

# **THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR PROTOCOL OFFICERS, SECRETARIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

**BY**

**THE NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE, ABUJA**

**23<sup>RD</sup> - 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2019**



# **ENHANCING PROFESSIONALISM & DIPLOMACY IN PROTOCOL PRACTICE**

**BY**



**JULIUS LAMBERT NYANANYO**  
**CHIEF PROTOCOL AND INFORMATION OFFICER**  
**BAYELSA STATE JUDICIARY**

# INTRODUCTION



- **Let all thanks and praises be given to the Almighty God, the ancient of days who made it possible for us to gather here today. I also thank the Administrator, the Director of studies and management of the National Judicial Institute for organising this workshop and inviting me.**
- **The theme for this year's workshop "towards improving the quality of judicial service in Nigeria" is very apt and timely. The Nigerian Judiciary has evolved in the last 17 years and is diversifying its operation and creating more opportunities for effective service delivery in line with organisational changes and re-engineering in the public service.**

- According to the former Chief Justice of Nigeria Hon. Mr Justice Walter Samuel Onnoghen, “the Judiciary, due to its conservative nature had stagnated in its operations, while the other arms of government have continued to undergo reforms. It is now urgent than ever to undertake a holistic reform of the judiciary”. Some part of the reforms was to take care of career development of Judiciary staff, which is urgently needed. ●

- I have been asked to speak on the topic “Enhancing Professionalism and Diplomacy in Protocol Practice”.
- Professionalism and Diplomacy are key determinant of organisational performance in protocol practice. It helps organisations fulfil policy and development objectives. The need for improving protocol practice in professional capacity has become very critical to explore new opportunities and to ensure that all public service functions are carried out to the highest professional standard.

# WHAT IS PROTOCOL?



- Protocol is simply the service that deals with most acceptable method or the best way of doing a thing or conducting a business with grace, effectiveness and efficiency. It is a skill in management or administrative service and can vary from how to organize a simple family meeting to the complex task of organizing international meeting or event.
- According to *Webster's encyclopaedic unabridged dictionary of the English language*, protocol is defined as the customs and regulations dealing with the ceremonies and etiquette of the diplomatic corps, other at a court, the military, etc.



- **According to the above mentioned dictionary, the origin of the word ‘protocol’ is from the Greek word ‘protokolion’. From this definition, ‘proto’ is a learned prefix borrowed from Greek, meaning ‘first’, ‘foremost’, ‘model’, ‘example’, ‘standard’.**



- **The Complete Handbook of Diplomatic Official and Social Usage** by Mary Jane McCaffnee, Pauline Innis, Richard M. Sand states:

**“While good manners are the rules one follows in everyday contacts with other people, protocol is the set of rules prescribing good manners in official life and in ceremonies involving governments and nations and their representatives. It is the recognised system of international courtesy”.**



- Protocol is a key service provider in every evolving business environment, playing the key roles in facilitating the smooth turning of the engines called organisations. They both lubricate the engine and ensure that they do not “knock”.
- For practical purposes, protocol is about correct procedures. It is the art of ensuring that official (and unofficial) occasion, visit, meeting and function are planned and conducted in accordance with a set of rules which are formally, socially and culturally accepted and expected by the parties involved.

- **The importance of protocol in fostering positive relations and outcomes should not be underrated or overlooked. It is therefore evident from the above referenced definitions that protocol goes far beyond the simplistic image of errand boys or girls arranging flights and airports reception for VIPs.**
- **Protocol well practiced, easily establishes you or your organisation as someone or an institution that possesses a good sense of decorum, etiquette and cross-cultural respect, and this creates a lasting positive impression.**



# QUALITIES OF A GOOD PROTOCOL OFFICER



- **Essentially, a protocol officer is a facilitator. He is a diplomatic agent, an event manager, a public relations officer, who aims at achieving the best at every function over time and space. He is in the service of detecting and preventing potential conflicts that may emanate from behavioural or social pattern of life in a function.**
- 

**A Protocol Officer must possess  
all these good qualities:**



- **Versatility:** This is the ability to do many things e.g. having to serve as a master of ceremonies or compere impromptu.
- **Decency:** Good dress sense, posture either sitting or standing. This is part of personal acceptability enhancer.
- **Calmness:** This is level-headedness or equanimity. People could be provocative while certain situation could prove highly irritating. Whatever becomes of the situation or people, the protocol officer must maintain his calmness. This is an aspect of public diplomacy.



- **Self-Control:** Patience or long suffering.
- **Listening Skill:** At all times, all you need to do is to listen, your speech might complicate or aggravate the situation.
- **Creativity & Flexibility:** Always prepare ahead and have the ability to make quick adjustment where necessary.
- **Expertise:** Be knowledgeable about almost everything.



- **He must be conversant with topical issues of his state/country as well as with matters of international interest.**
- **Communication gift: Fluency in relevant languages.**
- **Intellectual curiosity and drive to go on learning.**
- **Cross-cultural skill – studying the culture/tradition of various people of the world.**

- **Goal oriented** – Develop strategic goals, objectives and programmes for the themes.
- **Friendliness**
- **Honesty**
- **Dependability**
- **Considerate**



# **FUNCTIONS OF A PROTOCOL OFFICER**



- In Nigeria, the word protocol and protocol officer have been bastardized. Much as the job is exciting, even glamorous, it is equally challenging. Protocol Officers are not the ‘errand boys or girls’. Their principal duty is to plan and organize VIP visit and movement, ceremonies, official visits and special events.
- They are expected to be knowledgeable in the various aspects of protocol *such as order of precedence, titles of VIPs, form of address, flag-etiquette, and international protocol.*
- In short, we must be conversant with routine and highly specific protocol role as follows: 

- **Research traditions and customs**
- **Develop itineraries, agenda and checklist.**
- **Arrange photo opportunities**
- **Create suitable seating arrangement**
- **Make and send invitations**
- **Identify security risks and create safety plans**
- **Model polite behaviours – tactfulness and good manners**
- **Schedule and transportation/Travel counselling**
- **Arrange lodging and accommodation**
- **Organize directory- List of key leaders (guest list)**
- **Booking appointment/ meeting schedule**
- **Maintain event register**
- **Visa Counselling/Procurement.**
- **Diplomatic/Official/Standard Passport Acquisition**

# UNDERSTANDING DIPLOMACY



- **Diplomacy is defined as the skill for dealing with people effectively in a positive way that can achieve peaceful resolution including the foreign relation with other countries. A person who doesn't take sides in a fight but instead helps others to resolve their differences is an example of someone who is diplomatic.**
- **The practice of diplomacy is more visible at the international level amongst nations and Multi-national organisations. E.g. United Nations, European Union, African Union etc.**

**WHO IS A DIPLOMAT?**



- **A diplomat is a person involved in diplomacy; the collective term for a group of diplomats from a single country is a diplomatic mission.**
  - **An Ambassador/High Commissioner is the most senior diplomatic rank, with a diplomatic mission headed by an Ambassador known as an embassy. The collective body of all diplomats who are resident in a particular country is called a diplomatic corps.**
  - **In international politics, protocol is the etiquette of diplomacy and is the rule which instructs how an activity should be performed.**
- 

- **Diplomatic protocol is often an unwritten guideline which specifies the proper and generally-accepted behaviours in matters of state and diplomacy; such as being tactful (saying the ugliest things in the nicest way) for example: “even though other speakers are given fifteen minutes to speak, I don’t have the capacity to stop Dr. Emeka Musa”. Showing suitable respect (manners) to a head of state, ranking diplomats in chronological order of their accreditation (Vienna Convention of 1815).**



**ENHANCING  
PROFESSIONALISM IN  
PROTOCOL PRACTICE**



- **The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines professionalism as “the conduct, aims or qualities that characterized or mark a profession or a professional person”, and defines profession as a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long intensive academic preparation.**
- **Against this background, we may accept the definition of Wikipedia that a professional is a member of a profession or any person who earns their living from a specified professional activity. The term also describes the standard of education and training that prepares members of the profession with the particular knowledge and skills necessary to perform their specific role within that profession.**

- In addition, most professions are subject to strict code of conduct, ensuring ethical and moral obligations. In Nigeria, the Association of Certified Protocol Practitioners in Nigeria (ACPPN) is the professional association for protocol practitioners.
- Protocol as a profession has continued to develop. Its prospects and usefulness today cannot be over-emphasised. Nigeria as a developing country is expected as well as mandated to observe the rules of engagement of doing business e.g. diplomatic, investment promotion, event management etc.

- There are so many prospects in protocol practice; Firstly, there is the need for a Legal Framework to enhance protocol practice in Nigeria. A Law on the Order of National Precedence and other related matters will help in professionalising protocol practice. For example, in Chapter 8, Section 57 (2) of the Ghanaian Constitution deals on order of precedence.
- In the United States the State Chief of protocol goes through congressional clearance before appointment by the President, this shows the important place of protocol in governance.

- Secondly, *institutionalising protocol practice* as a cadre in the scheme of service of the Nigerian Public Service, this will greatly enhance professionalism and would bring about career development. For example, Bayelsa State Judiciary has institutionalised Protocol practice as a cadre in its scheme of service by this act young officers are trained and they get to the top of their career as protocol practitioners. This should be replicated in all the Judiciaries/public service in Nigeria.

- Thirdly, there is need for Training and certification programmes in line with our peculiar environment; as at now there is no known curriculum in Nigeria as it exists in other countries. Training and development of inter personal skill is an important component for building protocol practice that is efficient and competent to implement programmes. This builds professional self confidence in protocol officers, who will have what it takes in of terms of competence to respond to work challenges.



- Finally, *networking and professional development*, a protocol officer should be an active member of relevant groups – such as ACPPN, NIPR, PDI-POA etc.
- The Association of Certified Protocol Practitioners in Nigeria could set the pace in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Office of the Head of Service of the Federation and other relevant agencies in achieving these above stated objectives.

- **Lest I forget, and on a lighter note, may I advise Protocol Practitioners and speakers at events, that the following expressions, which are very often used innocently but erroneously by many Nigerians, should be completely avoided. They are:**

**“All Protocols observed”, and**

**“Permit me to stand on existing Protocols”**

- **Much as they may sound ‘classy’ or ‘cool’ as Americans would say, they have no place in international protocols. They are Nigerian inventions.**
- 

- **But, believe it or not, some members of the International Community, especially in Africa, have been infected by this Nigerian virus. To avoid this pitfall, keep your protocols short by mentioning the highest-ranking official at the function followed by “Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen”.**
- **Full Protocols are to be read out by the Master of Ceremony, at the beginning of the event ONLY, and the Keynote Speaker.**

# CONCLUSION



- **My Lords, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, as I conclude, permit me to make few comments. The proper observance of protocol rules is a sign of respect both for the organisational system of etiquette and for the individuals involved.**
- **However, in Nigeria, there appear clearly, a strong personal desires and aspirations in people against the concern for the greater good of obeying protocol rules.**
- **This explains why there is so much loss of professional etiquette characterised in contemporary society as a whole.**

- **It is imperative to address and ensure the re-orientation of our Very Important Personalities (VIPs). See Luke 14:10 of the Holy Bible. A case in point is the Royal Wedding in the United Kingdom where beauty, orderliness of VIPs who attended strictly on invitation was showcased.**



- In a more general sense, ignoring protocol rules create an atmosphere of suspicion that fuels an “us versus them” climate, as some may describe. The violation can result in a very significant and unwelcome consequence. No one is more important than the process. Those who are hostile to protocol, are at the very least, appear selfish and creating a certain perception lasting ill will. In short, those who knowingly ignore protocol, abuse the system, insult those involved, and risk tarnishing their own reputation.**



- Protocol promotes good will; its absence brings resentment and confusion in our world. Decent and modern societies observe protocol rule. If we act responsibly in obedience to protocols, we bring order and decorum in our world. The responsibility lies with those who attempt to circumvent the process as well as our leaders in every level of society to consistently respect protocol.
- 

- I call on the authorities of the Nigerian Judiciary to encourage professionalism and diplomacy in protocol practice which will improve the quality of judicial service in Nigeria.**



**THANK YOU  
AND  
GOD BLESS.**



**QUESTIONS, IF ANY.**

