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

Report of Inspection

Limited-Scope Inspection of Embassy Lome, Togo

Report Number ISP-I-08-32, May 2008

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PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

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

PURPOSE:

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

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

METHODOLOGY:

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



United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors

Office of Inspector General

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

William E. Todd
Acting Inspector General

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KEY JUDGMENTS

- U.S. strategic interests in Togo are distinctly limited, but within this context, Embassy Lome is using its assets to the maximum to advance the chief policy goals of furthering democracy, relative prosperity, and health.
- The Ambassador and deputy chief of mission have forged a flexible, productive embassy with a strong desire to do well as a team.
- With an outstanding range of contacts within the government, Embassy Lome is well positioned to advance U.S. law enforcement concerns including counterterrorism and counternarcotics.
- The general services section has exemplary accomplishments that include the move to the new embassy compound, which required tight and detailed schedules, getting equipment in place, procuring items for unanticipated needs, organizing warehouses, and meeting staff demands for usual and recurring services.
- The Office of Inspector General (OIG) team made informal recommendations to improve the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Federal Women's Programs, review local staffing levels, and train staff on the Department's WebPass administrative application.

This limited-scope inspection took place in Washington, DC, between January 7 and 25, 2008, and in Lome, Togo, between February 8 and 15, 2008.

It was part of a pilot project to determine whether a limited-scope inspection performed by a small team visiting small posts for a short time could adequately evaluate their performance in policy implementation and resource management. The inspection did not include a full review of security or information technology programs. This memorandum report sets forth the team's observations, informed impressions, findings, and recommendations.

CONTEXT

Located between Ghana and Benin, Togo is the size of West Virginia with a population of 6.5 million people. Rapid population growth, high external debt, a cutoff of foreign assistance by the United States as well as others, and episodic domestic turmoil have stalled the economy for two decades. Once a West African garden spot, Togo has slumped to one of the world's poorest countries, with a per capita income of about one dollar a day. Each of the three main pillars of the productive economy – cotton, phosphates, and the port of Lome – suffers from underinvestment and mismanagement. Abutting the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea, Togo has no proven oil reserves; initial indications are that any hydrocarbons may be in deep water and difficult to exploit. In short, economic prospects, even over the mid-term, are drab.

Togo's political situation offers more promise and could ultimately help to lift the country out of deep poverty. The country is emerging from a state of political and economic turmoil following the 2005 death of longtime President Eyadema, and his son Faure's controversial elevation to power. A process of national dialogue has begun; free and fair legislative elections took place in October 2007. The government has also met the 22 conditions imposed by the European Union for its resumption of assistance. Assuming Togo's political reform stays on track, Embassy Lome's biggest challenge will be marshalling U.S. government program resources to reinforce positive change while managing Togolese expectations for more immediate assistance. Unlike the Europeans, the United States has so far held off on significant new financial assistance for Togo.

Dark spots on the political horizon include enduring ethnic and regional animosities, and Togo's history of military involvement in politics. Togo had Africa's first coup. It was then held in thrall for decades by a dictator whose son now serves as an elected president. Differences with the opposition run brutally deep; the father of the current opposition leader Olympio was assassinated by the father of the current president.

U.S. strategic interests in Togo are distinctly limited. Within this context, Embassy Lome has positioned itself well to advance the chief policy goals of furthering democracy, relative prosperity, and health. An imposing new embassy completed on time and within budget underscores the point that the United States is here to help

Togo for the long term. Also of value is the United States' long history of pressuring the Togolese regime to democratize, which in decades past contrasted favorably with the actions of former colonial powers, France and Germany. Hence, Togolese government members are readily accessible to embassy staff and are generally responsive to requests for information or support. The U.S. Navy ship visit in January of 2008, the first in 15 years, was warmly welcomed.

Like many U.S. missions in Africa, Embassy Lome's chief challenge in managing U.S. programs is maintaining staffing at adequate levels and finding the optimal mix among programmatic, administrative, and security assets. The OIG team found the embassy at full strength, but in recent years, the embassy suffered lengthy, debilitating staffing gaps.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTION

Embassy Lome is a success story. A highly experienced Ambassador and deputy chief of mission (DCM) with ample management background have forged a flexible, productive embassy with a strong desire to do well as a team. Both the Ambassador and DCM favor an open door policy. Both manage in a fashion that encourages staff members to seek better ways to do things, and to push their insights to an approachable front office. Both eschew micromanaging. Indeed, this is the rare embassy where the DCM verges on over-delegation at times, and some officers would prefer more course correction feedback from the top.

Both the Ambassador and DCM are collegial to the point that collegiality has become the defining description of the embassy's working style. An upbeat mood infuses the country team and other meetings. Officers help each other. Visitors are managed with precision because of strong coordination between different sections within the embassy. A recent U.S. Navy ship visit was handled particularly well, in part because the front office deployed embassy resources to maximum effect.

The Ambassador and DCM enjoy outstanding relations with the only other agency present in Togo, the Peace Corps, which for many years was virtually the only tool of positive engagement with Togo. Appropriately mindful of the constraints imposed by Peace Corp's special status within U.S. diplomatic missions, the Ambassador and DCM visit volunteers, draw on their insights, and involve them in the Ambassador's self-help fund.

Executive office relations with the Department and other Washington-based agencies are exemplary. Officers within the Bureau of African Affairs praise Embassy Lome for its smooth management and keen understanding of which issues in this country merit the attention of senior Department officials.

ENTRY-LEVEL OFFICERS

The OIG team commends the Ambassador and DCM for creative, nurturing management of Embassy Lome's large entry-level complement of nine officers and staff, who constitute more than half of the embassy. High levels of individual responsibility are encouraged. Significantly, the more junior members of the mission

generally express job satisfaction. This was a difficult achievement given that Embassy Lome is a hardship assignment in a high crime environment.

The front office employs a mix of structured and unstructured mentoring sessions that exceed the usual efforts, even for small posts. For example, the Ambassador invited his entire entry-level team to the residence to discuss long-term career planning, including the Thrift Savings Program and other retirement modalities. The DCM meets weekly, and for many, daily, with most of Lome's entry-level officers. As an outgrowth of this, the front office can assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of entry-level staff with rare precision.

The recent 15-month gap between political officers during a time of exceptional Togolese political ferment was a call for the front office to be innovative, the more so as the sole political officer also covers political-military, economic, and commercial matters. Making a virtue out of a necessity, the Ambassador and DCM embarked on a nuanced strategy of broadening the experience of their entry-level team beyond core responsibilities.

A first-tour general services officer stepped into the breach to manage \$160,000 in special assistance programs, skillfully finessing 11th hour program reallocations Washington imposed. Another entry-level officer acting as the public affairs officer, worked with Peace Corps on a women's employment project, and as the point person for the Mission Strategic Plan. A third entry-level officer took on political-military tasks so effectively, that her reception for the Togo armed services was graced by Togolese Army, Navy, and Air Force chiefs of staff. These entry-level officers have been successfully empowered, and some may call on cabinet ministers to advance operational goals.

The OIG team highly commends Embassy Lome for its broad reach. At the same time, the OIG team cautions that such arrangements require careful delineation of extra duties, ample feedback, and a sharp sense of priority. The core duties that originally justified the officer's assigned position should come first.

MORALE

The Ambassador and DCM are highly attentive to mission morale, which is generally good. Above all, officers welcome a front office environment that encourages rather than dismisses suggestions. The Ambassador and DCM draw on the talents of an exceptionally capable regional security officer to cope with rampant violent crime in Lome that constrains outside-the-office activities.

SECURITY

The Ambassador and DCM exercise strong security oversight without being meddlesome. The two-way flow of relevant information between the front office and Embassy Lome's security component – a regional security officer, assistant regional officer, office management specialist, and Marine security guard detachment – is exceptionally good. In addition to a formal weekly meeting with the DCM, the regional security officer sees either the Ambassador or DCM almost daily. Notably, the Ambassador and DCM, though personally very comfortable with the security environment, are credited with fully respecting other embassy members' concerns.

Embassy Lome is unusual among small African posts in having a Marine security guard detachment. Historically, Togo has suffered from occasional outbreaks of political unrest, not different from those issues at other posts. While the current ruling government has a somewhat fragile relationship with the opposition, the high number of security personnel is potentially not needed.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

Embassy Lome recently designated an Equal Employment Opportunity counselor and a Federal Women's Program Coordinator. Neither has the required training, and limited funding restricts training opportunities until the designees are in Washington for rest and recuperation or other reasons. Consequently, there is no active program in Lome. Meanwhile, the OIG team suggested that the embassy post information on the Equal Employment Opportunity and Federal Women's Program on bulletin boards throughout the compound, including telephone numbers for the Equal Employment Opportunity office in Washington, and nearby embassies whose Equal Employment Opportunity counselors are willing to provide guidance and counseling. A local staff liaison should also be designated. The OIG team left informal recommendations regarding these issues.

POLICY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Since the severe political violence of 2005 prompted reforms by President Faure and his government, Embassy Lome has sharply focused its energies and resources on promoting democracy and human rights. A concerted effort to promote free and fair elections appropriately involved most embassy personnel and programs. The Ambassador and team leveraged good access to Togolese decision makers to deliver an unvarnished message of U.S. government expectations. The result was free and fair elections, with the United States credited for playing a significant role even though U.S. funding for this initiative was a tiny fraction of the 13 million Euros provided by European nations.

Assuming that the Togolese political reform process stays on track, Embassy Lome's overarching challenge will be marshalling U.S. government program resources to reinforce positive change and to ultimately transform political liberalization into economic gains. To this end, the mission has linked the prospect of African Growth and Opportunities Act benefits to successful elections. As yet, the embassy has been unable to convince Millennium Challenge Cooperation officials to engage the Togo government, a step the OIG team views as useful even if the Togolese are not ready to be approved as a recipient country.

Assistance

Besides the assistance that the embassy distributed under the President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief, Togo receives very modest U.S. assistance for a Low Income Country Under Stress, an official World Bank designation. The United States' approach is a response to the previous Togolese government's intransigence on human rights and democracy issues. Now that Togo's leadership has embarked on policy reforms, U.S. annual assistance of about \$500,000, including one-time funding of \$250,000 related to Togo's legislative elections, appears stinting. Current programs include \$87,000 from the International Military Education and Training fund program, \$80,000 from the Ambassador's self-help fund, and \$60,000 for the Democracy and Human Rights Fund. In addition, the Department of Labor recently signed an agreement with the International Labor Organization to provide \$5 million over five years to address Togo's child labor problem.

LAW ENFORCEMENT/NARCOTICS CONTROL

With an outstanding range of contacts within the government, Embassy Lome is well positioned to advance U.S. law enforcement concerns including counterterrorism and counternarcotics. The embassy worked effectively with the U.S. Coast Guard and Togolese officials to overcome serious security deficiencies at the Port of Lome. More broadly, the embassy got the Togolese navy to assume a partnership role in the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Initiative, the U.S. Navy's primary vehicle for engagement in the region.

The regional security officer, responsible for law enforcement issues, has started a working group of security coordinators at other diplomatic missions. This has, in turn, created a valuable link to third country law enforcement agencies. In addition, a Paris-based Department of Homeland Security official visits Togo regularly to work with the embassy on issues including two high-profile cases involving trafficking in persons, and an American citizen fugitive in Togo.

The Drug Enforcement Administration has a regional office in Embassy Abuja, but has not visited Lome for over two years. This reflects, in part, the absence of major narcotics flows

COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

U.S. commercial interests in Togo have long been minimal. Apart from a network of gas stations owned by a U.S. company and the presence of two American shipping firms, U.S. business is absent. With the political situation looking up, an American firm is, however, planning to build a \$100 million power plant. If this project, which is dependent on acquiring reliable natural gas supplies from Nigeria, stays on track, it would be the first significant U.S. investment in Togo. The embassy has the U.S. Department of Commerce's Gold Key service available for would-be investors and otherwise enjoys a reputation for responding to commercial inquiries quickly and in detail. Lome's Country Commercial Guide is up-to-date and objective. The embassy did not submit any International Market Insight reports in the past year.

POLITICAL-ECONOMIC REPORTING AND ANALYSIS

Washington consumers commented favorably on Embassy Lome's reporting. They appreciated that Embassy Lome increased reporting during the recent legislative elections, and has appropriately focused on the ongoing efforts to bridge differences between Togo's ruling party and the opposition. In the OIG team's view, this subject could be reported in even greater detail, as it is unequivocally the linchpin to better Togolese relations with western donor nations.

Embassy Lome's reporting and analysis on Togo's influential military had been minimal in recent years partly because of the absence of a resident Defense attaché. Recent reporting on the Togolese military drew on an entry-level officer's outstanding contacts with senior military officers. Washington readers welcomed the increase in military reporting. The Defense attaché resident at Embassy Accra visits occasionally.

Overall, the OIG team's review of outgoing cables and e-mails confirms that reporting and analysis is sharply focused, concise, and embodies a sharp sense of what is important for the Washington reader. The typical Lome message usefully highlights the main points in a short summary designed for the senior policymaker. The embassy noted that Embassy Paris' Africa Watchers have been very helpful.

The Burden of Required Reporting

Since the abolition of the special embassy program, small missions devote disproportionate time to all-embassy assignments, which pose much less of a burden for larger U.S. embassies. Above all, small embassies like the mission in Lome stagger under the load of annual reports, including at least 11 mandated by Congress, on subjects ranging from human rights to religious freedom, trafficking in persons, and investment disputes, among others. Each is based on a separate statute with different definitional as well as reporting schedules and standards, some in conflict. Many of the mandated reports carry the possibility of sanctions. Thus, dialogue with host governments can be prickly and beyond the skill or experience of the first- or second-tour officers who typically craft these reports.

Above all, the OIG team favors a simplification of the different deadlines, guidelines, and timelines for these many reports, especially for those not mandated by Congress. Ideally, small missions like Embassy Lome would prepare an omnibus

report covering these required topics at one time, once a year. Lome and other small embassies could then draw upon individual sections needed for reports due later in the year, as none of these reports relies heavily on timely information, given the lengthy processing procedures in Washington.

At a minimum, the Department might amalgamate mandated reports into logical subgroups. For example, an omnibus economic report could address the investment disputes, intellectual property, and national trade estimate reports. A homeland security report could cluster the counterterrorism, money laundering, and narcotics reports. A human rights and democracy report could embrace the human rights, religious freedom, trafficking-in-persons, advancing freedom and democracy, and labor reports.

Further, the OIG team believes that certain, more complex reports such as the lengthy Country Operating Plan required by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Office of the Director of U.S. Foreign Assistance could be restructured. In so doing, small embassies and those missions with little likelihood of receiving significant assistance would prepare an Internal Revenue Service 1040-A style "short form". In this regard, the OIG team notes that Embassy Lome devoted significant mission-wide effort to its operational proposal for development assistance, only, contrary to advance indications, to get no money in the end.

Overall, the OIG team finds that the current mandated annual report system invites duplication of effort and undercuts the effectiveness of individual reports. The time spent researching and writing these reports is time not spent addressing the serious, global, underlying issues they reflect. The goal of these reports, after all, is not just to publicize the issues under scrutiny; it is to provide a platform for action.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

As a country on the cusp of transforming itself into a more democratic and ultimately more prosperous society, Togo is a fertile ground for U.S. public diplomacy activities. Because of Togo's close proximity to both Ghana and Nigeria, Togolese are interested in learning English. There is also a vibrant intellectual community that is increasingly vocal on democracy and human rights.

A mid-level public diplomacy officer supervises Embassy Lome's nine member public diplomacy section and Information Resource Center located in the chancery. The section maintains a close relationship with the separate English Language Center facility, financially independent since 2003.

In late 2007, the embassy established an American Corner at the University of Lome. At present, the American Corner conducts biweekly American film series and training courses for English language faculty teaching in several academic disciplines. The university's main library houses the American Corner's several hundred reference works. The OIG team noted that the creation of such venues that are physically separate from newly constructed chanceries facilitates public-outreach programs and lessens the need for stringent security measures. The mission has effectively used the micro-access English scholarship program to fund young Muslims who want to learn English. This helped to build a positive relationship with the Muslim community.

The public diplomacy section is an active participant in fulfilling the Mission Strategic Plan's goals of strengthening local democratic institutions and attendant economic prosperity, promoting U.S. democratic and social values, and global health. Recent programs have included a pro bono legal assistance training program for Togolese lawyers and magistrates, workshops promoting media professionalism and electoral media coverage, and a digital videoconference for local decisionmakers on good governance and corruption issues.

The embassy used the January 2008 visit of a U.S. naval vessel to highlight the U.S. military's role in security and humanitarian assistance abroad. Its most recent cultural outreach involved performances by the vessel's band and a workshop for local musicians. Working with the consular section, the public affairs section has also implemented an ongoing and highly effective media campaign to dispel widespread public misunderstandings of the U.S. diversity visa lottery program, which attracts many Togolese applicants.

The embassy has drawn on both post-specific and regional funding to broaden its public reach. Besides on-site educational advising, it identified candidates for academic exchange programs and theme-specific programs linked to significant events like Black History Month or U.S. holidays such as Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. The section's semiannual French language publication, USA-Togo, distributed widely throughout the country, highlights U.S. assistance programs, educational opportunities, and cultural events.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

An entry-level officer and a deputy capably lead the consular section; the political-economic officer serves as their backup. The five locally employed staff receive appropriate guidance and training for their areas of responsibility. Thanks to the December 2006 move to the new embassy compound, the section's work area is ample and provides line-of-sight supervision to all areas of the section. A small, indoor, child-friendly waiting room and interview area are adequate for most clientele given the current workload and scheduling of visa interviews by appointment. The outdoor spillover waiting area is exposed to the tropical sun and periodic heavy rains, however. The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations agreed to fund a weather-proof awning to cover the open area and asked Embassy Lome to provide input for the design.

The American citizens services workload is light but intermittently complex. There were, for example, several time-consuming welfare and whereabouts cases in the past two years, and one death case in 2007. According to the Report of Potential Evacuees (F-77), updated in December 2007, an estimated 600 unofficial Americans reside in or visit Togo at any one time. Most are missionaries and dual nationals. Virtually all can be reached by the embassy's comprehensive warden system which was activated four times in the past year to disseminate safety and security information. Registrations and warden lists are updated frequently, as is the comprehensive guidance on consular emergencies in the embassy duty officer book.

Although Embassy Lome's overall nonimmigrant visa applications have steadily declined since 2002, the percentage of fraudulent applications increased due to Togo's uncertain economic and political situation. Over 1,900 applications were received in 2007; about half were refused. Visa referrals are handled according to Department regulations; an updated visa referral policy was distributed in January 2008.

Immigrant visa and diversity visa processing is the primary element of Embassy Lome's consular workload. Diversity visa applications are often accompanied by false documentation and fraudulent relationship claims intended to establish eligibility. In fact, this was true for about half of the 840 diversity visa applications that the section received in 2007. Misleading information about the visa lottery prevails among Togolese who seek better educational and economic opportunities abroad. In response to security threats from disgruntled and ineligible visa applicants, the

consular section received appropriate support from the regional security office. The public diplomacy section also conducted extensive media outreach to dispel misconceptions about diversity visa eligibility requirements. Consular management believes media outreach helped to reduce the number of ineligible applicants and the overall visa workload.

Because of the pervasive fraud, the staff time devoted to establishing immigrant visa and diversity visa eligibility is significant, about four hours per application. Processing for family members of Togolese granted asylum status in the United States is also complicated by fraudulent documentation and relationship claims. The consular fraud prevention unit and the regional security office are able to handle most of the diversity visa investigations but have been unable to address an increasing number of investigation requests from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. These requests to determine the legitimacy of asylum claims are relayed through the Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Consular management praised the regular telephone and e-mail support provided by the Frankfurt, Germany-based regional consular officer. The officer last visited in January 2008. After a two-year hiatus, a representative of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security regional office located at Embassy Accra visited Embassy Lome in late 2007. The OIG team urged the consular section to continue to request regular visits from Embassy Accra.

The OIG team commended Embassy Lome's consular management for observing all required management controls plus its meticulous preparation and frequent standard operating procedures updates.

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RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Agency	Direct-Hires and Eligible Family Member	Locally Employed	Funding FY 2008 (\$)
State – Program and Consular	9	8	\$1,105,800
State – ICASS	8	108	3,095,600
State – Diplomatic Security		13	626,120
State – Marine Security Guard	6	4	140,700
State- Diversity Visa		1	***
State-MRV		1	61,750
State-PD	1	8	447,400
State – OBO	1		42,500
Peace Corps	4	41	*
Totals	29	184	\$5,519,870

*Peace Corps budget information is not available

**FY 2007 funding

MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS

Embassy Lome's management section works very well because the management officer provides careful and direct supervision over the human resource and financial management section as well as managing the general services, facilities, and information management sections. The management officer is highly competent and knows the requirements for the position, and how the sections should run. The local staff employees responsible for human resource and financial management are not independent and experienced, and often their work is inaccurate or untimely. Consequently, even with regional human resource and financial management support and visits from the Bureau of African Affairs Paris-based rovers, the management officer must carefully oversee their work. The information management section gets high marks for its operations. Two direct-hire staff run a complicated communications and computer system with a large number of local staff.

The OIG team observed that the ongoing rightsizing exercise could usefully review the number of eligible family members and local staff in all of the embassy sections, including the mail room, information systems center, health unit, shipping, and other sections, as appropriate. The OIG team notes that repeated inspections

have recommended reducing the ratio of local staff to direct hires, and also notes that this high ratio does not include the contract local guard complement.

The facilities manager and a general services officer efficaciously combine efforts to maintain the new chancery and short-term leased housing. Staff are happy with housing, preventative maintenance, and attention to urgent repairs.

The OIG team notes that the management officer is responsible for management controls. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that the embassy reconsider this assignment and designate the DCM as the management controls officer.

THE NEW EMBASSY COMPOUND

In December 2006, Embassy Lome moved from its deplorable old chancery to a new embassy compound, a direct contrast to its former location. The chancery was officially dedicated with a ceremonial ribbon cutting on April 3, 2007. The old compound, located downtown in the middle of the main market was unsafe, unsightly, poorly configured, and cramped. OIG's 2001 Report of Inspection noted problems with emergency egress and life safety. Costing over \$50 million, but on time and within budget, the new chancery is spacious, secure and attractive. The landscaping enhances the site, and the exterior façade is well suited to the local environment. The compound includes the Marine security guard residence; warehouses; mechanical, electrical, auto repair, and other workshops; a modern gymnasium; a swimming pool and a kiddy pool; and other amenities.

The move went reasonably well, but was taxing for the staff. There were six disposal sales, some repairs in the long-term leased chancery building, and the chaos that is inherent in a major dislocation and change. Now that those woes have ended, staff agrees that the building and surroundings are excellent. Housing is nearby, except for the Ambassador's residence and several other in-town houses that are still in the inventory. There are few complaints about the drive to work. Conversely, local staff, whose commute has lengthened and become more expensive, enjoy working at the new location, but find the commute in the Lome traffic uncompensated and difficult.

The OIG team contacted the Bureau of Human Resources, Office of Overseas Employment, regarding its suggestions for a methodology to ensure transportation costs are properly included in comparator surveys. The companies and organizations used as comparators in wage surveys have not moved. Those comparators' employees do not have a new transportation cost because they have not moved out of town.

No comparators are in the vicinity of the new chancery. The mission will keep in touch with the Bureau of Human Resources in this regard.

The OIG team found warehouses in pristine condition, with well-trained and competent maintenance staff and workshops that were appropriate to their functions. The most important elements that keep the buildings operational are air conditioning and generators. It is significant that the climate and a chancery design that includes a three-story atrium generate a monthly \$41,000 electric bill.

The mission now employs several employees who worked for the new embassy's building contractor. They are adept at using the Internet to search for solutions to complicated engineering and mechanical problems.

Human Resource Management

Regional human resource support is often insufficient. Visits are neither frequent nor long enough. Although the computer-assisted job evaluation tool was implemented several years ago, the local human resource staff had just trained on its use. At the same time, locally employed staff continues to believe it was implemented to downgrade positions. Local staff is confused about when jobs are reevaluated. Human resource staff agreed to inform the committee's constituency that it is only used after a position description is changed.

Financial Management

Regional financial management support is inadequate in this area as well. The staff needs training but manages to do a credible job. Visits from the Bureau of African Affairs rovers are always useful and welcomed. The cashier is efficient and accurate; the management officer conducts unannounced monthly cash counts.

General Services Operations

This section is exemplary in its accomplishments. The move from the old chancery required repairing some areas in the old chancery, as the landlord requested, and selling or disposing of old furniture and equipment. Moving to the new embassy compound required a tight and detailed schedule, getting equipment in place, procuring items for unanticipated needs, and organizing warehouses and supplies while meeting staff demands for usual services.

The section is completely staffed but some weaker players need help and support. Some promotions that occurred several years ago have not resulted in having the most capable staff in their work roles.

The section has not fully implemented some of the WebPass features that could be beneficial and increase efficiency. WebPass has just become available throughout administrative sections and could help to improve procurement response time. The OIG team left an informal recommendation that the embassy implement WebPass and train staff in all sections, where appropriate.

Facilities Management

The facilities management office was a great success in helping to organize and orchestrate the move from the old embassy. Positive comments about housing reconfirm the value of preventive maintenance as well as fully trained and capable staff.

Facilities management staff, some hired after the building contract was completed, is fortunately adept at working with the embassy's complicated automated systems.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Togo's limited amenities, undeveloped medical infrastructure, and potential for crime offer significant challenges to staff and their families. Nonetheless, morale among the official American community was high. Mission management and working conditions at the new embassy compound have contributed to this outcome. In addition, American officers were unanimous in their appreciation of the quality of housing.

Staff were concerned about locally-available health care and the regional medical officer's and the Department's Office of Medical Services' policies that define and approve medical evacuations. Nonetheless, most staff members were pleased with the quality of primary care available from the embassy's health unit.

For its part, the community liaison office is strengthening the spirit and cohesiveness of its clientele by organizing outings and interesting events, and the employee association is seeking new opportunities to serve its membership.

HEALTH UNIT

Embassy Lome's spacious health unit is located in the chancery. The facilities and equipment are well-maintained and patient records are properly stored. The unit's prescription and controlled medications are inventoried monthly, appropriately safeguarded, and outdated items are properly destroyed. There was no signage indicating hours or telephone numbers to call in case of emergency. The OIG team left an informal recommendation to correct the lack of signage and pertinent information.

A local contract physician meets with patients, by appointment, primarily at his office. He also regularly consults at the health unit. Other locally employed staff includes two nurses, a medical technician, and a receptionist. The medical professionals are expecting to receive Department-sponsored training in 2008. They will attend

classes in women's and children's health and laboratory diagnostic techniques. A direct-hire U.S. Peace Corps nurse is also available for informal consultations and primary care. The regional medical officer and regional psychiatrist based at Embassy Accra support the mission as well. Although their visits take place regularly, several staff members expressed their dissatisfaction with the Department's Office of Medical Services' policies that define eligibility for medical evacuations to treat chronic and continuing medical conditions. Considering all of these factors and recognizing all of the support that is provided, the OIG team believes that the embassy's request for a direct-hire Foreign Service nurse practitioner is not merited at this time.

The health unit monitors water quality at the embassy cafeteria and residences quarterly, and has trained the cafeteria employees in safe food handling practices.

COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

Embassy Lome's community liaison office coordinator attends country team meetings and meets regularly with mission management to discuss community issues. The office serves 38 clients including direct-hire staff, family members, and the Marine security guard detachment. The coordinator organizes sponsors for new arrivals, conducts a mix of day trips, potluck dinners, game nights, and a book club that involves the entire embassy, including children. The venues for these events include the Marine security guard detachment residence and the swimming pool.

AMERICAN EMPLOYEE COMMUNITY AND WELFARE ASSOCIATION

The American Embassy Commissary and Welfare Association of Lome conducts limited-scope activities for the official community including installing and maintaining television satellite decoders for residences and selling duty free gasoline and logo clothing. The association plans to organize events to raise funds for community activities.

INFORMAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Embassy Lome does not have fully functional EEO and Federal Women's programs.

Informal recommendation 1: Embassy Lome should schedule training for the designated EEO and Federal Women's programs counselors, as soon as possible, and post their names and information on bulletin boards throughout the embassy compound.

Embassy Lome's local staff does not understand the components of EEO or their rights to guidance and counseling.

Informal recommendation 2: Embassy Lome should designate a local staff liaison to the Equal Employment Opportunity counselor.

The management officer is the designated management controls officer. Given that the consular and other sections often have control weaknesses, the DCM is better positioned to oversee this function.

Informal recommendation 3: Embassy Lome should designate the DCM as the management controls officer.

Repeated inspections have recommended reducing the ratio of local staff to direct hires but the high ratio continues.

Informal recommendation 4: Embassy Lome should review local staffing levels in the information systems center, the mailroom, the health unit, and throughout administrative sections.

Embassy Lome just installed the Department's WebPass administrative application but has not yet trained staff on how to use and implement it in areas where the functions are available.

Informal recommendation 5: Embassy Lome should train staff on WebPass and use its functions in all sections where appropriate.

Embassy Lome's health unit does not display the open hours or telephone numbers to call in case of emergency.

Informal recommendation 6: Embassy Lome should direct the health unit to display open hours and emergency telephone numbers.

PRINCIPAL OFFICIALS

	Name	Arrival date
Ambassador	David Dunn	01/06
Deputy Chief of Mission	J.A. Diffly	08/05
Management Officer	Ruth Wagoner	12/07
Political-Economic	Susan Walke	10/07
Public Affairs	Mary Daschbach	09/05
Consular Officer	Melanie Zimmerman	10/06
Regional Security Officer	Matthew Golbus	07/07
U.S. Marine Security Guard Detachment Commander	Master Sgt. Henry Rivera	01/07
Peace Corps	Rebekah Brown Lee	02/07

ABBREVIATIONS

DCM	Deputy chief of mission
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ELO	Entry-level officer
OIG	Office of Inspector General

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