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The Credential Letters of the Ambassadors of Grenada, Gambia, the Bahamas, Switzerland, Cabo Verde, Iceland, Turkmenistan, Malta, Qatar and Estonia, to the Holy See

Address of the Holy Father

Curriculum vitae of the new Ambassadors

At 10.00 this morning, in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, the Holy Father Francis received in audience the ambassadors of Grenada, Gambia, the Bahamas, Switzerland, Cabo Verde, Iceland, Turkmenistan, Malta, Qatar and Estonia, to the Holy See, on the occasion of the presentation of their credential letters.

The following are the Pope's address to the new ambassadors, and a brief biography of each one:

Address of the Holy Father

Your Excellencies,

I am pleased to receive you for the presentation of the Letters by which you are accredited as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of your countries to the Holy See: Switzerland, Malta, The Bahamas, Cabo Verde, Estonia, Iceland, Turkmenistan, Grenada, Qatar and The Gambia. I would ask you kindly to convey my sentiments of esteem to your respective Heads of State, together with the assurance of my prayers for them and for your fellow citizens.

This year, as you know, marks the hundredth anniversary of the end of the First World War, a tragedy of immense proportions that my predecessor, Pope Benedict XV, did not hesitate to call a "senseless slaughter". May the lessons learned from the two great wars of the twentieth century, which led to the establishment of the United Nations Organization, continue to convince the world's people and their leaders of the futility of armed

conflict and the need to resolve conflicts through patient dialogue and negotiation. It is my prayerful hope that the mission you now undertake in the service of your various nations will contribute to this lofty goal of “securing a peace based on justice and charity, and promoting the means necessary to attain it” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 77).

In this year, too, the international community has celebrated the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This foundational document continues to guide the efforts of global diplomacy to secure peace in our world and to promote the integral development of each individual and all peoples. The two goals are in fact inseparable. In its very first words, the Declaration states that, “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world” (*Preamble*).

In these times of sweeping social and political change, there can be no lessening of the commitment to this principle on the part of governments and peoples. It is essential that respect for human dignity and human rights inspire and direct every effort to address the grave situations of war and armed conflict, crushing poverty, discrimination and inequality that afflict our world, and in recent years have issued in the present crisis of mass migration. No effective humanitarian solution to that pressing global issue can ignore our moral responsibility, with due regard for the common good, to welcome, protect, promote and integrate those who knock at our doors in search of a secure future for themselves and their children (cf. *Message for the 2018 World Day of Peace*, No. 4). The Church, for her part, is committed to working with every responsible partner in a constructive dialogue aimed at proposing concrete solutions to this and other urgent humanitarian problems, with the goal of preserving human lives and dignity, alleviating suffering and advancing an authentic and integral development.

Dear Ambassadors, as you now begin your mission to the Holy See, I offer you my prayerful good wishes and I assure you of the constant readiness of the various offices of the Roman Curia to assist you in the fulfilment of your responsibilities. Upon you and your families, your collaborators and all your fellow citizens, I cordially invoke God’s blessings of joy and peace.

Curriculum vitae of the new Ambassadors

H.E. Ms. Akima PAUL LAMBERT
Ambassador of Grenada to the Holy See

H.E. Ms. Akima Paul Lambert was born in Grenada on 6 September 1982, and is married with a son.

She graduated in law, then obtained a master’s degree in the same subject from the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom (2001-2005), followed by a specialization in French and English law (*Université Panthéon Assas*, Paris, 2003-2005). She attended the BPP Law School (2005-2006) and became a lawyer in New York (2011).

She has held the following positions: associate at the Law Firm *Hogan Lovells* (2008-2012) and senior associate at *Cleary Gottlieb Steen and Hamilton* LLP (2010-2015); she currently works in private legal practise, and is international counsel at “*Debevoise & Plimpton*”. She will be the first ambassador of Grenada to the Holy See

She knows French, English and Spanish.

H.E. Mr. Francis René BLAIN
Ambassador of Gambia to the Holy See

H.E. Mr. Francis René Blain was born in Banjul on 8 November 1943.

He graduated in literature from the University in Sierra Leone in 1970.

He has held the following offices, among others: division commissioner (North Bank Division, Gambia 1973-1974); senior assistant secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1974-1976); director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1976-1979); deputy permanent secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1979-1980); United Nations deputy permanent representative in New York (1980-1982); United Nations permanent representative in New York (1982-1984); representative and coordinator of the United Nations Development Program for Residents, Liberia (1985-1989); deputy director of the Division for Technical Cooperation at the UNDP (1997-2002); ECOWAS special representative in Liberia (2003-2006); main external speaker, Division of External Speakers, United Nations Development Program (since 1989); ambassador in London, where he currently resides (since 2017).

He knows English.

H.E. Mr. Basil Walter BARNETT
Ambassador of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to the Holy See

H.E. Mr. Basil Walter Barnett was born in Nassau, on 25 July 1956, and is married with two children. He is an accountant.

He has held the following offices, among others: accountant at *Coopers & Lybrand*; financial controller at *JS Johnson & Company Limited* (1988-2004); and owner of *Bahamas Medical and Surgical Supplies Limited*.

The ambassador resides in Nassau, Bahamas.

He knows English.

H.E. Mr. Denis KNOBEL
Ambassador of Switzerland to the Holy See

H.E. Mr. Denis Knobel was born in 1961 in Lausanne, and is married with two children.

He holds a degree in history, anthropology and communication from the University of Fribourg.

He has held the following offices, among others: journalist for a newspaper in Bern and an information agency in Rossens; officer in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (1989); participant in the creation and development of the Swiss Cooperation Programme with Eastern Europe at the Swiss Directorate for Development Cooperation (SDC) and later at the relevant Political Division (1990-1995); head of the Agricultural and Rural Sector, as well as head of the Evaluation Office; deputy head of the Mission in Indonesia (1995-1998); cultural counsellor of the Mission in Italy (1999); deputy head of the SDC for Eastern Cooperation with Eastern Europe with the title of Minister (2003-2006); deputy head of the Mission in Egypt (2006-2010); ambassador to Croatia (2010-2014); ambassador to Bulgaria (since 2014).

He knows German, Italian, French and English.

H.E. Mr. Eurico CORREIA MONTEIRO
Ambassador of the Republic of Cabo Verde to the Holy See

H.E. Mr. Eurico Correia Monteiro was born on 22 January 1955 in São Tomé, to Cabo-Verdian parents, and is a citizen of Cabo Verde.

He graduated in law from the *Universidade clássica* of Lisbon, 1984), he subsequently obtained a master's degree in law-making (*Instituto Nacional de Administração de Portugal*) and another from the *Fundação de Desenvolvimento Administrativo*, São Paulo, Brazil). He is a lawyer.

He has held the following offices, among others: Minister of Justice, Public Administration and Labour (1991-1993); chairman of the Foreign Investments Committee (1991-1994); Minister of State for Justice and Labour (1993-1995); Member of Parliament (1995-2016); ambassador to Portugal (2017).

He knows French and English.

H.E. Ms. Sigríður Ásdís SnÆvarr
Ambassador of Iceland to the Holy See

H.E. Ms. Sigríður Ásdís SnÆvarr She was born on June 23, 1952 in Reykjavík.

She is married and has a son.

She obtained a master's degree in Law and Diplomacy from the *Fletcher School* in 1978. She was a member of the Harvard Russian Research Center (1987).

She has held the following offices, among others: first secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1978); first embassy secretary in Moscow (1979); deputy permanent representative to the Council of Europe (1981-1983); head of delegation at the United Nations Conference on the Status of Women, in Nairobi (1985); counsellor and later minister- counsellor in Bonn (1987-1991); ambassador to Sweden (1991-1996); ambassador to Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Namibia (1991-1996); ambassador to South Africa (1996-1999); ambassador and head of protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1996-1999); ambassador to France (1999-2004); ambassador and deputy permanent secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2004-2007); founder of a company to provide work for 1,100 unemployed persons (2007-2014); and director for resident ambassadors and special envoys at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (since 2017).

She knows Danish, French, English, Italian, German and Swedish.

H.E. Mr. Atageldi HALJANOV
Ambassador of Turkmenistan to the Holy See

H.E. Mr. Atageldi Haljanov was born on 7 October 1976.

He is married with two children.

He attended the *Dovlet Mamet Azadi* Turkmen National Institute of Foreign Languages. He is a philologist and an English teacher.

He has held the following offices: teacher at the Dashoguz secondary school, Turkmenistan (1999-2003); specialist in the Department of Secondary Education and Educational Work of the Ministry of Education (2003-2005); second secretary and, subsequently, first secretary at the Department of the Diplomatic Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005-2008); first secretary, then counsellor at the embassy in the United Kingdom (2008-2010); member of the embassy in France (2010-2011); first embassy secretary (Consul) in the United States of America (2011-2012); director of the Department for International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012-2014); United Nations permanent representative in Geneva (since 2014); ambassador to Switzerland (since 2015), where he resides.

He is the first Ambassador of Turkmenistan to the Holy See.

He knows English, Persian and Russian.

H.E. Mr. Frank ZAMMIT
Ambassador of Malta to the Holy See

H.E. Mr. Frank Zammit on 13 July 1965, and is married with four daughters.

He holds a diploma from Msida high school.

After serving in the Maltese Police (1987-1989) and a period of employment at the Bank of Valletta, p.l.c. (1989-1999) he held the following positions: personal assistant to the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (1999-2004); officer and, subsequently, manager at the Bank of Valletta p.l.c. (2005-2008); director of the company Infratec Pro Ltd and vice president of the Employment & Training Corp. (2008-2010); personal assistant to the European Commissioner for Health and Consumers (2010-2013); bank manager (2013-2014); adviser to the President for Relations with the Holy See (2014-2016); president of the Department for the Defence of Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Ministry of Justice since 2018, and member of the "Geoparks Commission" at the Ministry of the Environment. He is the author of several publications and television productions on the papacy of Saint John Paul II and on the Vatican.

He knows English.

H.E. Mr. Nasser Bin Hamad Mubarak AL-KHALIFA
Ambassador of Qatar to the Holy See

H.E. Mr. Nasser Bin Hamad Mubarak Al-Khalifa was born in Doha on 15 July 1952.

He graduated in political science from the Western Michigan University. He then obtained a master's degree in international relations from John Hopkins University in 1982 and in international law from City University, London, 2006, then specializing at the University of Washington, Washington University, Columbia University, and the New School for Social Research, New York. He obtained a doctorate from the London School of Economics (2007-2009).

He embarked on a diplomatic career in 1977 and has held the following offices, among others: service at the embassy in Washington, United Nations permanent representative in New York and, later, in Paris (1977-1992); ambassador to Korea (1992-1994); ambassador to Italy (1994-1996); United Nations permanent representative in New York (1996-1998); ambassador to the United Kingdom (2000-2005); and ambassador to the United States of America (2005-2007). Following further studies from 2007 to 2009, he served as member of the

Weatherhead Center of International Affairs at Harvard University (2009-2016); ambassador to Australia (2016-2018); and ambassador to Croatia (from May 2018).

He knows English and Italian.

H.E. Mr. Paul TEESALU
Ambassador of Estonia to the Holy See

H.E. Mr. Paul Teesalu was born in Martna, on 24 February 1975, and is married with two children.

He studied at the Tartu Theological Seminary and graduated in theology from the University of Tartu (1993-1997). Subsequently, he attended the Estonian School of Diplomacy in Tallinn from 1997 to 1998).

He has held the following offices: desk officer at the Political Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998-2001); political officer at the Permanent Mission to the OSCE in Vienna (2001-2004); political officer at the Permanent Mission to NATO in Brussels (2004-2007); director of the UN Division and International Organizations at the First Political Department (2007-2009); director of the Security Policy Division at the First Political Department (2009-2010); ambassador to Egypt, permanent observer at the Arab League and permanent observer at the African Union (2010-2014); political director and general director of the Political Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014-2018); undersecretary for Political Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (since 2018).

He knows English, German and Russian.
