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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Accra,
Ghana

Report Number ISP-I-09-14A, March 2009

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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 for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

PURPOSE

- The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the BBG. 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 economy 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 instances 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; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on-site interviews; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, 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, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

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, as appropriate, 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 "H. W. Geisel".

Harold W. Geisel
Acting Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- Embassy Accra works successfully to develop the close bilateral relationship between the United States and Ghana. The mission's policy goals of supporting democracy, economic growth, health and education, and counternarcotics are implemented through extensive advocacy and assistance programs.
- The recently arrived Ambassador, an experienced career officer, exerts leadership in an informal and friendly manner that resonates well with a community whose morale was spotty. The deputy chief of mission (DCM) has strong organizational skills. She has been at the mission for two years.
- Administrative management is a significant challenge for the mission, in part because the number of American positions has doubled in recent years. Resources and personnel have not kept pace. Management services are uneven with widespread customer dissatisfaction. The mission needs a strong management officer to improve services; the incumbent is curtailing.
- The expansion of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program requires increased executive office attention to overall planning and coordination among agencies at the mission.
- Recent staff turnover and the absence of the political section chief on temporary duty in Baghdad have limited the activities and reporting of the political and economic sections. New arrivals and an experienced political reporting officer on temporary duty are boosting the sections' output, which is particularly important for covering the Ghanaian presidential election in December 2008.
- The consular section delivers services effectively but its staffing is inadequate. The recent discovery of malfeasance and subsequent dismissal of a locally employed (LE) staff member highlights the need for additional antifraud resources, including an assistant regional security investigator position. With diversity visas (DV) doubling in FY 2009, the embassy will need temporarily assigned adjudicators to meet statutory processing deadlines.

- Embassy Accra's security office is managing the mission's security program effectively; however, the mission's emergency action committee needs to update the emergency action plan. The classified annex to this report provides details on this matter.

The inspection took place in Washington, DC, between September 15 and October 3, 2008, and in Accra, Ghana, between October 5 and 22, 2008. Ambassador Donald McConnell (team leader), Tom Carmichael (deputy team leader), Betsy Anderson, Brian Blood, Ronda Capeles, Craig Cheney, Andrea Leopold, Dennis Matthews, George Rivers and Richard Sypher conducted the inspection.

CONTEXT

Ghana is a stable and democratic country with a population of 22 million. It is a leader in promoting peaceful conflict resolution in Africa, a major contributor of troops to UN peacekeeping missions, and a key U.S. partner in the region on counterterrorism. The recent exchange of presidential visits reflects the close U.S.–Ghanaian relationship.



Ghana has a good record of democratic elections, a lively civil society and media, an apolitical military, and a good human rights record. Solid economic management, substantial debt relief, and favorable prices for gold and cocoa (Ghana's main exports) have resulted in a decade of sustained economic growth. Nevertheless, Ghana is far from its potential. Its political and economic achievements are fragile, with weak institutions,

excessive concentration of executive power, over-centralization of authority, corruption, and a growing narcotics trafficking problem. Politics is polarized between the two main parties. Outbreaks of ethnic violence in the North threaten the atmosphere leading up to Ghana's 2008 Presidential elections.

Ghana needs significant structural transformation to achieve its goal of middle-income status by 2015. Its infrastructure, including the power and water sectors, constrains growth. Per capita Gross Domestic Product is below sub-Saharan Africa's average. Income inequality is worsening and a high population growth rate persists. Disease, especially malaria and HIV/AIDS, is a burden. Access to education has improved, but quality remains poor.

The United States and Ghana have excellent relations based on shared commitments to democracy and free market economics, and collaborate on regional and global issues. Robust military-to-military relations include Department of Defense assistance programs, U.S. Navy ship visits, peacekeeping training via the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program, and exchanges with the North Dakota National Guard. The United States is one of Ghana's principal trading partners, and many American companies operate in Ghana.

U.S. government assistance to Ghana includes a five-year \$547 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact focused on agriculture and rural development. United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) \$73 million program (FY 2008) is aimed at private sector development, primary education, child health and HIV/AIDS, good governance, and food security. Next year the U.S. government will fund \$17 million for the PEPFAR activity in Ghana. Ghana hosts up to 140 Peace Corps volunteers each year.

Mission Accra staffing includes 126 U.S. direct-hire and 402 Ghanaians and third country national employees. By the end of FY 2008, it will include more than a dozen agencies and major offices: the Departments of State, Commerce, Homeland Security, Agriculture, Justice and Treasury; USAID, Peace Corps, the Defense attaché office (DAO), the office for security cooperation, Navy medical research unit, the International Broadcasting Bureau, and the MCC. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will join these agencies in FY 2009.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

The size and scope of the U.S. Government presence at Mission Accra present a significant challenge in carrying out the Chief of Mission's responsibility for oversight and coordination of executive branch agencies at the mission. Fortunately, the recently arrived Ambassador brings extensive management and policy experience, having served as DCM and for a long period as chargé d'affaires in South Africa and having worked on the National Security Council.

The Country Team and Interagency Process

All agencies, entities, and section heads are represented on the country team, which meets weekly. The Ambassador chairs the meeting or, in his absence, the DCM. The Ambassador and/or DCM meet weekly or biweekly with individual section heads and agency chiefs. The new Ambassador has an open and informal style which encourages interaction and discussion. He has stated his desire to have an off-site retreat in the future to engage in an extended discussion of U.S. policies, programs and priorities in Ghana, and the best ways to advance U.S. interests. He has stated a commitment to look for opportunities where the different sections and agencies can cooperate in their respective activities to maximize U.S. effectiveness in Ghana.

The Ambassador also chairs a smaller version of the country team meeting weekly. Called the core team, it includes the political section, the economic section, the consular section, the public affairs section, the regional security office, the management section, the environmental science and technology officer, the management officer, and the chiefs of USAID Ghana and USAID Regional West Africa. The OIG team informally recommended to the executive office that it supplement or replace the core team meeting with interagency cluster groups to meet regularly under the chair of the Ambassador or DCM to focus on specific program or foreign assistance activity areas. The OIG team recommends an initial cluster group tied to economic development in the economics section of this report.

Interagency relations are good. Front office direction and coordination with all agencies is open and cooperative. Agency and section heads commented to the OIG team that they expected productive and cooperative relationships under the leadership of the new Ambassador. The DCM and the Ambassador work well together. The Ambassador has expressed confidence in the ability of the DCM to oversee operations as chargé d'affaires in his absence.

The Mission Strategic Plan Process

Mission employees said that the Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) process at Embassy Accra had gone smoothly, with widespread participation and input. Under the supervision of the DCM, the political section chief coordinated drafting of the document among mission sections. The country team discussed the draft document, and the previous Ambassador approved it. The OIG team reviewed the MSP and found the plan to be well targeted and appropriate to U.S. interests and advancing U.S.-Ghanaian relations. With respect to public diplomacy and consular operations, however, the OIG team found the MSP rather thin and general. The recently-arrived public affairs counselor has stated she will seek to target public diplomacy activities to specific elements of MSP goals, under the guidance of the Ambassador. The consular section chief told the OIG team that he has developed some performance indicators that will help the section determine if it is meeting its MSP goals.

Security and Emergency Preparedness

The Ambassador and DCM are positively engaged in the mission's security programs and support the mission's security policies. They encourage personnel through formal directives and personal example to participate actively in emergency drills and to comply with security policies and procedures. The Ambassador and DCM rely on the regional security officer (RSO) to manage Embassy Accra's strong and effective security program. Their communication and interaction with the regional security office is frequent and productive.

A major advance in the security of offices at Mission Accra was achieved with the move into the new embassy compound (NEC) in 2007. Preparation of an updated emergency action plan (EAP) has lagged; however, mission leadership is committed to completing this process.

Support of Equal Employment Opportunity Objectives

The executive office supports Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) objectives, but as discussed later in this report, the embassy does not have a trained EEO counselor. As an interim measure until a Department officer can be trained, an EEO counselor in the USAID mission is temporarily serving in this function for EEO coverage of embassy personnel.

(b) (2)

Entry-Level Officer Program

The entry-level officer (ELO) program at Mission Accra is adequate but the DCM could improve it. There is no formal program nor any regular schedule of meetings or mentoring. The DCM meets on occasion with ELOs in brown-bag lunches and has hosted a dinner discussion with them at her residence. She counsels them and provides career advice on an individual, ad hoc basis. The majority of ELOs are in the consular section where their work requires them to be at their posts daily, limiting their opportunity to become familiar with work in other areas of the embassy. To mitigate this and provide a career broadening experience, their work

requirements statements provide for them to have a period of rotation outside their normal duty. In a meeting with the OIG team, ELOs suggested it would be helpful to them to receive upon arrival a description of the ELO program and to have periodic mentoring meetings. The OIG team informally suggested that the DCM develop a written program to give ELOs upon their arrival and to arrange more regular mentoring.

Management of Foreign Assistance

Ghana benefits from a large and varied U.S. assistance program, which includes a five-year \$547 million MCC compact focused on agriculture and rural development. MCC has two American officers in Mission Accra to oversee the program. MCC works closely and cooperatively with the embassy leadership and other agencies. For example, MCC and the Peace Corps are developing complementary agriculture programs.

Ghana had the first Peace Corps program in the world and hosts up to 140 volunteers each year. They are dispersed widely around the country, working in areas such as health, education, and small business development. The Peace Corps director in Accra actively participates in the country team.

The USAID has a large presence in Accra with 35 American positions serving in the USAID Ghana mission and the USAID West Africa Regional Headquarters. USAID's \$73 million bilateral program in Ghana is aimed at private sector development, primary education, child health and HIV/AIDS, good governance, and food security. The Ambassador and DCM exercise appropriate oversight and coordination of USAID's program activities in Ghana. Department-USAID management consolidation under a single International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) system in conjunction with the move to the NEC, however, has not gone smoothly nor is it complete. It is part of the significant management challenge to the mission discussed elsewhere in this report.

Next year the PEPFAR program budget for Ghana will increase to \$17 million. The executive office should engage actively and early in planning for the coordination and executive oversight of the program. The mission has yet to make basic decisions on the execution of this large and important program. USAID will likely have the operational lead working with the CDC and others, but overall planning and coordination under the Ambassador will be critical.

The U.S. African Development Foundation manages a portfolio of 39 investment projects across a range of industrial sectors in Ghana. The foundation's country program was established in 1984. It focuses on export-oriented enterprise development. The foundation's total commitment to Ghana is \$7.5 million.

There are also robust military-to-military programs between the U.S. and Ghana including office of security cooperation programs, support to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Center, U.S. Navy ship visits, and peacekeeping training via the African Contingency Operations Training Assistance program. Ghana will receive four Coast Guard Defender class boats in 2008 funded by \$2.3 million in FY 2007 1206 funds¹. This includes shipping, training, and spare parts for the boats. FY 2008 1206 funds will be used for three more boats to be delivered in 2009. In FY 2007, foreign military financing was \$500,000 and international military education and training was \$643,000. The level of the Ambassador's oversight of these programs is appropriate. There is good communication and cooperation between and among the different military and civilian elements.

U.S. Mission Accra has grown hugely in a short period of time, doubling the number of American positions in the last five years. Administrative support positions have not kept pace, straining the embassy's ability to provide administrative services. With the difficulties in Cote d'Ivoire in recent years, U.S. agencies increasingly choose to base their West Africa operations in Accra. Office space in the new chancery already is squeezed with the addition of new personnel. CDC and FBI representatives are scheduled to arrive in FY 2009. Additional National Security Decision Directive-38 (NSDD-38) requests are on the horizon. USAID is considering adding up to eight new U.S. positions in Accra each year for three years. The Chief of Mission will need to consider each new NSDD-38 request in terms of the capability of providing office space and administrative support, in addition to reviewing the program and policy justification for each position.

¹Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006 provides the Secretary of Defense with authority to train and equip foreign military and foreign maritime security forces. Funds may be obligated only with the concurrence of the Secretary of State. Thus far, the Department of Defense has used Section 1206 authority primarily to provide counterterrorism support.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

POLITICAL AFFAIRS

A mid-level section chief, a rotating ELO, an LE staff member, and an eligible family member (EFM) staff the political section; the section shares an office management specialist (OMS) with the economic section. The section chief is currently on a one-year temporary duty assignment to Embassy Baghdad. A when-actually-employed officer with previous extensive Ghana experience arrived soon before the OIG team to serve as section chief in Accra for four months during the run-up to the December 2008 national elections. The ELO previously led the section. Given the staffing constraints, the section has performed well. The section chief has a weekly one-on-one meeting with the DCM to update her on developments and the activities of the section.

With the arrival of the when-actually-employed officer, reporting has increased substantially. Brought to Accra to focus on the elections, and with extensive contacts from previous Accra assignments, his reporting on election related activities is timely and insightful. Washington agencies praised recent reports on the national campaign, the various candidates and the procedural aspects of the election that the Ghanaian electoral authority is now addressing. The ELO prepared many of these reports.

Prior to the acting section chief's arrival, essentially only required reports and demarches were done and voluntary reporting was limited. During that time, however, the executive office did support reporting. Prior to her departure, the previous Ambassador hosted a series of lunches with Ghanaian presidential candidates and prepared reports based on those events. Short staff and a steady stream of visitors requiring support limited the section's ability to do anything other than the essential. Despite the short staffing, the section contributed to the preparation for Ghanaian President Kufuor's state visit to the United States in September 2008.

When the section is fully staffed, there is a good division of labor between the section chief and the ELO. Representational and travel budgets are adequate, although staffing shortages have limited travel outside of Accra.

Political section interaction with the Department of Defense mission elements is primarily through the country team process. The mission has implemented procedures and is following guidance from the Department concerning the Leahy Amendment requirement for vetting individuals and units of Ghana's security forces prior to their benefitting from U.S. security assistance and training programs. The political section coordinates such checks with input from the Office of Security Cooperation.

Narcotics Assistance

Ghana has become a major transshipment point for illegal drugs, particularly cocaine from South America, as well as heroin from Southeast and Southwest Asia. Europe is the main destination, but drugs also flow to South Africa and North America. Traffickers increasingly use Accra's Kotoka International Airport and the three major seaports.

Ghana is taking steps to address the increasing drug flow and welcomes assistance in combating illicit trafficking in narcotics. Bilateral U.S.-Ghanaian narcotics control and law enforcement cooperation is increasing. The political section manages a number of assistance programs. Department of Defense Africa Command funds are being used to build a climate-controlled narcotics interdiction facility at Accra's Kotoka International Airport and a police training and evidence storage facility. International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement program funds will be used in FY 2009 for a temporary duty complex narcotics investigations intermittent legal adviser to assist and train Ghanaian officials and towards the purchase of narcotics detection equipment for the airport.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The economic section had a complete turnover in U.S. officers in the 30 days prior to the OIG team's arrival in Ghana. The section chief is an experienced mid-level officer. The section comprises a second tour ELO, an LE staff economic specialist who is a critical resource integrally involved in all aspects of the section's work, a newly hired economic assistant, a coordinator of the Ambassador's Special Self-Help program, and an OMS shared with the political section. The section chief has a weekly one-on-one meeting with the DCM to discuss the section's work and plans. The section chief holds weekly staff meetings that include both American and LE staff.

Since the arrival of the two officers, there has been little reporting other than completion of required reports and responses to inquiries from Washington agencies. Those same Washington agencies were generally pleased with the quality and analysis in economic reporting from the previous team. The new section chief has read up on Ghana, has identified priorities and is establishing his contacts within Ghana's government and economic community. He is creating links to the other U.S. economic and development agencies colocated on the embassy compound to improve coordination. To further this coordination and information sharing effort the OIG made an informal recommendation that the Ambassador form an economic and development cluster group that meets monthly. Members of this cluster should include the economic section, the public affairs section, USAID, MCC, Foreign Commercial Service (FCS), the U.S. Treasury advisors embedded in the Ghanaian Finance Ministry, and the regional Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) officer when he is making his visits to Accra.

In recent years, fairly significant quantities of oil and gas were discovered in Ghanaian offshore waters and oil revenues are expected to start to flow into government coffers in the next two years. The economic section is working with other parts of the mission, including USAID, to encourage the government of Ghana to use its future oil revenues wisely, to not borrow excessively against those future revenues, and to implement anticorruption measures now, in advance of the expected income.

Soon after President Bush's visit, Ghana expressed interest in negotiating a free trade agreement with the United States. Initial discussions revealed technical problems related to Ghana's membership in the Economic Community of West African States. These bilateral discussions are now on hold. Prior to President Kufuor's visit to Washington there were also exploratory discussions on a possible Bilateral Investment Treaty. Again, initial discussions revealed the complexity of the U.S. model agreement and Ghana is taking time to understand U.S. environmental and labor requirements contained in a U.S.-Bilateral Investment Treaty. These discussions have served, however, to establish closer relations with policymakers and both potential agreements are discussed in the annual council meeting called for in the bilateral Trade and Investment Facilitation Agreement. The Office of the United States Trade Representative would negotiate both of these potential agreements. The Office of the United States Trade Representative desk officer for Ghana highly praised the embassy's economic officers in providing information and coordinating these discussions, including digital videoconferences.

Refugee and Migration Affairs

A regional refugee coordinator representing the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) is assigned to Embassy Accra. The officer covers 21 countries in the region and primarily oversees the processing of refugees for admission to the United States. The regional refugee officer coordinates closely with nongovernmental organizations working on refugee matters as well as with the offices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to encourage more referrals from that agency to the United States for resettlement. She visits refugee camps in Ghana and reports on conditions in the camps.

The refugee coordinator manages a \$3.7 million contract with the Overseas Processing Entity, a nongovernmental organization with offices in Accra, which PRM has contracted to prepare refugee cases for presentation to the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Immigration Service (DHS/USCIS) office, for interviews. The regional office of DHS/USCIS is also located in Embassy Accra. The refugee coordinator maintains close contact and good relations with that office.

The regional refugee coordinator in Accra has had limited success in increasing flows of refugees in her covered region to the United States as the UNHCR is now concentrating more on repatriating refugees located in this region than in resettling them in third countries. However, the coordinator remains busy as there are increasing numbers of refugees from Sudan in Chad, Cameroon, Gabon, and the Central African Republic, which are within the refugee coordinator's region.

Though the refugee coordinator reports to the head of the political section, she operates with a great deal of autonomy. She generally sets her own schedule in consultation with PRM in Washington and is in frequent contact with her desk officer by telephone and e-mail. At the request of the political section chief she has contributed to section reporting and assisted with U.S. Government high level visits to Ghana. The refugee coordinator is a member of the country team.

Environment, Science, Technology and Health Hub

The Environment, Science, Technology and Health (ESTH) hub officer covers 25 countries in West and Central Africa. He is tasked with promoting regional cooperative approaches to environmental issues in his countries as well as the promotion of science and technology partnerships in the region. The ESTH hub officer is on the road between one third and half the time, usually attending meetings of regional

organizations. Given the size of his region, he has decided he is most effective if he works with multi-country environmental and science organizations mainly on trans-boundary issues. He maintains good contact with the numerous nongovernmental agencies working in Africa on his range of issues.

The hub officer is unable to devote much time to ESTH issues in Ghana due to his travel schedule. He does, however, maintain contacts with Ghanaian officials working in the ESTH area and recently worked with Department of Defense elements at the mission to host a fisheries management training program at the Ghanaian port of Tema to enhance fisheries monitoring and catch reporting. The ESTH hub officer manages a travel budget of \$46,000 which he finds barely sufficient to cover his travel in his region, travel which is difficult and usually indirect. He is rated by an office director in the Bureau of Oceans and Environmental Affairs and reviewed by the DCM. The ESTH hub officer is a member of the country team and has access to the Ambassador and DCM when needed.

Trade Promotion

The U.S. Department of Commerce has a FCS officer assigned permanently to Embassy Accra. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has a FAS officer who visits Ghana at least quarterly from his office at the Consulate General in Lagos, Nigeria. FAS has an LE staff member in Accra who shares office space with the FCS. The FAS officer visited Accra during the inspection.

The FCS officer and the new economic section officers meet frequently and share information and contacts. Similarly, the FAS officer exchanges information with the FCS and economic section officers.

The embassy's executive office is active in promoting trade with the United States. The FAS officer commented on assistance from the previous Ambassador which was instrumental in reversing an official Ghanaian decision to restrict imports of U.S. grown genetically modified rice. The Ambassador's intervention was also critical to an April 2008 Ghanaian decision to open up to imports of U.S. bone-in beef. The FCS officer said that the previous Ambassador's advocacy on behalf of a U.S. investor in a dispute regarding an energy sector investment resulted in the recovery of a substantial amount of money owed.

Law Enforcement Coordination

The RSO and the recently arrived Department of Defense Force Protection Detachment are the two law enforcement entities currently at Embassy Ghana. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the FBI cover Ghana from their regional offices in Lagos, Nigeria. Agents from both the DEA and the FBI visit Accra on a quarterly basis. Both agencies have NSDD-38 approval to establish offices at Embassy Accra. DEA agents are expected to arrive before the end of 2008 and embassy officers expect an FBI agent to arrive in 2009.

The RSO maintains excellent contact and cooperation with Ghanaian law enforcement authorities.

The DCM chairs the Law Enforcement and Counternarcotics Working Group (LEWG) at Embassy Accra. The mission created the LEWG to share information and coordinate among the group's members. The LEWG had not met in the six months prior to this inspection. With the expansion of the number of law enforcement agencies in Accra it is important that the LEWG meet on a regular basis and expand its membership to include all offices and sections that work on law enforcement-related issues.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Accra should establish and implement a schedule for formal monthly meetings of the Law Enforcement and Counternarcotics Working. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Visiting Delegations

As noted previously in this report, Embassy Accra receives a very large number of official visitors. In many cases the duties of control officer for these visits fall on officers in the political and economic sections. An inordinate amount of the control officer's time is spent on logistical aspects of visits to the detriment of the officer's other duties.

Files Management

The political and economic sections share a Foreign Service office manager. The incumbent arrived one week prior to the inspection. There was a gap of several months between her arrival and her predecessor's departure. Her predecessor also had to cover frequent gaps in the front office OMS staffing. As a result, files in the economic and political sections are minimal, with no central repository for incoming

action cables or outgoing cables. Each officer maintains his or her own chronological files. The OIG left an informal recommendation that the shared OMS prepare electronic chronological and subject files in accordance with standard procedure and educate the sections' officers in their use.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

The Embassy Accra public affairs section is well staffed and carries out an active public diplomacy program that furthers MSP goals and effectively supports other mission elements. Washington elements spoke highly of its program stewardship; however, the section leadership seeks to strengthen its program capacity as it adjusts its programs to work from within a NEC.

Rationalization of Space and Staff

The newly arrived public affairs officer (PAO) is addressing incomplete elements in the 2007 transfer of the public affairs section (PAS) cultural section, press section, information resource center (IRC), and educational advising center operations into the new chancery building. For example, the PAO is reconfiguring radio and TV reception equipment to allow news monitoring, replacing aging equipment, and ordering furniture for its IRC and educational advising center.

The OIG team found that the initial arrangement of PAS's new chancery office space did not enhance productivity or esprit de corps. Most of the PAS cultural and press LE staff are located close to the second floor offices of their Foreign Service officer supervisors; however, their cubicles are grouped among cubicles of other sections in a floor plan that is neither clear nor convenient. Signage is barely visible. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the PAS and other cubicles on the second floor be reorganized to reflect more clearly the functional sections.

The colocation of the IRC and educational advising center in the NEC has created access problems and visitor numbers have dropped. The RSO has helped minimize the problems security restrictions bring, but he must enforce regulations governing visitors. The PAO hopes that greater IRC outreach may attract more IRC visitors. When the educational advising center's student advisee workload is heaviest during the summer, the LE staff educational advisors must escort groups of advisees to and from the entrance gate and to restrooms. This is not an effective use of their time. The OIG team discussed with the PAO the value of hiring temporary help to handle this duty for the heavy periods.

PAS is taking several steps to strengthen and rationalize its staff. One step is to upgrade the secretarial positions to cultural and information assistant positions. The incumbents already fulfill those duties. One of the PAO secretaries now compiles and submits the mission activities tracker entries, addressing a PAS shortcoming reported by Washington elements. The OIG team discussed with the PAO the value of training for these newly promoted assistants to fine tune their skills. The IRC director carries out technical arrangements for digital videoconferences. This work takes the director away from important IRC outreach activities. In addition, although PAS may wish to offer digital videoconferencing support for embassy personnel training and internal U.S. government management or other discussion, the participating mission element should assume employee salary and other direct costs. The OIG team made informal recommendations to rationalize the assignment of PAS personnel for this support and to help ensure that the public diplomacy budget is used for public diplomacy programs.

Media Analysis and Informing the Mission

PAS has been expanding its analytic reporting of the Ghanaian media, including cables discussing the politicized nature of state media and the political rhetoric of civic, religious, and political leaders in their calls for more civil discourse in response to the upsurge of violence in the North as Presidential elections grow near. PAS and the embassy political section carefully coordinated on these cables and other reporting on “hate messages” in the media.

The PAS information section is energetic and skilled, but has not been keeping the mission adequately informed about Ghanaian media’s reporting on the United States or on issues important to the mission. The OIG team endorses the PAO’s plan to develop a new vehicle for this reporting that allows PAS to provide real value-added news selection and analysis rather than repetition of what is found in the English-language newspapers.

The Presidents Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

The expansion of PEPFAR-funded HIV/AIDS and other Presidential health initiatives in Ghana adds significant new work for PAS.. At this time when PAS capacity should be expanded, the Department plans to leave the PAS Accra cultural affairs officer position vacant from September 2009 to 2010. This will further tax the PAO. The OIG team discussed two steps the mission could take to ensure Ghanaians understand and appreciate the humanitarian and developmental benefits of U.S. contributions. To enhance cooperation among mission elements, the mission could require short-term, training-oriented exchanges among PAS LE staff and public

affairs professionals from USAID and the staff of other PEPFAR program implementations. The mission also could use PEPFAR funds to create a public affairs contract position in PAS. This contract employee would carry out media and public affairs programming to support PEPFAR and other Presidential health initiatives.

The OIG team also looked at ways to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the mission's public diplomacy efforts. The most fundamental approach to coordinate mission-wide public affairs activities would be for PAS to develop and implement a mission communications strategy and a mission public affairs calendar to which all mission elements can contribute updates. A mission communications strategy would keep messages focused on the right audiences. A calendar would allow effective management of the resources of PAS, its partner mission elements, and the implementing partners.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Accra should develop and implement a mission-wide communications strategy and public affairs calendar. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Mission Understanding of Public Affairs Section's Role and Programs

The OIG team's discussion with agency chiefs indicates that they have high regard for PAS's expertise, advice, and support for their public diplomacy needs; however, the mission would benefit from a better understanding of PAS's programs. To increase understanding, the OIG team discussed with PAS the value of including visits to the educational advising center and IRC on the newcomer check-in list, and holding educational advising center brown-bag lunch presentations for mission staff.

Public Diplomacy Grants Management

PAS follows most Department public diplomacy grant procedures and has good files. The OIG team discussed with the section several steps to fine-tune this function, including closer attention to the Excluded Parties List requirement. The cultural affairs officer has a grants warrant and the PAO is planning on completing training necessary to renew her warrant for Ghana so that there is operational redundancy.

CONSULAR OPERATIONS

Embassy Accra's consular section is well-managed and productive. Its staff consists of an FO-02 chief, five ELOs, four EFMs, and 16 LE staff. The staff capably and courteously handles a heavy workload in a challenging, high-fraud environment. While staff resources are concentrated on safeguarding U.S. borders through adjudicating a growing visa caseload as well as providing services to U.S. citizens, the MSP goal related to consular excellence does not articulate a specific strategy or performance indicators for measuring success. The section chief fosters a calm, professional atmosphere which helps maintain good morale, but persistent staffing gaps have eroded the section's ability to meet all its responsibilities. The OIG team addresses several informal recommendations to these issues.

Consular Management

The consular chief is a hands-on manager whose leadership is well regarded within and outside the consular section. The priority he places on courteous customer service has produced calm, respectful interactions with the public, despite the high refusal and fraud rates. The OIG team noted that interviews are conducted in sufficient depth to determine eligibility and refusals are explained thoroughly. Management controls are well understood and implemented consistently to control waste, fraud, and mismanagement. Diligence in reviewing exception reports sparked a recent investigation and subsequent dismissal of an LE employee. The section keeps cash records meticulously, and conducts unannounced cash counts frequently.

Appointments are scheduled throughout the workday. In order to manage the workload without creating unacceptably long wait times, the consular section needs each of its officers to adjudicate cases at least six hours a day. The section chief handles overflow nonimmigrant visa (NIV) interviews in addition to the American Citizen Services clientele. The section chief has made tough but correct choices about priorities, but consular duty procedures, the consular portions of the EAP, and section standard operating procedures are out of date. The OIG team made informal recommendations regarding these issues. Officers routinely work 5-10 hours of overtime weekly. ELOs who qualify for overtime compensation receive it upon request; the OIG team reminded all officers to count their hours accurately for the consular package.

Frequent, long staffing gaps; reduced productivity during training and orientation of officers transitioning into the section; parental leave; rest and recreation travel; and even short absences for illness or to attend to administrative details have reduced the section's ability to deal with less urgent but important work. A deputy chief is

due to arrive shortly after a five-month gap. The post recently learned it will experience a near doubling of the DV workload in FY 2009. With current staffing, the consular section will not be able to complete the required number of DV interviews within the statutory timeframe.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should provide experienced temporary duty assignment adjudicators to assist with the increased volume of diversity visa applicants in FY 2009. (Action: CA, in coordination with Embassy Accra)

Space

The consular section occupies a wing on the main level of this one-year-old embassy with a separate controlled access point. All the service windows are in use at busy times. There is not room to seat all applicants inside on busy days, but there is a covered outdoor seating area with drinking water available. There is space for confidential interviews, which DHS/USCIS intermittently uses for refugee interviews. A queuing system (Q-matic) is partially installed, but not functional. Applicants for U.S. citizens' services are obliged to interrupt others in order to get their names on the list for service. Use of the Q-matic would eliminate this problem.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Accra should complete the installation of its Q-matic system in order to organize waiting lines more effectively. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Interviewers cannot hear applicants well. There is no privacy screen separating the applicants at the counter from those in the waiting room. The counter appears to have been installed backwards; it is wider on the public side than on the employee's side, where the additional surface area would be useful for equipment. The width on the public side makes it hard for the applicants to get close enough to the microphone to speak directly into it. To alleviate this, the embassy has built free-standing wooden boxes for applicants to stand on, enabling them to lean further towards the microphone.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Accra should reduce the width of the service counters on the applicants' side of the window so the applicants can easily speak into the microphones. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Although the embassy has been in use just over a year, the waiting room shows signs of wear and tear. When applicants enter the waiting room, a guard directs them to the appropriate window and seating area. These areas are marked with Bureau of Consular Affairs-approved graphics, but applicants have no guide to what they mean. The backs of chairs have dug a ridge into the drywall. There are head marks and finger marks on the paint. There are torn, dirty, and misspelled paper signs in the public restrooms and no brochures or reading material in the magazine rack. Only one of the two television sets is operational. The OIG team offered several informal recommendations to address these issues.

Officers have clear line-of-sight supervision over all employees

Recommendation 6: (b) (2)

Fraud Prevention

Fraud in immigrant and NIV applications is widespread. Consular officers are attentive to the potential for fraud and malfeasance. The recent investigation and subsequent dismissal of a long-time LE staff employee and some local guards has heightened this awareness. Consular officers have developed good contacts with police and shared the podium with an anticorruption official at a recent press conference to publicize the Diversity Visa Program. The post has a steady caseload of internet scams of which U.S. citizens are victims. DNA testing is required in about 90 percent of immigrant visa cases based on relationships. In the absence of a deputy section chief, an ELO serves as fraud prevention manager and supervises the two full-time and one part-time LE staff assigned to the function; this responsibility will devolve to the new deputy upon arrival. Considering the high stakes and growing

workload, the fraud prevention and detection program would greatly benefit from the services of an assistant regional security officer investigator, which the Department has approved in principle based on the embassy's MSP submission, but has not yet established or filled.

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Consular Affairs should request the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to establish and fill the assistant regional security officer investigator position in Accra in FY 2009. (Action: CA in coordination with DS)

Visa Services

There is keen interest in Ghana about immigration to the United States. In FY 2008, Embassy Accra issued more than 4000 DVs, and over 7000 Ghanaians received notice that they were selected in FY 2009's lottery. Most of those will process their applications at Embassy Accra.

The large DV workload has spurred an increase in family-based preference immigration, as successful DV applicants petition for qualifying family members. Fraud occurs frequently, as noted in the Fraud Prevention section of the report.

The close relationship between the United States and Ghana fosters interest in business, educational, and cultural travel as well as personal visits to the United States. NIV demand has continued to grow. The OIG team noted that interviews are conducted carefully and applicants are treated with respect and patience. LE staff employees assist officers to interview applicants whose English is not adequate.

NIV applicants are required to make appointments using a web-based appointment system that the Bureau of Consular Affairs developed. Most residents of Ghana do not have access to the Internet at home or at work, and they use Internet cafes to make appointments. The Internet cafes claim all available appointments, often in place-holder names with fabricated receipt and passport numbers, and charge applicants a fee for the service. The system then shows no available appointments for applicants accessing the system from another source. This results in a no-show rate averaging between 30 and 40 per cent. Consular management tries to compensate by opening up new slots at random times, but these are immediately snapped up by the Internet cafes. Another remedy is to overbook appointments, but to date, this has only resulted in a higher no-show rate.

The embassy receives a small number of complaints from people trying to make appointments who are unable to do so. Some such calls, made to other embassy offices, result in referrals. If the applicant qualifies for a referral, the consular chief determines an appropriate date based on planned travel, and properly notes the referral form. When such a call is received directly, the EFM consular assistant can make an appointment from the small number of slots reserved for emergencies. The number of calls received does not correspond with the no-show rate – leading consular management to conclude that the number of appointments made does not represent real demand. This makes it difficult to accurately report wait times. Consular management understands that the Bureau of Consular Affairs intends to address this issue in a future release of visa software, but the release will not be available for more than a year.

Recommendation 8: The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should provide a short-term systems solution to prevent or deter entrepreneurs from making phantom nonimmigrant visas appointments. (Action: CA, in coordination with Embassy Accra)

American Citizen Services

U.S. citizens seeking services may enter the consular controlled access area at any time it is open. The OIG team spoke with several randomly-selected U.S. citizens at the entrance who reported lack of available parking, rude or indifferent treatment by guards, and an unwelcoming appearance and process for entering the compound. The OIG team observed an uncertain process for lining up for service. The U.S. citizens reported waiting a long time to be served, but noted that the office was very busy. They expressed praise for the competence of the consular employees handling their business.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Accra should institute regular training sessions and frequent oversight for guards assigned to the consular compound access control area in order to improve their customer service skills. (Action: Embassy Accra)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. PSCs	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2008 (\$)
State – D&CP	30		3	10	43	3,039,300
State – ICASS***	9		6.5	260	275.5	7,567,200
State – CA	8		4	16	28	659,677
State – Public Diplomacy	4		0	15	19	755,480
State – Diplomatic Security	4		1	3	8	1,192,959
State – Marine Security	6		0	4	10	123,000
State – Representation	-		-	-	-	38,400
State – OBO	0		0	0	0	1,453,026
MCC**	2		1	2	5	426,000
USAID****	32	20	3	74	129	132,481,286
FAS	0		0	1	1	38,500
DHS	2		0	2	4	269,175
FCS	1		0	3	4	242,490
DOD-HIV	1		0	0	1	297,060
DOD-Office of Defense Cooperation	4		0	3	7	347,400
HHS	1		0	0	1	55,600
DEA	3		0	0	3	566,382
Defense attaché office	7		2	1	10	707,815
DOJ – FBI LegAtt	2		0	0	2	142,056
IBB	1		0	1	2	791,610
Peace Corps	3	1	1	*6	11	2,407,000
U.S. Department of Treasury	2		0	1	3	777,300
DOD – FPD	4		0	0	4	330,000
State – INL	-		-	-	-	336,900
Totals	126	21	21.5	402	570.5	\$155,045,616

*This number does not include 24 Peace Corps local employees hired under the PSC mechanism that are not included in the U.S. Embassy Accra's Local Compensation Plan.

**The MCC Development Specialist position is job-share. The MCC Compact program provides \$547 million over five years.

***CLO coordinator position is staffed by 3 employees (job-share).

****The USAID program was \$73 million for FY 2008. PEPFAR funding totals \$17 million for FY 2009.

Embassy Accra moved to the NEC in June 2007. USAID moved in September 2007. The total cost for the NEC and the USAID annex was approximately \$81 million.

An EFM from the Office of Management's Office of Planning, Rightsizing and Innovation (M/PRI) helped coordinate the move. He is not an Embassy Accra employee but rather an employee of M/PRI. In summer 2008, he became a professional associate and is now assigned only regional duties from Embassy Accra where he has no apparent supervision and is not fully occupied. While M/PRI considers his portfolio to be regional, it has not assigned him specific tasks, and he does not expect to travel to facilitate other embassies' moves in the near future. The OIG team discussed the position with M/PRI and found that M/PRI had established regional NEC coordinators to reduce duplication of effort when embassies move to new compounds. The coordinators are expected to amass institutional knowledge of embassy moves and develop a handbook for embassies planning to move into new compounds. The coordinators fall under the Professional Associates Program, and are paid approximately \$40,000 annually. The Office of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO) first agreed to the concept when M/PRI approached them about it in 2008, but later declined to fund it, because OBO believes it may be more costly than helpful.

In 2008, when the positions first were advertised for EFMs, there were 30 applicants for three positions. The positions are staffed in Kuala Lumpur, Manila, and Accra. The three coordinators have not established communication among themselves nor a methodology for sharing information and experience with each other or other missions planning a move. M/PRI has not consistently made travel funds available to enable the coordinators to visit embassies undergoing moves. The positions have no responsibilities at their home posts, and in this case, M/PRI's remote supervision from Washington led to the coordinator having nothing at all to do. All employees should be properly supervised and have specific, relevant duties. They also need an appropriate travel budget, particularly if their positions are regional, to carry out their work. Without such elements the positions are ineffective and waste money, (b) (2)

Recommendation 10: The Office of Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should abolish the position of the Office of Planning and Rightsizing and Innovation's coordinator in Accra, or define its duties, designate an embassy supervisor, and provide travel funding. (Action: M/PRI, in coordination with Embassy Accra.)

Embassy Accra's management section is facing challenges in meeting growth requirements. Executive office attention to the management office function and support for the Department-USAID management consolidation was also limited. The consolidation, still incomplete, suffered from a lack of leadership, transparency, and cooperation.

The general services office is not performing well and customer dissatisfaction is widespread. At the time of the inspection, the management officer was not present and the supervisory general services officer (GSO) and the facilities maintenance manager were on rest and recuperation leave. Consequently, the financial management officer led the section. His exceptional performance during the inspection cannot be overstated. The human resources officer and the assistant GSO also provided impressive and necessary support for the inspectors working with the management section.

The financial management and human resource management sections are fully functioning. The human resources officer provides regional support to Embassies Lome and Cotonou and the financial management officer provides regional support to Embassy Lome. The growing workload at Embassy Accra makes these regional duties more difficult to fulfill.

There are training plans for each section but budget limits often prevent staff from getting needed training. If the embassy becomes a regional training center, as envisioned, staff here and in neighboring countries will benefit. The information management section needs to focus on performing information security duties and developing a contingency and continuity of operations plan.

The Bureau of African Affairs and Embassy Accra agreed to wait until the next bidding cycle to replace the departing management officer. Designating the supervisory GSO as the acting management officer during the interim does not appear adequate. The decision to delay the arrival of this critical leadership position until late summer 2009 creates a long gap and the mission should reconsider the delay. The OIG team believes a full-time management officer is needed as soon as possible and, until a management officer arrives, a temporary duty management officer is needed immediately. The management section clearly cannot function well without leadership and management.

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should assign a full-time management officer as soon as possible. (Action: AF, in coordination with Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 12: The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should assign a temporary duty management officer as soon as possible and request temporary duty management presence until a full-time management officer arrives. (Action: AF, in coordination with Embassy Accra)

American staff has nearly doubled in the last three years, but local staff increases have not matched this growth and the resulting service demands placed upon some sections. Department-USAID management consolidation has increased the number of houses the housing staff must lease, but the housing staff has remained nearly the same.

The dissatisfaction is focused on GSO functions but personnel also criticize the facilities management section's maintenance and service delivery.

The OIG team recognizes the need to reorganize the general services section but it cannot resolve the problem without consulting with the senior GSO. A new assistant GSO may provide a needed and proper division of labor within the section. The motor pool is a serious problem; staff often wait for vehicles that do not arrive or arrive too late to be useful.

Official Visitor Support

The general services office could address concerns that point of contact officers for official visitors must contact more than one person to coordinate visitor arrivals by assigning the coordinator role to one of the three GSOs responsible for the three functions generally involved – the motor pool, expeditors, and travel office staff responsible for making hotel reservations. Without access to the senior GSO, the OIG team has not gone farther in suggesting a central travel unit.

CONSOLIDATION

The Department and USAID have initiated a process designed to reduce costs by eliminating duplication and non-essential U.S. government presence overseas. Consolidation of administrative services, rightsizing, and regionalization are expected to provide the savings. The consolidation is expected when USAID is collocated on the NEC. The Joint Management Council provides a framework and guidance for

consolidation. It notes that shared service projects that result in reducing local staff do not reduce costs as much as when compared to the outcome of reducing direct-hire American staff, each of whom is estimated to cost \$437,000 annually. Contrary to this dictum, Embassy Accra is getting a third GSO.

At Embassy Accra, the regional USAID mission has maintained and increased local and direct-hire staff while the bilateral USAID mission has participated in consolidation. The reasoning behind the failure to consolidate the regional administrative platform is that it serves many other African countries and needs its own administrative infrastructure to be successful. Embassy Accra has consolidated the USAID Ghana's motor pool, leasing and maintenance services. The embassy planned to consolidate payroll also, but cancelled the process at the last minute. They had been in the process of hiring additional employees for this function, but were forced to back off from this commitment due to the cancellation.

When Embassy Ghana and USAID Ghana moved to the NEC in June and September 2007, the consolidation was underway. Planning began in May 2006. According to USAID customers, consolidation decisions were taken hastily, without full consultation, transparency, or teamwork. Less than full executive office participation and oversight may have played a part. In addition, the lack of an active ICASS council to explain how shared services work under an ICASS service provider made the process opaque. To address concerns, USAID has engaged a contractor to conduct retreats to determine how the embassy's management section is functioning and how to provide enhanced customer service. Several key embassy managers, as noted above, are not in Accra and will not participate in the retreat.

Many customers believe the consolidation has been largely unsuccessful. USAID staff, for example, say maintenance services were better before consolidation. USAID contracted for general services to a local company. Instead of conducting a comparison of the costs and benefits of contracting out, the embassy decided to wait until after consolidation to determine whether outsourcing would be beneficial. Consequently, the embassy increased maintenance section staffing by approximately the number of positions the contract provided. The maintenance section has over 130 staff members. Problems with consolidation were magnified by an unprecedented number of official visitors and staffing expansions in most agencies.

ICASS remains the service provider for the consolidated management platform. Therefore, the ICASS standards, ICASS council decisions, and working group inputs are vital to meeting goals. The ICASS chairman related to the OIG team that everyone is so busy in Accra that ICASS is not a priority. There is a budget commit-

tee, but no other working groups. According to the chairman, ICASS is too difficult and complicated to understand. The embassy is evaluating the usefulness of post-specific ICASS training.

CUSTOMS AND SHIPPING

Responses to OIG questionnaires and personal interviews confirmed that customs and shipping cause the most customer dissatisfaction. This has caused tensions, including customers berating the customs and shipping staff for delays that are beyond their control. In part, this may be because the information provided to newcomers is not complete and does not describe how to plan for the time needed, up to 6 months, for the shipments to arrive. Unaccompanied baggage is shipped by air cargo, is not subject to long clearances, and arrives without problems. Long delays in receiving consumables undermine the purpose of the program.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Accra should request the Bureau of Administration's Office of Logistics Management, Transportation and Travel Management Division to provide air shipments for consumables. (Action: Embassy Accra)

All shipments are sent from U.S.-based dispatch agencies to the European Logistics Support Office (ELSO) in Antwerp, Belgium. They are stored there until Embassy Accra notifies ELSO that a receiving staff member has arrived in Ghana. The government of Ghana requires that the embassy wait until the employee has arrived in Ghana before notifying ELSO that the shipment can be sent. Therefore, the time to move the shipment from the ELSO warehouse, to a container, to a Ghana-bound ship, to the Ghana port may be more than 4 months. Once the shipment arrives in Ghana, it takes at least six weeks for the shipment to go through Ministry of Foreign Affairs and customs requirements. Two new contracts, effective October 1, 2008, state that freight forwarders will deliver shipments within five to seven days after customs clearance is complete. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that Embassy Ghana should describe fully the shipping and customs process in its post report and cable correspondence between the embassy and incoming personnel.

Newcomers complain that the customs and shipping section is slow to respond to questions regarding the status of a shipment once it arrives in Ghana. The OIG team saw e-mail correspondence that refutes this assertion. Some correspondence contained threats and accusations. Making shipment status information more easily available to customers may reduce these tensions. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that the section use a board to depict the status of shipments as they move through the clearance process.

HOUSING

Employees praised the housing section for its customer service attitude; however, low scores and comments on the ICASS customer services satisfaction survey and OIG questionnaires indicated that single family homes were in poor condition.

Embassy Accra gained 30 short-term leases when the embassy and USAID consolidated leasing. The majority of USAID's short-term leases are for older homes that have not been properly maintained. Three housing clerks are responsible for a total of 96 short-term leased properties. They are working to eliminate older and undesirable homes from the housing pool and to find replacements.

The section does not have a supervisor. Given the additional workload and greater responsibility for the section, a supervisor is needed to manage the section, deal with landlords, negotiate new leases, and ensure deductions to lease payments when landlords do not perform maintenance and repairs. The supervisory position will assist in meeting the requirements of leasing services defined in 6 FAH-5 H-341 .7-8(A) and Embassy Accra's ICASS service standards.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Accra should create and fill a locally employed staff housing supervisor position description. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Facility Management

Embassy Accra's carpentry shop does not have adequate ventilation to ensure workplace safety for the carpenters. Health unit staff observed fine dust throughout the shop and that the staff do not wear masks, ear protection, or goggles. While the

facility manager and others suggested moving the shop elsewhere, the front office, correctly, decided the shops would remain on the compound. Therefore, Embassy Accra needs to work with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings to promptly remedy the ventilation problems.

Recommendation 15: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should remedy ventilation problems in the carpentry shop and other workshops at the new embassy compound. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Accra)

At the same time, welders have moved to the ICASS warehouse where they have no first aid kits, eye wash stations, or American supervision. This is unacceptable and must be corrected immediately. A safe work environment is critical, with proper safety precautions and supervision.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Accra should immediately move the welders to a safe workplace with first-aid kits, eye wash stations, and proper supervision. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Property Management

Until June 2007, when the embassy and other agencies moved into the NEC, nonexpendable property was stored in two warehouses. USAID maintained a third warehouse. The NEC warehouse is intended to store the contents of all of the former warehouses. The embassy moved its and other agencies' goods, but USAID continued to maintain its own warehouse.

The NEC warehouse is now full and cannot store the goods from the USAID warehouse, now called the ICASS warehouse, because neither USAID nor the embassy have disposed of unused and excess property or established a furniture pool that could eliminate unneeded inventory.

A mission furniture pool would be advantageous, although furniture pools are not mandatory. The list of advantages enumerated in 6 FAH-5 H-471.8 b. includes financial and logistics improvements. The most significant advantage for Embassy Accra would be to reduce inventory and free space in the NEC warehouse. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that Embassy Accra establish a furniture pool.

Once the mission establishes a furniture pool and disposes of excess property at the ICASS warehouse, it is likely the ICASS warehouse would not be needed. Deleting the ICASS warehouse from the real property inventory could yield savings up to \$62,000 a year.

Recommendation 17: Embassy Accra should dispose of excess furniture, furnishings, appliances, and equipment from the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services warehouse and the new embassy compound warehouse. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Accra should not renew the lease for the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services warehouse (lease number AID-641-LE-93-255) when it expires on September 28, 2009. (Action: Embassy Accra)

PROCUREMENT

Customers complain about delays in receiving requested items and services and feel the staff is not responsive to requests for information on the status of the requested items. The section received low scores on the 2008 ICASS Customer Services Survey and OIG's Workplace and Quality of Life Questionnaire. Further, the procurement staff and the GSO do not communicate well with their customers. **(b) (2)**

The section does not use the Department's WebPASS procurement application in its entirety. This makes it useless as a tracking system. The WebPASS application manages the procurement life cycle more effectively when it is fully implemented and allows requestors to see the status of orders. Embassy Accra and the health unit conducted a successful trial using the requestor portion of the WebPass program. Despite this success, according to his staff, the supervisory GSO declines to use the entire procurement WebPASS application because it requires the contracting officer to approve a request twice. This does not seem a relevant objection because embassy contracting officers must sign when a procurement request is received and after it is funded whether they use the WEBPASS application or not.

The OIG team made an informal recommendation that the procurement section use the WebPASS procurement application.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The human resources section has well-trained employees who provide excellent service. Position descriptions are reviewed during annual performance appraisals. The staff member who performs the computer-assisted job evaluations is fully trained and provides support to Embassies Lome and Cotonou. The human resource officer visits those embassies quarterly to provide oversight and training. The embassies are satisfied with the services.

The OIG team discussed local staff health benefits with the section and understands that attempts to locate a health insurance provider were unsuccessful. During the next comparator survey, the section will add a question about insurance providers used by comparators to determine how well that is working.

The local staff handbook is two years old but needs to be reviewed and revised because it does not cover all of the information needed. The section agreed to undertake this revision soon. Local staff do not all receive a copy of the handbook, but can find it on the embassy OpenNet website. This presents a problem for local staff at other buildings where they do not have access to the OpenNet workstations. The section also agreed to provide a hard copy of the handbook at new employee orientations.

Equal Employment Opportunity Program

Senior management has designated an experienced officer with good leadership skills as its EEO counselor; however, the officer has not yet received the mandatory 32-hour training per 3 FAM 1514.2 and is not formally certified. At the time of the writing of the report, changes were being considered to the FAM that would effectively limit the EEO counselor training requirement to larger missions; however, the OIG team feels the requirement should be maintained until proposed FAM changes come into force. As an interim measure, a trained EEO counselor in the USAID mission is temporarily serving as the embassy's EEO counselor. The mission reports there are no active EEO cases. There is a Federal Women's Program manager and alternate, and an LE staff liaison for EEO issues.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Accra should provide its designated Equal Employment Opportunity counselor with the mandatory 32-hour training and formal certification. (Action: Embassy Accra)

The OIG team found EEO materials and the EEO contact information posted on a bulletin board inside the human resources section. The OIG team made an informal recommendation that it also be posted in a prominent place away from the human resources section, and that this information be added to the embassy's Intranet website.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This is an impressive section with responsibility for a large budget, including the embassy's ICASS and various program budgets and for other agencies' budgets as well. The voucher examiners have had introductory training but need follow-on training. The financial management officer must check every voucher carefully before certifying it.

Some agencies are not satisfied with the Financial Management Center in Charleston, citing its unresponsiveness in establishing electronic funds transfers with overseas banks and with processing checks. The section has been researching alternatives to speed the processes.

Embassy Accra's December 22, 2005, management notice states that official embassy working hours are Monday through Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (9 hours) and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (4 hours). It further states that for time-keeping purposes all records would show five 8-hour days. When employees were on annual or sick leave on Fridays, they were charged 8 hours instead of 5 hours. The financial management section researched this problem and will fix the time and attendance reporting requirements to reflect actual hours worked and allow for accurate annual and sick leave charges.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Embassy Accra operates a comprehensive information management program that includes the Department's classified local area network and the sensitive but unclassified network known as OpenNet, a dedicated Internet network, mail and pouch, radio, and telephone services. The information management section provides service for roughly 500 accounts. The embassy's OpenNet network includes 287 shared workstations and 11 servers; the classified local area network includes 39 workstations and five servers. IRM is responsible for six dedicated Internet networks.

Three direct-hire officers, one EFM and 15 LE staff work in the information management section. The information management officer has strong technical skills and manages vendors well. The section meets its customers' requirements.

. The plan should include a thorough discussion of a coordinated system to recover from disruptions and resume operations, the development and implementation of a written policy for cellular phone usage, and the use of individual development plans to ensure staff are properly trained in the latest technology advances.

The OIG team found that the information management section is not operating in a collaborative manner. Instead of a shared sense of responsibility, the information management staff restrict themselves to their primary work requirement areas. They do not respond to service or assistance requests outside of their areas. The information management officer is working with the staff to train them to be more flexible and timely in responding to customers' requests.

(b) (2)

(b) (2)

Recommendation 20:

(b) (2)

Cellular Phone Program

Embassy Accra's management of its cellular phone program is inadequate. The 5 FAM 526.1 requires embassies to establish a cellular phone policy that specifies cellular telephone allocation and use, including personal use. Although embassy personnel are required to pay for personal calls, this requirement has not been formalized in a written policy that also specifies what constitutes abuse.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Accra should develop a formal policy for cellular phones that describes authorized usage, personal usage, and what constitutes abuse. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Training

Information management is not using individual development plans to identify their staffs' training needs. Individual development plans set priorities for employee training and development opportunities to meet the career goals of each employee and provide management with better oversight. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that all staff complete individual development plans.

Rightsizing

The embassy wrote its first rightsizing report in 2003 in preparation for building the NEC. Rightsizing studies focus on reducing direct-hire positions and using competitive outsourcing, among other cost saving measures. A Department rightsizing trip report, March, 2008, states that the move to the NEC and subsequent consolidation was accomplished. The report notes that the mission and USAID have not consolidated warehousing, property management, and LE staff and EFM recruitment. The report provides comments on the present situation and makes suggestions for completing the rightsizing study to include these elements.

Rightsizing reviews are required every five years. Embassy Accra was to submit its updated rightsizing report by June 15, 2008 (State cable 005617, dated January 17, 2008). That report has not been done.

Recommendation 22: Embassy Accra should complete its rightsizing report and submit it to the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Management's Office of Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation. (Action: Embassy Accra)

QUALITY OF LIFE

The community liaison office (CLO) is credited with assisting incoming personnel by arranging professional and social sponsors, hosting coffees and vendors, and forwarding school information. The health unit is fully staffed with local nurses, and regional direct-hire medical American staff, all of whom are praised for professional and caring service. The American Embassy Association is an active participant in community activities and has become more engaged in improving its image and fiscal status. The school also gets high marks for its curriculum and the educational experience it offers.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

Two CLO coordinators successfully share the office's responsibilities, each contributing equally to its successes. The CLO coordinators each work 20 hours weekly and the mission recently hired a CLO assistant to write and edit a biweekly newsletter. The newsletter should reflect more local events and perspectives once the editor is on board. The CLO coordinators provided homemade cakes and coffee at an event they sponsored for unhappy dependents to meet with the OIG team. They maintain a truly open door and many people drop-in regularly. At the same time, they prepare required reports. The CLO coordinators are actively implementing the sponsor program, although some newcomers are not happy with the limited attention some sponsors provide.

HEALTH UNIT

The health unit provides quality medical care to the embassy's direct-hire staff and EFMs. The unit sees about 205 patients monthly. A regional medical officer, also responsible for Embassies Lome, Abidjan, Monrovia, and Freetown; a regional medical officer/psychiatrist (RMO/P), responsible for 23 posts in 19 West and Central Africa countries; a Foreign Service health practitioner, also responsible for Embassy Lome; one full-time and two part-time LE nurses; and three administrative support staff comprise the unit. There have been 28 medical evacuations since July 2007.

The RMO/P covers a large region and visiting the 23 posts requires him to spend about 70 percent of his time travelling. Therefore, the RMO/P visits only a few posts more than twice each year and many get only one visit. A number of posts have asked for more visits. This pattern is not sustainable, exhausts the RMO/P, and does not provide the number of visits that some embassies require. The RMO/P and the Office of Medical Services told the OIG team that the Office of Medical Services has requested a new RMO/P position at Embassy Dakar. The OIG team believes this position (or elsewhere in the region) is needed to provide additional care in Central and West Africa and to reduce the number of posts Embassy Accra's RMO/P serves.

Recommendation 23: The Bureau of Human Resources should approve the request from the Office of Medical Services to create and fill an additional position for a West Africa Regional Medical Officer/Psychiatrist. (Action: DGHR)

The embassy stores its medical supplies securely and inventories them properly. The unit maintains and administers controlled substances properly and keeps logs regarding use and disposal of expired medications. It also stores and maintains the large quantity of prepositioned emergency medical supplies properly.

Malaria Prophylaxis

The medical staff expressed great frustration regarding the number of American embassy employees who do not regularly take malaria prophylaxis and the resulting number of malaria cases that occur. Although the health unit cannot require community members to take the medication, it must treat those who contract the disease. The health unit actually treats one or two new cases of malaria each month. Statistics gathered during the tenure of the present medical staff indicate that no one who has taken malaria suppressants, as prescribed, has contracted malaria.

Local Staff Health Benefits

Embassy Accra provides medical benefits for its local staff. The program allows \$1,500 per family of four, annually, with additional catastrophic coverage up to \$3,000. The embassy suggests staff use several preferred provider clinics. A health unit nurse reviews each medical expense claim to verify that prescribed procedures and medications correspond to the patient's medical condition. This is a time-consuming, laborious process. The financial management officer also certifies the claims

for payment and the cashier makes the payments. Recently, the embassy reviewed local medical insurance plans and found none to be adequate. The human resources section plans to look into locally provided medical insurance plans during the next comparator survey.

AMERICAN RECREATION ASSOCIATION

The American Employee Association has been re-energized, meeting frequently and supporting new programs to attract customers and improve its image. For example, it has sponsored an October Fest and wine tastings. It has a substantial core of activities. The association stocks items in its commissary that are in demand and the product turnover is excellent. The association contracts for the embassy cafeteria services and manages the swimming pool, the gymnasium, and the basketball, volleyball, and tennis courts. The association also runs a fee-for-service minivan that provides school transportation for students of

The association's bottom line benefits greatly from the commissary's location on the embassy compound. According to Logistical Support regulations (6 FAM 524), in deciding whether to charge the association for use of the land, the embassy should consider the cost the U.S. government incurs. The association need not pay lease costs, because U.S. government cost for the property is inconsequential. Under a 50-year leasehold agreement, the U.S. government must pay only about \$100 annually upon demand to the government of Ghana, which has not even asked for payment in many years. At the same time, the embassy provides guard services for other property on the lot with the commissary, and the association takes advantage of this service cost-free.

The association, however, is facing difficult times. It has not yet produced an audited financial statement for 2007, but the draft financial statement indicates that it is at the financial break-even point. Nevertheless, the association owes about \$50,000 for two years of electrical services at the commissary property. Efforts to negotiate a long-term payment plan with the electrical service provider have not been successful and there are concerns that electricity to the commissary could be turned off.

SCHOOL

The Bureau of Administration's Office of Overseas Schools provides resources and advice to the . The school meets the Department's standards for receiving Office of Overseas Schools grants--\$60,000 in FY 2007. The provides educational opportunities from preschool through grade 12. The Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges accredits it, and the school offers all three levels of the International Baccalaureate Program.

The Ambassador appoints three representatives to the nine--member Board of Directors.

In the last several years, the government of Ghana began to insist that the school hire more Ghanaian teachers and is providing fewer work permits than the school requests for foreign teachers. The embassy community is concerned that this restriction will prevent the school from hiring sufficiently qualified teachers, lower the school's educational standards, and affect its accreditation. Tensions surrounding this situation have undermined relationships among teachers, parents, school administrators, school board members, embassy school board representatives, and the embassy. The OIG team suggested that embassy leadership develop a strategy among the stakeholders in the school's success – the international business and diplomatic communities – to convince the Ghanaian government to issue an adequate number of foreign teacher work permits in order to maintain the school's quality.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Embassy Accra's annual chief of mission management control statement of assurance, dated August 8, 2008, states that the objectives of the systems of management controls the Department provides are in place to provide reasonable assurance that the embassy achieved management control objectives. On March 18, 2008, the embassy requested an extension to submit its annual Property Management Report and met the requirement on July 10, 2008. The statement did not identify any material weaknesses.

The Ambassador designated the management officer as the management controls coordinator, with the DCM as the back-up (2 FAM 022.8 d. An updated designation of responsibility was made effective on September 18, 2008.

The OIG inspection did not reveal material weaknesses or other control problems that needed correction.

THE INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING BUREAU MARKETING OFFICE

The International Broadcasting Bureau's (IBB) Marketing Office consists of one Civil Service employee on an excursion assignment and an LE staff secretary. The office is responsible for marketing Voice of America programs to more than 20 African countries. The marketing director maintains an ambitious travel schedule. Washington IBB's Office of Marketing and Program Promotions directs the marketing director's activities. The director's major interaction with the embassy is with the financial management section, which supports IBB procurement activities, including payment to affiliates carrying Voice of America programs and purchases of promotional items and services. The OIG team will submit a separate report to the Board of Broadcasting Governors with details on the director's operations.

~~**SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**~~

~~**SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED**~~

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendation 1:** Embassy Accra should establish and implement a schedule for formal monthly meetings of the Law Enforcement and Counternarcotics Working. (Action: Embassy Accra)
- Recommendation 2:** Embassy Accra should develop and implement a mission-wide communications strategy and public affairs calendar. (Action: Embassy Accra)
- Recommendation 3:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should provide experienced temporary duty assignment adjudicators to assist with the increased volume of diversity visa applicants in FY 2009. (Action: CA, in coordination with Embassy Accra)
- Recommendation 4:** Embassy Accra should complete the installation of its Q-matic system in order to organize waiting lines more effectively. (Action: Embassy Accra)
- Recommendation 5:** Embassy Accra should reduce the width of the service counters on the applicants' side of the window so the applicants can easily speak into the microphones. (Action: Embassy Accra)
- Recommendation 6:** (b) (2)
- Recommendation 7:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should request the Bureau of Diplomatic Security to establish and fill the assistant regional security officer investigator position in Accra in FY 2009. (Action: CA in coordination with DS)
- Recommendation 8:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should provide a short-term systems solution to prevent or deter entrepreneurs from making phantom nonimmigrant visas appointments. (Action: CA, in coordination with Embassy Accra)
- Recommendation 9:** Embassy Accra should institute regular training sessions and frequent oversight for guards assigned to the consular compound access control area in order to improve their customer service skills. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 10: The Office of Policy, Rightsizing, and Innovation, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should abolish the position of the Office of Planning and Rightsizing and Innovation's coordinator in Accra, or define its duties, designate an embassy supervisor, and provide travel funding. (Action: M/PRI, in coordination with Embassy Accra.)

Recommendation 11: The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should assign a full-time management officer as soon as possible. (Action: AF, in coordination with Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 12: The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should assign a temporary duty management officer as soon as possible and request temporary duty management presence until a full-time management officer arrives. (Action: AF, in coordination with Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 13: Embassy Accra should request the Bureau of Administration's Office of Logistics Management, Transportation and Travel Management Division to provide air shipments for consumables. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Accra should create and fill a locally employed staff housing supervisor position description. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 15: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Accra, should remedy ventilation problems in the carpentry shop and other workshops at the new embassy compound. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Accra should immediately move the welders to a safe workplace with first aid kits, eye wash stations, and proper supervision. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 17: Embassy Accra should dispose of excess furniture, furnishings, appliances, and equipment from the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services warehouse and the new embassy compound warehouse. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Accra should not renew the lease for the International Cooperative Administrative Support Services warehouse (lease number AID-641-LE-93-255) when it expires on September 28, 2009. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Accra should provide its designated Equal Employment Opportunity counselor with the mandatory 32-hour training and formal certification. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 20:

Recommendation 21: Embassy Accra should develop a formal policy for cellular phones that describes authorized usage, personal usage, and what constitutes abuse. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 22: Embassy Accra should complete its rightsizing report and submit it to the Bureau of African Affairs and the Bureau of Management's Office of Policy, Rightsizing and Innovation. (Action: Embassy Accra)

Recommendation 23: The Bureau of Human Resources should approve the request from the Office of Medical Services to create and fill an additional position for a West Africa Regional Medical Officer/Psychiatrist. (Action: DGHR)

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 Ambassador or DCM chairs a weekly meeting called the core team that is a smaller version of the country team. Cooperation would be more effective if inter-agency cluster groups replaced the core team, and met regularly under the chair of the Ambassador or DCM to focus on specific program or foreign assistance activity areas.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Accra should replace the core team group with interagency cluster groups focused on specific program or foreign assistance activity areas.

Entry-Level Officer Program

The ELO program at Embassy Accra is adequate but could be improved. There is no written program nor any regular schedule of meetings or mentoring.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Accra should provide more regular mentoring of ELOs and develop a written program to present to them upon their arrival.

Economic Affairs

Coordination of the economic and development agencies at Embassy Accra should be increased.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Accra should form monthly economic and development cluster groups.

Files Management

Files in the economic and political sections are minimal, with no central repository for incoming action cables or outgoing cables.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Accra should prepare electronic chronological and subject files in the political and economic section in accordance with standard procedures and educate the sections' officers in their use.

Public Diplomacy

Most of the PAS LE staff are located close to the second floor offices of their FSO supervisors; however, their cubicles are grouped among cubicles of other sections in an office plan that is neither clear nor convenient.

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Accra should reorganize the second floor cubicles to reflect more clearly functional sections.

The IRC director's technical involvement with PAS digital videoconferences limits him in participating in important IRC outreach activities.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Accra should reassign technical duties related to PAS digital videoconferences to the PAS audio-visual technician.

Although PAS may wish to offer digital videoconference support for embassy personnel training and internal U.S. government management or other discussion; it is spending public diplomacy budget funds for salary and other direct costs of the non-public diplomacy programs.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Accra should ensure requesting mission elements reimburse PAS for personnel and other direct costs of digital videoconferences.

Consular Operations

Embassy Accra's consular standard operating procedures have not been reviewed since before the 2007 move to the new chancery. They should be reviewed and updated to better reflect actual practice.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Accra should update its consular standard operating procedures for American Citizen Services, NIVs, immigrant and diversity

visas, and fraud program management to provide consistent guidance to its staff. The consular portion of the Embassy Accra duty instructions and EAP are out of date.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Accra should update its duty instructions and EAP with current contact information and guidance on consular emergencies.

Consular waiting room chairs have damaged the drywall, and the paint is dirty, giving a neglected look to this relatively new embassy's public space.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Accra should repair and repaint the walls in the consular waiting room, giving consideration to installation of a chair rail.

The seating areas in Embassy Accra's consular waiting room are not clearly marked.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Accra should replace consular-approved picture signs with written signs defining the seating areas in the waiting room.

Paper signs in the consular waiting room's public restrooms are tattered and misspelled.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Accra should upgrade the appearance and cleanliness of any signs in its public restrooms.

There are no brochures or magazines available in the magazine rack in the consular waiting room.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Accra should stock appropriate printed materials in the magazine rack in the consular waiting room.

There are two television sets in the consular waiting room, only one of which is operational. The television sets can be used to display information about the United States as well as to provide a diversion for applicants and provide an element of privacy for customers at the window.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Accra should complete the installation of the second television set in the consular waiting room, and explore available resources for providing audio-visual information to waiting applicants.

Value Added Tax

Embassy Accra has not been providing personal value added tax processing and is not getting value added tax reimbursement through the government of Ghana. Further, it has not obtained tax identification numbers that are needed to process value added tax reimbursement requests.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Accra should implement a process to obtain tax identification numbers from the government of Ghana and establish a process to request and obtain value added tax reimbursements.

Customs and Shipping

Embassy Accra's information for pending arrivals does not fully delineate the time needed to get shipments delivered.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Accra should fully define and delineate the process and time needed to get shipments, including privately-owned vehicles to residences in Accra.

Newcomers complain that the customs and shipping section is slow to respond to questions regarding the status of a shipment once it arrives in Ghana.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Accra should use a board that shows the status of shipments once they arrive in Ghana. The board should be posted in a prominent location to provide customers with current information.

Property Management

Embassy Accra's on-site warehouse is filled to capacity and there is no furniture pool (6 FAH-5H-471.8 b.) to minimize storage requirements, reduce damage to furniture and equipment from constant moving, and reduce the need to move furniture from house-to-house.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Accra should establish a furniture pool.

Procurement

The procurement section does not use the Department's WebPASS procurement application in its entirety.

Informal Recommendation 19: Embassy Accra should use the WebPASS application in its entirety.

Equal Employment Opportunity

EEO materials and the EEO contact information are posted on a bulletin board inside the human resources section. Such information is more effectively posted in a prominent place away from the human resources section and added to the embassy's Intranet website.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Accra should post its EEO information prominently in a location other than the human resources section, and add the information to its Intranet website.

Informal Recommendation 21: (b) (2)

(b) (2)

Informal Recommendation 22: (b) (2)

Individual development plans are not being used by information management and information management staff to identify their training needs.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Accra should ensure that all staff complete individual development plans.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Donald G. Teitelbaum	08/08
Deputy Chief of Mission	Sue K. Brown	08/06
Chiefs of Sections:		
Management	Vacant	
Consular	Michael P. Evans	09/07
Economic	Philip M. Cummings	08/08
Political	Brian Shukan (temporarily assigned to Bagdad)	07/07
Public Affairs	Mary D. Scholl	08/08
Regional Security	David J. Siddons	03/08
Other Agencies:		
International Broadcast Bureau	Joyce Ngoh	09/07
Center for Disease Control	Vacant	
Department of Defense - DAO	Benjamin W. Moody	10/07
Department of Defense - AFRICOM	Jerome A. Jackson	08/08
Department of Defense - OSC	Tong C. Vang	08/07
Department of Defense - FPD	John C. Parkinson	07/08
Department of Defense - NAMRU	Karl C. Kronmann	07/08
Department of Justice - DEA	Jeffery P. Breeden (currently resident in Lagos)	12/08
Department of Justice - FBI	Ronald N. Nolan (currently resident in Lagos)	2009
Department of Homeland Security	Leikun Teferra	08/07
Department of Treasury	Gail L. Ostler	08/06

Foreign Agriculture Service	Ali A. Abdi (resident in Lagos)	08/05
Foreign Commercial Service	Heather R. Byrnes	08/08
Millennium Challenge Corporation	James F. Bednar	08/07
Peace Corps	Robert W. Golledge	02/07
USAID Ghana Mission Director	Robert G. Hellyer	10/07
USAID West Africa Regional Director	Henderson Patrick	11/07

ABBREVIATIONS

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CLO	Community liaison office
DCM	Deputy chief of mission
DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration
Department	Department of State
DHS/USCIS	Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Immigration Service
DV	Diversity visa
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
EFM	Eligible family member
ELO	Entry-level officer
ELSO	European Logistics Support Office
ESTH	Environment, Science, Technology and Health
FAS	Foreign Agricultural Service
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigations
FCS	Foreign Commercial Service
GSO	General services officer
IBB	International Bureau of Broadcasting
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IRC	Information resource center
ISSO	Information system security officer
LE	Locally employed

LEWG	Law enforcement and counternarcotics working group
M/PRI	Office of Management's Office of Planning, Rightsizing and Innovation
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MSP	Mission Strategic Plan
NEC	New embassy compound
NIV	Nonimmigrant visa
NSDD-38	National Security Decision Directive-38
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMS	Office management specialist
PAO	Public affairs officer
PAS	Public affairs section
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PRM	Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration
RMO/P	Regional Medical Officer – Psychiatrist
RSO	Regional security officer
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

FRAUD, WASTE, ABUSE OR MISMANAGEMENT
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