



ANY REPLY OR SUBSEQUENT REFERENCE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY AND THE FOLLOWING REFERENCE NUMBER QUOTED:-

Telephone No. 92-28600-16  
Website: <http://www.mof.gov.jm>  
Email: [info@mof.gov.jm](mailto:info@mof.gov.jm)

MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND PLANNING  
30 NATIONAL HEROES CIRCLE  
P.O. BOX 512  
KINGSTON  
JAMAICA

Circular No. 9  
File No. 27/026  
Public Expenditure Policy Co-ordination Division

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Permanent Secretaries:  
Heads of Departments and Agencies:  
Chief Executive Officers of Public Bodies:

**Official Visits Abroad – New Procedures**

The attention of Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Departments and Agencies, and CEOs of Public Bodies is being drawn to the following procedures for Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State, other Parliamentarians and public officials travelling overseas on official business, as directed by Cabinet Decision No. 33/05 dated November 7, 2005.

Attached is the following set of procedures in respect of official visits abroad:

- (a) general procedures for securing approval for travel abroad and accounting for the foreign exchange involved;
- (b) approval procedures;
- (c) approved per diem rates payable, which are maximum and are inclusive of hotel accommodation, meals, transportation and incidentals; and
- (d) application for release of foreign exchange for official visits abroad for  
(1) political directorate; and (2) all others.

Permanent Secretaries of their respective Ministries have been delegated the responsibility to approve applications for the release of foreign exchange to public officials from ministries, departments, agencies and public bodies.

Colin Bullock  
Financial Secretary

**FOREIGN TRAVEL**  
**PER DIEM PROCEDURES**

All applications for release of foreign exchange for official visits abroad must be submitted to the Permanent Secretary of the relevant Ministry for approval in accordance with the following procedural guidelines, which must be meticulously followed in respect of the operation of the approved annual budgetary allocation for official visits abroad. These Guidelines apply to employees of Government entities, employees of Government Owned Corporations, Parliamentarians, police officers and soldiers when the public official's travel costs (including expenses and allowances) are either fully or partially met from official funds, or where the costs of overseas travel for official duties are funded from other sources (e.g. fee for service activities, full costs covered by a conference organizer, official grants and other official funds).

***General Information***

1. Members of the political directorate and other public officials of Government entities and Government corporations, who travel abroad on official business will be given a per diem travel allowance to cover all expenses (i.e. hotel bills, meals, transportation, telephone calls) for the period of the proposed trip based on the approved per diem rates as set out. (See Appendix 2)
2. The Ministry of Finance and Planning has established per diem rates for the various public officials in the political directorate and the public sector. These rates should be regarded as the maximum rates that under normal circumstances will be approved. (See Appendix 2)
3. In determining the per diem to be applied for, cognisance must be taken of the cost of hotel accommodation and of any special discounts or concessions that may be offered.
4. In all cases where the per diem applied for is in excess of the prescribed rates, appropriate justification must be submitted with the application form to the Ministry of Finance and Planning for approval at least five (5) working days before the proposed date of departure. In cases where official visits are being subsidized by overseas bodies or organizations, the required adjustments must be made to the application.
5. Where the full cost of the trip is being sponsored by an overseas organization, a per diem rate of US\$40 per day for Parliamentarians and US\$35 per day for public officers shall be applied.
6. If the actual period of the trip is reduced subsequent to the approval of total foreign exchange, then the per diem travel allowance in respect of the days by



which the tour is reduced must be refunded within seven (7) days of return to Jamaica in the foreign currency in which it was released, not the Jamaican Dollar equivalent.

7. The amounts are to be calculated and charged directly to expenditure.
8. Once the annual budgetary allocation of a ministry, department, agency or public body for official travel abroad has been exhausted or fully committed, no further requests for foreign exchange should be made until the entity has applied for and has been granted a supplementary financial allocation for the year.
9. In cases where protocol demands that ministers or public officials host receptions, or requires that they engage in other forms of entertainment, application for the required foreign exchange must be submitted with the relevant particulars for approval. If the required foreign exchange cannot be accurately determined, the amount requested must be treated in the accounts as an advance. In the cases of public officials, such receptions and entertainment are restricted to heads of delegations only. The amount advanced is to be accounted for in each case by the submission of actual bills to the Financial Manager of the official's ministry, department, agency, or public body within seven days of the return of the public official to Jamaica.
10. Where the full amount of an advance was not utilized or is not properly accounted for, the public official must refund within seven (7) days of return to Jamaica the unaccounted for balance to the entity in the foreign exchange in which it was released, not the Jamaican Dollar equivalent.
11. Prior to authorizing official travel overseas by public officials in their respective ministries, departments, agencies and public bodies, Permanent Secretaries, CEOs and Heads of agencies and public bodies should consult with their respective Ministers. (Cab. Dec. No. 20/03 dated May 26, 2003)
12. In respect of invitations to speak at events overseas in an official capacity, public officials should ensure that the benefits that accrue to the country from these overseas visits exceed the cost of the related expenses of attending these engagements. The total cost of these trips must be within the approved budgetary allocation of the ministry, department or entity concerned. (Cabinet Decision No. 27/04 dated September 6, 2004)
13. The rates for warm clothing allowance should be applied in relation to the time of year and geographical location of the country to be visited by the officer. Warm clothing allowance is paid once every 3 years. The rates are as follows:



- i) US\$150 April – September where the duty period is less than 2 months;
  - ii) US\$300 if the visit is made during the other months of the year and the period spent abroad is less than 12 months;
  - iii) US\$400 where the period spent abroad is over 12 months.
14. MDAs and other public entities are required to exercise restraint in planning overseas visits. Only those trips that are considered essential to the attainment of the entity's or Government objectives should be considered. All other avenues for gaining relevant knowledge or experience should be considered before overseas travel is proposed.
15. The term "public officials" includes Civil Service and Local Government personnel; chairmen and members of para-statal boards; and the staff of para-statal entities.

#### ***Procedures for Application***

16. The application for the per diem travel allowance must be made in the prescribed format, and the completed application form must be submitted to the Permanent Secretary of the ministry at least three (3) working days before the proposed date of the applicant's departure on the trip for which the foreign exchange is being sought.
17. The Financial Manager must certify that funds are available for each application for foreign exchange for official visits abroad.
18. The application for overseas travel must have attached to it a valid travel itinerary and hotel booking that can be determined at the time the application is made, and the letter and other documentation from the organizers setting out the details of the meeting, seminar, workshop, etc.
19. Copies of the approved foreign exchange application forms and relevant documents must be stored by each entity on a file specific for the purpose. Proper records must be kept of all foreign exchange approved for official visits abroad.
20. Where the assistance of Missions abroad is sought to make reservations for hotel accommodation, directions must be given to the Mission regarding room rates, as these rates must be consistent with the Government's prevailing per diem rates which cover hotel accommodation and subsistence.
21. As a condition of official overseas travel, the public official must provide a travel report on return from an overseas trip. The report should state *inter alia*



dates of travel and countries visited; objectives of the trip; benefits to the entity and to the public generally; recommendations and/or action plans arising from the overseas trip; and suitability of the report for inter-agency sharing. The public official must also give documentary proof of per diem and other benefits provided by a sponsoring overseas agency to the official. Individual MDAs and other public entities may specify the manner and procedures for submitting reports.

22. In all cases, air travel must be planned to make use of the most economical and direct route so as to avoid transfers involving costly waiting time(s). Transfers to facilitate personal needs will not be considered when additional cost is involved.
23. For public officials other than Parliamentarians, air travel of under four hours flying time between departure and arrival must be at the most economy class. Trips of longer duration will be dealt with on a case by case basis and specific approval of the Financial Secretary will be required for upgrade.
24. When airline tickets are provided by overseas organizations as part of sponsorship for official visits abroad, expenditure of additional funds to upgrade the airline tickets must not be authorized without the prior written approval of the Financial Secretary.
25. Any official stationed in an agency's office overseas who authorizes the use of funds of the agency (held there in foreign exchange) to pay bills left there by a public official, who before leaving Jamaica was provided with foreign exchange sufficient to meet all reasonable bills, is liable to a surcharge of a sum equal to the full amount of the payment.

#### ***Parliamentarians***

26. Applications for the release of foreign exchange for Members of Parliament and Senators must be made on the application form designated "Application by Parliamentarian for the Release of Foreign Exchange for Official Travel Overseas."
27. Ministers are required to first consult with the Prime Minister in writing before submitting an application through the official channels. In this way, prior agreement would be reached before the application is submitted to the Permanent Secretary, and approval for the release of foreign exchange could then be issued without further reference to the Prime Minister.
28. But for very exceptional circumstances (where the Prime Minister would give the necessary directive) plans for foreign travel by Ministers and persons accompanying them should be submitted to the Cabinet for authorization.

(Cabinet Decision No. 12/03 dated March 31, 2003)

29. The purposes of international meetings, and the positions proposed to be taken on the issues that these meetings would consider, should be clearly stated in the Cabinet Submission. (Cabinet Decision No. 12/03 dated March 31, 2003)
30. Accounting Officers are requested to submit applications for the release of foreign exchange for ministerial and parliamentary travel direct to the office of the Minister of Finance together with a copy of the agreement/approval of the Prime Minister.
31. Application forms for Members of Parliament and Senators should be certified by the Minister of Finance as to purpose of travel and class of air passages as indicated on the itinerary.
32. Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State applying directly to the Prime Minister for permission for official travel overseas must state whether they will be accompanied by public officials, and the officials should be named.  
(Cabinet Decision No. 20/03 dated May 26, 2003)
33. All Cabinet Ministers may occupy hotel suites while on official visits overseas. Where this is proposed, full particulars pertaining thereto are to be submitted to the Permanent Secretary in order to facilitate assessment and adjustment of the per diem payable as may be necessary.
34. For parliamentarians, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will decide the class of air passage in each case. With regard to ministerial travel, where feasible and where business class travel is available on an airline as an alternative to first class, business class should be used.
35. In cases where protocol demands that ministers travel with security on visits abroad for private business, the release of foreign exchange must be approved for only one security officer per minister.



**APPENDIX 2**  
**APPROVED PER DIEM RATES PAYABLE FOR OFFICIAL VISITS ABROAD**  
**EFFECTIVE APRIL 6, 2006**

OFFICIALS	REGIONS										REMARKS
	North America	South Central America and other Caribbean Countries	CARICOM	Western Europe	Eastern Europe	Africa	Middle East	Asia and Far East excluding Japan	Japan	Pacific and Australia and New Zealand	
<b>CAL DIRECTORATE</b>	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	US\$	(1) These rates are based on the United Nations (UN HQ) index. Source: Int'l Civil Service Commission, New York, ICSC Database.  (2) Notwithstanding the figures stated herein the amount allocated from time to time must be determined by the particular circumstances of their travelling on official business.
Minister and Minister of State	410	390	390	430	390	395	395	390	450	390	
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs	370	350	350	390	350	355	355	350	410	350	
Minister of Finance (office is separate)	335	315	315	355	315	320	320	315	375	315	
Minister of Foreign Affairs (office is separate)	335	315	315	355	315	320	320	315	375	315	
Cabinet Ministers	310	290	290	330	290	295	295	290	350	290	
Members of State and other Secretaries	270	250	250	290	250	255	255	250	325	250	
<b>BLJC OFFICERS</b>											
Deputy Secretaries and other Officers	270	250	250	290	250	255	255	250	325	250	
Public Officers	250	230	230	270	230	235	235	230	305	230	

(1) These rates are based on the United Nations (UN HQ) index.

Source: Int'l Civil Service Commission, New York, ICSC Database.

(2) Notwithstanding the figures stated herein the amount allocated from time to time must be determined by the particular circumstances of their travelling on official business.

APPENDIX 3

APPLICATION BY PARLIAMENTARIAN FOR THE RELEASE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR OFFICIAL VISITS ABROAD

<p>4. Purpose of Overseas Visit:</p>	
<p>1. Applicant: .....</p> <p>(Name of Parliamentarian)</p> <p>2. Official Status: .....</p> <p>(i.e. Minister; Parliamentary Secretary; Member of Parliament)</p> <p>3. Agency Accountable: .....</p> <p>(Ministry, Houses of Parliament)</p>	<p>6. Date of Departure from Jamaica .....</p> <p>8. Travel itinerary (attach itinerary showing route, overnight in-transit stops, schedule of confirmed appointments, nature of business to be conducted, and time to be spent transacting business at each stop.</p> <p>(PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED)</p>
<p>7. Date of Return to Jamaica .....</p>	<p>10. In cases where persons at (5) form part of an official delegation to Conferences, Seminars, Negotiations, etc. name the Government Agency responsible for selecting and coordinating attendance of the delegation.</p>

Name and Status of each person accompanying Parliamentarian (attach a list if space here is inadequate).

Name Status

Approved by me as to purpose of travel, and class of air passage as indicated on the itinerary, subject to Ministry of Finance clearance of the itinerary and the other details.

Minister of Finance Date  
 what way, and to what extent is use being made of Jamaica's Missions or offices abroad to secure the objectives that the proposed visit seeks to achieve?



12. Allowances in terms of cash or services to persons at (5) from overseas sources (sponsors and/or other) Government during the course of visit (specify sum or type of service). Vague answers such as "part of expenses" will not be accepted.

cases of Conferences, Seminars, Negotiations, etc., will any persons other than those persons at attending as part of the Government delegation? If the answer is "yes" give names and status and of organizations they represent.

Name and Status

Organization

amount of foreign exchange requested  
*per diem* for each person)

14. If foreign exchange is being sought in (13) for contingencies or for purposes other than living expenses, state reasons to justify the request.

15. Cost of Air Ticket  
(state class)

16. Is any Jamaican Government Mission or office abroad expected to make its vehicle(s) available for use by the applicant or the delegation (tick)

Yes

No

18. Approved by Special Committee Members:-

certify that funds are available from the approved allocation of J.S. ....  
Official visits abroad to meet the cost at (13), (14) and (15) if approved at those levels.

Financial Manager

Date

## ITINERARY AND SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS

NAME OF ORGANIZATION:

NAME(S) OF OFFICIAL(S).....

**DESTINATION:**

[illegible]

AUTHORIZING OFFICER .....

PERMANENT SECRETARY.....

DATE.....

DATE.....