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

Report of Inspection

Embassy Maseru, Lesotho

Report Number ISP-I-10-58A, June 2010

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**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
Deputy Inspector General

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 instance of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

METHODOLOGY

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records; 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.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- U.S. relations with Lesotho have prospered under the Ambassador's stewardship.
- Embassy Maseru has a mixed record coordinating the dramatic increase in U.S. assistance programs in Lesotho. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) programs run efficiently. Operations associated with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) have been hampered by blurred lines of authority and unresolved staffing issues.
- Three big assistance agencies—Peace Corps, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—have strong, well-established presences at the Embassy. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) does not and manages its responsibilities mostly from a large regional office in Pretoria. The USAID model needs to be reexamined.
- Embassy Maseru needs a formal understanding with Embassy Pretoria to facilitate the smooth and timely flow of threat information emanating from South Africa.
- With the increased public diplomacy demands from MCC and PEPFAR, Embassy Maseru needs a mid-level public diplomacy officer with experience in strategic planning and program development.
- Deficient consular public and office space weakens operations. Embassy Maseru has sought to expand the consular section twice in the past five years, without success. It is time to fix the problem.
- The management section has been stretched to the breaking point supporting the large and growing assistance programs, and management support has suffered. However, the three American officers—all but one of whom are in their positions for the first time—have increased International Cooperative Administrative Support Services (ICASS) staffing levels. They also successfully renovated the embassy's warehouse into PEPFAR office space and did so under budget and ahead of schedule.
- There have been communication problems regarding the use of embassy and agency funds. Agencies involved with PEPFAR expressed concern about a lack of transparency in the funds' use.

- The dissolution of the locally employed (LE) staff committee approximately four years ago has contributed to a communication gap between embassy management and the LE staff. The LE staff committee should be reconstituted.
- The heavy workload on the U.S. staff has had a negative impact on management controls. Although controls are reasonably good, they are not always followed in every area.

The inspection took place in Maseru, Lesotho, between February 23 and March 5, 2010.

CONTEXT

Lesotho is a small country of 1.8 million people, where large U.S. assistance programs focus on HIV/AIDS and economic development. The country's natural resources are scarce, a consequence of the harsh environment of the highland plateau and limited agricultural space in the lowlands. Surrounded by South Africa, it depends on that country as an employer and as a buyer of water, its main natural resource. South Africa has intervened on several occasions in Lesotho politics, notably in 1998 when it sent in troops to quell unrest. The still unresolved April 2009 assassination attempt against Prime Minister Mosisili, coupled with significant unrest stemming from 2007 election issues, threaten the political stability of the country. Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy where King Letsie III plays a symbolic, unifying role.



Map of Lesotho.
Source: U.S. Government

Approximately half the country is unemployed, and 70 percent of the population lives in poverty. This condition has been exacerbated by the global economic downturn, which has especially hurt the country's substantial textile industry. Street crime, including carjackings, is common. Police are under-resourced and inadequately trained. The country's 23 percent HIV/AIDS infection rate is the third highest in the world. The draw of higher wages and better living conditions has resulted in the migration of many skilled Basotho (Lesotho nationals) across the border into South Africa, leaving Lesotho with a lack of human capacity in government institutions and professional fields, including health care and education.

The U.S. operates substantial assistance programs in Lesotho. The largest is a five-year, \$363 million program managed by the MCC and designed to improve water and health systems and to encourage private-sector development. MCC signed a compact with Lesotho in 2007; it took effect in 2008. PEPFAR is the second largest assistance program, which has provided funds since 2004. In August 2009, Lesotho signed a new, five-year PEPFAR Partnership Framework agreement with the U.S.

Government. PEPFAR is managed primarily by USAID and CDC. Peace Corps and the Department of Defense also play important roles. PEPFAR's 2010 budget is approximately \$29 million and includes projects addressing prevention, care and treatment, and strengthening health care systems. PEPFAR expects to spend \$140 million over the next five years on HIV/AIDS programs in Lesotho.

Embassy Maseru was a small, quiet post, but its role has expanded significantly with the advent of PEPFAR and MCC. Although the number of U.S. direct-hire employees increased from five in 2005 to 18 in 2010, the staff is severely stretched in trying to support these large scale assistance projects. There are 83 LE staff members. The Peace Corps maintains a significant presence, with 85 volunteers assigned to projects across the country, primarily in villages.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

U.S. relations with Lesotho have prospered under the Ambassador's stewardship. The Basotho have responded warmly to his outgoing approach, and he has successfully overcome serious bureaucratic hurdles, facilitating a major U.S. humanitarian and developmental effort. The Ambassador's support for and oversight of MCC have been on the mark. The MCC compact with Lesotho and the quality of MCC staff are both examples of how to structure and manage development assistance. The same cannot be said of PEPFAR, which has faced more difficult management challenges. (See below.)

The Ambassador and deputy chief of mission (DCM) have an effective partnership. Both communicate regularly with all levels of the Bureau of African Affairs (AF). In the past year, Embassy Maseru has welcomed the AF/S (southern Africa) deputy director, the Lesotho desk officer, and the AF/EX (executive office) post management officer. In the case of AF/S, these were the first such visits in the Ambassador's tenure, and he expressed his appreciation for AF's visible demonstration of improved support.

The DCM has provided strong oversight and mentoring of embassy officers, many of whom are performing their jobs for the first time. She is responsible for major planning documents, including the Mission Strategy Plan, Emergency Action Plan, and longer range reporting on political and economic stability. The DCM's already full plate was overloaded with coordination of the PEPFAR team, a subject covered more fully in the program implementation section of this report.

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Workplace issues also are affected by inexperienced and insufficient staffing of Department positions. One second-tour officer has been performing as public affairs, political, and economic officer, as well as back-up consular: an impossible proposition. The Department has agreed to assign a full time public diplomacy officer to Maseru. The management officer is an all-around performer, but with the ramp up of U.S. assistance programs, pressures on the management position have increased tangibly. He will be supported by a first-tour general services officer, who will be dependent on the oversight and supervision received from the management officer. Non-Department agencies also are asking for more oversight and clearer explanations of the budget process, in order to track budget outlays and procurement. Up until two years ago, the management officer also covered security. A new regional security officer (RSO) is now completing a two-year assignment, with impressive results.

REPRESENTATION

Limited representation funds of \$12,000 are used primarily to fund mission events that support humanitarian, development, and public diplomacy goals. A member of the OIG team witnessed one dinner in honor of a ranking MCC official that included Lesotho's deputy prime minister. It was the type of targeted event that merits commendation. More junior officers should be developing one-on-one contacts to better understand the local environment. The embassy's sole reporting officer has never hosted even a contact lunch, explaining that all funds are used for larger events. A representation plan should be developed and used to support a request to AF for an increase in funding, as the OIG team has recommended informally.

SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

Notwithstanding pushback by some U.S. employees, security has been improved sharply under the embassy's first RSO. As crime increases steadily at this critical crime location, American employees are more amenable to taking security seriously.

During 2009, an assassination attempt on the prime minister and the closure of Embassy Pretoria underlined the importance of security and preparedness in Lesotho. Pretoria's closure triggered the unnecessary closure of Embassy Maseru. The latter's reaction was due largely to the failure of AF, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, and Embassy Pretoria to respond to Embassy Maseru's attempts to clarify why Embassy Pretoria had been closed. The OIG team was shown copies of messages without responses from the Department. Initial communication was poor between the regional security office in Pretoria and an acting security officer in Lesotho. This situation was a clear lesson that what happens inside South Africa should be communicated not only to Pretoria's constituent posts, but also to Lesotho, which is located within the borders of South Africa. Embassy Lesotho states that its communication is now greatly improved with AF and the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, as well as with Embassy Pretoria. Nevertheless, arrangements should be ratified to keep Embassy Maseru informed in the case of a future crisis. This is discussed further in the classified security annex that accompanies this report.

Embassy Maseru also has completely revised its Emergency Action Plan, which the OIG team found to be well written and complete. The project took seven months, a clear example of the effort required for small posts to produce major reports.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Embassy Maseru manages two large assistance programs from an inadequate platform. MCC's five-year, \$363 million program to improve water and health systems and to promote private-sector growth is well-managed by an experienced resident country director and deputy. Staffing is adequate, and lines of authority are clear. The smaller PEPFAR program is an interagency effort designed to address Lesotho's crushing 23 percent HIV/AIDS infection rate. While successful in establishing robust and balanced programs, PEPFAR faces management shortcomings that have prevented it from operating at maximum efficiency and effectiveness. The inspection team discussed these shortcomings at length with the Front Office and the PEPFAR team. The embassy is taking steps to address them.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

MCC and the Government of Lesotho signed a development compact in July 2007. Improvements in water and sanitation systems comprise nearly half the program. Investments in health, the second largest component, are designed to complement the embassy's PEPFAR program by constructing and equipping clinics, retrofitting hospitals to provide enhanced HIV/AIDS treatment, creating a blood bank and central laboratory, and building a dormitory for students at a national health training college. PEPFAR funds are used to strengthen the quality of services at these facilities. The joint effort represents an excellent example of cooperation across agency lines.

Coordination within the embassy has been similarly impressive. MCC's resident country director reports to the Ambassador, and the two have reached clear agreement on the division of responsibilities. The Ambassador has successfully worked with MCC and senior levels of the Lesotho Government to keep the program on track when it appeared the country was falling behind on its commitments. MCC officials in Washington told the inspection team that the Ambassador's personal involvement was crucial to bringing the compact into force on schedule.

MCC staff comprises two experienced U.S. direct hires and two LE professionals. Responsibilities are neatly apportioned among them. MCC regulations and procedures are clear, and Washington-based technical and professional staff visit Maseru regularly. MCC has offices at the embassy and at the headquarters of its government partner. Public diplomacy is handled by the local partner in coordination with MCC staff, and to a lesser extent with the embassy's public diplomacy staff. A nationwide contest resulted in a logo that emphasizes partnership between the United States and Lesotho.

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

PEPFAR faces complex management challenges. Lesotho has been receiving PEPFAR funds since 2004 and has had a full-time PEPFAR coordinator since 2007. As with other PEPFAR programs, USAID and CDC are the two main implementing partners. The Peace Corps operates smaller programs in primarily rural areas, and the Department of Defense manages programs targeted at the Lesotho Defense Forces. A PEPFAR coordinator oversees the entire effort. PEPFAR's 2010 budget is approximately \$29 million, about two-thirds of which supports USAID projects. The embassy foresees spending \$140 million over the next five years to combat HIV/AIDS in Lesotho, not including related MCC projects.

The program has demonstrated a solid record of achievement, including counseling and testing nearly 60,000 pregnant women, providing treatment to 15,000 pregnant women to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, and providing treatment to more than 30,000 people who are HIV-positive. In the coming years, the program will pay increased attention to improving Lesotho's health care system, including its health care workforce, and expanding HIV transmission prevention programs for orphans and vulnerable children.

The offices of USAID, CDC, MCC, Department of Defense, and the PEPFAR coordinator all are located in a single annex, making communication across agencies relatively easy. Participants agreed that relations between USAID and CDC—often fractious elsewhere—have been cooperative here. Interagency rivalry is not a divisive issue in Maseru.

Management shortcomings have hampered the smooth operation of PEPFAR programs. Some deficiencies are internal to the embassy. Others involve inadequate support on the ground from participating agencies, notably USAID. These failings have led to a needlessly stressful workplace, staffing shortages, and an inordinate amount of time spent on issues that could have been averted had sound management structures been in place. (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

A number of these issues, including recruitment and retention of qualified staff, clear definition of the PEPFAR coordinator's responsibilities, and provision of adequate training for PEPFAR staff, are common to many PEPFAR programs and were detailed in a November 2009, OIG report.¹

Lines of authority within the embassy are unclear. When asked by inspectors who they reported to in the front office, ranking PEPFAR officers expressed uncertainty. "That's an interesting question," one responded. According to the embassy's organizational chart, CDC's chief of party reports to the Ambassador, while the PEPFAR coordinator and the USAID representative report to the DCM. The chart is festooned with dotted lines of authority that further blur the picture. In practice, all three appear to report to the Ambassador on program issues such as prevention and treatment, and to the DCM on management issues. This has led to excessive senior staff meetings with both the Ambassador and the DCM, in addition to a weekly country team meeting and regular one-on-one meetings with the DCM. Despite these meetings, members of the PEPFAR team told inspectors that communication is not always sufficient.

¹ The Exercise of Chief of Mission Authority in Managing the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Overseas, Report Number ISP-1-10-01, November 2009.

An organizational template drawn up by the Office of the Global Aids Coordinator (OGAC) calls for the Ambassador to head the PEPFAR program. The inspection team believes that adopting this design would place PEPFAR on a sounder organizational footing in Lesotho. It would also allow the DCM to focus more sharply on planning, reporting, security, consular affairs, embassy management, and other functions; at present, she is overburdened.

Recommendation 1: Embassy Maseru should designate the Ambassador as having full responsibility for all management and policy issues related to the President’s Emergency Program for AIDs Relief. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recruitment and retention of qualified PEPFAR staff has proved difficult, to the detriment of the program. USAID and CDC were short six professionals and several administrative staff members at the time of the inspection. For example, several senior officers as well as LE professionals told the inspection team that there was insufficient staff to monitor and evaluate USAID programs in Lesotho. “It is done on paper, not on-site,” as one participant put it. At the time of the inspection, the USAID portfolio was being managed by an experienced USAID employee on temporary duty from the regional office in Pretoria, and one LE employee. The temporary assignment followed the dismissal of a contractor whose performance was considered unsatisfactory.

Issues involving management structures and lines of authority have been exacerbated by the fact that Lesotho is a non-presence country for USAID, which supports PEPFAR from its large regional office at Embassy Pretoria. While USAID staff members from Pretoria make regular visits to Lesotho, all participants interviewed by the inspection team termed this support welcome, but inadequate. Lines of authority are blurred, as USAID programs are managed variously from Lesotho, Pretoria, and Washington. It is not always clear to the front office and others where authority lies for USAID programs. By contrast, CDC is headed by two direct-hire CDC staff members with authority to manage their programs.

As one member of the PEPFAR team noted:

A program of this size and complexity would be better served by a USAID mission. The interagency dynamics, the role of OGAC and the shared responsibility for all aspects of programming means too much time is spent coordinating and generating paper. Not enough time is spent really building the partnerships or getting out to our sites to see if we are getting the best possible programming our money can buy.

The inspection team believes that a larger, experienced USAID staff is required in Lesotho, and that a review should be undertaken to determine whether the establishment of a small USAID mission in Lesotho is warranted and what changes if any should be made to existing management structures.

Recommendation 2: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with the Office of the Global Aids Coordinator, should work with the United States Agency for International Development to submit to the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance a comprehensive review of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief in Lesotho staffing requirements, current management structure, and role of the program coordinator. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with OGAC)

A third set of issues involves the role of the PEPFAR coordinator. The Ambassador has given the PEPFAR coordinator in Lesotho broad but ill-defined responsibilities. For example, the coordinator has been heavily involved in several personnel decisions related to CDC staff, in some cases without prior front office knowledge. It has become practice for the coordinator to task CDC and USAID staff directly, without working through agency heads. While doing so may have made sense in terms of addressing urgent issues and meeting deadlines, it has caused unnecessary friction. The issue of responsibilities has been complicated by extended staffing gaps in the position. The inspection team has left an informal recommendation that the Ambassador more clearly define the coordinator's responsibilities, particularly in terms of evaluating and tasking USAID and CDC staff.

The PEPFAR coordinator is hard working and dedicated. In her first year on the job, the PEPFAR budget doubled. She was the driving force behind the completion of a Partnership Framework with the Government of Lesotho and is involved in all aspects of care, prevention, and treatment of HIV/AIDS, and in increasing the capacity of the country's health system to address these issues.

Like many PEPFAR coordinators, however, she did not receive adequate training before assuming her responsibilities. In response to the inspection team's questions, she said she had not received any training in how to work in an overseas mission, grants management, regional studies, or leadership. She had never worked for USAID or CDC, or even visited and been briefed at CDC headquarters in Atlanta. The OIG's inspection of PEPFAR programs in 2009 found similar shortcomings at a number of embassies and recommended that the Foreign Service Institute and OGAC develop a training regimen to better prepare coordinators for their overseas responsibilities.² Rather than repeat a version of that recommendation here, the inspection team notes that training remains a significant shortcoming within the PEPFAR program and needs to be addressed without delay.

The inspection team identified two other areas that require attention. All agencies involved in the PEPFAR program, as well as MCC, expressed uncertainty over the management of their funds at the embassy. This issue is addressed in the management section of this report.

Second, the embassy has not had sufficient resources to conduct adequate public diplomacy events highlighting the life saving work the PEPFAR team is doing in Lesotho. The planned addition of a full-time public affairs officer will enable the embassy to give more attention to this issue, as discussed in the public diplomacy section of this report.

Political and Economic Reporting

Political and economic reporting is not an embassy priority. One second-tour officer has a portfolio that includes political and economic reporting, public affairs, and back-up consular support. The officer – who is referred to as PDEP (for public diplomacy-economic-political) to reflect her many responsibilities—spends approximately half her time on reporting and aims to draft two cables a month. The DCM supplements the cables with reporting of her own. At the time of the inspection, there were no political- or economic-coned officers on the embassy staff.

Washington consumers told the team that reporting has been satisfactory, under the circumstances. It was robust enough, for example, to enable publication recently of a comprehensive piece on political stability in Lesotho. Analysts singled out three cables in particular for praise—drafted by the DCM, the PDEP, and an LE political assistant. Reporting focuses on contentious domestic issues, including proposed land reform legislation and continuing debate over the allocation of parliamentary seats.

² The Exercise of Chief of Mission Authority Managing the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief Overseas, *op. cit.*, pp 29-30.

The embassy also has produced useful reporting on the Chinese and Indian presence in Lesotho, as well as on the Southern African Development Community. In addition, the section's LE economic assistant drafted a well-written country commercial guide. The inspection team counseled the reporting officer to focus, when possible, on cables that comprehensively address a single issue (such as land reform) and that will have a relatively long shelf life in Washington.

The embassy is working actively to persuade the government to adopt acceptable positions on the issue of trafficking in persons. The PDEP is one of three diplomats serving ex-officio on the government's trafficking committee. At the PDEP's initiative and using AF public diplomacy funds, the embassy sponsored one conference on trafficking in persons in 2008 and two in 2009, with each conference featuring a U.S. expert. The issue is important, given that Lesotho has taken a relatively weak position on this problem, and assistance programs could be jeopardized if it allows trafficking to worsen.

Military programs focusing on HIV/AIDS and are handled by a Department of Defense-funded LE position in PEPFAR. The political section works on a variety of training issues, including international military education and training. The Department of Defense plans to fund an additional LE staff member to work with Embassy Maseru's political section, as well as with Embassy Pretoria's Defense attaché and its office for Defense cooperation. Representatives from those offices in Pretoria, who regularly visit Lesotho, expressed praise for both the Ambassador and the DCM for their support. The DCM in Maseru reviews Leahy vetting for Lesotho.

The Treasury Department's Office of Technical Assistance is funding a contractor who will take up a one-year position to help the Government of Lesotho improve its budgeting processes. Although rules of confidentiality apply to any information the contractor discusses with the Government of Lesotho, the Treasury presence should provide the embassy with better insights on the state of Lesotho's economy.

Public Diplomacy

The PDEP's portfolio includes public diplomacy, in which she is assisted by LE staff. The public diplomacy program is scheduled to expand with the arrival of a dedicated public diplomacy officer in summer 2010. As of March 2010, funding for this position had not been finalized, the grade of the position had not been fixed, nor had an officer been assigned or an arrival date set. The AF Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs has indicated that the arrival date could slip to as late as summer 2011. This small, isolated embassy needs a mid-level public diplomacy

officer with experience in strategic planning and program development to fulfill the demands of the greatly increased PEPFAR and MCC assistance programs while managing a modest public diplomacy portfolio. With the departure of the PDEP officer scheduled for summer 2010, any substantial gap in staffing until the arrival of the public affairs officer will mean that the PEPFAR and MCC programs will not receive the public diplomacy support necessary to identify these programs as U.S. Government endeavors.

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should follow through on creating and funding a public diplomacy position and assigning an officer with experience in strategic planning and program development. (Action: AF, in coordination with HR)

Following the arrival of the new public affairs officer, the embassy should arrange for a communications specialist with interagency experience in PEPFAR public diplomacy to conduct a workshop for the public affairs section (PAS) and PEPFAR personnel, to help create a PEPFAR communications strategy for Lesotho. PEPFAR already has allocated funds for this purpose. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation to this effect.

With a full public diplomacy program, Embassy Maseru will have greater need to employ electronic media, such as digital videoconferences, DVDs, Web sites, and social media, to convey the U.S. message to target audiences. Even with a dedicated public affairs officer, the embassy will have neither the technical support nor the expertise to use these tools effectively. In the past, experienced LE staff members from PAS Pretoria have provided excellent technical help and professional advice by telephone and through visits. In addition, the PDEP officer traveled to South Africa for consultations. A more formal arrangement would enable PAS Pretoria and the new PAS Maseru to better plan for regular support and avoid disruption to existing program schedules. AF's Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs has supplied the funds for temporary duty travel and consultations in the past and could more easily budget for these expenses if a support plan and schedule were mapped out in advance.

Recommendation 4: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Pretoria and the Bureau of African Affairs, should agree on and implement a framework, budget, and timeline for Embassy Pretoria’s public affairs section to provide regular technical and professional support to Embassy Maseru’s public affairs section. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Pretoria and AF)

Embassy Maseru does not have a formal speakers program. The inspectors have recommended informally that the new public affairs officer establish a formal embassy speakers bureau for U.S. embassy personnel to serve as speakers in outreach programs on a regular basis.

In 2006, Embassy Maseru opened an “American Room,” just off the main reading room in the National Library, a spacious facility built by the Chinese in 2005. Although stocked by a private donation of 20,000 recently published American books, the American Room remains locked most of the time, because no librarian is available. Although the books have been catalogued, they remain on the shelf because the library does not have a check-out system. The embassy recently installed two wall-mounted projection screens, which can be used for programs but also are equipped with earphones so visitors can watch videos without disturbing those who are studying. The main reading room is popular with high school and university students, an ideal target audience of upwardly mobile young people. The embassy plans to open the American Room and conduct student advising there—initially for one afternoon a week, potentially expanding to two afternoons a week to include other program activities.

The American Room may be a good site for an American Corner at some time in the future. Until the embassy can forge a stronger partnership with the library, however, the mission should limit its focus to making the facility available on a regular basis for educational advising and public diplomacy programs.

Recommendation 5: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with the Pretoria regional information resource center, should design and implement a plan to make the best use of the American Room in the National Library. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Pretoria IRC)

CONSULAR OPERATIONS

Overview

One vice consul manages Embassy Maseru's small consular section, with one full-time LE staffer. The vice consul has improved public perceptions of the consular section among host county nationals and local authorities.

Embassy colleagues expressed high opinions of the vice consul's abilities and cooperative attitude. The inspection team made several suggestions, including that the vice consul prepare a twice-monthly summary of consular activity for the front office. Several consular issues, such as adoptions and emergency evacuation, could benefit from a more structured, comprehensive approach. The section lacks a formal plan for outreach, representation, and reporting; such a plan would help focus the section's efforts and resources on Mission Strategy Plan goals and other objectives. A well-structured plan, which could include PAS-coordinated speaking opportunities for the vice consul, would further improve relations with the host country, while helping to meet citizen protection and visa information responsibilities. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation regarding this matter.

Section position descriptions are accurate, but the alternate consular subchief's position description requires updating. (See the informal recommendation in management controls section of this report.) The LE staff member completed two consular study courses in FY 2009, including one outside Lesotho, but it would be useful to send the LE staff member on a working temporary duty visit to Consulate General Johannesburg.

American Citizen Services

About 600 U.S. citizens, chiefly associated with religious organizations, have registered with the American citizen services unit. About 50 Americans visit Lesotho at any given time. The section also supports a number of Americans living in nearby regions of South Africa, as Maseru is geographically closer than either the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria or the U.S. consulates general in South Africa. The high HIV/AIDS-related death rate in Lesotho has triggered a substantial increase in the number of orphans, including many HIV/AIDS-infected children. In late 2008, Lesotho began to allow U.S. citizens to adopt children who are Lesotho citizens. The Government of Lesotho recently selected a U.S.-based adoption agency to coordinate all such adoptions, the number of inter-country adoptions may begin to accelerate from its currently low level.

Lesotho's meager infrastructure makes it difficult to manage an efficient emergency notification system and devise specific plans for the safety and evacuation of private U.S. citizens. The section's warden system and consular emergency plan fulfill these responsibilities, but incorporating related outreach and reporting work into the formal plan described above will enhance performance.

Visa Services

The visa unit adjudicated about 600 nonimmigrant visa applications in FY 2009. Consulate General Johannesburg processes immigrant visa and refugee/asylee status requests for Lesotho residents. The OIG team concurs with both missions' views that work related to these cases should remain in Johannesburg. However, as noted above, the increasing numbers of adoptions of children by U.S. citizens will require greater attention and assistance. The consular section has yet to select a panel physician, to perform visa-related medical evaluations according to CDC guidelines, as required in 9 FAM 42.66 *(citing CFR 22 42.66 [b])*. Doing so would facilitate requests for immigrant visa applications for adoptions and also would help determine potential nonimmigrant visa eligibility on medical grounds.

Recommendation 6: Embassy Maseru should select a panel physician, in accordance with regulations. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Antifraud Activity

Consular fraud rates appear to be low, and fraudulent documents are easy to detect. The section has conducted validation studies on several categories of nonimmigrant visa holders; these indicate that nearly all comply with visa stipulations. About 20 percent of first-time applicants fail to qualify for visitor visas. South African criminal rings have used Lesotho passports in their efforts to smuggle Chinese and Pakistani nationals into the U.S. Based on Department of Homeland Security findings, Department officials suggest that this situation may be a fruitful area for investigation in Lesotho. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation regarding this matter.

Visas Viper Program

The OIG team examined the embassy's Visas Viper committee actions for the last year. The committee held monthly meetings, as required, and the consular section submitted all required reports on time, according to 9 FAM 40.37. Members of all sections responsible for Visas Viper activity attended every meeting. None of the reports contained names of potential terrorists, nor were there any classified Visas Viper submissions.

Consular Space

The 10-foot by 15-foot consular work space, directly off the chancery's main waiting area, is cramped and claustrophobic; the section presents a poor image of the United States. A single consular service window opens into the waiting room, so that the vice consul and LE staff member cannot "work the window" at the same time. The window is adjacent to the chancery hard-line door, making it difficult to enter other offices while interviews are taking place. The lack of privacy and attendant noise levels inhibit applicant interviews. A computer terminal for consular client use will be installed in the waiting room. Persons in wheelchairs may enter the waiting area—after they negotiate the embassy main entrance and about 200 feet of internal sidewalk. The waiting area lacks toilets. Consular employees share the constricted, poorly ventilated office with their equipment and supplies. While the small space makes supervisory line-of-sight for controlled materials easy, the vice consul must conduct sensitive personal interviews in the general waiting area or borrow someone's office. Overall tight chancery space does not offer obvious opportunities to fix the consular space situation.

The embassy first sought a corrective chancery upgrade in 2005. Other than developing a floor plan, no corrective action was taken. In mid 2009, Embassy Maseru again asked the Department for remedial action, estimated to cost about \$3 million dollars, but the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations informed the embassy that the project was not a priority due to cost. It may be that a less expensive renovation option exists.

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Maseru, should design, fund, and implement a plan to resolve the cited problems in the consular work space. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Maseru)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	U.S. Direct-Hire Staff	U.S. Local-Hire Staff	Foreign National Staff ¹	Total Staff	Total Funding FY 2009
State – Diplomatic & Consular Programs	6	1	7	14	\$535,900
State – ICASS	2	2	39	43	\$1,667,700
State – Public Diplomacy					\$55,000
State – Diplomatic Security	1		1	2	\$399,661
State – Machine Readable Visa					\$20,200
State - Representation					\$13,000
State – OBO					\$328,813
State - PEPFAR	1		7	8	\$1,200,411
MCC	2		3	5	\$448,662
MCC Program					\$22,215,679
CDC	2		5 ²	7	\$460,000
CDC Program					\$8,467,250
USAID	1		3	4	\$17,517
USAID Program					\$15,622,375
Peace Corps	3		18 ³	21	\$1,709,400
Dept. of Defense PEPFAR					\$610,000
Totals	18	3	83	104	\$53,771,568

Notes:

¹ Includes vacant LE staff positions.

² Includes two third-country nationals.

³ Includes 15 personal services contract positions.

MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Maseru's management section is extremely busy, supporting the embassy's large and growing assistance programs with only three U.S. officers, all but one of whom are in their position for the first time. The management officer has been stretched, serving as post security officer until the arrival of the RSO in October 2008 and as acting DCM from July through December 2008. The general services officer (GSO), who also serves as the facilities manager, was responsible for a number of complicated, and successful, construction projects. The embassy's staffing increased by almost 100 percent between October 2006 and February 2010. The section received mixed reviews during this inspection. According to some, it has done an excellent job providing support across the full range of management operations. Others – especially in other agencies—said that support was lacking. For 2010, the customer satisfaction survey scores were mixed for the 28 management sub-functions measured on the ICASS survey, when compared to AF and worldwide averages. When compared with the previous year, the majority of scores trended positively.

The section is under the direction of a “can do” general services specialist who is on his fourth tour of duty but his first tour as a management officer. Other U.S. direct-hire positions in the section include the GSO—a position which is currently vacant but formerly was held by an out-of-cone economic officer—and an experienced information management officer. The new GSO will be a first tour officer. Financial management, human resources operations, and the health unit are staffed by a combination of experienced and fairly new LE staff members, under the direction of the management officer. There are two eligible family member positions: the community liaison office coordinator and the management assistant. Both eligible family member incumbents, scheduled to depart this summer, have tendered their resignations.

The section has embraced the tenets of the Department's collaborative management initiative and has implemented major components of the program, such as eServices. The initiative's ICASS uniform service standards are in use, but copies of the standards were not posted in the offices and were difficult to find on the embassy's Intranet site.

During the course of the inspection, one issue was repeated frequently: the use of embassy and agency funds was not transparent. PEPFAR, MCC, CDC, and USAID expressed concern that their funds may have been used for other sections or agencies. Several of them thought that funding may have been spent without their approval, a perception that could not be confirmed. Weekly meetings and monthly provision of COAST (consolidated overseas accountability support toolbox) finan-

cial reports have not eliminated these concerns. In addition, the management officer approved the use of the ICASS allotment to fund the travel of the RSO to the World Cup security briefing in Pretoria, even though the RSO has her own travel funds. Keeping all sections more clearly informed about their budgets could have alleviated these issues.

Recommendation 8: Embassy Maseru should establish a mechanism for the management office and agency heads to review and resolve disputed claims regarding the use of embassy and agency funds. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The financial management unit is doing a fair job providing services to its ICASS customers. The unit consists of four LE staff members, under the direction of the management officer. The regional financial management specialist in Pretoria, who visits quarterly, scheduled a visit to coincide during the first week of the OIG inspection. The Lesotho unit was responsible for FY 2009 Department allotments of approximately \$4.2 million, including \$1.2 million in Department PEPFAR funding. It provides limited financial services to CDC, MCC, and PEPFAR.

The 2010 ICASS customer satisfaction survey results were mixed, compared to bureau and worldwide averages. When compared to the previous year, there was improvement in scores for budgets and financial plans, accounts and records, payroll, and cashier. Vouchering was the only operation for which scores declined. This might be due to the financial management unit's workload, which has increased dramatically since 2005 without an increase in staffing.

With the assistance of AF regional staff from the financial support and training office (FSTO) in Paris, who visited the embassy several weeks before the OIG team arrived, the financial management unit prepared well for the inspection. The unit corrected procedural deficiencies identified by the FSTO rovers, including reconciling official residence expenses and updating accounts receivable. Still pending is the marking of original invoices as "paid" after voucher certification. The inspection team has recommended informally that the financial management unit resume use of the perforation machine to mark original invoices as "paid."

Upon conversion of the former warehouse into office space for CDC, MCC, PEPFAR, and USAID, a conference room was constructed and outfitted using PEPFAR program funds. This was done even though embassy management and the occupying agencies agreed that the conference room was to be used as shared space and should be charged to ICASS. During the course of the inspection, the embassy took the necessary steps to charge ICASS for the square footage of the PEPFAR conference room at the FY 2010 final budget review and to reimburse PEPFAR for the conference room fixtures and fittings.

Expenses are at times unidentifiable in PEPFAR's COAST financial reports, and, when questioned, the financial management unit's responses have been unsatisfactory. The inspection team has informally recommended that the financial management unit work with the PEPFAR team on categorizing their expenses.

The embassy is installing COAST on CDC, MCC, PEPFAR, and USAID computers, with training to be provided on the next visit of the regional financial management specialist. These measures should help resolve issues between the financial management unit and the PEPFAR team.

In their report, the AF regional staff recommended that the embassy develop a training plan for the financial management unit's LE staff. The mission also needs to augment its formal training with on-the-job training. The inspection team informally has recommended that the financial specialist provide on-the-job training to the financial management unit staff, especially the backup financial specialist.

The Class B cashier is experienced, knowledgeable, and well trained. Cashier operations are conducted in accordance with financial management procedures and requirements. Two exceptions are discussed in the management controls section of the report.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

The embassy ICASS council includes representatives of the Department, CDC, MCC, Peace Corps, and USAID. In February 2010, CDC's deputy director was elected council chair after a five month vacancy. As a recipient of ICASS training, the chair will bring much needed direction to the council. The council meets on a regular basis, with three regularly scheduled and two ad hoc meetings held in 2009. ICASS council decisions and commitments appear to be made using email and are not recorded in formal minutes. The inspection team has recommended informally that the embassy prepare, clear, and maintain minutes of all ICASS council meetings.

Despite guidance from the Department, the embassy has not established an ICASS budget committee. The inspection team informally has recommended that the embassy do so. Due to the small size of the embassy, the council and the budget committees may be identical in composition.

The council has not been consistent in fulfilling its responsibilities to provide input for the management officer's evaluation. The new ICASS council chair was advised of her responsibility to provide input into this year's evaluation.

ICASS service standards for each service provider should be posted in each section. The inspection team informally has recommended that these standards be posted.

In July 2009, the council chair requested post-specific ICASS training. The ICASS Service Center could not support that training request, but the regional financial management specialist will provide post-specific training within the next several months.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The human resources unit is doing a first rate job providing services to its ICASS customers. In the 2010 ICASS customer satisfaction survey, Embassy Maseru respondents ranked both U.S. and LE staff services above the AF and worldwide averages. When compared to the previous year, both operations registered an improvement in scores.

The unit consists of two LE staff members under the direction of the management officer. The regional human resources officer from Gaborone visits quarterly. The human resources assistant, who has been on the job for 17 months, was acknowledged by the Ambassador as outstanding. She is certified to perform computer aided job evaluations.

The evaluation process is generally well managed. All work requirement statements for U.S. staff were completed as required. Due to the size of the embassy, U.S. employee evaluation reports are reviewed by the AF panel in Washington. Most, but not all, LE staff employee performance reports were completed as required. One PEPFAR LE staff employee's performance report was not completed, due to the absence of the PEPFAR coordinator; it was still pending as of March 2010.

The awards program functions appropriately, with 27 incentive awards given in the past 12 months. An agency-wide awards ceremony is held once per year, and awards are capped at \$500.

Both embassy management and LE staff said that training was insufficient. Where possible, LE staff members from the Foreign Service National (FSN) Executive Corps have been used to provide informal training, and LE employees have been sent to Embassy Pretoria to shadow their peers. Embassy Maseru has a training matrix but has not prioritized it. Moreover, the embassy had appropriated only minimal funds for training in the past several years, due to severely limited funding. During the inspection, Maseru's ICASS allotment received \$55,500 from prior year recoveries, which the embassy earmarked for training ICASS employees.

Recommendation 9: Embassy Maseru should use the earmarked funds for International Cooperative Administrative Support Services training based on a prioritized training plan. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

The embassy's economic-commercial specialist has been employed for six months, and a new political-military specialist will be brought onboard shortly. Training is a must. The Foreign Service Institute's course in FSN economic training (PE220) is scheduled for April 2010. The inspection team informally has recommended that Embassy Maseru review its program allotment or seek additional funding from AF to enroll the economic-commercial specialist in PE220.

The human resources unit is responsible for sending telegrams to the Financial Services Center Charleston about discontinuing and recommencing post differential when American employees travel to the United States, especially for rest and recuperation (R&R) travel. However, because the unit does not receive copies of U.S. employees' travel orders and itineraries, it cannot meet its responsibilities in a timely fashion. The inspection team informally has recommended that the general services office provide copies of U.S. employees' travel orders and itineraries to the human resources unit. The inspection team also has recommended informally that the human resources unit reconcile travel to the United States with the requirements listed in the Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR 532 b.), and inform Charleston of the necessary corrections.

The team found evidence that position descriptions are not current and accurate for all LE staff members. For example, the mail clerk works part-time in the consular section, but those duties are not reflected in her position description. This position description was updated during the inspection, but others need to be reviewed. The regional human resources officer, in her last out brief, said she would focus on this issue during her next visit.

Recommendation 10: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Gaborone’s regional human resources officer, should review locally employed staff position descriptions to make certain they are current and accurate. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Gaborone)

LOCALLY EMPLOYED STAFF

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Inadequate communication between embassy management and the LE staff was a predominant issue. The inspectors pointed out that communication was a two-way street, and without an LE staff committee to act as a conduit for LE staff concerns, progress was unlikely. Both the DCM and management officer met with LE staff members during the inspection. The DCM told the staff that reconstituting the LE staff committee is high on her agenda.

Recommendation 11: Embassy Maseru should develop and implement a plan to improve communications with the locally employed staff, consult at regular intervals with their representatives on key management issues, convene town hall or small group meetings, and identify areas of concern that can be addressed jointly. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

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The former GSO, who departed the embassy shortly before this inspection, was an economics officer serving his first GSO tour. His successor, who will arrive shortly after the inspection, is an entry-level officer on his first tour.

The embassy hired an additional 10 LE staff members in 2009, bringing the number of GSO and facilities LE staff to 27. The former GSO held weekly leadership meetings with the staff, but, due to a lack of funding, new employees received little functional or customer service training. This training is needed if the LE staff is to continue to improve.

Procurement

The procurement section, which processed more than 500 actions in FY 2009, has one experienced staff member and one with less than a year in the job. The new employee, who is also the part-time shipping clerk, has received on-the-job training and completed an online simplified acquisitions course. He requires more formal training.

Purchase order, blanket purchase agreement, and purchase card files are generally in good condition, with all necessary supporting documentation. However, the contracting officer had not signed any of the procurement folders. In addition, formal competition was not clearly documented on the procurement folders as required (14 FAH-2 H-517), although the written quotes themselves were included in the folder. Formal contract files were stored in the GSO's office, rather than in the procurement office, and were unavailable to the LE staff procurement agents. Several formal contract files were incomplete or haphazardly organized. In addition, copies of the contract statements of work were not provided to at least one contracting officer's representative. Without this information, the contracting officer's representatives cannot properly monitor the contract and confirm that the work is being done properly.

Recommendation 13: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures to complete, review, and sign all procurement folders, maintain all formal contract files as prescribed by the Office of the Procurement Executive, and provide the necessary information, including statements of work, to the contracting officer's representatives. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Of the construction-related procurements that the general services section issued in FY 2009 and early FY 2010, 15 were competed, 3 were awarded with valid sole source justifications, and 29 were not competed. Nine procurements valued at

between \$2,000 and \$3,000 should have been competed but were not, nor was any sole source justification provided. Another 17 were under the competition threshold for \$2,000. Of the 29 procurement actions that were not competed, 19 were given to the same company. That company also won 7 of the 15 contracts that were competed. This reliance on one company, especially for sole source or noncompetitive procurements, has led to a perception among embassy employees of favoritism. It also could result in limited competition and increased costs.

Recommendation 14: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures to complete all construction procurements valued at over \$2,000 or provide valid sole source justifications. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Maseru should expand the number of qualified contractors who are awarded its smaller construction related contracts. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

The GSO handled all formal contracts himself, rather than having the LE staff assist with these procurements. This increased the workload on the GSO, which deprived the LE procurement staff of needed experience.

Housing

The inspectors heard few complaints about embassy housing, although several appeals had been approved by the Interagency Housing Board. The embassy has 3 government-owned houses and 13 short-term leased residences. Housing that fits embassy standards is difficult to find in Maseru. The housing board visits all houses before they are leased or assigned. The LE assistant GSO for facilities handles all aspects of the leasing program, including negotiating with the landlords. A spot check of the leases showed them to be in good order. If the U.S. or third-country national direct-hire staff continues to grow as expected, the embassy may need to hire a full-time housing clerk.

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Property Management and Warehouse

Embassy Maseru's warehouse operations are in a state of flux after its July 2009 move to an offsite warehouse approximately five minutes from the chancery. The warehouse staff has a good organizational proposal, which will be put in place when the new shelving arrives. Separate cages have been installed for the information management section, MCC, PEPFAR, and USAID, but none had padlocks when the inspectors visited the warehouse. In addition, the warehouse did not have a visitor's log. The general services staff promptly corrected these issues.

None of the general services staff has received formal training in the non-expendable property accountability or WebPASS computer programs. While the LE staff members have done an admirable job in teaching themselves these programs, formal training is urgently needed. The accountable property officer was not personally conducting periodic, unannounced spot counts of expendable and nonexpendable property in warehouses to verify the accuracy of property records, as required in 14 FAM 411.2-2c. The last nonexpendable property accountability inventory had a discrepancy rate of less than 1 percent, but surprise spot checks indicated that both the nonexpendable and expendable inventories had not been done in several years. A spot check of the nonexpandable property showed no problems. However, a spot check of the expendables showed discrepancies with the inventory in WebPASS. At the time of the inspection, the supply clerk already had reinventoried approximately half the expendable supplies, in preparation for correcting the computer inventory. The spot check matched the paper inventory the supply clerk had compiled.

Recommendation 16: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures to conduct regular unannounced spot checks of both nonexpendable and expendable property and supplies. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

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The warehouse LE staff provides inventories of the furniture and appliances in each house, upon the new occupant's arrival. A spot check of the inventory files showed that approximately half of these inventories have yet to be signed and returned to the general services office. An informal recommendation has been made on this issue.

The embassy has only one cabinet in the chancery for storing office supplies. There is no cupboard stock in any of the annexes. Individual employees are responsible for requesting their own supplies, rather than relying on their section's cupboard stock. If the requestor is unavailable when the supplies are delivered, they are simply left on the desk. This results in a lack of accountability and no clear record regarding the location or use of supplies. In addition, the property management staff has not determined the minimum and maximum levels for expendable supplies. Without this information, the embassy will continue to run out of some office and other expendable supplies, while having too much of other stock. Informal recommendations have been made regarding these issues.

Shipping, Customs, and Travel

The general services section reported few problems with shipping. Most delays at the port in Durban, South Africa, occur when Maseru shipments do not take up a full container and have to be consolidated with items from other posts before they can be trucked to the embassy. The LE staff has a good working relationship with the Lesotho Customs Office, and customs clearances appear to be smooth.

The travel clerk has been in the position for two years and received training in travel policy and regulations in August 2009. She relies on Embassy Pretoria staff for advice on out-of-the-ordinary travel and reports that they have been very helpful. In addition to handling travel arrangements for embassy employees, she also arranges invitational travel. All embassy drivers and many U.S. staff have blanket travel orders, since trips to South Africa are frequent. The blanket travel orders and vouchers appear to be in good order. Embassy Maseru uses a South African travel agent who is affiliated with the Department's travel contractor.

Motor Pool

The embassy motor pool has 18 vehicles and 5 drivers, including the Ambassador's driver. All full time and incidental drivers receive annual physicals and refresher driver training. American and LE staff members are given a driving test prior to being authorized to drive a U.S. Government vehicle. The embassy updated its transportation policy, last issued in 2007, after the inspectors raised this issue. The inspec-

tors found one incident of a family member using an official vehicle, driven by an embassy driver, for a personal trip. Once this situation was pointed out to embassy management, the management section issued a bill to the employee, who agreed to pay it immediately.

While all U.S. Government vehicles have signs stating that seat belt use is mandatory, drivers do not consistently remind passengers to use them. In addition, passengers were not required to sign the OF-108 Daily Vehicle Use Report, until this issue was raised by the inspectors. These requirements are listed in the updated transportation policy and have been posted to remind staff of these requirements.

None of the motor pool employees has received training in the integrated logistics management system, which is used to track vehicle usage and complete the annual inventory. The staff was struggling to complete the online integrated logistics management system inventory program during the inspection and was unable to do so without help from the Department.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

In the past 18 months, the embassy has successfully completed several complicated office and building renovations, as well as smaller construction related projects. In addition, due to the poor infrastructure in Lesotho, the facilities management section handles all but the most complicated repairs in-house. The section includes the LE staff assistant GSO for facilities, a maintenance supervisor, and eight technicians, in addition to the office and janitorial staffs. The maintenance supervisor, who was recently promoted to the position, has yet to receive supervisory skills training. The GSO serves as the facilities manager. The facilities manager at Consulate General Cape Town provides regional support, although until recently that support has been spotty. There is no formal memorandum of understanding delineating the regional facilities manager's responsibilities or requiring that this individual visit Embassy Maseru quarterly.

Recommendation 18: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Pretoria, should develop and sign a memorandum of understanding regarding the support the regional facilities manager at Consulate General Cape Town will provide to Embassy Maseru. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Pretoria)

The inspectors were told that the GSO handles most of the larger construction contracts himself, with some assistance from the regional facilities manager, while the maintenance staff handles routine maintenance. This deprives the GSO of the expertise of the LE maintenance staff members. The LE staff members escort the contract construction workers, but often do not have sufficient knowledge of the project or statements of work to be certain that the work is being done properly. All of the projects now are successfully completed, but it is possible that the work could have gone more smoothly if the maintenance staff had been more involved in developing or reviewing the statements of work.

The embassy has implemented a preventive maintenance schedule, but due to the facilities management section's workload, it is not always followed. This increases the number of emergency and overtime calls the section receives, which affects both the embassy's budget and customer service. The work order clerk notifies all customers by email when work on a house or office has been completed. The section has expendable supplies on hand, and it uses blanket purchase agreements to buy other supplies as needed.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Embassy Maseru enjoys the services of an able information management (IM) officer, who is serving a growing embassy staff. The IM officer is responsible for classified and unclassified computer operations, the radio program, telephone systems, unclassified mail, and the diplomatic pouch, as well as the switchboard. Maseru has a small amount of classified processing, with six users and four workstations.

The IM officer is also the information system security officer, and the RSO is the alternate. Both have taken the required courses and have the information system security officer responsibility written into their work requirements. Maseru earned a high grade on the Department's network management tool, which measures system performance, security, and configuration. The IM officer is an enthusiastic professional who works hard to meet the increased demands of the expanded embassy staff. He takes systems security seriously.

The IM section's LE staff consists of two competent employees assigned to the unclassified computer section. They maintain 10 servers and 60 workstations, and they support 18 Americans and 83 LE staff members. One receptionist and one mailroom clerk form the final complement of the IM staff. Both U.S. and LE staff often fill multiple roles. For example, the mailroom clerk acts as an airport expeditor and also performs consular duties.

During a walk-through of IM spaces, the OIG inspector noted that wiring was strewn over the floor in the back portion of the OpenNet systems server room. This situation was most likely a result of a rapid installation several years ago. This wiring should be neatly confined to conduit or tie wrapped, as working conditions are unsafe and wiring could be damaged.

Recommendation 19: Embassy Maseru, with the assistance of the regional information management center in Pretoria, should arrange cabling in the systems room in a neat and logical order. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with RIMC Pretoria.)

The embassy warehouse stores too much obsolete information management equipment. Equipment has not been sold or disposed of properly in the past several years. Until the mission has an embassy sale, equipment must be organized and stored in a safe, neat, and orderly area. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation to address this.

Records Management

Safes in the information programs center contain drawers of outdated material from various embassy offices. The U.S. employees who use these safes depart without destroying unnecessary material and archiving material that the Department requires the embassy to keep. For example, the OIG inspection from 1998 was discovered in the midst of these documents. Material in all safes should be kept to a minimum.

Recommendation 20: Embassy Maseru should purge all nonessential material in the safes located in the information programs center. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Regional Information Management Center Pretoria Support

Prior to this inspection, the regional information management center in Pretoria supplied a memo outlining specific information on each post the OIG team was to visit, detailing telephone, digital, radio, and operational issues and projects. During

the team's four-post inspection, OIG team members visited regional Pretoria offices and found that regional information management center support of the southern African posts, including Embassy Maseru, is excellent.

QUALITY OF LIFE

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

At the time of the inspection, Embassy Maseru did not have a trained Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor, as is required by federal regulations (3 FAM 1514.2). Twice during 2009, the embassy sought but did not receive the mandatory training for an EEO counselor. In the first instance, it was because the Department's Office of Civil Rights cancelled the course. At the time of the inspection, the embassy had selected an LE staff member to provide an EEO-type resources for LE staffers, but this individual had not yet been trained. The embassy formally designated an EEO counselor during the inspection and began planning to appoint an additional LE staff liaison. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation regarding training for the EEO counselor.

Embassy management stated that no EEO-related matters had arisen in the past year. The Ambassador and DCM promote the embassy's family advocacy program. The embassy appointed a Federal Women's Program coordinator shortly before the inspection, but this individual had not received training or materials, and had not yet set up a women's program. An informal recommendation has been made on this topic.

The embassy publicized updated EEO and Federal Women's Program contacts, materials, and guidance during the course of the inspection.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

Besides serving on the emergency action committee, the housing board, and other embassy committees, the Community Liaison Office coordinator assists new employees before and after their arrival. The coordinator also manages a lending library, and prepares a monthly newsletter.

HEALTH UNIT

An LE nurse staffs the embassy health unit. The nurse has received no training since being hired approximately one year ago, but is enrolled in a medical seminar scheduled for April 2010. The OIG team believes that the nurse would benefit from increased consultations at the regional medical office in Pretoria, South Africa. The nurse can call on local medical specialists for emergency assistance, but typically confers with the regional medical office in Pretoria, Embassy Maputo's Foreign Service health practitioner, and the Department's Office of Medical Services. The mission coordinated 14 medical evacuations in 2009. Regional medical officers visited the embassy several times within the last year.

The health unit occupies two cramped rooms, plus a bathroom. Space is so limited that a cubicle-type divider separates the physical examination area from the reception/office. The OIG inspectors verified that the health unit correctly manages confidential patient records and controlled medical supplies. The inspectors also confirmed that mission first aid kits are acceptably maintained.

MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

Management controls are reasonably good, but they are not always followed in every area, possibly due to the heavy workload on the U.S. staff. Embassy Maseru's 2009 Chief of Mission management controls statement of assurance flagged several issues. During the period covered by the statement, the consular officer was designated as an alternate certifying officer. Until that time, the management officer was both the designated contracting and the certifying officer. Although a waiver had been granted to the management officer, separation of duties is a key element in a system of internal controls. Financial management controls have been further enhanced by the one-time visits of an accountant from Financial Services Center Charleston, the Financial Support and Training Office in Paris' cashier monitor, and AF rovers, and periodic visits by Pretoria's regional financial management specialist.

The embassy has clear separation of duties and responsibilities in various job functions. The management officer has been designated the embassy's management control coordinator. Responsibility for management controls is included in work requirement statements for all staff members who manage U.S. Government assets.

Several shortcomings in procedures and/or requirements in cashier operations were identified by the visit of the cashier monitor from the Financial Support and Training Office in Paris in April 2009. The general services office subcashier has a cash advance of \$1,000, and unannounced verifications of funds are being done quarterly, per the *Cashier User Guide*. However, 4 FAH-3 H397.2-3 states that unannounced verifications are required monthly, when the cash advance is \$1,000 or more. This caused some confusion at the embassy, but the class B cashier now is doing monthly verifications of the general services office subcashier. It is the responsibility of U.S. supervisors, however, to perform unannounced verifications of their subcashiers.

Recommendation 21: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures for the general services officer or management officer to perform monthly unannounced verifications of the general services office's subcashier. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

The alternate class B cashier does not have her own safe and has to secure her funds in the management officer's safe. A safe has been ordered for her.

Embassy Maseru's R&R travel administrative notice is dated April 2007 and should be updated. Effective January 1, 2010, South African Airways, as a United Airlines code share, discontinued its contract and excursion fares on its flights from Johannesburg to Washington, DC. Contract and excursion fares are available if travel is routed through Europe. Delta Airlines still offers contract or excursion fares from Johannesburg to Atlanta. Since round trip contract fares are no longer available from Johannesburg to Washington, DC, the embassy should determine the most beneficial economy airfare to fund R&R travel. The R&R travel administrative notice also should include a paragraph describing an employee's responsibility to inform the appropriate embassy personnel that post differential should, if applicable, be discontinued. The inspection team informally has recommended that Embassy Maseru update its R&R travel policy, including the abovementioned paragraph, and determine the most beneficial economy fare for funding R&R travel.

The OIG inspectors found several management control issues in the general services office. These are detailed in the general services section of the report.

CONSULAR MANAGEMENT CONTROLS

The embassy properly designated an accountable consular officer, a consular subcashier, and alternates. A recently appointed alternate consular subcashier, who will not perform cashiering duties until fully trained, had not completed the required distance learning training course. The OIG team has made an informal recommendation on this topic.

Consular subcashiers have individual cash advances. The OIG team's random records and accounts verification revealed no mathematical or accounting errors. The DCM reviews nonimmigrant visa application electronic files once a week. The OIG team finds this schedule appropriate, given the work volume. The accountable consular officer complies with *Consular Management Handbook* standards to regulate supplies of blank passports, reports of birth, immigrant visa and nonimmigrant visa documents, official seals, funds, and other accountable items. Sensitive computer access controls, computer file security, inventories generated by consular computer

systems, visa lookout accountability, and the nonimmigrant visa referral system satisfy all requirements. The section recently reviewed its records holdings and disposed of a number of inactive or obsolete files. However, as the OIG team has informally recommended, the section should reduce records holdings further and uniformly apply “traffic analysis by geography and subject” labels to remaining files.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Embassy Maseru should designate the Ambassador as having full responsibility for all management and policy issues related to the President's Emergency Program for AIDs Relief. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 2: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with the Office of the Global Aids Coordinator, should work with the United States Agency for International Development to submit to the Office of the Director of Foreign Assistance a comprehensive review of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief in Lesotho staffing requirements, current management structure, and role of the program coordinator. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with OGAC)

Recommendation 3: The Bureau of African Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Human Resources, should follow through on creating and funding a public diplomacy position and assigning an officer with experience in strategic planning and program development. (Action: AF, in coordination with HR)

Recommendation 4: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Pretoria and the Bureau of African Affairs, should agree on and implement a framework, budget, and timeline for Embassy Pretoria's public affairs section to provide regular technical and professional support to Embassy Maseru's public affairs section. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Pretoria and AF)

Recommendation 5: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with the Pretoria regional information resource center, should design and implement a plan to make the best use of the American Room in the National Library. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Pretoria IRC)

Recommendation 6: Embassy Maseru should select a panel physician, in accordance with regulations. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 7: The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, in coordination with Embassy Maseru, should design, fund, and implement a plan to resolve the cited problems in the consular work space. (Action: OBO, in coordination with Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 8: Embassy Maseru should establish a mechanism for the management office and agency heads to review and resolve disputed claims regarding the use of embassy and agency funds. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 9: Embassy Maseru should use the earmarked funds for International Cooperative Administrative Support Services training based on a prioritized training plan. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 10: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Gaborone's regional human resources officer, should review locally employed staff position descriptions to make certain they are current and accurate. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Gaborone)

Recommendation 11: Embassy Maseru should develop and implement a plan to improve communications with the locally employed staff, consult at regular intervals with their representatives on key management issues, convene town hall or small group meetings, and identify areas of concern that can be addressed jointly. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 12:

Recommendation 13: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures to complete, review, and sign all procurement folders, maintain all formal contract files as prescribed by the Office of the Procurement Executive, and provide the necessary information, including statements of work, to the contracting officer's representatives. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 14: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures to complete all construction procurements valued at over \$2,000 or provide valid sole source justifications. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 15: Embassy Maseru should expand the number of qualified contractors who are awarded its smaller construction related contracts. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 16: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures to conduct regular unannounced spot checks of both nonexpendable and expendable property and supplies. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 17: (b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)(b) (2)

Recommendation 18: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Pretoria, should develop and sign a memorandum of understanding regarding the support the regional facilities manager at Consulate General Cape Town will provide to Embassy Maseru. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with Embassy Pretoria)

Recommendation 19: Embassy Maseru, with the assistance of the regional information management center in Pretoria, should arrange cabling in the systems room in a neat and logical order. (Action: Embassy Maseru, in coordination with RIMC Pretoria.)

Recommendation 20: Embassy Maseru should purge all nonessential material in the safes located in the information programs center. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

Recommendation 21: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures for the general services officer or management officer to perform monthly unannounced verifications of the general services office's subcashier. (Action: Embassy Maseru)

INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Informal recommendations cover operational matters not requiring action by either organizations outside the inspected unit 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.

Embassy Maseru's employee evaluation reports are studded with superlative adjectives that are not balanced by constructive commentary on interpersonal relations or other areas where improvement might be merited.

Informal Recommendation 1: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures to include constructive criticism and valid areas for improvement in employee evaluations.

Embassy Maseru's limited representation funds of \$12,000 are used primarily to fund mission events that support humanitarian, development, and public diplomacy goals. These scant representation funds are not being maximized so that all embassy sections can further Mission Strategic Plan and reporting goals.

Informal Recommendation 2: Embassy Maseru should develop a representation plan tied to the Mission Strategic Plan and reporting goals, and fence off a portion of funds to promote contact work by junior personnel.

Informal Recommendation 3: Embassy Maseru should ask the Bureau of African Affairs for a limited increase in representation funds to support objectives cited in the representation plan.

The PEPFAR coordinator's involvement in CDC and USAID personnel issues and her tasking of staff from these offices has led to confused lines of authority.

Informal Recommendation 4: Embassy Maseru should more clearly define the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief coordinator's role in issues related to the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention personnel.

Embassy Maseru needs more training in specialized public diplomacy for PEPFAR

Informal Recommendation 5: Embassy Maseru should arrange for a specialist with interagency experience in communications to conduct a workshop with the public affairs section and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief staff to create a Lesotho communications strategy for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Embassy Maseru does not have a formal outreach speakers program.

Informal Recommendation 6: Embassy Maseru should establish a formal embassy speakers bureau for American personnel to conduct outreach programs on a regular basis.

Embassy Maseru's consular section lacks a formal outreach, representation, and reporting plan.

Informal Recommendation 7: Embassy Maseru should develop and implement a formal outreach, representation, and reporting plan in the consular section.

Embassy Maseru is positioned to investigate South African criminal rings using Lesotho passports to smuggle people into the United States.

Informal Recommendation 8: Embassy Maseru should study and report on visa fraud realities and potential in Lesotho.

Embassy Maseru does not mark original invoices as paid after certification.

Informal Recommendation 9: Embassy Maseru should resume use of the perforation machine to mark original invoices as paid.

Embassy Maseru's PEPFAR agencies say they are unable to identify expenses in their COAST reports.

Informal Recommendation 10: Embassy Maseru should work with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief team on categorizing their expenses.

Embassy Maseru's backup financial specialist is not fully cross-trained.

Informal Recommendation 11: Embassy Maseru should provide on-the-job training to the financial management unit staff, especially the backup financial specialist.

Embassy Maseru has not kept formal minutes of its ICASS council meetings.

Informal Recommendation 12: Embassy Maseru should prepare, clear, and maintain minutes for all International Cooperative Administrative Support Services council meetings.

Embassy Maseru has not established a post budget committee.

Informal Recommendation 13: Embassy Maseru should establish a post budget committee.

Embassy Maseru has not posted its ICASS services standards.

Informal Recommendation 14: Embassy Maseru should post its International Cooperative Administrative Support Services standards.

Embassy Maseru's economic-commercial specialist has not received economic training.

Informal Recommendation 15: Embassy Maseru should review its Program allotment or seek additional funding from the bureau to enroll the economic-commercial specialist in PE220.

Embassy Maseru's human resources unit is responsible for discontinuing and recommencing post differential for American employees but does not receive copies of travel orders and itineraries.

Informal Recommendation 16: Embassy Maseru should implement procedures to ensure that the general services travel section provides copies of American employees' travel orders and itineraries to the human resources unit so that post differential payments can be adjusted accordingly.

Embassy Maseru is not consistently following the discontinuance and commencement of post differential allowances.

Informal Recommendation 17: Embassy Maseru's human resources unit should reconcile travel to the United States with the Standard Regulations and inform the Financial Services Center in Charleston of the necessary corrections.

Embassy Maseru's LE staff do not provide input in completing the LE staff annual compensation questionnaire.

Informal Recommendation 18: Embassy Maseru should seek locally employed staff input in completing its next annual compensation questionnaire.

Informal Recommendation 19:

Embassy Maseru has not required that all residential inventories be signed and returned to GSO.

Informal Recommendation 20: Embassy Maseru should require embassy staff to review, sign, and return their residential inventories within a reasonable timeframe.

Embassy Maseru has only one cabinet containing cupboard stock of expendable office supplies in the chancery and none in the annexes.

Informal Recommendation 21: Embassy Maseru should locate cupboard stock of office and other expendable supplies in the annexes and develop and implement a control system for monitoring and reordering this cupboard stock.

Embassy Maseru has not set minimum or maximum levels for office supplies and other expendable property.

Informal Recommendations 22: Embassy Maseru should determine minimum and maximum supply levels for office supplies and other expendable property and use this information to ensure items are reordered in a timely manner.

Embassy Maseru stores obsolete IM equipment at the warehouse.

Informal Recommendation 23: Embassy Maseru should correctly store and properly dispose of all unnecessary and unused equipment.

Embassy Maseru's Equal Employment Opportunity counselor has not received mandatory training.

Informal Recommendation 24: Embassy Maseru should arrange Equal Employment Opportunity training for its counselor.

Embassy Maseru's Federal Women's Program coordinator has not yet devised an informational program.

Informal Recommendation 25: Embassy Maseru should seek guidance from a nearby embassy on developing a Federal Women's Program.

Embassy Maseru's R&R travel policy is not up to date.

Informal Recommendation 26: Embassy Maseru should update its travel policy to include determining the most beneficial economy fare for funding rest and recuperation travel, and highlighting an employee's responsibilities with respect to post differential.

Embassy Maseru's recently appointed alternate consular subcashier has not completed mandatory training.

Informal Recommendation 27: Embassy Maseru should provide the newly selected alternate consular subcashier with the Foreign Service Institute's course "PC-419, Collecting Consular Fees: Training for Consular Cashiers.

Embassy Maseru's consular section retains a number of obsolete records and has not uniformly applied Traffic Analysis by Geography and Subject (TAGS) labels to files.

Informal Recommendation 28: Embassy Maseru should reduce its consular record holdings in accordance with Consular Management Handbook and Records Management Handbook standards and uniformly apply Traffic Analysis by Geography and Subject labels to these holdings.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

Title	Name	Arrival Date
Ambassador	Robert B. Nolan	09/07
Deputy Chief of Mission	Elizabeth C. Power	12/08
<i>Chiefs of Sections:</i>		
Administrative	Craig A. Anderson	09/06
Consular	Karla Brown	11/08
PDEP (Public Diplomacy, Economic and Political)	Sara Devlin	08/08
Regional Security	Kimberly Jones	10/08
PEPFAR	Katie Crowley	09/08
<i>Other Agencies:</i>		
USAID	Vacant	
CDC	James Creighton	10/07
MCC	Gene MacDonald	10/07
Peace Corps	Kathy Jacquart-Dill	02/10

ABBREVIATIONS

AF	Bureau of African Affairs
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
COAST	consolidated overseas accountability support toolbox
DCM	deputy chief of mission
DOD	Department of Defense
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
FAM	Foreign Affairs Manual
FSN	Foreign Service National
FSTO	Financial support and training office
GSO	general services officer
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ICASS	International Cooperative Administrative Support Services
IM	Information management
LE	Locally employed (staff)
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
OIG	Office of Inspector General
PAS	public affairs section
PDEP	public diplomacy-economic-political
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
RSO	Regional Security Officer
R&R	rest and recuperation
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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