



**UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

November 13, 2002

HC-60-02

The United States Mission to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations and has the honor to advise them of the definition which applies to the term “family” as that term is used for the purpose of extension of diplomatic privileges and immunities by the host country. This circular note replaces the United States Mission’s note of March 16, 1987 on the same subject.

For the purposes of the application in the United States of paragraph 37 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, operative for Permanent Mission to the United Nations through Section 15 of the Headquarters Agreement between the United States and the United Nations, “family...forming part of ...household” means the spouse of the member of the Mission and his or her unmarried children under 21 years of age, who are not members of some other household, and who reside exclusively in that Mission member’s household. Additionally, the term “family” includes that Mission member’s children under 23 years of age, provided that such children are attending an institution of higher learning on a full-time basis.

Other personal who are not members of some other household, who reside exclusively in the Mission member's household, and who are recognized by the sending state as members of the family forming part of that household, may be considered "family" for the purposes of the Vienna Convention under very exceptional circumstances and with the expressed approval of the United States Government. In such cases, a formal request for consideration by the United States Department of State must be submitted to the United States Mission. The request must include full justification for the requested exception.

The attention of the Permanent Mission is also drawn to the applicable provisions of international law in respect of termination status of family members. Whenever any person who has been accorded "family" status for the purposes of diplomatic privileges and immunities in the United States ceases to reside with the principal Mission member, marries, or otherwise ceases to be part of the Mission member's household, such person immediately ceases to be a member of the "family" within the meaning of international law and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Accordingly, all privileges and immunities to which such person has been entitled in the United States would terminate.

It is emphasized that the standard set forth in this note is solely to define members of the family pursuant to the terms of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations with regard to the extension of diplomatic privileges and immunities. It is without prejudice to other definitions of family for other purposes, such as the continued eligibility for "G" visa status, which have an independent basis in international agreements or United States domestic law.

The United States Mission to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.