

## INTRODUCTION

This Guide is intended to help the Diplomatic and Consular Corps in Canada to familiarize themselves with the Canadian Government's policies, practices, and procedures relevant to the activities of diplomatic and consular missions so that they will be better able to perform their functions efficiently.

The Canadian Government, through the Office of Protocol of the Department of External Affairs, regulates the privileges, benefits, and immunities of diplomatic and consular missions in Canada, on the basis of reciprocity, pursuant to the Diplomatic and Consular Privileges and Immunities Act (Canada, 1977 as amended 1981), the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations (1963).

The Office of Protocol interprets privileges as exemptions from laws and regulations that the Canadian Government is obliged by law to grant. Such privileges include, among others:

- (1) the exemption from direct dues and taxes, such as provincial retail sales tax, with certain exceptions provided for by the Vienna Conventions;
- (2) the exemption from customs duties, taxes, and related charges for articles imported for official or personal use;
- (3) the exemption from participation in social security programs;
- (4) the exemption from registration of aliens and residence permits; and,
- (5) the exemption from personal services, public service, and military obligations.

The Office of Protocol interprets benefits as concessions that the Canadian Government may grant voluntarily on the basis of reciprocity. Such benefits include, among others:

- (1) the number of automobiles that may be imported free of customs duties, taxes, and related charges;
- (2) the resale of automobiles and other articles imported free of customs duties, taxes, and related charges after being possessed in Canada for at least two years, or earlier in case of recall or cross-posting by the sending State;
- (3) the free issuance of driver's licences and diplomatic or consular automobiles licence plates;
- (4) access to provincial health care plans;