**NOTE 11: DEFINITION OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS (PERMANENT EMBASSIES/HIGH COMMISSIONS AND OTHERS)**

**11.0. INTRODUCTION**

A Diplomatic Mission is a central part in a State external relations as it is the channel via which states foreign engagement take place. It should be noted that in defining Diplomatic Missions, they can be defined as either a body of Diplomat carrying out **Diplomat functions abroad** or the **location** **where they carry out such missions** or **both.**

**11.1. WHAT ARE DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS**

Diplomatic Missions can be defined as a **group of persons** from a state or an international organisation, present in another state or international organisation, officially representing their sending state or international organisation authority in the receiving state or international organisation. Diplomatic Missions could also be **a fixed location** where **Diplomatic activities take** **place (physical structures like building or geographic location).**

**11.2. TYPES OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS**

There exist various types of Diplomatic Missions. In this class, we shall group the types of Diplomatic Missions under **Three broad** headings. They are:

1. Embassy
2. Consulate
3. Trade Office

**11.3. WHAT IS AN EMBASSY**

An embassy is typically a **permanent mission** or **resident mission**. It is the **highest form of diplomatic representation** **(both in terms of personnel’s, location and building**). Embassies can be identified as the Diplomatic office of a country’s or international organisation diplomatic activities, in the Capital of another country. The presence of an Embassy shows the **closeness** and **frequency** of relations between two nations or international organisation and a country or region. Also, Embassies are the highest form of state or international organisations acknowledgement of the importance of their relations. There are various types of Embassy. They are;

**11.3.1. RESIDENT/PERMANENT MISSION**

It is a type of Embassy that has representatives accredited to another head of state. This Embassy resides in the Capital of the receiving state. An **Ambassador** heads it.

**11.3.2. NON-RESIDENT MISSION**

It is similar to a resident mission. The difference is that a non-resident mission is a type of Embassy where a sending state doesn’t have a permanent presence in the receiving state. Such a Diplomatic presence is in a neighbouring country. Officials of a Non-Resident Mission, travel to their host state on a need to need bases (they have no permanent presence in the host state) An **Ambassador** heads it, with **accreditation to two or more countries**.

**11.3.3. HIGH COMMISSION**

It is a type of Embassy common amongst the **British Commonwealth Nations**. A **High Commissioner** it

**11.3.4. APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE**

It is a type of Embassy that is used by the **Holy See** (it represent the **Pope**, who resides at **Vatican City**). They represent the **Pope**, **Holy See** and **Vatican City**. A **Papal Nuncio** is the head.

**11.3.5. PEOPLE BUREAU**

It is a type of Embassy operated by Libya under Muhammed Gaddafi Administration in Libya. A Secretary is the head of a **People Bureau**.

**11.3.6. PERMANENT REPRESENTATION**

It is a type of Embassy found at International Organisation. Sending States or other International Organisation Representatives carry out their function here. It is headed by a **Permanent Representative** or a **Head of Delegation**.

**11.4. CONSULATES**

A Consulate is a type of Diplomatic Mission **not located** in the Capital of the receiving state. They exist as **a complimentary branch** of embassies and **render specific** Diplomatic services (visa application, notary service, etc.). Consulates are similar to Embassy but are not the same as Embassy. A consulate is created to handle relations with individuals and business. The purpose of their creation is to ensure that the Diplomatic service of a nation is spread and accessible across the geography of the host state, especially one with a large population of your nationals residing or transacting there. They are various types of consulate they are;

1. **CONSULATE GENERAL**: Headed by a Consul General
2. **CONSULATE:** A Consul heads it
3. **HONORARY CONSUL:** A Honorary Consul heads it

**11.5 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN EMBASSY AND A CONSULATE**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **EMBASSY** | **CONSULATE** |
| **1** | There is only one Embassy in a host Country. | There can be many Consulates in a host Country. |
| **2** | An Ambassador heads an Embassy | A Consulate is heeded by a Consul, Consul General or Honorary Consul, depending on the type of consulate. |
| **3** | Embassy ensures maintenance of friendly relations with a host country | Consulate mainly focuses on the issuance of visa and safety of travellers from and to a host country |

**10.6 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN AN EMBASSY AND A CONSULATE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S/N | **SIMILARITIES** |
| 1 | Both are Diplomatic Missions |
| 2 | Both are Permanent in Nature |

**11.7. TRADE OFFICE**

A trade office is a Diplomatic Mission whose focus is to perform economic functions. In a broader sense, a trade office is established by polities who do not enjoy the recognition of sovereignty as a means to engage in Diplomatic Relations. Examples of this include Hong Kong Trade Office in Toronto and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Offices of Taiwan.