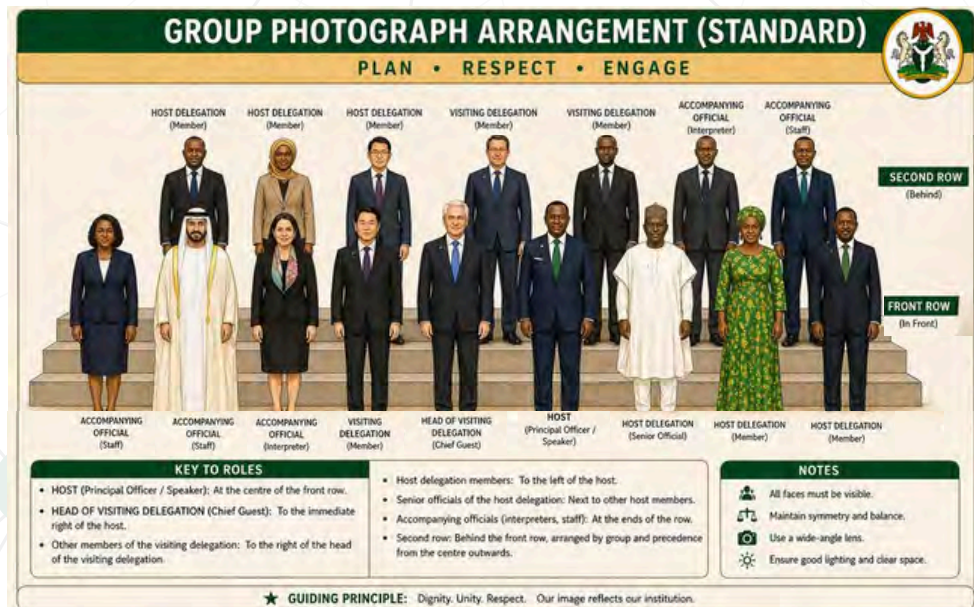
APPENDIX 6

STANDARD SEATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARLIAMENTARY EVENTS

1. **Bilateral Parliamentary Meeting (Rectangular Table)**
2. **Courtesy Visit (Small Meeting Setting)**
3. **Head Table Arrangement (Conference or Public Event)**
4. **U-Shaped Conference Seating**
5. **Roundtable Meeting**
6. **Signing Ceremony Arrangement**

APPENDIX 7 GROUP PHOTOGRAPH ARRANGEMENT

Official photographs are an important part of diplomatic protocol.
Standard Arrangement



Protocol rules:

- The most senior host stands at the center
- The guest of honour stands to the host's right
- Delegation members stand behind

APPENDIX 8 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY EVENT PROGRAMME TEMPLATE

This template can be used for conferences, hearings, and international events.

Event: Parliamentary Dialogue on Legislative Oversight

Host: House Committee on _____

Time	Activity
09:00	Arrival and Registration
09:30	Opening Prayer
09:35	Welcome Remarks
09:45	Opening Address by Committee Chairman
10:00	Keynote Address
10:30	Panel Discussion
12:00	Question and Answer Session
13:00	Closing Remarks

APPENDIX 9 GLOSSARY OF PROTOCOL TERMS

Protocol: The established rules governing official interactions among dignitaries and institutions.

Order of Precedence: The ranking of officials used to determine seating, introductions, and speaking order.

Courtesy Visit: A formal call made by a visiting dignitary to a host official.

Seat of Honour: The most prominent seat in a meeting or event.

Delegation: A group of representatives participating in an official engagement.

