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

# Report of Inspection

Embassy Freetown,  
Sierra Leone

Report Number ISP-I-08-18A, March 2008

## ~~IMPORTANT NOTICE~~

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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

- As Sierra Leone's situation has stabilized, and the new embassy compound (NEC) has provided secure, attractive, and functional office space, Embassy Freetown has been gradually increasing its presence and its services to pre-conflict levels.
- The NEC was constructed on an elevated site outside of Freetown that does not have a reliable source of water. The embassy and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) are collaborating to explore a number of alternatives but have not yet identified a long-term solution to this problem.
- Embassy Freetown housing does not meet Department of State (Department) standards, and this is having a negative impact on staff morale. The deputy chief of mission (DCM) residence and the Signal Hill apartment building are particularly unsuitable, and the embassy should work with OBO to replace these units as soon as possible.
- The key policy challenge for Embassy Freetown and the U.S. government is whether the United States and other donors can sustain the political, security, and economic support to maintain hope and stability in this war-ravaged country.
- Morale among American staff was relatively high despite the difficulties of service in this post-conflict, hardship post. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)
- The embassy manages two small grants programs, but officers responsible for managing these programs have not received the appropriate training to perform these functions.
- The embassy's public diplomacy effort was seriously restricted during the civil war with the closure of the information resource center (IRC) and suspension of most public programs. Much progress has been made since the restoration of normal operations in 2004, but some areas require additional attention.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 4 and 24, 2007, and in Freetown, Sierra Leone, between November 1 and 15, 2007. Ambassador Joseph G. Sullivan (team leader), Paul R. Smith (deputy team leader), Perry Adair, William Belcher, Eric Chavera, Michael Kirby, Matthew Koch, Jeanne Nienhaus, Robert Ripley, and Michael Yoder conducted the inspection.



## CONTEXT



Sierra Leone is emerging from a quarter century of oppressive governance and a brutal civil war that ended in 2002 which claimed 80,000 lives, and displaced two million people, or roughly one third of the population. Sixty percent of the population is Muslim. A UN peacekeeping force of 17,000 was required to disarm the rebels and restore order after the war ended. The last of the UN peacekeepers withdrew in December 2005, leaving full responsibility for security in this small West African country with domestic security forces. Sierra Leone has made slow but

steady progress toward restoring security and stability since then. A new civilian UN mission was established to support the government's efforts to consolidate peace and security. Presidential elections held in September 2007 were declared free and fair by the international community and represent the first peaceful transfer of civilian power in Sierra Leone since independence.

However, some of the underlying conditions that led to the war still prevail. Although Sierra Leone is rich in a number of high-demand natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, platinum, rutile, and bauxite, it ranks among the poorest countries in the world. With unemployment approaching 80 percent, weak governmental institutions, and pervasive corruption, the newly elected government will need to address high public expectations for quick change. A recent UN report summarized the current status of Sierra Leone as a country with "massive natural potential for economic development given continued stability and security." The donor community, led by the United Kingdom and European Commission, funds a broad range of programs to promote stability, good governance, and economic reform in Sierra Leone. In late 2006, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank cancelled \$994 million of Sierra Leone's external debt. These institutions as well as the African Development Bank and Global Fund continue to support the country's economic reform effort.



The U.S. government's bilateral relationship with Sierra Leone is positive. Principal U.S. policy goals in Sierra Leone have focused on bolstering democracy through support of the recent national elections, but also include broad support for economic development in the agricultural sector and diamond sector reform. A Department-funded Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) facility in Freetown provides training and logistical support to Sierra Leone's military forces. The U.S. military also participates in the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) effort to help rebuild and equip the country's military forces. The United States is the largest source of funding for the Special Court for Sierra Leone, a joint UN-Sierra Leone government court to prosecute war crimes committed during the civil war.

U.S. Embassy Freetown is staffed by 21 direct-hire Americans. It is a 30-percent hardship mission consisting of Department of State, Department of Defense, and Department of Justice and USAID elements. The embassy moved into the NEC in November 2006, is classified as "lock and leave," and does not have a Marine security guard detachment.

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The Ambassador, a career Foreign Service officer who has served previously as Ambassador and twice as deputy chief of mission (DCM) in Africa and in numerous positions in the Department, arrived in Freetown four weeks prior to the inspection. The DCM, who has had postings in Africa and dealings with Africa previously, has been DCM in Freetown since August 2006. The Ambassador has emphasized the need for a united team effort among all mission elements and the importance of improving housing of embassy staff in her early period at post.

Executive direction of the embassy has performed well to advance U.S. goals in Sierra Leone, lending important diplomatic and program support to help assure that the August-September national elections were free, fair, and largely without violence. The previous Ambassador made frequent public appearances and demarches in support of free and fair elections. The current Ambassador has made the positive election process, and the opportunity it provides the new government and the country, the major theme of her introductory calls and statements to the media. The newly elected government has entered office pledging reforms and an end to corruption. The challenge for the mission and the U.S. government is whether the United States, together with other donors, can sustain the political, security, and economic support to help revive economic activity and maintain hope in this war-ravaged country.

The Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) for FY 2009, prepared in early 2007, sets forth the following key goals: advancing regional peace and stability; promoting democracy and good governance; using trade and investment to spur economic growth and job creation; promoting common values among the two nations; increasing consular services, and; improving administrative and information services. The plan was produced through a mission-wide effort, and was used recently to evaluate mission performance.

The executive direction of the mission supported, directed, and contributed to mission reporting which was focused well on the mission's major priorities. The embassy leadership has maintained an active reporting program in the key election period despite disruptions in normal staffing through creative use of nonreporting officers, Washington temporary duty staff, and retired officers. The DCM is very knowledgeable about consular services, and has played an instrumental role in Embassy Freetown's initial, successful steps toward normalizing consular services.

The executive direction has provided appropriate coordination and direction for the Department of Defense's Defense Attaché Office (DAO) and Department of Justice Legal Attaché (LEGATT) offices in the embassy. The Ambassador and the DCM meet weekly with agency heads, and the DCM chairs a quarterly Law Enforcement Working Group, which includes the LEGATT, the DAO, the regional security officer, and the political/economic officer. The Ambassador and the DCM also meet frequently with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) representative to coordinate planning and programs.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The mission's executive direction has provided appropriate oversight on internal management issues, including those affecting human resources, financial management of the mission, and related issues. The recently arrived Ambassador and the DCM continue to engage in regular meetings on the range of management issues to assure that the mission's human and financial resources are managed well.

### Morale

The OIG team found morale among American staff to be high despite the difficulties of service in this post-conflict, hardship post.

American and LE staff said they were encouraged by the efforts of the recently arrived Ambassador and the DCM to address staff concerns. LE staff expressed satisfaction over the newly arrived Ambassador's inclusion of LE staff in a recent embassy offsite session.

### Entry-Level Officers

The DCM has had a regularly functioning entry-level officer (ELO) program during the past year, and held sessions on professional and career issues in addition to meeting individually with ELO's. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) team encouraged ELO's to assure that the program continues to develop to meet their needs.

### Equal Employment Opportunity

The embassy has not had an Equal Employment Opportunity officer (EEO) since at least March 2007. The Department has given mixed signals about its readiness to provide training for a new EEO officer. This issue is discussed later in the report.

## Security

Embassy Freetown's mission security program is strong, effective, and well-managed. The DCM and regional security officer appear to have 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

Embassy Freetown has been gradually increasing its services and presence to pre-conflict levels, as the situation in country has stabilized and as the NEC provided secure and functional office space. The Department of Justice opened a two-person LEGATT with regional responsibilities in 2006, and the Department plans to add a second consular position in 2008. There are no other pending National Security Decision Directive-38<sup>1</sup> requests for staffing changes.

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<sup>1</sup> National Security Decision Directive-38, Staffing at Diplomatic Missions and Their Constituent Posts, issued on June 2, 1982, assigns ambassadors the authority and responsibility to determine the appropriate size, composition, and mandate of all staffing operating under their authority.

## POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

### POLITICAL/ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Embassy Freetown political/economic section officers are actively engaged in efforts to promote democracy in Sierra Leone, as demonstrated in successful presidential and parliamentary elections held in August-September 2007, but need to devote greater attention to economic/commercial issues. The OIG team identified a need to ensure that individuals with grant/program responsibility receive training in program management, and recommended that the DCM receive proper designation as a contracting officer representative for a Department-funded program she monitors. Additionally, the team recommended that LE staff workload distribution be reassessed, travel and representation plans be established, Leahy vetting procedures be strengthened, vouchering procedures for small grant programs be revised, and that the small grants coordinator receive training to obtain a grants warrant.

The political/economic section (P/E) consists of one officer, one eligible family member (EFM) employee, and two LE staff. One of the LE staff primarily covers P/E issues, and the other covers Special Help (SH) and Democracy and Human Rights Fund (DHRF) small grant programs, as well as commercial issues. At the time of the inspection, the P/E officer position was vacant.

### Staffing/Section Management

The P/E section has been in transition since September 2007, when the incumbent P/E officer was curtailed in order to take an assignment in Baghdad, depriving the embassy of its only reporting officer. Post management moved actively to fill the position, and a Civil Service employee who has spent time in Sierra Leone working on trafficking in persons issues, a key issue, is scheduled to arrive in February 2008.

During the pre-inspection survey conducted by the OIG team in Washington, Department offices expressed general satisfaction with Freetown's political reporting. One Washington consumer noted that the embassy actively reports on human rights issues and produced an excellent Human Rights Report and Supporting Human Rights and Democracy Report. Embassy reporting on the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the presidential and legislative elections was also praised.

Some Washington offices believe that Freetown economic reporting is insufficient, and the OIG team's examination of post reporting records supports that assessment. One Washington office expressed dissatisfaction with the level of post reporting on diamond issues. The OIG team believes greater attention should be devoted to the diamond sector, given its cross-cutting impact on, and linkage to, regional/political instability, weapons sales, military conflict, money laundering, drug smuggling and, potentially, terrorism. Freetown's economic reporting has not effectively addressed the MSP goal of using trade, investment, and aid in Sierra Leone to spur economic growth and job creation, nor has it adequately addressed economic-related aspects (money laundering, diamond sector reform) of the MSP goal aimed at securing regional peace and preventing terrorism. In-depth analytical economic reporting is also deficient.

The P/E demarche load is such that the P/E officer cannot handle all such requests. Mandated annual reports have driven the focus of reporting at the expense of analytical economic reporting. The installation of a new government in Sierra Leone, with a pro-business/growth and anticorruption platform, has brought increased requests for embassy assistance from U.S. companies exploring business opportunities in Sierra Leone.

OIG team discussions with P/E section LE staff indicate that the P/E specialist spends 70 percent of his time on political issues, and 30 percent on economic issues. The LE staff small grants coordinator estimates he spends 60 percent of his time on small grants, 30 percent on commercial affairs, and 10 percent on economic affairs. The OIG team believes that section management should reassess LE staff workload distribution, with a view toward increasing the amount of LE staff time spent on economic affairs and economic reporting. An informal recommendation was made.

If filling the P/E office position on a permanent basis and redistributing LE staff workload does not result in improved coverage of economic issues and expanded economic reporting, the OIG team would support Embassy Freetown's request, contained in its FY 2009 MSP, for a second (primarily economic/commercial) reporting officer. The OIG team notes that there is a reporting plan in place, but travel and representation plans are not. 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. In light of atrocities committed in Sierra Leone during the civil war, Leahy vetting procedures at Embassy Freetown

are especially important. Post acknowledges that in the past, its internal Leahy vetting procedures had not always been in full accordance with Department guidelines, particularly with regard to vetting at post prior to submission to Washington. Steps, particularly with regard to interagency coordination, are already underway at post to strengthen Leahy vetting procedures. An informal recommendation was made.

## Counterterrorism

Embassy Freetown has an adequate counterterrorism program in place. The executive office has made terrorism-related issues a priority, and they are reflected in the MSP. All terrorism-related cables are approved by the executive office. Engagement by the embassy in counterterrorism efforts appears to be in line with the actual threat as identified at post. The embassy has a Law Enforcement Working Group chaired by the DCM. The P/E section prepares the annual country report on terrorism. The regional security office is well integrated into country team counterterrorism activities. No antiterrorism assistance programs are managed at post.

## Small Grants Program

American oversight of small grants for transformational diplomacy purposes is assigned to the P/E section. The P/E section EFM employee serves as the American coordinator for these grant programs, and is assisted by one LE staff. In FY 2007, funds available for Ambassador's SH and DHRF grants totaled \$65,000 for each program. The embassy has made full use of available funds. Site visits are usually undertaken in the pre-assessment phase, as well as while projects are ongoing.

Selection and rank ordering of prospective SH/DHRF projects is the responsibility of a committee, comprised of P/E, Public Affairs, USAID, and the DCM. Legal reviews and certification of associated vouchers are performed by USAID offices in Conakry and Dakar.

In managing SH/DHRF programs, embassy personnel are asked to assume some oversight responsibility for assistance programs. This responsibility often falls to embassy officers with no prior experience working with grant programs. Several Embassy Freetown personnel with involvement in grant programs have received no formal Foreign Service Institute training in managing or evaluating such programs.

**Recommendation 1:** Embassy Freetown, 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 Freetown, in coordination with DGHR and FSI)

In recent years, embassy practice was for the embassy grants officer to sign as the ordering officer on all SH/DHRF vouchers. However, the embassy grants officer is the public affairs officer, who has no functional oversight for these P/E-oriented programs. SH/DHRF manuals require that only the SH/DHRF coordinator should sign vouchering documentation. Because keeping signature/programmatic oversight in the hands of the SH/DHRF coordinator, rather than with the grants officer who is in another section, is more logical from an oversight/monitoring perspective, OIG advised the coordinator that the signature of the grants officer should not be included on vouchering paperwork. An informal recommendation was made.

Although the signature of the grants officer is not required, the OIG team agreed that program oversight would be strengthened if the SH/DHRF coordinator had a grants warrant. Moreover, accounting entries in the Department database for SH/DHRF accounts require a grants officer number. It would be prudent for the SH/DHRF coordinator to take the on-line Department course to obtain a grants warrant. An informal recommendation was made.

The OIG team also noted the various USAID accounting reports cited in the SH/DHRF manuals, and emphasized the need for the SH/DHRF coordinator to strengthen communication with the USAID accounting office in Conakry in order to more effectively monitor grant management and track voucher liquidations. An informal recommendation was made.

The EFM coordinator has improved administration and oversight of the SH/DHRF grant programs. The establishment of an automated database for entering, tracking, and monitoring SH/DHRF projects, both past and present, will be a useful management tool for future current and future program coordinators, as well as a time-saving device. Improving automation of these programs will improve their management.

## FOREIGN ASSISTANCE

Sierra Leone is considered a nonpresence post for USAID. The USAID office at Embassy Freetown is headed by a country program manager who reports to the USAID mission in Conakry, Guinea. Support staff for the Freetown country program manager includes one LE staff program specialist, two LE staff activity managers, and one LE staff administrative assistant.

USAID development assistance to Sierra Leone, totaling \$11 million per year in the recent past, now stands at \$4 million which includes expenses for salaries, overhead, and other costs in addition to program support. In its FY 2009 MSP, Embassy Freetown requested restoration of this USAID funding, and believes without it, the embassy will be unable to achieve its objectives in enhancing democracy and economic development. Expected FY 2008 and FY 2009 funding of zero economic support funds and reduced development assistance will likely hamper the bilateral relationship.

The Department-funded (\$2 million per year, according to the Bureau of African Affairs) ECOWAS depot is located in Freetown in a Sierra Leone armed forces barracks. It serves as a logistics and supply depot (vehicles, radios, other equipment) for an ECOWAS standby force. The depot is managed by Pacific Architects & Engineers (PAE). PAE also provides training (driver, communications courses) and sends a weekly report to the DCM and to the Bureau of African Affairs Office of Regional and Security Affairs (AF/RSA). The depot provided 40 vehicles to the National Elections Commission for distribution of ballot materials during the August-September 2007 national elections.

The DCM serves as the contracting officer representative for the ECOWAS depot contract. In this capacity, the DCM reviews the weekly reports from PAE, examines documentation for outstanding invoices and other questions, and exercises general oversight, including visits to the site. Off-contract work is approved by AF/RSA. The OIG team notes, however, that the DCM has not yet completed the appropriate course to assume contracting officer representative responsibility.

**Recommendation 2:** Embassy Freetown's deputy chief of mission should complete Foreign Service Institute on-line course PA-296 "How to be a Contracting Officer Representative." (Action: Embassy Freetown)

In coordination with the Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP), a \$100,000 grant to UNICEF to work with the government of Sierra Leone to educate on trafficking and provide training for law enforcement was signed at Embassy Freetown in September 2006, and was subsequently extended (no-cost extension) by post for one year in September 2007. This grant is jointly monitored by Embassy Freetown and G/TIP. UNICEF Headquarters sends progress reports to G/TIP, but the P/E section also keeps in touch with UNICEF regarding progress.

There are no Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migrations programs in Sierra Leone, although the bureau does provide some funding to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to support Liberian refugees still in Sierra Leone. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor currently has no Human Rights and Democracy Fund projects in Sierra Leone.

Through the Office of the Defense Attaché, the embassy is providing some training to Sierra Leone military and security forces. U.S. military assistance has centered on support to Sierra Leone maritime forces, primarily in the areas of small boats, smuggling, counternarcotics, safety and security, and search and rescue. In addition, three U.S. military personnel participate in the United Kingdom-led IMATT, a multilateral effort aimed at rebuilding, restructuring, and equipping the Sierra Leone Armed Forces. The Department of Defense also has an ongoing HIV/AIDS prevention program with the armed forces underway in Sierra Leone.

## PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

Embassy Freetown's public diplomacy mission was essentially shut down during most of the civil war. The IRC and related public programming facilities were closed in 1997 and did not reopen until 2004. For several years there was no public affairs officer (PAO), and the LE staff had to manage the embassy's public diplomacy effort with little direct American supervision. The last OIG inspection in 2002 characterized Embassy Freetown's public diplomacy mission as "moribund." Much has changed since then, and the embassy has made significant progress in a number of key public diplomacy areas. In November 2006, all public affairs section (PAS) functions were consolidated with the move into the NEC. Creative thinking has gone into the establishment of American Shelves book collections in two Freetown libraries and an American Corner in the country's second largest city. However, two key

areas of the public diplomacy mission, information outreach and the IRC, require additional attention. Two LE staff positions are vacant, and one LE staff member requires training to fulfill the minimum requirements of his job.

All Embassy Freetown PAS offices and program facilities are now located in the NEC. PAS is staffed by a PAO on her second public diplomacy assignment and eight LE staff. The PAO began her assignment shortly before the inspection and has already established solid working relations with the DCM and other embassy elements, including USAID. In addition to attending all country team meetings, the PAO meets with the DCM once a week to review upcoming public diplomacy activities, and is in daily contact with the DCM by phone and e-mail. Total public diplomacy program funding for FY 2007, including LE staff salaries, was a very modest \$165,400. Representation funding was \$4,800. PAS maintains a program calendar to track public diplomacy activities, but has not developed an operational plan to coordinate fulfillment of specific MSP goals. An informal recommendation was made.

## Exchanges

PAS has gradually increased its exchanges portfolio in recent years. During FY 2007, the embassy sent nine participants to the United States on regional International Visitor programs, three on Fulbright scholarships and one as a Humphrey Fellow. Fulbright and International Visitor alumni associations were recently formed.

## Outreach Programs

PAS has put its very limited program budget to effective use through a combination of seminars and lunches targeted at groups such as women journalists and Muslim youth and cultural programs designed to reach larger audiences throughout the country. Information outreach is less effective. Shortly after her arrival, the new PAO filled the vacant information assistant position with an experienced information specialist and former journalist. PAS supports all of the Ambassador's public appearances and embassy sponsored events with press releases which are distributed to the local media and key contacts. The information assistant also produces a daily summary of the local media which is distributed within the embassy and to the Department. Currently, PAS does not regularly use Washington File or other electronic Department resources to inform the media on MSP themes. This is due in part to the fact that most informational materials must still be delivered in hard copy by hand. Internet connectivity remains minimal within Sierra Leone, including within key embassy contact institutions and the media. The country's postal service

does not function, and the majority of information distribution must be provided in hard copy using two embassy couriers who can deliver only a maximum of 50 items per day for the entire embassy. This limits the embassy's ability to develop an effective outreach program to inform the media and key contacts on MSP themes. Filling the long vacant distribution clerk position would provide a resource that could help remedy this deficiency. An informal recommendation was made.

The information distribution environment following the civil war in Sierra Leone is not unique to the region. Neighboring Liberia also suffers from a collapsed infrastructure following its recent civil war. Embassy Monrovia faces the same challenges in providing reliable information services to target audiences and is employing a number of creative approaches to successfully meet those challenges. PAS Freetown would benefit from consultation with their colleagues in Monrovia. An informal recommendation was made.

## Information Resource Center

The IRC is located within the NEC and is staffed by an LE staff IRC director and IRC assistant. The IRC contains a modest collection of 500 books, 50 periodicals, seating for approximately 10, and five public access Internet work stations. The IRC assistant also serves as the educational advisor, and maintains an active schedule of advising visits to educational institutions throughout Sierra Leone. The IRC includes an adjacent program room that seats approximately 50 and provides audio/visual and digital videoconferencing (DVC) capability.

In its former location in a public facility in the center of Freetown, the IRC enjoyed heavy attendance. With the move to the NEC, which is located on the side of a hill on the outskirts of town, IRC attendance has plummeted and currently averages 30 to 40 visitors a month. The regional information resource officer in Accra visited Freetown in February 2007, shortly after the move to the NEC, and worked with PAS to develop a new IRC program plan. The development of an active marketing strategy is the new plan's top priority. Although some steps have been taken, such as the development of a promotional brochure, the plan has not been fully developed or implemented. An informal recommendation was made.

## American Corners

Embassy Freetown currently supports one American Corner in Sierra Leone's second largest city, Bo. Two more modest collaborative programs called American Shelves were recently established in two of Freetown's libraries. The IRC provides reference and program coordination support to all three facilities.

## Staffing

One PAS LE staff position, the audio visual systems technician, is responsible for providing audio and visual program and system support for all elements of the embassy. The incumbent has occupied this position for 18 years. When the embassy moved to the NEC, the position assumed responsibility for two new areas of technology, DVC programming and the embassy's television receive only (TVRO) system. Neither of these systems existed in the old embassy, and the technician assumed responsibility for them with no training. The embassy has attempted only two DVC programs since moving to the NEC and reported technical difficulties with both. The TVRO system is designed to serve nine terminals within the embassy, including the Ambassador's office, but has also encountered technical difficulties which the technician does not fully understand. Members of the information management (IM) staff who understand the technology have helped the PAS technician resolve specific issues but with limited success. There is general agreement that, until the embassy either provides the audio visual technician adequate training or shifts responsibility for this area of technical support to someone qualified, TVRO and DVC capabilities will remain limited at best. An informal recommendation was made.

## CONSULAR AFFAIRS

After 10 years of offering only minimal services for American citizens, Embassy Freetown is taking positive steps toward normalizing consular services. The NEC provides the consular section with excellent facilities and a pleasant atmosphere. The embassy began issuing nonimmigrant visas in January 2007 and now provides a full range of consular services for American citizens. Immigrant visas and adoption cases are still adjudicated in Dakar, and diversity visas (DV) in Abidjan. However, Embassy Freetown receives a second consular officer in 2008, and will then begin to adjudicate its own immigrant visas, adoption cases, and DVs. Freetown's fraud prevention unit does extensive field investigations, but pervasive fraud in Sierra Leone is a serious problem.

The FY 2009 MSP includes a goal to "increase the range of consular services to serve Americans and facilitate U.S. travel." The Visas Viper committee meets monthly and sends Visas Viper cables as mandated. The embassy visa referral system policy complies with the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs guidelines.

Internal controls are in place, and consular section management guards against waste, fraud, and misappropriation of public property. Inventories of visa foils,

passports, emergency passport foils, consular reports of birth abroad, and all other controlled consular items have been completed and are correct. The consular affairs system user list is current. Cashiering operations meet Foreign Affairs Manual guidelines. Cash counts are conducted in a timely manner and without cash discrepancies for the consular cashier and backup cashier. The consular section chief has appropriate line of sight for all consular operations.

The section schedules nonimmigrant visa appointments online and uses the bar-code electronic visa application form. The section collects machine-readable visa fees off-site in partnership with a local bank with proper accountability. The embassy has a functioning warden system and is actively recruiting wardens to cover all regions of Sierra Leone. The warden system relies on contact via cell telephone. An attempt to implement a system messaging service text messaging system has been hampered by incompatibility among rival cell telephone companies.

The consular section works with PAS to provide occasional public outreach but relies on distributing flyers in Freetown to disseminate consular information. Contact by mail is difficult, and diversity visa winners sometimes can't be reached. The consular section maintains a dedicated e-mail address to answer questions from the general public, and staff responds to telephone inquiries two hours each day. Nevertheless, individuals frequently appear at the consular section entrance without appointment attempting to gain information about consular services. An informal recommendation was made.

The waiting room for consular clients is spacious and attractive. Five windows are available for visa operations. A private interview room is available for interviews with American citizens. The one contract guard is kept busy directing traffic as clients move from one window to the next. A high percentage of citizens in Sierra Leone are HIV positive, but the guard has not received training or equipment in the event of a medical emergency. An informal recommendation was made.

Fraud is pervasive in Sierra Leone, and all official documents are suspect. The consular section must investigate births and marriages for immigrant visas, adoption, and DV cases. These investigations often involve difficult travel to remote areas of the country and may last several days. Two LE staff fraud investigators operate in the field without American supervision. Most civil birth records either were not recorded or disappeared during the civil war. False birth certificates are frequently used to obtain genuine Sierra Leone passports. The embassy relies on DNA testing to prove most claims of family relationships. The workload for fraud investigations is likely to increase as the consular section begins adjudicating immigrant visas, adop-

tions, and DVs in 2008. To provide adequate American oversight of fraud prevention unit activities, the embassy will request an EFM consular associate. The OIG team supports this request.

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

Embassy Freetown attempted to nominate an EEO counselor in March 2007 and again in September, but the Department's Office of Civil Rights (S/OCR) would not approve the nomination because post has less than 50 American direct hires. Regulations clearly state that all posts, regardless of size, should nominate an EEO counselor.

**Recommendation 3:** The Office of Civil Rights should approve Embassy Freetown's request to nominate an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor and should provide the new counselor with standard Equal Employment Opportunity counselor training. (Action: S/OCR)

The embassy does not have a Federal Women's Program coordinator. An informal recommendation was made. The embassy has not set aside a notice board for information about EEO policy and the Federal Women's Program. An informal recommendation was made.





## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local Hire Staff	Foreign National FY 2007	Total Staff	Total Funding
State – D&CP	8	1	6	15	633,400
State – ICASS	3	2	94	99	3,192,500
State – Public Diplomacy	1	0	8	9	165,400
State – Diplomatic Security	2	0	1	3	625,752
State – Representation	0	0	0	0	15,200
PD – Representation	0	0	0	0	4,800
State – OBO	0	0	0	0	465,549
Department of Justice	2	0	0	2	320,250
Defense Attaché Office	3	0	1	4	196,280
USAID	1	0	4	5	4,000,000*
Self-Help Projects	0	0	0	0	65,000*
Democracy and Human Rights Fund	0	0	0	0	75,000*
MRV Consular Program	1	0	3	4	40,100
DOD HIV/AIDS	0	0	3	3	151,000**
International Military Educational Training	0	0	0	0	325,000**
State – OBO (NEC) (One-Time Only)	0	0	0	0	939,648
<b>Totals</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>11,214,879</b>

\*Funds managed through USAID/Conakry, including development funding

\*\* Programs managed by Defense Attaché Office



The new Ambassador held a town hall meeting of American and LE staff shortly after her arrival, and the LE staff committee expressed interest in a follow-up meeting with her and the management officer

**Recommendation 4:**

## General Services Office

The general services office is directed by a first-tour management-coned officer who has performed well under difficult circumstances. Under her stewardship, the office received above average ratings on both the 2007 ICASS customer satisfaction survey and the workplace and quality of life survey conducted for this inspection. These positive results were for overall management of the general services office, as well as for travel, shipping and customs, property management, procurement, vehicle maintenance, and leasing. The only exception was for motor pool operations, which were ranked just below average.

## MOTOR POOL

The GSO characterizes the motor pool inventory as aging yet adequate. The motor pool consists of Toyota and Chevrolet SUV passenger vehicles suited for the extreme road conditions within Freetown and elsewhere in country. The inventory also includes several utility vehicles, including two tanker trucks that the embassy requires for delivery of water and diesel fuel to the NEC and residences. Another important element of the motor pool is the motorcycles that are extensively used to deliver invitations, diplomatic notes, and even press releases.

The NEC contains a garage where two LE staff automotive mechanics provide basic service and maintenance, and post has also used local commercial garages for more complicated repairs. The primary maintenance challenge is obtaining spare parts in a timely manner, which makes it necessary to hold a larger inventory.

Embassy management has vigorously enforced a uniform policy prohibiting the use of government-owned vehicles for “other authorized use,” including home-to-office transportation by employees of other agencies. The previous ambassador denied such requests in the interest of equitable treatment for all mission staff. Other regulations pertaining to motor vehicle usage have also been strictly enforced, including the requirement for passengers to use seat belts, sign trip logs, and to refrain from smoking in U.S. government-owned vehicles.

## WAREHOUSING AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

The embassy maintains a warehouse for both expendable and nonexpendable supplies on the NEC, a facility which is well maintained and managed in accordance with existing regulations for security and warehouse management procedures. The embassy has implemented appliance and furniture pools for the Department and other agencies.

## PREMIUM CLASS TRAVEL

Embassy Freetown issued 18 premium-class travel tickets in 2007, all for temporary duty assignments and permanent change of station travel. The OIG team reviewed general services office/travel files and found that all of the premium-class travel qualified under applicable Department regulations. The DS-4087 forms authorizing premium class were properly completed for 15 of the trips, and in the three cases where DS-4087 forms were missing, the premium-class travel was authorized in the orders.

## Facilities Management

The facilities management section is capably directed by an entry-level facilities manager with solid private-sector credentials, as well as keen cultural awareness obtained during an assignment with the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone. He managed the November 2006 relocation to the NEC, and mission personnel rated his section well above average for residential and nonresidential maintenance on both the 2007 ICASS customer satisfaction survey as well as the workplace and quality of life survey prepared for this inspection.

Embassy Freetown is now located in an attractive and functional NEC that provides sufficient office and utility space for all current mission operations. Some minor problems are being resolved under contractor warranties that are still in effect for the building and support systems. However, there is a major operational problem which requires a long-term solution; the lack of a reliable water source to support the NEC's daily demand for 9,000 gallons. Of this amount, about 6,000 gallons are required just for the water-cooled chillers of the air conditioning system.

Because the Sierra Leonean infrastructure is nonfunctional, the only alternatives are to locate water either on the NEC compound or from alternative sources nearby. The embassy and OBO have collaborated on several initiatives to address this problem, ranging from the institution of simple conservation measures, to repeated attempts to drill for water on the compound. OBO provided \$40,000 to purchase a 5,000-gallon tanker truck for transporting water from a local distribution site. The embassy has also obtained limited amounts of water from the compound of the British IMATT, which is adjacent to the NEC. This latter arrangement is based upon an informal agreement with the IMATT commander, and is subject to availability. Scant precipitation during the rainy seasons in 2006 and 2007 depleted the IMATT reserves, forcing them to cut off the NEC's supply at times. This has raised new concerns about the reliability of any external water source that the embassy may be using.

OBO recognizes that multiple approaches are required for a long-term solution to the water supply problem, and has tasked its design and engineering division's sustainable design team to consider every alternative. In so doing, OBO should give priority to those options that are less financially burdensome to post and do not rely upon the cooperation of external parties. One option that deserves serious consideration is the installation of a rainwater harvesting system. Sierra Leone is one of the highest precipitation countries in West Africa, and a rainwater harvesting system could collect and store precipitation that falls on the NEC property during the six-month rainy season. Another option would be to reduce the demand for water by replacing the water-cooled heating ventilation air conditioning chillers with air-cooled models, a measure which OBO is reportedly considering.

**Recommendation 5:** The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Freetown, should devote all necessary effort and resources to finding a long-term solution to satisfy the new embassy compound requirement for water. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Freetown)

**Recommendation 6:** The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Freetown, should undertake a cost-benefit analysis to determine if the original water-cooled chillers in the new embassy compound should be replaced with air-cooled chillers. Such assessment should focus not only on the relative operational costs of these alternative systems, but also on the availability of sufficient water to operate the water-cooled chillers. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Freetown)

Regardless of whether OBO replaces the water-cooled chillers with air-cooled units, it is imperative that the embassy have ready access to trained and qualified personnel who can maintain the critical elements of the system. OBO guidance on NEC construction requires that the building contractor provide training to post maintenance staff on all new critical building equipment and systems. The staff received some training in basic maintenance of the chillers, but not enough to perform diagnosis and repairs. The original chillers are still under warranty, and thus far have only required routine maintenance. In the long run however, the lack of in-house repair capability will require that post bring in a private contractor, which could prove a very expensive proposition.

**Recommendation 7:** The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with the Bureau of African Affairs, should determine how best to fund and provide trained and qualified personnel who can maintain and repair critical infrastructure systems at Embassy Freetown, especially the heating ventilation air conditioning chillers. (Action: OBO, in coordination with AF)

## Housing

According to 15 FAM 113.1 and 15 FAM 211.1 a-b, OBO has overall responsibility for the overseas housing program, with the objective of providing embassy staff and families with housing that is “adequate”. The Foreign Affairs Manual defines adequate housing as “...comparable to what an employee would occupy in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area, with adjustments for family size and locality abroad.”

The OIG team found that the current housing pool for Embassy Freetown falls considerably short of this standard. Mission staff rated the suitability of housing among the lowest items on the workplace and quality of life survey, well below the average score of 53 previously inspected posts. Among their concerns were the

poor construction and maintenance of buildings, lack of reliable utilities, and the mold and water damage to exterior and interior surfaces. The new Ambassador has expressed her concern to OBO regarding the inadequacy of staff housing, and OBO indicated that a real estate specialist would be sent to post in November 2007.

Among the residences that should be replaced is the current DCM residence. It is in deplorable condition, and is inappropriate for representational purposes. The DCM residence is an older house located on a rutted lane just off a busy street, with limited interior representational space and a shabby exterior marred by rusted metal roofing and a façade blighted with water stains and mold. Citing chronic maintenance problems and associated costs, the embassy recommended in 2006 that a replacement DCM residence be found, but thus far this has not been accomplished.



Exterior view of deputy chief of mission residence

**Recommendation 8:** Embassy Freetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should relocate the deputy chief of mission residence to leased premises that require less maintenance and provide a more attractive and functional residence for representational purposes. (Action: Embassy Freetown, in coordination with OBO)

Post leases six units in the Signal Hill apartment building, which is located adjacent to the Ambassador's residence. This building has been occupied by the U.S. government for more than 40 years, but current occupants and post management agree that these units are well below standard for both size and quality. The OIG team inspected the Signal Hill property, noting both the shabby appearance of the building façade and public areas, and the decrepit condition of the apartment units. The OIG team concludes that the Signal Hill apartments cannot be considered adequate by any measure, and concurs with post that they should be dropped from the housing pool.



Embassy Freetown has been discussing the replacement of these apartments with OBO since 2005. According to the OBO Fact Sheet provided to OIG for this inspection, post "...was advised to seek out local contractors to build units that would be sized attractively for Americans, and that would accommodate American appliances." In late 2006, post requested OBO approval to lease units in a new apartment complex under construction near the NEC as replacements for the Signal Hill apartments. However, OBO declined the request to terminate the Signal Hill leases, reportedly because the property shares a water supply and generator set with the embassy main residence. OBO instructed post to extend the Signal Hill lease, and post subsequently signed a lease extension for another nine years with the owners.



Exterior of Signal Hill embassy housing

**Recommendation 9:** Embassy Freetown, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should proceed with earlier plans to locate more appropriate housing near the new embassy compound and drop the six apartments in the Signal Hill building from the post housing pool when more suitable housing is located. (Embassy Freetown, in coordination with the OBO)

## Financial Management

The financial management section received mixed results in recent customer evaluations. The 2007 ICASS customer satisfaction survey results were above average for all financial operations, but the workplace and quality of life survey scores for overall management of financial services were well below the average score of 53 posts previously inspected by OIG.



The evaluation process is well managed. All work requirement statements for American staff, and all LE performance evaluations were completed on a timely basis. The awards program functions appropriately,

over 60 percent of the LE staff were recognized for assisting in the move to the NEC.

The embassy has a training plan based upon MSP priorities, and was able to fund training for 14 LE staff members last year.

The  
OIG team shares this concern and recommends elsewhere in this report that more training is required for the facilities maintenance and TVRO/DVC LE staff who are tasked with keeping the NEC's sophisticated equipment running.

Embassy Freetown has not received timely service from the Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment. The annual revision to the local compensation plan cable was one month overdue at the time of the OIG inspection. In addition, the embassy has yet to receive a response to its most recent request of May 2007 to increase the authorized LE staff meal and transportation allowances. The OIG team believes that the embassy should be more proactive in pursuing responses on compensation issues from the Bureau of Human Resources. An informal recommendation was made.

## LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF RETIREMENT

LE staff at Embassy Freetown expressed concern over the recent conversion to a different LE staff retirement program. Post had previously participated in the privately-held National Insurance Company (NIC) retirement plan, into which the U.S. government contributed 14 percent of base pay and the employees contributed seven percent.

In December 2006, the Sierra Leone government required all employers to participate in the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT). This plan requires smaller contributions than the NIC; 10 percent from employers and five percent from employees. The government also required that NASSIT enrollment be retroactive to January 2002, so a portion of their NIC account balances were transferred to NASSIT to cover the retroactive contributions for LE staff.

After this transfer, all LE staff were left with account balances of various amounts in their NIC accounts. As stated in the NIC regulations; "If the fund is terminated...member's contributions and interest...shall be paid to the member." Many employees initially wanted to cash out their NIC accounts, but others recognized that in so doing, they would forego eligibility for the six percent difference between the NIC and NASSIT contributions; four percent from the U.S. government and two percent from the employee.

Post sought guidance on the issue from the Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment (HR/OE). In October 2007, HR/OE determined that the remaining contributions should be kept in the NIC. HR/OE considers the NIC solvent and reasoned that dispersal of the contributions to LE staff would significantly reduce employee pensions. HR/OE further authorized continued deposit of four percent from the U.S. government and two percent in employer contributions into the NIC accounts. Post has yet to implement this latter action, and an informal recommendation was made.

## Shared Services

Embassy Freetown has essentially implemented full consolidation of all administrative support services. A joint housing pool has been established, the motor pool services the entire mission, and all agencies participate in the furniture and appliance pools. There are no USAID administrative personnel at post, and necessary management support is provided by the USAID executive office in Embassy Conakry.

## International Cooperative Administrative Support Services

The embassy's ICASS council includes representatives of the Department of State, the DAO, LEGATT and USAID. The council is chaired by the USAID representative, who is entering her second year in this capacity. She noted that there is a good working relationship between the council and ICASS service provider who handles all the administrative tasks such as preparing meeting agendas and minutes. In her judgment, the council has functioned well, as they hold regular meetings and have accomplished the important task of establishing ICASS service standards.

However, she acknowledged that neither she nor her fellow board members have had formal training regarding ICASS principles and procedures. Several council responsibilities have not been carried out, including an annual evaluation of ICASS

services or preparation of input for the management officer's annual performance evaluation. She also stated that the council has not established a budget working group as required by the ICASS Interagency Working Group in 06 State 139716. Informal recommendations were made.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS SECURITY

Embassy Freetown operates an effective IM and information systems security program. The information management officer (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 (DIN), unclassified and classified pouch, and mailroom operations. The OpenNet network consists of 123 workstations and six servers; the classified local area network consists of 17 workstations and four servers. The section adheres to most Department IM guidelines and the industry's common practices. The IM staff consists of one IMO, one IM specialist, and the following LE staff: two systems-support employees, two radio/telephone technicians, three mailroom positions, and one switchboard operator.

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## INFORMATION SYSTEMS CENTER TRANSPORTATION

Embassy Freetown currently uses motorcycles as the primary means of transportation for post’s IM staff operations. These duties, which are performed by the embassy’s official messengers, radio/telephone technicians, and systems staff, require them to use the motorcycles as transport an average of 60 percent of the time. Due to the embassy’s remote location and hazardous road conditions, several of the IM staff members have been involved in accidents and have been injured primarily during the rainy season; some seriously. The potential threat of injury is increased during the rainy season which peaks, yearly, in the months of June and July. The previous management officer and information program officer had agreed on providing a vehicle that was to be designated as the official vehicle for the IM staff in response to the planned move to the NEC. The IM vehicle was not received, and the issue still remains unresolved.

IM management agrees with the need to have a designated vehicle for the IM staff, but said that this vehicle should act as alternate means of transportation during adverse road conditions and when delivering large items or bulk volumes of printed material. The inability to provide the IM staff with an alternate vehicle for transportation compromises the well-being of the IM staff and hinders the staff’s ability to operate.

**Recommendation 11:** Embassy Freetown should provide a designated vehicle to the information management staff to meet information management section transportation needs. (Action: Embassy Freetown)

## DEDICATED INTERNET NETWORK

Embassy Freetown has a DIN connection that is used for online research in the IRC. The DIN is connected to an external Internet service provider. The information technology staff supports this connection, which is funded by the embassy. The network is not being fully supported by the IM staff. According to 2006 State 166377, the IMO has overall management responsibility of any DINs as part of the embassy's computer resources management. As part of this responsibility, the information technology staff should install and update patches and antivirus software on the DIN workstations regularly. The embassy must also provide software licensing and configuration for the DIN. An informal recommendation was made.

The OIG team counseled post in the area of classification labeling, offsite back-up tape storage, unclassified pouch closing procedures, and labeling of the phone list. Embassy Freetown has taken remediation action on these items. The OIG team has also made recommendations in the classified annex.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### HEALTH UNIT

Embassy staff hold the health unit in particularly high regard, as evidenced by the fact that scores were well above average for both the 2007 ICASS customer satisfaction survey and the workplace and quality of life survey prepared for this inspection. The health unit staff includes a Foreign Service health practitioner, one LE registered nurse/receptionist, and a laboratory technician. The embassy receives regular visits from the regional medical officer and regional mental health officer from Embassy Accra. There is a western-trained local medical advisor, but local medical care facilities or providers are not routinely used by mission personnel.

The health unit provides adequate primary care to American staff and families for uncomplicated illnesses, such as upper-respiratory and intestinal problems. More serious problems require medical evacuation to London or the United States. The health practitioner noted that she does not have appropriate equipment or supplies to treat small children. With three children now at post, and more expected later this year, the health unit must be better equipped to meet their specific health care needs. An informal recommendation was made.

The small space is well organized, the laboratory has the necessary equipment, medications are tagged and reviewed for expiration dates, and controlled substances are properly secured. There is both an examination and day room, but storage space is at a premium.

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, enough for all American and LE staff.

The health unit performs physical examinations of embassy drivers every two years, but current regulations do not require testing for controlled substances. The Foreign Service health practitioner noted that drug usage is on the increase in the general population, so this could become a safety in the workplace issue. An informal recommendation was made.



## COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE COORDINATOR

The CLO coordinator has made a valuable contribution to the embassy community's well-being, and the mission community awarded her high marks in the workplace and quality of life survey for overall helpfulness. Embassy Freetown had no CLO coordinator for several years until the incumbent was hired on a half-time basis in August 2006. She completed the CLO training course the following October and has since worked hard to organize community events and publish a monthly newsletter. The coordinator is currently updating Embassy Freetown's file at the Overseas Briefing Center, and is also seeking ways to involve LE staff in more community activities and in the newsletter.

Three members of the embassy community are on the school board – one appointed by the Ambassador and two elected.

The school suffered a crisis this fall when the newly-appointed school director had to resign suddenly. The former director stepped in briefly, and then the board identified and appointed an interim director. The interim director, an American citizen, has taught several years at (b) (6) and seems deeply committed to the school.

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## MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

### Internal Controls

The embassy submitted the annual Chief of Mission certification of internal controls for FY 2007, which cited no reportable conditions. The embassy has clear separation of duties and responsibilities in various job functions. The management officer has been designated as the embassy's management controls coordinator, and the bureau's management controls coordinator was so notified. The responsibility for management controls is included in the work requirements statements for all staff members who manage U.S. government assets.

Most required systems of internal controls were in place and functioning adequately throughout the mission, including the management and consular sections. However, sub-cashier reconciliations were not being made as required on a quarterly basis. The combination on the cashier's safe has not been changed on an annual basis, as required. Informal recommendations were made.







## INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover matters not requiring action by organizations outside of the inspected unit and/or the parent regional bureau and are not 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.

### POLITICAL/ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

P/E section LE staff do not devote sufficient time to economic affairs.

**Informal Recommendation 1:** Embassy Freetown should reassess locally employed staff workload distribution to focus more staff time on economic affairs.

The P/E section has no travel/representation plans in place.

**Informal Recommendation 2:** Embassy Freetown should prepare political/economic section travel and representation plans to ensure that travel/representational priorities are addressed.

Leahy vetting procedures have not always been fully in accordance with Department guidelines.

**Informal Recommendation 3:** Embassy Freetown should take steps, particularly with regard to interagency coordination, to strengthen Leahy vetting procedures.

The embassy grants officer currently signs SH and DHRF small grants program vouchering documentation.

**Informal Recommendation 4:** The American Self Help and Democracy and Human Rights Fund small grants program coordinator, and not the grants officer, should sign grant vouchering documentation as the ordering officer.

The SH and DHRF small grants program coordinator does not have a grants warrant.

**Informal Recommendation 5:** The American Self Help and Democracy and Human Rights Fund small grants coordinator should take the on-line Department course to obtain a grants warrant.

The American SH and DHRF small grants coordinator has not recently requested accounting reports from the USAID accounting station in Conakry.

**Informal Recommendation 6:** The American Self Help and Democracy and Human Rights Fund small grants coordinator should strengthen coordination with the U.S. Agency for International Development Conakry to more effectively oversee grant management and track voucher liquidations.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The PAS does not maintain an operational program plan to track completion of MSP public diplomacy goals.

**Informal Recommendation 7:** Embassy Freetown should maintain an annual public diplomacy program plan that is linked to appropriate Mission Strategic Plan goals.

The PAS has a vacant distribution clerk position and distribution needs that are not being adequately met.

**Informal Recommendation 8:** Embassy Freetown should fill the vacant public affairs section distribution clerk position.

Embassy Freetown and Embassy Monrovia share common challenges for the distribution of information to the media. Embassy Monrovia is employing a number of creative approaches to meet those challenges.

**Informal Recommendation 9:** Embassy Freetown's public affairs section should consult with their counterparts in Embassy Monrovia regarding the information support to local media outlets.

Since moving to the NEC, Embassy Freetown's IRC is serving far fewer target audience members than it did at its former location.

**Informal Recommendation 10:** Embassy Freetown should develop and implement an active marketing strategy to increase use of the information resource center by target audiences.

Although Embassy Freetown has qualified technical staff to support the embassy's new TVRO and DVC systems, the PAS audio visual technician who is responsible for these systems has not received training to provide adequate support.

**Informal Recommendation 11:** Embassy Freetown should either provide sufficient training to the public affairs audio visual technician to prepare him to support the new television receive only and digital videoconferencing systems or transfer those responsibilities to qualified technicians within the embassy.

## CONSULAR AFFAIRS

People from Sierra Leone frequently appear at the consular section entrance without appointment, attempting to gain information about consular services.

**Informal Recommendation 12:** Embassy Freetown should place an announcement board outside the entrance to the consular section to display information about consular services to the general public.

A high percentage of citizens in Sierra Leone are HIV positive, but the guard force has not received training or equipment and would not know how to respond in the event of a medical emergency.

**Informal Recommendation 13:** Embassy Freetown should provide training and equipment to guards working in the visa waiting room to prepare them in the event of a medical emergency involving individuals who may be HIV positive.

## EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM

The embassy does not have a Federal Women's Program coordinator.

**Recommendation 14:** Post should nominate a volunteer to serve as Federal Women's Program coordinator

The embassy has not set aside a notice board for information about EEO policy and the Federal Women's Program.



**Recommendation 15:** Post should set aside a notice board for Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program information in an area where employees have easy access to it. Post should clearly label the board for Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program announcements.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

On occasion, overtime for official residence expense staff serving at official representational events has been paid on official residence expense vouchers.

**Informal Recommendation 16:** Embassy Freetown should adhere to Section 320 of the Standardized Regulations and charge all future overtime for official residence staff serving at representational events to the representational allotment.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

Embassy Freetown has not received a reply to its May 2007 message to the Bureau of Human Resources requesting the bureau's reconsideration of its authorized transportation and meal allowances.

**Informal Recommendation 17:** Embassy Freetown should be more proactive in its dealing with the Bureau of Human Resources on compensation issues.

## LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF RETIREMENT

Embassy Freetown received authorization from the Department (07 State 145836) to maintain LE staff enrollment in the NIC retirement scheme.

**Informal Recommendation 18:** Embassy Freetown should begin contributing the difference in contributions between the National Social Security and Insurance Trust and the National Insurance Company retirement Scheme, i.e., two percent employee and four percent employer, to the National Insurance Company.

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

Embassy Freetown's ICASS council chairperson has acknowledged a need for formal ICASS training.

**Informal Recommendation 19:** Embassy Freetown should take advantage of the International Cooperative Administrative Service Center's offer of post-specific training in FY 2008 (State 131163).

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

**Informal Recommendation 20:** Embassy Freetown should have its International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council prepare an annual evaluation of the service provider's services.

The ICASS council has not provided input to the management officer's annual performance evaluation, as required by 6 FAH-5 H-161(a).

**Informal Recommendation 21:** Embassy Freetown should require the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services chair to provide input to the management officer's annual performance evaluation report.

Embassy Freetown has not established an ICASS budget committee as required by 06 State 139716.

**Informal Recommendation 22:** Embassy Freetown should establish an International Cooperative Administrative Support Services budget committee.

## HEALTH UNIT

Embassy Freetown's health unit does not have appropriate supplies and equipment to treat small children.

**Informal Recommendation 23:** Embassy Freetown's health unit should seek additional International Cooperative Administrative Support Services funding to purchase age-appropriate medical supplies and equipment.

Current regulations do not require testing for controlled substances during biennial embassy drivers' physical examinations.

**Informal Recommendation 24:** Embassy Freetown should implement a post policy that requires embassy drivers to be tested for controlled substances when undergoing their biennial physical examination.

**Informal Recommendation 25:**

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Embassy Freetown has a DIN connection that is used for internet research in the IRC. The network is not being supported fully by the IM staff as required by 2006 State 166377.

**Informal Recommendation 26:** Embassy Freetown should bring the Dedicated Internet Network into compliance with Department regulations, and patches and antivirus updates should be checked on a regular basis.

## INTERNAL CONTROLS

Unannounced verification of sub-cashier funds are not being conducted at least 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 27:** Embassy Freetown should conduct cash verifications of advances to sub-cashiers.

Embassy Freetown's class B cashier stated that her safe combination was changed approximately one year ago, whereas the regional security officer's combo change card states March 2002 which is not in accordance with 4 FAH-3 H-317.3-2 b regulations.

**Informal Recommendation 28:** Embassy Freetown must ensure that the class b cashier's safe combination is changed at least annually per Department regulations.





	<b>Name</b>	<b>Arrival Date</b>
Ambassador	June C. Perry	09/07
Deputy Chief of Mission	Elizabeth Pratt	08/06
Chiefs of Sections:		
Administrative	Ola B. Criss	08/07
Consular	Brendan P. Mullarkey	05/06
Political/Economics	Vacant since	09/07
Public Affairs	Danna J. Van Brandt	08/07
Regional Security	Bryan J. Scruggs	08/06
Other Agencies:		
Department of Defense	LTC Leslie Bryant	09/07
Department of Justice	Alvie Price	07/06
U.S. Agency for International Development	Christine Sheckler	06/04

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AISF	
CLO	Community liaison office coordinator
COR	Contracting Officer Representative
DAO	Defense Attaché Office
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DHRF	Democracy and Human Rights Fund
DIN	Dedicated Internet Network
DV	Diversity visa
DVC	Digital videoconference
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFM	Eligible family member
ELO	Entry-level officer
G/TIP	Trafficking in Persons
GSO	General services officer
HR/OE	Human Resources Office of Overseas Employment
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
IMATT	International Military Advisory and Training Team
IMO	Information management officer
IRC	Information resource center
LE	Locally employed
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NASSIT	National Social Security and Insurance Trust
NEC	New embassy compound



NIC	National Insurance Company
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations
OBC	Overseas Briefing Center
OIG	Office of Inspector General
P/E	Political/Economic section
PAE	Pacific Architects & Engineers
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
S/OCR	Office of Civil Rights
SH	Self Help
TVRO	Telephone Receive Only
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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