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United States Department of State  
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Office of Inspector General

# Report of Inspection

Embassy Abidjan,  
Cote d' Ivoire

Report Number ISP-I-08-10A, March 2008

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# **PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION**

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of State.

## **PURPOSE**

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department of State, its posts abroad, and related activities. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and being accurately and effectively represented; and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; whether instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist: and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records in the Department and elsewhere; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on site interviews with personnel at the overseas missions, in the Department, and elsewhere; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with office, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.



United States Department of State  
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

*Office of Inspector General*

PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, the Arms Control and Disarmament Amendments Act of 1987, and the Department of State and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 1996. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its oversight responsibility with respect to the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors to identify and prevent fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations therein have been developed on the basis of the best knowledge available to the OIG, and have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Todd", written in a cursive style.

William E. Todd  
Acting Inspector General

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## KEY JUDGMENTS

- The embassy's former executive direction did not pay sufficient attention to management issues or communication with American and locally employed (LE) staff. The recently arrived Ambassador and deputy chief of mission (DCM) are giving priority to improving communications
- Deficiencies in certain key management operations are compounded by poor communication within the management section, as well as between the management section and other mission elements. Executive involvement is required to address these issues,
- Embassy participation on the International Community School of Abidjan (ICSA) school board and attention to school administration has been minimal at best. There appears to be no written record of an agreement between the embassy and the school granting the school permission to lease U.S. government-owned property (the school's former location) to the United Nations. The embassy does not know how the \$2 million received from the leased property has been spent.
- The new embassy compound (NEC) was designed and constructed when Embassy Abidjan was a much larger mission that served as a regional support center for West Africa. Ongoing political turmoil has resulted in major downsizing of mission staff, leaving the current occupancy of the NEC at less than two-thirds of capacity. Post and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) are devising plans to close off large sections of the facility to reduce operating expenses. However, post management should also develop options for relocating other U.S. government activities from elsewhere in Abidjan into vacant NEC office space.
- The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) manages an active and cohesive program for prevention, treatment, and mitigation of HIV and AIDS under the leadership of the Ambassador and PEPFAR coordinator.

- Embassy Abidjan maintains a very active public diplomacy program out of its Information Resource Center within the NEC and three American Corners throughout the country. Management oversight of the American Corners, including the accountability of funds, is deficient.
- The U.S. government still owns a recreation center in Abidjan, but embassy staff no longer uses this facility because it is not located near the NEC or the area where most staff now reside. Post management is working with OBO to sell this property, and the Office of Inspector General (OIG) team believes the proceeds of sale should be applied to establish a recreational facility located closer to the NEC and staff housing.
- The cell phone program at Embassy Abidjan is very efficiently managed. The OIG team identified a best practice relating to the management and operations of the program.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 4 and 24, 2007, and in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, between October 15 and 31, 2007. Ambassador Joseph G. Sullivan (team leader), Paul R. Smith (deputy team leader), Perry Adair, William Belcher, Eric Chavera, Michael Kirby, Matthew Koch, Dennis Matthews, Robert Ripley, and Michael Yoder conducted the inspection.

## CONTEXT

Cote d'Ivoire is a mid-sized West African country approximately the size of New Mexico with a population approaching 18 million. Close ties to France since independence in 1960, and the development of cocoa production to become the



world's largest exporter, made Cote d'Ivoire one of the most prosperous countries in the region, but did not protect it from political turmoil. In December 1999, a military coup – the first ever in Cote d'Ivoire's history – overthrew the government several years after the death of its first president. The civil war that followed left the country divided with rebel forces occupying the northern half of the country and the government in control of the south. U.S. Foreign Assistance Act Section 508 sanctions on assistance to the government of Cote d'Ivoire were

declared following the 1999 coup, and a UN peacekeeping force was authorized in 2004 to monitor a buffer zone between the north and south. U.S. sanctions and UN peacekeeping forces remain in place today. January 2003 talks in France produced a peace agreement that led to a government of national reconciliation followed by numerous other agreements under peace initiatives supported by the African Union and the UN Security Council. However, none of these agreements were fully implemented, and all failed to lead to reunification of the country, or the organization of presidential and parliamentary elections.

In March 2007, the rival parties themselves worked out a new power-sharing agreement which, was signed in Ouagadougou and calls for presidential elections by early 2008. The international community has been quick to welcome these “home-grown” developments, partly because of the lack of any viable alternative. The election timeline will likely slide because a number of crucial issues remain to be resolved, such as the reintegration of the military, the disarmament of militias, the full restoration of government control throughout the country, and the establishment of citizenship status and electoral registration. Although Section 508 sanctions on U.S. assistance to the government remain in place, Cote d’Ivoire is one of 15 focus countries worldwide under PEPFAR.

U.S. Embassy Abidjan currently has 58 direct-hire Americans and 310 LE staff working for the Department of State (Department), Department of Defense, Health and Human Services’ Center for Disease Control and Prevention (HHS/CDC) and Open Source Center (OSC).



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Ambassador, who arrived in Abidjan two weeks prior to the inspection, is a career Foreign Service officer who has served previously as ambassador and twice as DCM in Africa and as principal deputy assistant secretary in a functional bureau of the Department. The DCM, who arrived eight weeks prior to the OIG team, has served previously as DCM in another embassy in Africa.

Until recently, executive direction of the embassy was focused very largely outside the mission in support of the embassy's large and very successful PEPFAR program and to demonstrate American support for an end to the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire. The previous ambassador made frequent public appearances and demarches in support of these objectives. While regional peace agreements have prevented renewed clashes for the last year, the agreed steps for judicial reform and election preparations necessary to end the country's division and restore normality have not occurred. The current challenge for the embassy and the U.S. government is whether the United States can do more to move the peace and election process forward and help move the country toward reunification and political stability, which would allow renewed economic prosperity and the gradual withdrawal of UN peacekeeping troops.

The Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) for FY 2009, prepared in early 2007, effectively sets forth the mission's key goals of promoting democracy, good governance and human rights, regional stability, global health and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, and securing cooperation for counterterrorism efforts. The plan was not the product of a mission-wide effort, nor was it used as a living document to plan and measure mission performance. The embassy will have the opportunity in early 2008 to utilize the preparation of the MSP for FY 2010 as the basis for development of a mission-wide effort to develop policy goals and the plan for implementing them. An informal recommendation was made to this effect.

The previous ambassador engaged extensively to assure the embassy made effective use of its PEPFAR resources to prevent further spread of the HIV/AIDS virus, provide treatment to those infected, and mitigate the effects of the disease on orphans, vulnerable children, and others affected by the disease. The PEPFAR coordinator reports directly to the Ambassador and DCM, and the PEPFAR team has had the Ambassador's strong support in assuring the government of Cote d'Ivoire provided the necessary cooperation to allow the PEPFAR team to implement a very effective program. The PEPFAR Cote d'Ivoire team submits extensive annual documentation of its program results and its requests for following-year funding to the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator. The Ambassador worked closely with the PEPFAR coordinator, the large CDC office, and the small U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), LE staff, and supporting USAID staff from the West Africa regional office to assure all the necessary support for development and monitoring of an effective PEPFAR program. In 2008, the Defense Attaché Office will utilize PEPFAR funds to hire a staff member to carry out HIV/AIDS activities with the armed forces in Cote d'Ivoire. The current DCM, in her role as charge d'affaires, has helped assure HHS/CDC has been able to work with embassy management to recruit the necessary staff to carry out and monitor the PEPFAR program, which is expected to grow to \$140 million in FY 2008.

The executive direction of the mission supported and directed mission reporting, which was focused well on the mission's major priorities. The current Ambassador and DCM are off to a good start in providing guidance and leadership to the predominantly newly arrived reporting staff.

## Resource Management

The mission's executive direction has not engaged sufficiently in recent years on internal management issues, including those affecting human resources, financial management of the mission, and related issues. The recently arrived Ambassador and DCM recognize this need and are engaging in regular and extensive meetings on the full range of management issues to assure that the mission's human and financial resources are managed well.

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## Entry-Level Officers

The embassy has not had a regularly functioning entry-level officer (ELO) program in the past year. The newly arrived Ambassador and DCM have each met with ELO generalists and specialists and are consulting with them about the development of an ELO program most useful for their development.

## Equal Employment Opportunity

The embassy has not had an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) officer since at least March 2007. The DCM has acted recently to recruit an EEO officer and secure the earliest possible training.

## Security

Embassy Abidjan's mission security program is strong, effective, and well-managed. The Ambassador, the DCM, and the regional security officer (RSO) are all newly arrived. The DCM and RSO appear to have established a strong working relationship, and professional relations have been established on security issues among key post personnel. A more detailed review of the mission's security programs can be found in the classified annex to this report.

## Rightsizing

The size of embassy Abidjan has trended downward in recent years as a result of security issues and political instability. Only a few agencies, including the Department of Defense and the CDC, are beginning to increase their personnel once again from the number of staff to which these agencies reduced. The OIG team does not support the request for two additional Department positions in the FY 2009 MSP. These staffing issues are discussed at greater length in the appropriate section of the report. Embassy Abidjan is scheduled for a rightsizing exercise in 2008, at which time staffing issues should be thoroughly addressed.



## POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

### POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Embassy officers are actively engaged in efforts to promote democracy and human rights, refugee affairs, political stability, and economic growth in Cote d'Ivoire. The OIG team determined current conditions do not support the embassy's request for a second economic officer position and identified a need to ensure officers with grant program responsibility receive training in program management. The team also recommended that political/economic (P/E) section reporting on counterterrorism be expanded, a P/E reporting plan be prepared, travel and representational plans be prepared, vetting procedures be strengthened, and small grant funds be more efficiently used and projects more actively monitored.

The P/E section consists of four officers, one office management specialist, and five LE staff positions. The P/E counselor supervises one officer covering political affairs, one covering primarily economic issues, one regional refugee coordinator, and the office management specialist. LE staff in the section include a political assistant, an economic assistant, a refugee assistant, a Self Help (SH) and Democracy & Human Rights Fund (DHRF) grants coordinator, and a translator (currently vacant but due to be filled in late October 2007). The Department's Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration Affairs (PRM) directly funds the regional refugee coordinator, the refugee assistant, and a driver. The P/E counselor and the regional refugee coordinator are new, arriving in July and October 2007, respectively.

Cote d'Ivoire remains divided, south and north, between government and rebel forces. Presidential and parliamentary elections, originally scheduled for late 2005, have been postponed several times; elections do not appear possible until 2008 at the earliest. The identification and registration of several million undocumented people born in Cote d'Ivoire, an essential step toward preparing for elections, is moving more slowly than expected. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, also vital for reunification of the country, have been stalled. U.S. nonhumanitarian assistance to Cote d'Ivoire is suspended consistent with section 508 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Appropriations Act, which restricts direct assistance to the government of any country whose duly elected head of govern-

ment is deposed by decree or military coup until such time as the President determines and certifies to Congress that a democratically elected government has taken office.

## Staffing

In its FY-2009 MSP, Embassy Abidjan stated it seeks resources to fund an additional economic officer position lost in 2007. While the OIG team notes embassy concerns that the lack of Foreign Commercial Service and USAID presence in Cote d'Ivoire results in a workload warranting a second economic officer position, the team believes the embassy is able at this time to cover adequately all priority issues with existing officer and LE staff resources and does not support funding an additional economic officer position. Additionally, the team does not believe circumstances have changed sufficiently since the position was eliminated earlier this year to justify restoring it. Should free and fair elections be held, Section 508 sanctions lifted, and U.S. bilateral trade with Cote d'Ivoire grow substantially (U.S. exports in 2006 totaled \$147.5 million), however, conditions may justify the Department's funding an additional economic officer position at a later date.

**Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of African Affairs should not approve Embassy Abidjan's FY-2009 Mission Strategic Plan request for a second economic officer. (Action: AF)

The P/E section has undergone significant transition in recent months. One officer departed Cote d'Ivoire early on medical evacuation, leaving the section short staffed for several months. Additionally, the section translator, who effectively acts as the embassy translator, providing services for the front office and other sections in addition to P/E, resigned. With the arrival in the section of the P/E counselor, the regional refugee coordinator, the SH/DHRF coordinator, and a new translator, the P/E section will be back to full strength as of late October.

Overall, the P/E section has done an effective job in reporting on priority political and economic issues. In the OIG survey conducted in Washington prior to the inspection of Embassy Abidjan, Washington consumers generally expressed satisfaction with Abidjan reporting. One office praised an Abidjan cable on conflict diamonds, which included analysis and reporting from rebel-held areas in the north of Cote d'Ivoire. Another consumer appreciated the embassy's ability to report on

democracy and human rights issues despite being encumbered by limited staffing and restricted travel in country, and praised embassy analysis of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement progress and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration.

Although the OIG team believes that P/E section reporting has effectively addressed the MSP goals of democracy/human rights, regional stability, and economic prosperity, reporting on MSP Goal #4, Counterterrorism, is notably lacking. In the future, the P/E section should ensure reporting on counterterrorism is commensurate with the issue's status as a key MSP goal and should work with other offices in the embassy to ensure mission reporting on counterterrorism is coordinated. An informal recommendation was made.

At the time of the inspection, the P/E section had no reporting plan to provide the necessary structure to ensure that all key political and economic issues are adequately covered. The OIG team believes that preparing a P/E reporting plan for FY-2008 will both improve reporting and ensure it better reflects MSP priorities. An informal recommendation was made.

The P/E section does not have in place either a travel plan or a representational plan, which can help to assure travel/representational requests are properly prioritized, maximizing the likelihood key needs are met. The OIG team believes that the P/E section should prepare travel and representational plans for FY-2008. An informal recommendation was made.

The Leahy Amendment and policies developed to implement the amendment prohibit the use of foreign assistance funds to support foreign security forces where there is credible evidence such forces have committed gross human rights violations. The Department's Leahy vetting process is used to determine whether there is such evidence prior to providing assistance. While Leahy vetting cases in Cote d'Ivoire may be limited given the current political climate and existing Section 508 sanctions, the OIG team determined the embassy has not developed appropriate checklists and standard operating procedures for Leahy vetting oversight as instructed in the April 2007 report, "Compliance with the Department of State and Department of Defense Leahy Amendments: A Guide to the Vetting Process." An informal recommendation was made.

The new P/E counselor has sought to build a sense of team within the P/E section. She holds sectional meetings each week with all P/E American and LE staff. Additionally, the DCM meets regularly with the entire P/E section, which sends a clear signal to all section members that the executive office is interested and engaged in their issues.

One issue that could have a potentially negative impact on team cohesion, however, is the location of P/E LE staff offices. While the offices of the political assistant, economic assistant, and refugee assistant are located in close proximity, the office of the SH/DHRF coordinator is not. The OIG team believes the embassy should ensure P/E LE staff offices are located in close proximity to each other. Such an arrangement will also enhance ongoing section efforts to develop cross-training/back-up coverage among section employees/issues. An informal recommendation was made.

As a final section management issue, the OIG team notes the P/E section's establishment of an electronic chronology file, which places in one electronic file all P/E section reporting. This mechanism adds to the efficiency of section operations by placing all section reporting, as far back as 2005, within quick and easy reach.

## Refugee and Migration Affairs

PRM funds a regional refugee coordinator (Refcoord), who oversees refugee and assistance issues in West Africa and is located in the P/E section and reports to the P/E counselor. PRM also funds a refugee assistant and a driver in the embassy in support of the coordinator. The Refcoord engages with the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), USAID/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and other partners monitoring displacement in Cote d'Ivoire to help identify unmet humanitarian needs.

The Refcoord is responsible for monitoring PRM-funded programs in her region and for monitoring global grants to UNHCR, portions of which are spent on programs in her region of responsibility. Currently PRM is not funding nongovernmental organizations unless they are in Liberia; the focus is on repatriation and reintegration of Liberian refugees in the region.

Refcoord oversight of these programs is active. The Refcoord provides weekly activity reports on programs to PRM by e-mail; following every site visit/monitoring trip within her region, the Refcoord submits a cabled report to Washington. For PRM-funded programs with nongovernmental organizations, the Refcoord typically conducts a site visit six to nine months into a project to see how it is progressing; monitoring of UNHCR is effectively continuous, with reports submitted to PRM as circumstances require. The Refcoord's travel is funded by PRM in Washington. Grants for activities monitored by the Refcoord are prepared entirely in Washington; the comptroller sits in PRM and prepares contracts in coordination with the





## Small Grants Programs

The P/E section provides oversight of small grants for transformational diplomacy. The SH/DHRF coordinator reports directly to the P/E counselor.

Although selection/rank ordering of small grant projects for funding was previously entrusted to an embassy committee, in practice, representation on this committee was limited primarily to P/E section members. As the embassy begins the next funding cycle, efforts are being made to broaden participation in this committee.

The Ambassador's SH Fund assists community groups in small development projects. In 2006, Embassy Abidjan used its full \$70,000 funds availability to fund 18 activities. The executive office has sought to spread grants as broadly as possible to maximize the impact of the grants. Twelve activities funded involved transformational equipment, such as grinding and husking machines for small villages.

With regard to DHRF projects, in 2006 the embassy used \$33,236 of its \$90,000 available to fund two activities: one program aimed at combating female genital mutilation; and one program designed to educate and empower women and girls by means of literacy courses, public health training, and dissemination of information on HIV/AIDS.

In SH, DHRF, and Refcoord programs, embassy personnel are asked to assume some oversight responsibility for assistance programs. This responsibility may fall to P/E section officers with no prior experience working with grant programs. Several Embassy Abidjan personnel with involvement in grant programs have received no formal Foreign Service Institute training in managing or evaluating such programs.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Foreign Service Institute, should develop and implement a plan for Department personnel with responsibility for foreign assistance/grant programs to complete the Foreign Service Institute's course PP-223, Managing Foreign Assistance Awards. (Action: Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with DGHR and FSI)

Given Abidjan's status as a USAID nonpresence post, and because of Section 508 sanctions in place that severely restrict bilateral assist to Cote d'Ivoire, Embassy Abidjan's small grant programs have greater importance than at other embassies in the region where large assistance programs may be in place. The OIG team believes in the future, embassy offices should look to fund projects making full use of available DHRF funds in order to maximize the benefit of this program. An informal recommendation was made.

As for program oversight and monitoring, embassy representatives, either American or LE staff, conducted site visits to all of the SH/DHRF projects in country. The embassy has effectively combined travel in country with site visits to use travel funds as efficiently as possible. However, not all SH/DHRF project sites received a visit from an American. To the extent that travel/funding resources permit, the OIG team encourages the embassy to provide opportunities for American staff to conduct site visits of as many projects as possible. An informal recommendation was made.

## Foreign Assistance

As mentioned above, Section 508 sanctions severely restrict bilateral foreign assistance to Cote d'Ivoire. By far the largest assistance program in country is under PEPFAR. Cote d'Ivoire is one of 15 PEPFAR focus countries; under PEPFAR, the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator is appointed by President Bush to coordinate and oversee the U.S. response to HIV/AIDS. This includes ensuring coordination among U.S. government agencies and to approve all activities aimed at combating HIV/AIDS in the 15 focus countries. The coordinator reports directly to the Secretary of State.

Cote d'Ivoire has an HIV prevalence of 4.7 percent, the highest in the West African region. The U.S. government is by far the largest supporter of HIV/AIDS efforts in Cote d'Ivoire; in 2007, U.S. government/PEPFAR support of \$84 million represented 70 percent of the budget dedicated to HIV/AIDS in Cote d'Ivoire. Of the \$84 million targeted for Cote d'Ivoire in FY 2007, the CDC received \$57 million, while USAID received \$27 million. The preliminary FY 2008 PEPFAR country operational plan for Cote d'Ivoire calls for PEPFAR funding of approximately \$120 million.

Coordinated by the host government, the U.S. government interagency emergency plan team, and implementing partners, the fight against HIV/AIDS in Cote d'Ivoire is steadily moving forward and achieving significant gains. Individuals receiving HIV/AIDS care and support in Cote d'Ivoire increased from an estimated

10,000 in 2004 to 145,000 in FY 2007, while 100 percent of blood units distributed nationwide in FY 2007 were screened for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and syphilis. Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is reaching more patients (estimated at 47,500, up from 2,100 in FY 2004) through expanded AIDS testing, improved pediatric HIV treatment and care, improved availability of commodities, and opening of ART/preventing mother to child transmission (PMTCT) sites in underserved areas. Another positive indicator is improved detection/treatment of HIV/tuberculosis co-infection. In FY-08, PEPFAR-supported programs are expected to counsel and test 351,000 people, including 20,000 at tuberculosis treatment sites. With PEPFAR support, Cote d'Ivoire PMTCT programs in FY 2008 will grow to 264 sites, will counsel and test 215,000 pregnant women for HIV, and will provide antiretroviral prophylaxis for 15,000 HIV-infected pregnant women.

Orphans and vulnerable children strategies focus on significantly increased resources aimed at building local capacity and linkages to ensure assessment and integrated care (including pediatric HIV care, if needed) for any child living in an HIV-affected household, with effective referrals and follow-up. Sixteen percent of children in Cote d'Ivoire are orphans and vulnerable children, including eight percent who have lost at least one parent to AIDS; PEPFAR will support direct services for 63,000 orphans and vulnerable children in the coming year. A partnership with the Ministry of Education is working to improve the quality and coverage of HIV prevention through life skills training for students, to reduce HIV transmission among students and teachers through age-appropriate behavior change communication designed to delay sexual debut and promote fidelity, partner reduction and uptake of counseling and testing, and to address negative gender and discriminatory attitudes.

Within Embassy Abidjan, the PEPFAR country coordinator, funded by CDC but under the supervision and direction of the Ambassador, works closely with CDC and USAID representatives to lead overall PEPFAR intervention in Cote d'Ivoire. In turn, the agency heads oversee their organizations' programs in country on behalf of the PEPFAR program, although project coordinators oversee programs carried out by partners regardless of funding source. The bulk of CDC's 90 employees work in a facility located on the campus of the largest teaching hospital in Abidjan; plans are currently underway to relocate 10 of these positions within the embassy.

CDC programming activities are implemented through cooperative agreements processed through CDC headquarters in Atlanta and the Department of Health and Human Services. USAID programs are implemented through grants prepared in Washington, with legal and other support provided from USAID's regional office in Accra, Ghana. Because the lack of colocation of USAID's contracting officer

and legal advisor has proven problematic, PEPFAR will fund an American USAID contracting officer position in Accra to provide contracting services for the Abidjan PEPFAR program.

The PEPFAR program in Cote d'Ivoire has been a significant success. The PEPFAR coordinator in Abidjan has effectively organized and coordinated among agency heads in pursuit of an overall PEPFAR strategy in Cote d'Ivoire. Her management approach has stressed the team concept; agency heads have acknowledged their "leaving their agency hat at the door" has been critical to fostering a sense of teamwork and unity of purpose, aimed at promoting the U.S. government/PEPFAR effort – rather than the parochial interests of a particular agency. OIG inspectors have been struck both by the unified interagency commitment to the PEPFAR mission, as well as by the lack of bureaucratic in-fighting. The Cote d'Ivoire PEPFAR coordinator's scheduled departure from Abidjan next summer will pose a significant challenge, as forceful and dynamic coordinators are vital for sustained program success.

As indicated in the Executive Direction section of this report, the active role and leadership of the Ambassador and DCM has also been critical to PEPFAR success in Cote d'Ivoire. Without clear direction on the part of the embassy's executive office, the PEPFAR effort in Cote d'Ivoire would not have enjoyed the success it has to date. Sustained commitment to PEPFAR of the Ambassador and DCM will be essential for continued progress.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The public affairs section (PAS) is located in the NEC and consists of a public affairs officer (PAO), an information officer (IO), and 15 LE staff. The PAO, a political cone officer on her first public diplomacy (PD) assignment, was scheduled to arrive at post to begin her assignment following the inspection. The IO, a Department Civil Service employee on an excursion assignment, arrived at post shortly before the inspection and was serving as acting PAO. She was already participating fully in embassy program planning and coordination and met frequently with the charge d'affaires. The LE staff is experienced and highly motivated. For several weeks during the summer, between the departure of the former PAO and IO and the arrival of the new IO, the LE staff successfully maintained all elements of a very broad public diplomacy program without direct American supervision.

A third American position, the cultural affairs officer, was eliminated in 2007 with the departure of the incumbent. The embassy requested the return of this position in its FY 2009 MSP, but the OIG team believes two officers are adequate to meet current program needs. With the shift from three officers to two, the IO has assumed many of the program management responsibilities of the former cultural affairs officer and has in effect become the assistant public affairs officer. The embassy should revise both the work requirements and title of this position to reflect those added responsibilities. An informal recommendation was made.

Public affairs programming tracks closely with current embassy MSP priorities, including the promotion of democracy and good governance, regional stability, conflict resolution, and global health. PAS has been particularly active and creative in its outreach to Muslim communities, the promotion of cross-cultural understanding, and support for PEPFAR. The embassy participates in the full range of available educational exchange programs, including Fulbright graduate and senior lecturer programs, the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship, and African Senior Research Scholars programs, as well as summer institutes for English teachers and American studies specialists. The embassy international visitor committee chaired by the DCM selected 12 participants for programs during FY 2007. The Information Resource Center (IRC), located in the NEC, and three American Corners in Abidjan, Yamoussoukro, and Tiassale provide the platform for much of the embassy's information outreach and public diplomacy programming.

## Information Resource Center

Embassy Abidjan's IRC is a model for public diplomacy operations that have relocated from facilities with ready public access to the more secure environment provided by NEC facilities. The move in 2005 from a location in the center of Abidjan to the NEC some distance from the center has, in fact, resulted in a steady increase in target audience attendance instead of the decrease that many embassies experience. There are two principal reasons for this: creative programming and a commitment by all elements of the embassy to make the IRC work. The IRC has a circulating collection of 4,400 books, approximately 1,000 reference volumes, an extensive CD-ROM reference collection, and subscriptions to 25 periodicals. Five workstations provide public Internet access, and a digital videoconferencing facility offers embassy contacts frequent connectivity with American counterparts on MSP topics such as the U.S. legal system and conflict resolution. The IRC will accommodate up to 100 people. Three program initiatives are of note because they consistently draw large target audiences. The "Book of the Month" is a monthly

conference-style program featuring a specific title designed to stimulate discussion for decision makers around an MSP theme. “Cross Cultural Research” is a workshop series designed to enhance the information research skills among graduate students in specific disciplines. During the past year, workshops involving more than 200 graduate students included research topics such as diversity in the United States, social integration, and intercultural dialogue. The immersion session is a series of programs designed to introduce the IRC to new target audience groups, quite often from outside Abidjan. A monthly IRC newsletter is distributed to embassy contacts as well as embassy employees who are active participants in programs, both at the IRC and the three American Corners. Student advising services are provided at the IRC by a contractor.

The IRC is currently managed by two LE staff specialists who, in addition to coordinating a very busy program schedule, also provide electronic reference and information outreach services to embassy contacts and the embassy’s three American Corners. Two positions are not adequate for a program of this magnitude. Until recently, the IRC had a third LE staff information resource technician position (#100570), but, as discussed in the rightsizing section of this report, the management counselor arbitrarily eliminated this position. An informal recommendation was made in the rightsizing section of this report to fill the position.

## American Corners

The embassy has established three American Corners in Cote d’Ivoire and is considering up to four more in the future. The first was opened in 2003 in Abidjan’s Center for Ivorian Economic and Social Research. Two more were opened in 2005 at the National Technical University in Yamoussoukro and at a regional library in Tiassale. Some years ago, Yamoussoukro was designated as the political capital of Cote d’Ivoire and, while a significant move of power from Abidjan has not yet taken place, there are plans for the federal assembly to relocate to Yamoussoukro within the next couple of years. The corner will be well placed to serve new target audiences in that city. The embassy provided financial support to all three partner institutions to renovate the facilities and purchase book and reference collections, furniture, and computer equipment. The corner in Yamoussoukro has 15 computer work stations, and the Tiassale corner has seven. The responsibilities for managing the three corners are stipulated in memoranda of understanding (MOU) between the embassy and the host institutions, but the OIG team noted deficiencies in the actual management of those facilities. None of the corners currently maintains records of visitation or services, nor do they submit reports to the embassy as stipulated in the

MOUs. All three corners charge membership fees but apparently do not maintain accounting records. None of the corners were able to provide visitation or accounting records when requested by the OIG team during site visits. Although the MOUs stipulate the corner host institutions will provide telephone and Internet service to the corners, the corner in Yamoussoukro currently does not have a telephone connection. One result is the embassy provided digital videoconference equipment that is unusable. Although the MOU stipulates the host institution will provide dedicated staff and Internet service, the corner in Tiassale currently has neither.

The embassy's IRC is responsible for coordinating information and reference services to the three corners, and this has clearly not occurred since the elimination of the IRC technician position described earlier in this report. With the reinstatement of this position, IRC support to the three corners should improve. Nevertheless, overall management supervision of the corners by the embassy has not been adequate, especially the accountability of funds, and this should become an immediate priority.

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Abidjan should work with the three American Corners in Cote d'Ivoire to establish reliable mechanisms for the accountability of funds and program reporting. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)

One valuable resource the embassy has not adequately utilized is the regional information resource officer (IRO) located next door in Accra, Ghana. The IRO made one trip to Cote d'Ivoire during the past year, but visited only the IRC and American Corner in Abidjan. The embassy should work closely with the IRO in Accra to establish more efficient operations at all three of the American Corners that it supports before considering further expansion. The next IRO visit should include adequate time at the American Corners in Yamoussoukro and Tiassale for complete program evaluations and staff training. An informal recommendation was made.

## The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Program Support

PAS has been particularly active in coordinating public affairs support for the embassy's PEPFAR mission. PAS worked closely with the PEPFAR staff to organize a number of major events designed to provide the public a better understanding of HIV/AIDS issues. The "AIDS Roadshow" is an embassy public affairs initiative involving several days of educational programs and media events in a specific



city. PAS and PEPFAR worked together to organize a series of seminars and media events following the all-Africa PEPFAR conference held in Lusaka, Zambia as well as an ongoing series of workshops for journalists covering HIV/AIDS issues.

## CONSULAR AFFAIRS

The consular section in Abidjan is well-managed, well-designed, and generously staffed. The section chief uses strong interpersonal and management skills to form an impressive, cohesive team of LE staff, ELOs, and an eligible family member consular associate. The NEC provides the consular section a workspace that is logical, comfortable, and spacious. The workload is too light to justify current American staffing.

Internal controls are in place, and management is guarding against waste, fraud, and misappropriation of public property. Inventories of visa foils, emergency passport foils, consular reports of birth abroad, and all other controlled consular items have been completed. The Consular Affairs System User List is current and correct. Cashiering operations meet Foreign Affairs Manual guidelines. Cash counts have been conducted in a timely manner without discrepancies. Supervisors have appropriate line of sight for consular operations, with the exception of cashiering operations. An informal recommendation was made.

The consular section adjudicates nonimmigrant visas Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Immigrant visa interviews are scheduled Monday through Thursday from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Published hours for American citizens services (ACS) are Monday and Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and Tuesday and Thursday from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. On Fridays, the section is officially closed to the public and the day is spent on staff meetings, training, and administrative matters. On Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, the section maintains an information window where LE staff take questions from the general public about specific visa cases, but also spend time providing general information about consular services that should be displayed outside the embassy. An informal recommendation was made.

The consular section offers a spacious waiting room. Five interview windows are used for visa operations: one for intake, one for fingerprints, and up to three for visa interviews. A sixth window is used for the cashier, and fees for consular services are displayed. A seventh window is available for ACS. A private interview room is

also available as needed for ACS interviews. Three contract guards oversee the waiting room area. Given the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Cote D'Ivoire, guards should receive training on how to manage a medical emergency involving a visa client. An informal recommendation was made.

The embassy visa referral system policy complies with the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs guidelines. A policy memorandum from the Ambassador and frequent training sessions explain the referral system to the mission. The executive office expects duty officers to understand their consular responsibilities, and the consular section provides training. The Visas Viper committee meets monthly and meets its reporting requirement. Under the previous Ambassador and DCM, the consular section did not participate in the MSP. The most recent MSP does not include consular goals or benchmarks. Acknowledgement of the need to protect American citizens (in a country plagued by crime and political unrest and where a travel warning is in place) was made part of the Chief of Mission statement, attached to the MSP. An informal recommendation was made.

Fraud is a serious concern in Abidjan, and the consular section has moved to address the issue. In 2006, the section added two LE staff fraud investigators. Working with the consular associate, they form a fraud prevention unit to combat fraud in an organized, comprehensive manner. A validation study for embassy referrals yielded mixed results because more than half of those who received visas could not be contacted. For immigrant visa cases, familial relationships are difficult to verify. The section increasingly relies on DNA testing. The civil war led to the destruction of public records in many parts of the country. As a result, fraud prevention unit investigators find it difficult to verify birth, marriage, death, and other proofs of identity. When civil registrars are available, local government offices often lack copying machines. An informal recommendation was made.

Working with the PAS, the consular section staff has designed an excellent public outreach program, including press briefings and public speaking opportunities with potential clients.

The section chief and his staff have devoted considerable time and effort to re-drafting position descriptions for the LE staff and reorganizing the section. The new organization will divide American and LE staff into two units: one for visas and ACS, the other for fraud prevention. It gives supervisory responsibilities to the two American ELOs and the senior LE staff. Once approved, the LE staff production team will train in all aspects of consular services and become interchangeable. The reorganization plan is a boost to morale and is consistent with recommended best practices.

The consular section maintains an outstanding warden system, using text messaging to reach wardens located in all geographic areas. The regional consular officer has recommended that text messaging to reach wardens be considered one of the Bureau of Consular Affairs' best practices.

Workload for visa adjudication cases and ACS in Abidjan's consular section remains light. Nonimmigrant visa adjudications have dropped, and more than half of immigrant visa adjudications are diversity visa cases from Sierra Leone. The embassy in Sierra Leone expects to receive added staffing next year and will do its own diversity visa cases. Although the regional consular officer states Abidjan can provide temporary duty officers to other posts in the region, the reality is very little temporary duty assistance is being provided. The embassy's decision to curtail the current consular section chief and create a six-month staffing gap was based in part on management's belief the section could manage with two American staff positions "without adversely affecting our operations." The two ELO consular officers now in place arrived this year and both tours will end in 2009. The OIG team believes one of those two positions should be eliminated.

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should eliminate one of two entry-level officer positions in the consular section when the current officer's scheduled tour of duty ends in February 2009. (Action: Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with CA)



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2007
State – D&CP	24		19	43	2,249,100
State – ICASS	8	3	162	173	9,165,400
State – Public Diplomacy	2		14	16	722,100
State – Diplomatic Security & Marine Security	11		4	15	1,839,936
State – Refugee Program	1		2	3	159,387
State – Representation					31,600
State – OBO					892,657
Foreign Commercial Service					159,320
Defense Attaché Office	5		2	8	298,756
OSC – Open Source Center	2		25	27	2,607,000
USAID – PEPFAR			1	1	1,164,900
PEPFAR					80,000,000
Center for Disease Control	5		78	83	4,617,787
USAID – OFDA					3,596,216
Self-Help Projects					70,000
DHRF					90,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>107,664,159</b>

### MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Deficiencies in certain key management operations have been compounded by poor communication within the section, as well as between the management section

and other mission elements. Executive involvement is required to address these issues, which have contributed to operational inefficiencies

Along with the rest of the embassy, the management section has undergone a significant reduction in both American and LE staff. While continuing to provide the same range of administrative support services to the downsized mission, management also faces the unique challenges of controlling the operational costs of the underutilized NEC and maintaining the sophisticated infrastructure of the facility.

The section is under the direction of an experienced senior Foreign Service management counselor. Her management team is capable, with experienced personnel in key positions and competent entry-level personnel in supporting roles. The management staff includes several recent arrivals, including the financial management officer, human resources officer, and a Foreign Service nurse practitioner. The information management (IM) section includes an information management officer (IMO) and two IM specialists. There are currently three general services officers (GSOs), but one of the positions will remain vacant after the departure of the incumbent later this year. An eligible family member is serving as a part-time administrative assistant, and another was recently hired to fill the vacant community liaison office coordinator position.

The 2007 International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) customer satisfaction survey scores for Embassy Abidjan were below the Bureau of African Affairs and worldwide average in several areas, particularly such important general services office operations as shipping and customs, procurement, motor pool, travel, and residential building operations and maintenance. The responses to the work and quality of life questionnaires prepared for this inspection indicated a similar degree of dissatisfaction with some, but not all, elements of management operations. The average score was particularly low for the overall running of the general services and management section, compared with the same figure for 53 posts OIG had previously inspected.

## General Services Office

The general services office is directed by a supervisory GSO (S/GSO) whose prior experience as a project manager with OBO has proven beneficial as post works with OBO to resolve problems with the NEC. Specifically, he collaborated with the facilities manager to identify warranty repairs, safety defects, and maintenance issues requiring OBO attention or funding.

As noted above, several elements of general services office operations received below average ratings on both the 2007 ICASS customer satisfaction survey and the workplace and quality of life questionnaire survey conducted for this inspection. The management officer and GSO recognize improvement is required and are taking active measures to address the deficiencies. One such measure is the designation of a general services office customer service representative responsible for ensuring timely service and information is provided to customers.

## Motor Pool

The motor pool inventory is in adequate condition and large enough to meet the current demand for official transportation. However, the existing fleet contains vehicles from several different manufacturers, including Ford, Chevrolet, Jeep, Mitsubishi, Hyundai, Mazda, Peugeot, and Toyota. It is relatively more difficult to maintain spare parts for such a wide array of vehicles, and motor pool maintenance would be more efficient if the fleet contained vehicles from the same manufacturer. Post management acknowledges this problem and has begun to standardize the fleet by purchasing eight new vehicles from a local Chevrolet dealer.

## Customs and Shipping

The most frequently cited customer complaint about the general services office was the lengthy time required between shipment and receipt of personal vehicles. In the latter operation, post managers noted delays with shipping vehicles from the United States originate with the Dispatch Agency in Baltimore, which holds vehicles until full shipments can be consolidated. Once vehicles arrive in Abidjan however, it can take several weeks for customs clearance, inspection, and registration before staff members have access to their vehicles. This not only degrades the morale of new staff members, it also creates an additional demand for motor pool support of home-to-office and other nonofficial transportation.

In a December 2006 diplomatic note, the embassy proposed specific measures to reduce the lengthy processing time, including special expedited customs clearance of diplomatic vehicles and the authorization for diplomats to operate their vehicles with temporary tags pending formal registration. The government of Cote d'Ivoire has taken no action to improve the situation, nor has the embassy received a formal response.

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Abidjan should undertake more robust efforts to engage the government of Cote d'Ivoire to reduce the amount of time from arrival to availability of personal vehicles for embassy staff. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)

## Warehousing and Inventory Management

The embassy maintains an expendable supply warehouse on the NEC and continues to operate a nonexpendable supply warehouse located some distance from the NEC, closer to the airport and harbor. Both facilities are well-maintained and operated in accordance with existing regulations for security and warehouse management procedures.

The embassy maintains separate inventories of appliances and furniture for Department and other agencies. Although the nonexpendable warehouse has adequate space for these separate inventories, the establishment of mission-wide appliance and furniture pools would offer several advantages. Specifically, it would simplify inventory recordkeeping and ensure uniform quality and quantity of household furnishings for all staff. It would also avoid unnecessary effort and potential damage in moving furniture and appliances when occupancy of a residence passes from one agency to another.

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Abidjan should implement appliance and furniture pools in order to achieve greater efficiency in managing inventories of nonexpendable U.S. government property. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)

The forklift required for loading and unloading heavy items from delivery vehicles at both the general services warehouse compound and at the perimeter loading dock at the NEC has not been operational for a number of months.

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Abidjan should repair or replace the forklift that is required for loading and unloading heavy items from delivery vehicles at both the general services warehouse compound and at the perimeter loading dock at the new embassy compound. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)



An important element of internal controls over embassy property inventory is the establishment of a property survey board, as defined in 14 FAM 416.5-2. Post management officials acknowledged in the OIG functional questionnaire this board has not been established. An informal recommendation was made.

## Facilities Maintenance

The NEC is an attractive and functional facility, but design and maintenance deficiencies have required the attention of embassy and OBO specialists. There is evidence most of these problems will be resolved either by the building contractor, the embassy, or OBO, but one significant maintenance issue remains unresolved. Specifically, the embassy does not have trained and qualified personnel on staff who can maintain the critical elements of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system, notably the water-cooled chillers.

OBO guidance on NEC construction requires that the building contractor provide training to post maintenance staff on all new critical building equipment and systems. Although some training was provided, the focus was on systems operation rather than diagnosis and repair. Post had requested OBO provide funding for such advanced training, but OBO replied that LE staff training was an expense that should be paid from post ICASS funds. The funding issue aside, post managers questioned whether the LE staff even have the requisite technical knowledge base-line to understand and apply such training.

Without such in-house capability, the embassy has been forced to bring a private contractor from South Africa for emergency repairs at a cost of about \$7,000 per visit from post ICASS funds. While the cost of such contractor support is one issue, post must also be assured of timely and responsive contractor support for these critical systems. As an alternative, post has proposed that OBO establish a regional maintenance center staffed by trained and qualified mechanics to support the sophisticated systems at Embassy Abidjan and other posts in Africa where NECs have been or will be constructed. Post understands some discussion of this concept has occurred within OBO, but is unaware of any plans at this time to establish a regional maintenance office in Africa. While the need for timely and reliable maintenance support of NECs in the African region is evident, Department management must first determine the source of funding for regional maintenance centers or other alternative solutions.

**Recommendation 8:** The Office of Management Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should determine how best to fund and provide trained and qualified personnel who can maintain and repair critical infrastructure systems at Embassy Abidjan and other posts with new embassy compounds in Africa. (Action: M/PRI, in coordination with OBO and AF)

## Real Property

In 2005, Embassy Abidjan relocated to a NEC that was designed at a time when the embassy was a regional support center with a considerably larger staff. Since that time, the ongoing political turmoil has resulted in a significant reduction in American and LE staff, leaving large sections of the NEC unoccupied. The embassy and OBO are considering actions to reduce building operating costs, such as closure of the unused sections of the facility.

Although this could result in some cost savings for the Department, another option for embassy management is the relocation to the NEC of U.S. government activities and personnel who are currently operating from other sites outside of the chancery. The OIG team noted that the Open Source Center has a total of 22 staff members in a separate U. S government-owned facility near the NEC. This facility was constructed before the NEC and meets the security and operational requirements of OSC. However, the OIG team believes that OSC could also operate effectively within the NEC, as has been demonstrated by the presence of OSC offices in other U.S. embassies. If the OSC is relocated to the NEC, the vacated facility could be disposed of, with the sale proceeds and operational cost savings accruing to the U.S. government.

The CDC has approximately 90 staff members working on the PEPFAR program in Abidjan, including 40 laboratory technicians and administrators and another 45 nontechnical staff who are located in a teaching hospital some distance from the NEC. The U.S. government paid for construction of the hospital about 20 years ago, and CDC therefore pays only for utilities and upkeep of the facilities. Five CDC staff members currently have offices in the NEC, and CDC plans to relocate another 10 administrative positions from the hospital to the NEC. CDC management believes that the 40 laboratory technicians and administrators should remain at the hospital and also prefers the remaining 35 nontechnical staff remain there as well. However, the OIG team believes there would be sufficient space in the NEC to relocate the 35 nontechnical CDC staff members.

Although OSC and CDC may prefer to remain in their current locations, embassy management should consider the advantages of relocating many of these personnel to the NEC. The parent agencies would pay a proportionate share of NEC operational costs, thus reducing the relative financial burden on the Department. The consolidation of staff would also contribute to the cohesiveness of the mission community and enhance the coordination of embassy program activities.

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should develop and submit options for review and approval by the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations to maximize use of U.S. government real property in Abidjan. (Action: Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with OBO)

The U.S. government owns other properties in Abidjan, including one which had previously served as a recreation center with a swimming pool, tennis court, and commissary for Embassy Abidjan staff and families. With the relocation of the embassy from the old chancery to the NEC, and the subsequent movement of staff to housing near the NEC, the mission community stopped using this remote recreation center. The embassy is working with OBO to sell this property.

Recreational facilities are important to community morale and cohesiveness in a hardship post such as Abidjan and a necessary element of readiness for U.S. Marine Corps security guard detachments. However, there were no recreational facilities constructed on the NEC grounds. In order to meet the recreational needs and improve morale of the mission community, the OIG team believes the existing unused recreational facility should be disposed of and the proceeds of sale devoted to the establishment of recreational facilities closer to the NEC and mission staff housing.

**Recommendation 10:** Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should proceed with plans to sell the existing recreational center and use the proceeds of sale to establish a recreational facility that is located conveniently near the new embassy compound and staff housing areas. (Action: Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with OBO)

## SHARED SERVICES

In the absence of a sizable USAID presence in Embassy Abidjan, the opportunity does not exist for cost savings to the U.S. government through consolidation of USAID and Department administrative services. However, there may be opportunities for consolidating Department administrative services with CDC and OSC. With their offices located outside of the NEC, these two agencies have established their own parallel administrative structures to carry out various management tasks including vehicle maintenance and some elements of financial management. The CDC plans to relocate 10 of its administrative staff to the NEC, which would present the opportunity for consolidating similar operations and possible elimination of some staff positions. Further consolidation might be possible with the relocation of all or part of OSC and CDC operations to the NEC. Such consolidation would offer the opportunity for greater operational efficiencies and overall cost savings for the U.S. government.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Abidjan should identify administrative operations of the Centers for Disease Control and the Open Source Center that could be consolidated with the existing Department of State administrative infrastructure in the new embassy compound. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)



## HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resources operations received below average scores on the OIG's workplace and quality of life questionnaires, notably in overall human resources services. Abidjan's LE staff services' score ranked below both the Bureau of African Affairs and worldwide averages, which tracks with the low scores that human resources services received on the LE staff personal questionnaires.

A direct-hire American human resources officer with regional responsibilities for Freetown and Monrovia supervises a small human resources staff. In the past several years, human resources has reclassified all LE staff positions under the CAJE system and is currently working on implementing a supplemental retirement plan. The CAJE results set off a firestorm among the LE staff that still reverberates to this day. The OIG team was told between 50-70 percent of the mission's LE staff was downgraded, but in actuality there were 51 downgrades and 57 upgrades (out of 208 positions and 339 LE staff). This misperception highlights the lack of communication the OIG team observed within the management section.

LE staff performance evaluations are not tracked efficiently and as a result, overdue evaluations have become commonplace. The human resources section must track performance evaluation due dates and ensure it has up-to-date information. Tracking evaluation reminders to American supervisors may also need improvement. Successful implementation of the Department's new LE staff performance management initiative requires better tracking of performance evaluations. An informal recommendation was made.

Three American employee evaluation reports were submitted late to the Bureau of Human Resources last year. The new human resources officer took immediate steps to resolve this issue and is aware procedures must be in place to ensure compliance to employee evaluation report timelines. An informal recommendation was made.

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Although a retention register rank ordering the positions and/or employees subject to elimination was developed per 3 FAM 7732.4, one LE staff, a fuel plant operator who was given priority in hiring on the instruction of the former Ambassador, was removed from the retention register. The RIF was also used inappropriately in the aborted hiring of the vacant information resource technician position. Responding to a June 7, 2007 vacancy announcement, an embassy LE staff employee interviewed for the position in July and received a written offer of appointment in August. Even though the information resource technician position was not a position subject to the May 2007 RIF, without consulting with either the outgoing or incoming American staff, the management counselor canceled the appointment and terminated the position. As discussed in the public affairs section of this report, the position in question is considered necessary, and the candidate who was offered the position should be allowed to fill it. An informal recommendation was made.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The embassy's newly elected ICASS council includes Department of State, Department of Defense, and CDC representatives. At its first meeting in September 2007, CDC was elected to fill the council chairperson seat. In the meeting with members of the OIG team, the chairperson professed a need for ICASS training and further stated that minutes of prior meetings were not available, either from her predecessor or management. Minutes of the ICASS council meeting held on April 20, 2007, in which the embassy's RIF were discussed, would have been especially welcomed. Informal recommendations were made.

ICASS service standards have been established, but the ICASS council has not conducted an annual evaluation of ICASS services and has not contributed to the performance evaluations of American ICASS employees. Informal recommendations were made.



## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY

Embassy Abidjan operates a comprehensive IM and information systems security program. The acting IMO effectively manages all of the embassy's IM and security requirements. The OIG team checked operating system patches, antivirus, systems documentation, performed random checks of the embassy's files, and assessed all standard operating procedures. The information technology posture of the embassy is adequate.

The IM staff is responsible for the operation, maintenance, and security of the Department's unclassified network (OpenNet), classified local area network, dedicated Internet network, unclassified and classified pouch, cell phone program, and mailroom operations. The OpenNet network consists of 244 workstations and 14 servers; the classified local area network consists of 25 workstations and five servers. The section largely adheres to Department IM guidelines and the industry's common practices. The IM staff consists of two information management specialists, six systems-support LE staff employees, three mailroom LE staff positions, and one LE switchboard operator.

### Information Processing Center Electrical Filter

In May of 2007, the embassy's voltage regulator was rendered inoperable by a power spike, and the embassy had to switch over to an emergency generator power. Since then, Embassy Abidjan has been experiencing intermittent problems with equipment in the information processing center, such as equipment shutting down or being inoperable. There is a potential of 5.7 volts between ground and neutral on the electrical power within the filter box. The voltage regulator has been repaired, and the embassy is back on regular power, but problems still continue. It is believed that the power filter in the information processing center was also rendered inoperable at that time. All power to the information processing center should be regulated and filtered for consistent voltage. Voltage that is not regulated and filtered can either destroy sensitive computer equipment or be the reason equipment shuts off intermittently, thus causing a denial of service.





**Best Practice:** Management of the cell phone program.

**Issue:** Embassy Abidjan desired a way to effectively reduce cost and provide better service with the cell phone program. The cell phone program had no documented standard operating procedures to provide accountability.

**Response:** The previous management created a position designated as the cell phone program manager. A standard operating procedure was created formalizing the administrative responsibility and procedures, user responsibility, personal use policy, maintenance and replacement procedures, security restrictions, and check-in/check-out procedures. Embassy personnel were advised of the policy per administrative procedure #58 dated May 25, 2005.

**Result:** The cell phone program has proven to be very effective and continues to operate efficiently. This result eliminates any possible loss in government resources and funding.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### HEALTH UNIT

The health unit is the most highly regarded operational element in the embassy, with the results of both the workplace and quality of life questionnaire and the 2007 ICASS customer satisfaction survey well above average. The health unit provides adequate primary care for uncomplicated illnesses like intestinal ailments, and local medical care providers offer adequate secondary care. When local medical care is inadequate to treat more serious conditions, patients are sent to London or to the United States.

The health unit is staffed by a Foreign Service health practitioner, two full-time and one half-time LE staff registered nurses, and a laboratory technician. The health unit lost its LE staff administrative assistant position, which was vacant at the time of the May 2007 RIF. The health unit would be better served if the half-time LE staff registered nurse position was converted to a full-time LE staff administrative assistant position. An informal recommendation was made.

The health unit offices are spacious and well organized, with two examination rooms, a laboratory stocked with necessary equipment, and generous storage areas. A separate office/examination room for LE staff is adjacent to the health unit and is staffed by one host country national doctor funded by the LE staff health insurance provider.

All medications are properly tagged and reviewed for expiration dates, and controlled substances are properly secured. Cognizant of avian influenza, the health unit has stocked a supply of gowns, goggles, masks and gloves for caretakers, and an adequate supply of Tamiflu.

## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Embassy Abidjan has not had an EEO counselor since the previous counselor departed in April 2007. The embassy's previous human resources officer did not fill the position because she believed an embassy with less than 50 American direct hires was not eligible to have a counselor. The current human resources officer called for volunteers for the EEO counselor position in September, a candidate has been identified and is awaiting final approval from the Department's Office of Civil Rights. Meanwhile, the selected candidate has enrolled in a training course scheduled in December. The Federal Women's Program coordinator position is also vacant. A candidate has been identified and is awaiting executive office approval.

EEO information and announcements are posted on a bulletin board near the embassy cafeteria. There is no specific space labeled for and dedicated to EEO and Federal Women's Program information. An informal recommendation was made.

## COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE COORDINATOR

The community liaison office (CLO) coordinator position had been vacant for four months throughout the summer transition period. The CLO coordinator position is particularly important in an embassy such as Abidjan where external factors have negatively affected staff morale in recent years.

The current coordinator is an eligible family member who began work in September 2007. The individual has completed the CLO training course and is working to establish recreational and cultural activities, welcoming and orientation programs for newcomers, and other activities to enhance embassy morale. Specific projects include an update for the post report and the newcomer packet and publication of a newsletter.

At one time, the ICSA was considered to be among the best international schools in Africa. The U.S. embassy sponsored the school on a site provided by the government of Cote D'Ivoire to the embassy in 1989 for the purpose of building an international school with an American curriculum. Enrollment for grades kindergarten through high school numbered nearly 500 students. When civil war broke out, everything changed.

In January 2003, rioting forced the school to close its doors for six weeks. When it reopened, only 15 students remained. The school had spent most of its reserves on building projects that to this day remain incomplete. Without reserves, the school fell into debt, accumulated tax arrears, and missed social security payments. Generous funding from the Department's Office of Overseas Schools for \$150,000 (U.S.) for two years kept the school afloat.

In February 2004, [redacted] selected a new director. Two months later, he moved the school to a small villa, better suited for the [redacted] diminished enrollment. In August 2005, he entered into an agreement to lease the U.S. government-owned land at the previous school site to the UN mission in Cote D'Ivoire. The UN mission paid a \$225,000 deposit to the school and continues to pay \$75,000 rent per month. To date, the United Nations has paid (b) [redacted] more than \$2 million dollars, and the lease has been extended through August 2008. There appears to be no written record of agreement between the embassy and the school, granting the school permission to lease U.S. government-owned property to the United Nations.

The embassy's FMO recently visited the school to conduct an audit of the school's annual grant from the Office of Overseas Schools. The grants of \$50,000 are a small part of the school's overall budget. During the meeting, the FMO learned that the school director does not believe the U.S. government legally owns the previous school site (the site currently leased by the United Nations) and that he may have engaged legal counsel to pursue this issue. The original property transfer agreement states the land should be used "solely to serve the educational and extra-curricular needs of the new school being built on the site." The OIG team retrieved documents from embassy files indicating the U.S. government did obtain legal ownership of the property in 1989, but these files may not be complete.





In a recent meeting with faculty members, the embassy's two appointed school board members heard complaints regarding the personal conduct of a school administrator and accusations the individual made inappropriate comments to faculty members.

**Recommendation 17:** The Bureau of Administration's Office of Overseas Schools should provide training for the school board of the [REDACTED], including advice on how to establish and enforce codes of conduct for faculty and administrative staff, how to develop and review contracts of school faculty and administrators, and how to conduct performance reviews of school administrators, including the school director. (Action: A/OPR)

The embassy has not monitored the condition of the property currently leased by the United Nations, which has been turned into a UN military camp. This has undoubtedly affected the condition of the property. The school director states the terms of the lease require the UN mission to Cote d'Ivoire to restore the property to its original condition when the lease is terminated.

**Recommendation 18:** Embassy Abidjan should review the condition of the property being leased to the United Nations and determine what further measures must be taken to maintain the property for the duration of the current lease agreement. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)



## MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

### INTERNAL CONTROLS

Although the embassy has submitted the annual Chief of Mission certification of internal controls, there is some indication that management oversight of certain operations could be improved. Several staff members – including those within the management section – provided either general comments or specific examples in their personal questionnaires that waste, fraud, and mismanagement has occurred in the mission. The most notable example is the embassy’s lack of attention to the U.S. government property that had previously been the location of the . Specific issues regarding this property are included in the quality of life section of this report.

**Recommendation 19:** Embassy Abidjan should establish an International Co-operative Administrative Support Services working group to evaluate internal controls and develop recommendations for mission-wide internal control policies and procedures. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)



## FORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of African Affairs should not approve Embassy Abidjan's FY-2009 Mission Strategic Plan request for a second economic officer. (Action: AF)

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources and the Foreign Service Institute, should develop and implement a plan for Department personnel with responsibility for foreign assistance/grant programs to complete the Foreign Service Institute's course PP-223, Managing Foreign Assistance Awards. (Action: Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with DGHR and FSI)

**Recommendation 3:** Embassy Abidjan should work with the three American Corners in Cote d'Ivoire to establish reliable mechanisms for the accountability of funds and program reporting. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)

**Recommendation 4:** Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, should eliminate one of two entry-level officer positions in the consular section when the current officer's scheduled tour of duty ends in February 2009. (Action: Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with CA)

**Recommendation 5:** Embassy Abidjan should undertake more robust efforts to engage the government of Cote d'Ivoire to reduce the amount of time from arrival to availability of personal vehicles for embassy staff. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)

**Recommendation 6:** Embassy Abidjan should implement appliance and furniture pools in order to achieve greater efficiency in managing inventories of nonexpendable U.S. government property. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)

**Recommendation 7:** Embassy Abidjan should repair or replace the forklift that is required for loading and unloading heavy items from delivery vehicles at both the general services warehouse compound and at the perimeter loading dock at the new embassy compound. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)



**Recommendation 16:** Embassy Abidjan should require an independent audit of the \_\_\_\_\_, using an embassy-approved auditor. The Bureau of Administration should review this audit to determine whether grant funds have been properly used and accounted for. (Action: Embassy Abidjan, in coordination with A/OPR)

**Recommendation 17:** The Bureau of Administration's Office of Overseas Schools should provide training for the school board of the \_\_\_\_\_ including advice on how to establish and enforce codes of conduct for faculty and administrative staff, how to develop and review contracts of school faculty and administrators, and how to conduct performance reviews of school administrators, including the school director. (Action: A/OPR)

**Recommendation 18:** Embassy Abidjan should review the condition of the property being leased to the United Nations and determine what further measures must be taken to maintain the property for the duration of the current lease agreement. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)

**Recommendation 19:** Embassy Abidjan should establish an International Cooperative Administrative Support Services working group to evaluate internal controls and develop recommendations for mission-wide internal control policies and procedures. (Action: Embassy Abidjan)





## INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover operational matters not requiring action by organizations outside the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau. Informal recommendations will not be subject to the OIG compliance process. However, any subsequent OIG inspection or on-site compliance review will assess the mission's progress in implementing the informal recommendations.

### Executive Direction

The embassy's MSP for FY 2009 was not the product of a mission-wide effort and was not used as a continuing means to measure mission performance.

**Informal Recommendation 1:** Embassy Abidjan should assure that the embassy's preparation of the FY 2010 mission strategic plan is a mission-wide effort.

### Political/Economic Affairs

Although counterterrorism is a priority objective in Embassy Abidjan's MSP, P/E section reporting on counterterrorism issues is minimal.

**Informal Recommendation 2:** Embassy Abidjan should expand political/economic section reporting on counterterrorism issues, commensurate with the issue's status as a Mission Strategic Plan priority.

The P/E section has no reporting plan.

**Informal Recommendation 3:** Embassy Abidjan should prepare a political/economic section reporting plan in order to improve reporting and ensure that it better reflects mission strategic plan priorities.

The P/E section has no travel and representation plans.

**Informal Recommendation 4:** Embassy Abidjan should prepare political/economic section travel and representational plans to ensure that section travel/representational priorities are addressed.

The P/E section does not currently have in place standard operating procedures for Leahy vetting cases.

**Informal Recommendation 5:** Embassy Abidjan should develop standard operating procedures for the political/economic section to process Leahy vetting cases in accordance with Department guidance on the subject.

The offices of P/E section LE staff are not currently colocated.

**Informal Recommendation 6:** Embassy Abidjan should colocate political/economic section locally employed staff offices to enhance section management and strengthen section cross-training efforts.

Funds for DHRF small grants have not been fully used.

**Informal Recommendation 7:** Embassy Abidjan should fund projects making full use of available Democracy and Human Rights Funds in order to maximize the benefit of this small grant program.

Only a limited number of projects funded by SH and DHRF small grants have received site/monitoring visits from American personnel.

**Informal Recommendation 8:** Embassy Abidjan should increase the number of site/monitoring visits by American personnel to Self-Help/Democracy and Human Rights funded projects in order to strengthen grant program oversight.

## Public Diplomacy

With the recent reduction of the public affairs section from three American positions to two, the position descriptions and work requirement statements reflect neither the current public affairs staffing configuration within Embassy Abidjan nor the responsibilities for the two public diplomacy officers.

**Informal Recommendation 9:** Embassy Abidjan should revise the position descriptions and work requirement statements for the two public diplomacy officers to reflect the reduction from three to two officers in the public affairs section.

Embassy Abidjan has not adequately utilized the regional information resource officer in managing its three American Corners.

**Informal Recommendation 10:** Embassy Abidjan should arrange for more frequent visits by the regional information resource officer in Accra with focus on improving management of the three American Corners.

## Consular Affairs

Supervisors have appropriate line of sight for consular operations, with the exception of cashiering operations.

**Informal Recommendation 11:** The consular section should work with the security engineering office to place a closed-circuit television camera inside the cashier booth and a monitor in the office of the consular section chief.

On Monday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, the consular section maintains an information window where LE staff take questions from the general public about specific visa cases. The staff also spends time providing general information about consular services that should be displayed outside the embassy.

**Informal Recommendation 12:** The consular section should work with the general services office to place an information board on the fence outside the entrance where consular section clients enter the compound. The information board should provide the general public with an overview of consular services and visa requirements.

The embassy local guard force has not been trained on how to manage a medical emergency involving a visa client with HIV/AIDS.

**Informal Recommendation 13:** The consular section should work with the medical unit and regional security officer to provide training and equipment for contract guards responsible for security in the consular section waiting room, teaching them what precautions to take when dealing with a client who may be HIV positive.

The most recent MSP does not include consular goals or benchmarks. Acknowledgement of the need to protect American citizens in a country plagued by crime and political unrest and where a travel warning is in place was made part of the Chief of Mission statement, attached to the MSP.

**Informal Recommendation 14:** The consular section should work with the new deputy chief of mission to make sure input on consular goals is included in the Mission Strategic Plan process.

The civil war led to the destruction of public records in many parts of the country. As a result, fraud prevention unit investigators find it difficult to verify birth, marriage, death, and other proofs of identity. When civil registrars are available, local government offices often lack copying machines.

**Informal Recommendation 15:** The consular section should use machine-readable visa funds to purchase digital cameras for fraud prevention unit investigators, giving them the option to photograph public records when copying machines are not available.

## Financial Management

Embassy Abidjan's class B cashier has not organized his safe to safeguard in-transit cashier reconciliation statement (ACS-365) transactions per chapter 15 of the Cashier User Guide.

**Informal Recommendation 16:** Embassy Abidjan's class B cashier must organize his safe per Department regulations.

Unannounced verification of sub-cashier funds are not being conducted at least monthly when the advance amount is \$1,000 U.S. dollar equivalent or more and quarterly if the amount is less than \$1,000 U.S. dollar equivalent as required by 4 FAH-3 H-397.2-2 and 2-3.

**Informal Recommendation 17:** Embassy Abidjan should conduct cash verifications of advances to sub-cashiers per Department regulations.

The Prompt Payment Act, as amended (Pub. L. 97-177 and Pub. L. 100-496) requires the Department to pay its bills on time, to pay interest penalties when payments are made late, and to take discounts only when payments are made within the discount period. Embassy Abidjan is not in compliance with the Prompt Payment Act.

**Informal Recommendation 18:** Embassy Abidjan should take necessary measures to comply with the Prompt Payment Act and make payments promptly upon receipt of the necessary invoices and supporting documentation.

## Human Resources

Embassy Abidjan does not fully comply with the Department's instructions regarding completion of LE staff performance evaluations.



**Informal Recommendation 25:** Embassy Abidjan should take action to fill the vacant information resource locally employed staff information resource technician position.

Embassy Abidjan's general services office customer service assistant interviewed for and received an offer of appointment to the vacant information resource technician position, but the appointment was rescinded by the management counselor.

**Informal Recommendation 26:** Embassy Abidjan should honor its offer of appointment with immediate effect.

## International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

Embassy Abidjan's newly elected ICASS council chairperson has requested ICASS training.

**Informal Recommendation 27:** Embassy Abidjan should take advantage of the International Cooperative Administrative Support Service's Center offer of post-specific training in FY 2008 (State 131163).

Minutes of Embassy Abidjan's ICASS council meeting are not available in their entirety, specifically the April 20, 2007 minutes discussing/approving the May 2007 RIF, as required by 6 FAM-5 H-411.1 guidelines.

**Informal Recommendation 28:** Embassy Abidjan must follow and keep minutes and records of all decisions/commitments made in council meetings as stated in Department regulations.

The ICASS chair has not prepared the annual service providers assessment, as required by 6 FAH-5 H-161(a).

**Informal Recommendation 29:** Embassy Abidjan should require the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services chair to prepare an evaluation memorandum to assess the quality of International Cooperative Administrative Support Services at post.

The ICASS council has not conducted an annual evaluation of ICASS services.



**Informal Recommendation 35:** Embassy Abidjan should identify and label the appropriate level of classification for all media, each workstation, copier, fax, and printer.

## Quality of Life

Embassy Abidjan's RIF abolished the health unit's administrative assistant position which was vacant at the time of the RIF.

**Informal Recommendation 36:** Embassy Abidjan's health unit would be better served if the half-time locally employed staff registered nurse position was reprogrammed to an administrative assistant.

## Management Controls

An important element of internal controls over real property is the existence of a property survey board, which is required under 14 FAM 416.5-2. This three-person board is empowered to determine and assign liability for property that is missing, damaged, or destroyed as a result of negligence, improper use, or willful action. The S/GSO confirmed that Embassy Abidjan does not currently have a functioning property board and should therefore establish one without further delay.

**Informal Recommendation 37:** Embassy Abidjan should establish a property survey board as required by Department regulations.



## PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Arrival Date</b>
Ambassador	Wanda L. Nesbitt	10/07
Deputy Chief of Mission	Cynthia H. Akuetteh	09/07

### **Chiefs of Sections:**

Administrative	Marcia L. Norman	09/06
Consular	Robert W. Thomas	08/06
Political	Sylvia Eiriz	07/07
Public Affairs	Sharon Nancy White	10/07
Regional Security	Francis John Bray, Jr.	07/07

### **Other Agencies:**

Department of Defense	Col. Patrick Doyle	06/06
Center for Disease Control	Dr. Bruce Struminger	03/07
Open Source Center	Pamela Lafontaine	05/06



# ABBREVIATIONS

A\GSO	Alternate General Service Officer
ACS	American Citizens Services
CAJE	Computer-aided job evaluation
CDC	Center for Disease Control
CLO	Community liaison officer coordinator
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DHRF	Democracy and Human Rights Fund
DIN	Dedicated Internet Network
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ELO	Entry Level Officer
FMO	Financial management officer
GSO	General services officer
HHS	Health and Human Services
ICASS	International cooperative administrative support services
...	.....
( <del>IM</del> )	
IM	Information management
IMO	Information management officer
IO	Information officer
IRC	Information resource center
LE	Locally employed
LEWG	Law Enforcement Working Group
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NEC	New embassy compound

OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OSC	Open Source Center
P/E	Political/economic section
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
PEPFAR	The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PISCES	Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System
PRM	Bureau of Population,
RIF	Reduction in force
RSO	Regional security officer
S/GSO	Supervisory general service officer
SH	Self Help
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugee Affairs
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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