

**Protocol** in a strict sense refers to a set of rules and procedures that regulate affairs of state or diplomatic occasions, recognized and accepted by all concerned parties. The UNOV Protocol and Liaison Office implement and enforce these rules on a regular basis in order to keep good relations with Member States and other UN entities, which makes protocol an important part of diplomacy in the United Nations.

Current protocol practices are rooted in history but evolve continuously. There is always a legitimate reason behind a protocol rule or practice.

### History and Evolution of Protocol

Traces of protocol can be found throughout ancient history. The ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Chinese had basic systems of diplomacy.

The starting point of modern diplomacy and protocol as we know it today was the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

It was in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars that for the first time in the history of diplomacy, the principle of “conference diplomacy” was used as a tool for negotiations between conflicting factions.

The representatives of the major European powers recognized the importance of protocol in diplomacy and adopted an international system of diplomatic ranks and to reaffirm the principle of diplomatic immunity

### Protocol in the United Nations

Protocol in the United Nations follows the Charter of the United Nations, and its article 2 which states that there should be “Sovereign Equality of all its Members”.

In the world of multilateral diplomacy protocol provides a clear and transparent system that allows for all participants to an event organized by the United Nations, whether public or private, to understand the position they are being given in all aspects of their official functions.



### The United Nations Diplomatic Protocol System

In addition to the Secretariat in New York, referred to as the Headquarters (UNHQ), the United Nations has three “Offices away from Headquarters”:

The United Nations Office in Vienna (UNOV)  
The United Nations Office in Geneva (UNOG)  
The United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON)

All 4 entities host permanent missions with Permanent Representatives accredited to the respective United Nations Office.

UNHQ and the Offices away from headquarters facilitate diplomatic activities and are major centres of United Nations conferences. The Protocol and Liaison Offices of the respective United Nations Offices each liaise with Permanent Missions of Member States, Observer States, international organizations and other entities recognised by the General Assembly. Thus, the respective protocol offices become important intermediates between the United Nations and its various stakeholders.

Among the core responsibilities and functions of the Protocol and NGO Liaison Office of the United Nations Office at Vienna are:

- Responsible for all protocol related matters involving the DG/EG
- Liaise with permanent missions, NGOs and host country authorities
- Arrange for the presentation of credentials of newly appointed Permanent Representatives
- Provide advice on protocol and organizational matters to multiple stakeholders
- Planning, coordination and execution of high-level official events in and high-ranking visits to the Vienna International Centre
- Provide external relation services to the Host Country and liaise with other Organisations within the UN system
- Liaise with the Host Country on visa issuances and other administrative issues for the international diplomatic community
- Publish and maintain the UNOV Blue Book and UNOV Protocol manuals.

## The United Nations Office at Vienna

The UNOV Protocol and NGO Liaison Office applies the established UN protocol rules and procedures and governing codes of behaviour to various diplomatic forums, meetings, ceremonies and events involving missions/ observers, NGOs, IGOs and their representatives in the UNOV headquarters and abroad. The rules, procedures and governing codes of diplomatic protocol applied by the UNOV Protocol and NGO Liaison Office is aligned with those of the Protocol and Liaison Service at the United Nations Headquarters in New York

The UNOV Protocol and NGO Liaison Office provides liaison and protocol services to over 154 accredited Permanent Missions of Member States based in Austria (Vienna), Switzerland (Geneva), Germany (Berlin) and the United Kingdom (London). In addition, a total of 19 non-Member states, intergovernmental organisations and other entities have observer offices accredited to the United Nations Office at Vienna. In addition to this, UNOV serves as well as the focal point for NGOs with ECOSOC status and their accreditation to Vienna.

## Resources

For further information about the Protocol and NGO Liaison Office of the United Nations Office at Vienna, its work and useful resources for Permanent Missions, Permanent Observer Missions, Permanent Observer Offices and NGOs, kindly consult our website: [www.unvienna.org/protocol](http://www.unvienna.org/protocol)



## Contact Information

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## Protocol and Liaison Office

- Information Brochure -



## United Nations Office at Vienna

