

**AUDIT
OF
THE CANADIAN EMBASSY**

BEIRUT

MARCH, 2002

Audit Division (SIV)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An internal audit of the International Business Development (IBD), General Relations, Consular and Administration Programs was conducted in Beirut during the period October 30 to November 3, 2000. A previous "Advise and Assist" visit was conducted in 1996 as part of a general audit of Damascus.

MISSION MANAGEMENT

The Mission was re-opened in 1995 with a plan to remain a Category III Micro-Mission. The reality has been one of rapid growth with a current complement of nine Canada-Based Staff (CBS) and eighteen Locally-Engaged Staff (LES). It is expected that the status of this Mission will become Category II in the near future, and the Audit Team fully supports this change.

The Mission now has a dynamic management team in place and has an impressive complement of CB and LE Staff. This is a very active Mission with a growing workload, a challenging Visitor Program and a Consular Program experiencing huge volume increases.

GENERAL RELATIONS PROGRAM

The General Relations Program (GR) must devote some time to formulating work plans. The support of the HOM will be important in this regard. The status and role of the Consular Assistant and Translator/Social Secretary position needs to be clarified, as the position description is no longer representative of the current activities of the incumbent who is 100 percent devoted to the GR Program. The GR Program could achieve much more with its limited resources if it had systemic support from its Geographic and Functional units at HQ.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Lebanon is a varied environment with respect to IBD, and, although limited in scope, there is greater potential than has been realized to date. The limited IBD resources at this Mission will have to be utilized very efficiently to make tangible progress. There is a need to formalize objectives for IBD staff, as well as a need for additional training for both the Commercial Officer and the Commercial Assistant.

CONSULAR PROGRAM

The Consular Program is extremely active, with Beirut the third most active Mission in the world for passport services. The recent addition of a CB Consular Program will assist with this very heavy workload. Consular cases can be protracted

due to complicated local bureaucracy, meaning contacts with local authorities are very important. Another full time Assistant position is required. A review of the Consular Emergency Contingency Plan is underway, with the primary goal being to put in place more wardens.

ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

Despite a very heavy workload on the Consular side, effective administrative services are provided to all staff. The implementation of published service standards would strengthen the relationship with clients.

The Mission's properties are managed effectively. The Mission has accommodated new staff, both CBS and LES, in offices that are now near capacity, and has leased new staff quarters that take advantage of a changing market. The Mission has experienced expansion in the Immigration Program. Consideration is being given to moving the Chancery to a better location near the centre of the city.

RECOMMENDATION STATUS

This report contains 30 recommendations, 28 directed at the Mission and 2 at Headquarters units. Twenty-six recommendations have been implemented and 4 are still in progress.

MISSION MANAGEMENT

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 The HOM arrived at the Mission in 1998. He has encouraged an active Committee of Mission Management (CMM), ensuring that weekly meetings are scheduled. An agenda and minutes are prepared, with all areas of importance to Program Managers being covered. The Administration and Consular Programs share equal time with other programs. Other active committees include Housing, Technology, LES, and Occupational Safety and Health. The Contract Review Board and the Classification Committee were not active at the time of the audit due to CBS changeovers.

1.2 Resources

1.2.1 During the period 1999-2000, the Mission staff complement grew with the addition of one CBS Consular Program Manager (AS-03), one Immigration Control Officer (FS-02), one LES Consular Assistant (LE-05) and one Administrative Assistant (LE-04). One LES position has the title of Consular Assistant and Translator/Social Secretary, and serves both the General Relations and Consular Programs. In reality, this resource provides assistance to the General Relations Program 100 percent of the time.

1.2.2 The Office Manager position combines duties in both property and accounting, with approximately a 60-40 split. This was an effective arrangement when the Mission had fewer employees, but given the growth of the Mission in the past two years, this combination of duties is no longer effective. An Administrative Assistant position was added last year to support the Office Manager, and to a lesser extent, the MCO. The MCO is reviewing both job descriptions with a view to having one Property Assistant and one Accountant position.

1.2.3 The Consular Program is staffed by one CBS and 3.5 LES positions. The demand for services is continuing to grow, and the Mission feels this will be an ongoing trend as Lebanon stabilises and more dual nationals return to visit or live. Currently, the Consular Assistant/Translator's job description shows a division of time between the Consular and Political Programs of 50 percent in each, but in reality the incumbent works 100 percent for the Political Program. It was clear to the Audit Team that even with the new resources granted under Program Integrity earlier in fiscal year 2000/2001, the Consular Section requires this 0.5 FTE and, in fact, with demand for services growing, requires an additional 0.5 FTE. Such a position would help the Mission meet the Consular service standards by assisting in passport examination, ROCA data entry and other related duties.

Recommendations for the Mission

- 1.2.4 Update the job descriptions of both the Office Manager and the Administrative Assistant, and submit them for classification review.**
- 1.2.5 Request approval and funding for a fourth Consular Assistant position.**

Mission Responses

- 1.2.4 The Office Manager's job description was reviewed and reclassified to that of Property and Materiel Manager (LE-07), effective April 1, 2001. The Administrative Assistant's job description was reviewed and reclassified to that of Accountant (LE-06), effective April 1, 2001.**
- 1.2.5 Within the Business Plan submission of November 2000, two of the mission's proposals for additional personnel were included for consideration, one of the positions being a new Consular Assistant. In the summer of 2001, the Committee approved the creation of a Secretary/Administration Assistant for the Administration section in preparation of having full IMS, but did not accept our request for a new Consular Assistant. The Mission plans to make a separate proposal to the Branch for this position, which has the backing of the Consular Branch already.**

GENERAL RELATIONS PROGRAM

2.1 Management of the Program

2.1.1 The General Relations (GR) Program is being managed by an FS-02 ***. He is supported by a Consular Assistant and Translator/Social Secretary (LE-04), who is increasingly involved in Cultural and Public Affairs. He is also responsible for overseeing the Development Program in Lebanon and the Canada Fund and, as the Mission Security Officer, has a Military Security Guard (MSG) reporting to him.

2.1.2 The Mission had been preoccupied by a large trade delegation, managing the Development Program, restructuring the Canada Fund, along with ongoing GR activities. With many of these activities in the past, the Mission can now devote some time to taking stock and planning for the future.

2.2 Program Planning

2.2.1 The HOM has asked the Program Manager for his objectives. However, he has not yet seen the HOM's Accountability Accord. This document, along with the Geographic Bureau Business Plan and the extensive Handover Log (e.g., situation report, list of key issues, list of activities and projects, calendar, contact list), will make a good starting point for preparation of the requested objectives and associated plans for their implementation.

2.2.2 In addition to the objectives, the completed plan should reflect:

- objectives in terms of who will contribute what to their implementation;
- mutual interest and involvement of the IBD Program;
- the role of the Public Affairs Program in support of all programs;
- discussion of CIDA's plans for new bilateral funds for Lebanon;
- proposed use of the Post Initiative Fund, travel and hospitality funds;
- planning for the Francophone Summit; and,
- clear results indicators and success criteria for key activities.

Recommendation for the Mission

2.2.3 When responding to the HOM's request for objectives, conduct a thorough planning process.

Mission Response

2.2.3 Objectives were provided and discussed upon the departure of the Audit Team (November 2000). Planning for the program was evident.

2.3 Program Direction

Organization

2.3.1 The status and role of the Consular Assistant and Translator/Social Secretary position needs to be clarified. The position description is no longer representative of the current activities of the incumbent (e.g., some of the duties are now covered by the HOM's CBS Secretary). In fact, the reality is that this resource is devoted 100 percent to the GR Program.

Recommendation for the Mission

2.3.2 The Program Manager, in conjunction with the MCO, should prepare a new job description to reflect the new role of the Consular Assistant/Translator/Social Secretary.

Mission Response

2.3.2 This position's job description was re-written, reviewed and reclassified to Public Affairs and Political/Economic Assistant (LE-06), effective April 1, 2001, and functions 100% in support of the Political Section.

Policies, Systems and Procedures

2.3.3 There is a need for an approach/strategy for dealing with unrealistic demands from local contacts, which would be available to all staff, to ensure courteous, uniform but firm treatment.

2.3.4 The GR Program has little systemic support from its Geographic and Functional HQ units of the type provided to its IBD counterparts (e.g., a clear delineation of what services they should and should not provide to the various clients, systems, procedures and databases, work tools, support units). The GR Program could achieve much more with its limited resources if it had such support.

2.3.5 Program hospitality files do not contain evaluations of the usefulness of the events, in terms of meeting program objectives. This information would facilitate planning for future events. Event evaluation reports would be useful whether hospitality is given or received and, in fact, are a requirement under the Hospitality Guidelines.

2.3.6 It was noted that the Post Initiative Fund (PIF) instructions are outdated and need revision. In other audit reports, we have recommended that GMD update PIF guidelines. Additionally, the budget status report of the Canada Fund does not contain

a "Forecast of Expenditures" column, which makes it difficult to determine the true unencumbered balance for planning and reporting purposes.

Recommendations for the Mission

2.3.7 Event reports, containing evaluations of their usefulness, should be prepared for all events regardless of whether hospitality was given or received.

2.3.8 The Canada Fund Coordinator should revise the format of the budget status report to include a forecast column.

Mission Responses

2.3.7 Noted. Instructions were sent to all staff to complete an evaluation of an event's usefulness.

2.3.8 The Canada Fund Coordinator's budget status report now includes a section for "committed funds" to assist with forecasting needs. The Mission also received the new PIF guidelines. The Mission was visited by a financial representative from CIDA to review the process of the Canada Fund and to discuss ways to improve budget tracking on a new setup designed by the CIDA representative. Mission has implemented these procedures and the technical problems with the IMS system in Damascus were finally resolved in the spring of 2001, so there is now better control over these transactions.

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

3.1 Management of the Program

3.1.1 The International Business Development (IBD) Program is managed by an FS-02 Program Manager, ***. She is supported by a Commercial Officer (LE-09) and a new Commercial Assistant (LE-05).

3.1.2 Prior to the civil war in Lebanon, Beirut was a hub for commercial activity in the whole region. As Lebanon has little industrial infrastructure, business activity was and continues to be mostly as brokers or traders. Beirut's position of preeminence has been lost and will be a long time recovering.

3.1.3 As with other countries in the region, the orientation of the business community has been towards the European Union. Canada's volume of trade with Lebanon has not established any discernable pattern of growth thus far, transactions being more of a one-time rather than continuing nature. Many of the Mission's business clients are former Lebanese, who are now Canadian or dual nationals. Part of the Mission's clientele makes unsolicited requests and is very demanding, with the result that the IBD Program's time is taken up with trouble-shooting.

3.1.4 Although limited in scope, it is felt by the Geographic and the Mission itself that there is greater potential than has been realized to date. The limited IBD resources at this Mission will have to be utilized particularly efficiently to make tangible progress.

3.2 Program Planning

3.2.1 The Mission IBD team meets regularly (twice a week) to review priorities and to receive feedback from the CMM. The Program Manager has benefited from a Handover Log produced not by her predecessor but by the Commercial Assistant.

3.2.2 Proposals for incremental funding, made as part of the Mid-Year Review process, are in need of development to improve the "business case" for each. In doing this, it should be kept in mind that PIBD funds are meant for initiatives, usually one-time, that are not covered by reference levels.

3.2.3 The HOM has asked for a set of objectives and the Program Manager has drafted a tentative list, although it has not yet been formalized or reflected in the objectives for her subordinates. The development of objectives would be a good starting point for a more comprehensive planning process which should include:

- lining up the Mission's IBD objectives with the Geographic Bureau Business Plan and the HOM's Accountability Accord;

- a full discussion of the objectives with the HOM, peer Program Managers and subordinates, to arrive at priorities and an understanding of who will contribute what to their accomplishment;
- the development of detailed, costed plans for implementation of those objectives;
- an allocation of existing resources (staff, travel, hospitality and contract funds) and formalization of requests for incremental funds (e.g., reference level and PIBD funds); and,
- the development of key results indicators and associated success criteria to facilitate measurement of performance for planning at the end of the period.

Recommendation for the Mission

- 3.2.4 When responding to the HOM's request for objectives, conduct a thorough planning process.**

Mission Response

- 3.2.4 During the next round of objective settings, the HOM and the Commercial Program Manager discussed new objectives. It was clear that the Commercial Program Manager had been creating plans for the Section, for example, which sectors would have the focus in the upcoming year. This will be discussed with the CBS replacement upon arrival, as the former Program Manager has left the Mission.**

3.3 Program Direction

Policies, Systems and Procedures

- 3.3.1** It was noted that the previous incumbent's hospitality files do not contain evaluations of the usefulness of the events, in terms of meeting program objectives. This information would facilitate planning for future events. Similar documentation of hospitality received, even though no hospitality funds were used, could also be useful.

Recommendation for the Mission

- 3.3.2 Event reports should be prepared for all events, whether hospitality was received or provided, and should contain evaluations of their usefulness.**

Mission Response

3.3.2 HOM discussed the need to complete evaluations for the usefulness of the hospitality provided and received. This will again be discussed with the CBS replacement, as the former Program Manager has left the Mission.

Training

3.3.3 IBD staff are in need of additional training, including training for the new Commercial Assistant, and IBD Sectoral training and interviewing skills for both the Commercial Officer and the Assistant. Plans are being made for this training in conjunction with trips to Canada for other purposes. The Program Manager suggested that more training would have been beneficial to her, particularly on the subjects of sources of funding available to the Program, at HQ and the Mission; financial management, including net voting and joint funding of projects; use of Business Mission Agreements; and other IBD tools.

3.4 Program Control

3.4.1 The “Snapshot of Activities” report is a good initiative. It could be improved by additional information on projects being pursued and on success stories. We consider the monthly preparation of these reports to be a “best practice”.

3.5 Program Services

The New Approach

3.5.1 The Program Manager supports the New Approach and is taking steps to implement it in the context of the particular circumstances faced in Lebanon. She is familiarizing herself and her staff with the tools and templates available and with the support infrastructure available to her.

3.5.2 A list of local service providers has been prepared by the Program Manager’s predecessor. There is a need to update this list.

3.5.3 The Program should consider further use of the Canada Business Services Centres (CBSC), including the Domestic Referral Service, for clients it views unprepared for export initiatives but offering potential.

Recommendations for the Mission

3.5.4 The list of local service providers should be updated.

3.5.5 The Program Manager should consider further use of the Canada Business Service Centres for clients it does not view as ready to export.

Mission Responses

3.5.4 The list of local service providers has being updated, and it is now an ongoing task.

3.5.5 This will be reviewed with the new Program Manager upon arrival. Currently, the staff refer these types of potential clients to HQ (the PSU unit) for their suggestions.

3.6 Program Delivery Infrastructure

3.6.1 The construction of a web site has been completed. Within the web site, the Mission has linked the Mission Trade site to the Infoexport site, rather than duplicating its contents, thus saving developmental efforts and cost and making it easier to maintain.

3.6.2 The WINExport On-line system, although slower than its predecessor and lacking some of its predecessor's functionality, can be used for purposes of service tracking. It is our understanding that this system will be replaced by an internet-based system in the future, which should make it faster and more flexible.

CONSULAR PROGRAM

4.1 Management of the Program

4.1.1 The Consular Program is extremely active and is well managed, currently by the MCO. A new CBS Consular Program Manager position was added to the Mission in the summer of 2000. This position will oversee the day-to-day management of one of the busiest consular programs in the world, once she is up to speed. The HOM has a keen interest in the Program, is very supportive, and is kept informed on the progress of all significant cases and the workload.

4.1.2 The workload, in terms of passport services, has increased 100% per year over three years, as many dual nationals return to live in Lebanon. This has made the Mission third in the world for the number of passports issued annually. Over 500 passports have been issued some months, with the high season now becoming longer and covering more months of the year. A general review of the Consular Program organizational structure was underway during the audit visit, with a view to fully utilizing two new LES Consular Assistant positions. A classification review for all positions in the Program is planned, including that of the Consular Assistant/Clerk position, which appeared under-classified at the LE-04 level. The MCO had taken the interim measure of deploying the Senior Consular Assistant into one of the new vacant LE-06 positions, pending the outcome of the classification exercise. Further, there are two contractors and one CBS spouse to cope with the workload.

4.1.3 The Consular Program Manager *** and had only the two week Consular training course prior to being posted. This employee *** will be learning on the job for the next few months. The MCO understood the need for close mentoring of this individual.

4.2 Service to Canadian Citizens

4.2.1 There are approximately 3,000 Canadian citizens listed in the Registry of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) system. It is estimated, based on passport renewals, that up to 50,000 Canadian citizens are resident in Lebanon. Demands on the Consular staff are high, for both CBS and LES, given this large resident community in Lebanon and the pressure created by daily crowds and a very demanding clientele. At the time of the audit, there were two Canadians detained, and the Mission has maintained an appropriate level of communication with these prisoners. The Mission does not have an active warden network but this is a top priority for the new Consular Program Manager. Work is underway to recruit a number of people willing to commit to this important task. With such a large resident community, however, to meet the requirement of one warden per 15 families, there would be a need for over 100 wardens, which may be unrealistic. The Mission is aware of this and is planning to

recruit as many as possible as part of an effective contingency plan. To date, 34 wardens have been recruited, and 10-15 more are planned for in the next 6 months.

4.2.2 The Audit Team was advised that the PSATCOM facility was previously tested in preparation for Y2K and, at the time, all services were operating effectively. Further testing is planned for the near future.

4.3 Passport and Citizenship Services

4.3.1 At the time of the audit visit, passport services were administered by the Senior Consular Assistant and overseen by the MCO. The Consular Program Manager was still in the orientation stage of her posting and therefore had not taken over fully the daily management of the Program. Her priority task was the updating of the Consular Contingency Plan. This is a priority for the Mission and will include as complete a warden network as possible, given the large number of residents.

4.3.2 The passport supplies are stored in a secure area and are subject to inventory control processes and periodic verification counts by the Consular Program Manager. *** The Mission commented that a solution could be found if the secure area was re-arranged. The HOM verifies the inventory every quarter, as per regulations. ***

4.3.3 All revenues for Consular services are paid directly at the bank and clients return to the Mission with a receipt showing payment made. The Mission, therefore, handles no cash. Some clients find this inconvenient because they have to come to the Mission more than once, but this process is viewed as a best practice.

4.3.4 The Consular clientele is one that is very demanding. The waiting area is usually full and, with the heat, becomes very uncomfortable. The Consular wicket is co-located with the main Chancery Receptionist, who answers all incoming telephone calls to the Mission. The Receptionist helps out with Consular client overflow and assists with ROCA input when possible. The two employees occupy an area that is quite small, and one that appears to be under the Treasury Board office space guidelines. More importantly, the fact that the main switchboard is located next to the Consular reception wicket means communication can be confused. The main switchboard should be relocated. The employee in this position has been working in a high-pressure job with the added duties of assisting at the wicket. While she did not have a record of incoming calls, the volume was high. A record of calls had recently been started to gauge overall volume and the types of calls received. The Receptionist stated approximately 70% of calls were Immigration related inquiries. These calls are transferred to the Immigration Section, which has no receptionist but rather an electronic information system. The type of client calling is one that hangs up and calls back when encountering voice-mail. This fact may point to the need for the creation of an Immigration Receptionist position which can field calls from the public.

Recommendation for the Mission

- 4.3.5** Continue to document call patterns and, if required and in consultation with CIC, make a proposal to HQ for an incremental Immigration position to handle CIC inquiries.

Mission Response

- 4.3.5** The Mission has been monitoring and will continue to monitor the call patterns at the reception. The Mission was expecting to move to the new Chancery in November 2001 and wanted to see the impact of the move and of the co-location of the Quebec Immigration Office before deciding on a new structure. Unfortunately, due to security concerns and other factors, the move has been postponed and will likely take place in November 2002. The Mission still believes that the move and the co-location will have a major impact on the Receptionist position, but prefers to wait to decide how best to restructure the Receptionist duties. Please note that with the additional Consular staff under the Consular Program Integrity initiative, and the subsequent distribution of tasks, the stress level on the Receptionist has been reduced considerably.

ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

5.1 Management of the Program

5.1.1 The Administration Program is well managed. The MCO has been at the Mission since 1998 ***. She has spent approximately 60 percent of her time on Consular issues over the past year due to under-resourcing relative to an increased demand. The MCO is very well organized. She has regular meetings with her staff to discuss issues. The MCO has an excellent grasp of the Administration priorities, and has mapped out the major tasks to be taken on. These have all been discussed with and agreed to by the HOM, and flow down from the HOM accountability accord. With the steady growth in the number of staff at the Mission, a greater degree of formal planning is now required. The Mission would benefit from a documented plan, in particular as major projects such as the planned move to a new Chancery will affect all staff directly and communication will become increasingly important. As well, all Administration staff can share in this exercise, permitting buy-in and providing a solid link to the annual LES appraisal process.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.1.2 Establish an Administration work plan with objectives and time lines.

Mission Response

5.1.2 The Mission has been formalizing an Administration planning process which includes, for example, the development of a training spreadsheet, resource requirements reports, etc. This is being done gradually, as time permits, and should be completed by the time the MCO departs in the summer of 2002.

Consular Program Manager Mentoring

5.1.3 A new Consular Program Manager position assigned to the Mission will be a full-time Consular Program resource, but it is planned that she will also act as back-up to the MCO during absences. This Officer *** has had little training. It will be important for the MCO to prepare a work plan for this employee with objectives, responsibilities and time lines, and to provide mentoring and feedback.

Service Standards

5.1.4 The Mission would benefit from a set of service standards for the provision of administrative services. Service standards ensure clients know what to expect in terms of quality and response time for services, and foster realistic

expectations, which can protect Administration from unreasonable requests. The service standards should be discussed and approved by the CMM.

5.1.5 Overall, the level of satisfaction with administrative services is high, and effective services are provided to all Programs and staff. The 2000 posting season saw four new CBS arrive within the space of one week, and Mission Administration was somewhat overwhelmed. This led to a few complaints from newly-arrived CBS regarding confusion as to which employee was responsible for what aspect of service delivery. The need for a work order form was also highlighted and the Mission has printed an excellent four-part numbered form for work order requests.

Recommendations for the Mission

5.1.6 **Develop an Administration work plan which defines who is responsible for the activities and includes time frames.**

5.1.7 **Establish service standards for all key administrative activities and communicate these to all Mission staff.**

Mission Responses

5.1.6 **The addition of a new position of Secretary/Administration Assistant in August 2001 is now allowing the Administration section to separate responsibilities more distinctly. Prior to this, having only the 2 employees for administration meant that both had to be involved in all aspects of the work (arranging work on SQs, being able to issue cheques, preparing customs declarations). The current staff is thus made up of a Property and Materiel Manager, an Accountant and a Secretary. As the Mission is going through its first year with this configuration, we are monitoring and reviewing activities at each time period and determining how the tasks should best be distributed. By next summer, the section will be able to draft realistic service standards for the Administration activities for discussion with the CMM.**

5.1.7 **Please see the response in 5.1.6, which includes our response to this recommendation.**

5.2 Human Resources Management

5.2.1 The MCO manages the Human Resources function with the assistance of an Office Manager who manages the LES pay and benefits administration, and the Administrative Assistant who manages the LES leave records and other related Human Resources duties. The function is very competently managed.

5.2.2 A number of LES position descriptions need to be updated, especially those for the Senior Consular Assistant, Passport Examiner/Consular Assistant, Translator/Consular Assistant, Office Manager, Administrative Assistant and Receptionist/Clerk. The Commercial Secretary, the HOM Driver and the LES System Administrator job descriptions are currently under review.

5.2.3 With the recent arrival of the Consular Program Manager, the MCO will now be able to devote more time to some Administration activities such as the updating of job descriptions and a classification review. Once updated, a Classification Committee should be established to evaluate the position descriptions and make classification recommendations to HQ.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.2.4 Review and update LES position descriptions and submit to the Classification Committee for re-evaluation.

Mission Response

5.2.4 Since the Audit visit, the Mission has reviewed and reclassified the following positions:

- Consular Assistant/Clerk (LE-04) to Consular Officer (LE-07), effective April 1, 2000 - part of the Consular Integrity Program.**
- Consular Assistant (LE-06) to Passport Officer (LE-07), effective April 1, 2000 - part of the Consular Integrity Program.**
- Consular Assistant/Translator/Social Secretary (LE-04) to Consular Assistant/Political Assistant (LE-05), effective April 1, 2000 - part of the Consular Integrity Program.**
- Consular Assistant/Political Assistant (LE-05) to Public Affairs and Political/Economic Assistant (LE-06), effective April 1, 2001.**
- Office Manager/Accountant (LE-06) to Property and Materiel Manager (LE-07), effective April 1, 2001.**
- Administrative Assistant (LE-04) to Accountant (LE-06), effective April 1, 2001.**
- Commercial Assistant (LE-05) to Information Officer/Commercial Assistant (LE-06), effective April 1, 2001.**

- **Receptionist/Clerk (LE-04) to Receptionist/Consular Assistant (LE-05), effective April 1, 2001.**
- **Systems Administrator (LE-07 retained) - verification of classification level based on new SA benchmarks, effective April 1, 2000.**
- **Immigration Receptionist (LE-04) to Immigration Cost Recovery Clerk (LE-05), initial proposal accepted waiting for funding approval before doing formal submission, expected to come into effect August 2002.**

Meeting with LES Committee

5.2.5 The LES Committee is well organized and communication from the Committee to the LES community is good. The MCO meets with the Committee as required. The HOM holds regular meetings with the LES but they are more of a social nature and, therefore, are not conducive to information exchange. One primary issue that was mentioned by the LES related to benefits. A benefits survey was conducted by a spouse in March 2000, and results submitted to HQ for review. At the time of the audit, the LES were still waiting for the results to be announced. Recent salary increases were deemed to be very satisfactory.

5.2.6 Another issue raised by the LES concerns an education allowance paid under the Lebanese Labour Code to male employees for their school age children. The female employees do not get that benefit in those cases where their husbands receive it from another employer. The Mission LES Handbook, dated April 1998, specifies that only women who have full custody of their children have access to the education allowance.

5.2.7 In the latest benefits survey, a recommendation was made by the Mission that the education allowance be paid to widowed or divorced women, or when the husband of a female employee is unemployed or self-employed. This was found to be similar to the seven markers used in the survey.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.2.8 Establish a regular schedule of meetings between the LES Committee and Mission Management.

Mission Response

5.2.8 During a meeting with LES on November 13, 2000, the LES voted that since they are still relatively small in number, they prefer to

individually participate in any meetings with Mission Management rather than being represented by a Committee. Since that date there have been five meetings with the staff to discuss various issues such as Chancery relocation, Mission Retreat, Francophonie and PM visit, benefits survey, a security session in case of attacks on the Mission, plus administrative changes.

Recommendation for HRL

5.2.9 Follow up on the benefits issue and provide an update to the Mission.

HRL Response

5.2.9 HRL completed the study of the last two submissions and forwarded the recommendations to the Mission on November 14, 2001. The results were provided to the LES in the meeting of November 26, 2001.

Community Coordinator

5.2.10 The Mission has no Community Coordinator. This was noticeable particularly after the 2000 posting season when four new CBS and families arrived within the same week. Having a Community Coordinator assists the Administration Section in organising CBS arrivals and departures. As well, this position can update the Welcome Kit, assist new arrivals to better settle into the Mission, and organize social activities.

5.2.11 Due to the lack of reasonably priced recreational facilities in the city and surrounding areas, the Community Coordinator could also help the Mission identify hotel facilities or alternate commercial facilities which can be used by CBS and their families, if funding is available.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.2.12 Recruit a Community Coordinator as soon as possible.

Mission Response

5.2.12 In the fiscal year 2000-2001 the Mission attempted to find a Community Coordinator from among the spouses at the Post, but no suitable candidate was found acceptable by all the CBS community. In the fiscal year 2001-2002 the Mission again searched for a Community Coordinator from among the spouses at the Mission, yet

no candidates expressed an interest in the position. As there was no interest from within, the Mission has verified with HQ that it can recruit from outside the Mission community and is investigating if there is any interest among spouses of other similar missions.

Training

5.2.13 The MCO is the Mission Training Officer. She has essentially only been ensuring that messages from HQ related to training are circulated to all employees. The Mission does not have a training plan and there is not a coordinated approach to training. Such a plan could include which employees desire or need training, which employees have had training, and the costs of training. The Mission may be able to find ways to provide training within the limits of its budget but should also seek sources of funding within HQ.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.2.14 Develop a training plan for all staff, with associated costs.

Mission Response

5.2.14 The Mission has developed a training plan for staff. The Mission has been using various means such as the CFSS distance learning program, HQ sponsored opportunities and local facilities.

HR Records

5.2.15 A review of LES employment and pay certificates (EXT-208) sent to HQ showed that some forms were missing from HRL files and that the Mission has not sent the latest updates. Whenever there is a change with respect to the position or the employee, the Mission should keep HRL informed by sending an EXT-208 form. To maintain a full employee and position history, it is advisable to file a copy as well on the employee file.

5.2.16 A review of LES appraisals was conducted. Of the files sampled, all LES had up-to-date appraisals. Increments are occasionally granted based on confirmation of fully satisfactory performance from the Program Manager, where the appraisal has not been completed.

Recommendations for the Mission

5.2.17 Ensure that complete position files are maintained, that EXT-208's are sent to HRL, and that a copy is on the employee's file at the Mission.

5.2.18 Ensure all LES appraisals are completed annually.

Mission Responses

5.2.17 The Mission has been able to catch up with some long overdue filing and has ensured that all EXT-208's have been added to the employee files. In response to HQ's requests for missing EXT-208's, the Mission has forwarded photocopies from our records.

5.2.18 The Mission had informed all Program Managers of the due dates for their employees' appraisal reports and Administration follows up on any overdue reports.

Staffing

5.2.19 Some recruitment exercise files were found to be incomplete. Correspondence related to recruitment action should be on file and should contain all documents related to the exercise, including the statement of qualifications, advertisement, all applications, methodology applied to arrive at a short list, selection tools used and supporting documents, all interview and test notes from board members, letters of offer and rejection, the recommendation to the HOM, and the final approval of the HOM. These steps are necessary to keep the staffing process as transparent, efficient and fair as possible.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.2.20 Ensure that complete files are maintained for all staffing actions.

Mission Response

5.2.20 The Mission has been formalizing the recruitment exercise in order to create a better paper trail for record keeping. Administration has been working on developing standard formats, for example, for advertising vacancies that can be easily adapted for various recruitment exercises, and has purchased a number of books to assist with the development of interview questions. The Mission is also attempting to create, when possible, eligibility lists in order to try to reduce the number of competitions that the post has been experiencing. In addition, the Mission has developed LES recruitment statistics for future tracking purposes.

Contractors

5.2.21 The Mission has a number of contract staff to support Mission operations. A cleaning company supplies two cleaners for the Chancery premises and one for the HOM SQ. The need for the cleaning contract is well substantiated, both at the Chancery and at the SQ, and RAM has agreed that funding be provided for cleaning services at the HOM SQ given the number of events hosted each month. The Mission also has contracts for five security guards supervised by the CBS Military Security Guard.

5.2.22 With only three Drivers and three official vehicles, one of which is designated primarily for use by the HOM, there is frequently a need for a contracted driver. The Mission also has two employees on contract in the Consular Section, one of whom is a CBS spouse. The Mission has plans to regularize these contractors due to the on-going need for them.

Occupational Safety and Health

5.2.23 There is an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Committee at the Mission, as required by the Canada Labour Code. Composition includes both LES and CBS staff members. Given the level of hardship at the Mission and health concerns associated with the local environment, such a Committee is particularly useful in relaying information and dealing with employee concerns. There is no mini-clinic at the Mission but the nurse based in Damascus can provide services to CBS.

5.3 Physical Resources

5.3.1 The MCO is responsible for daily operations of the Physical Resources function, with the assistance of the Office Manager. All properties are Crown-leased. The Chancery building and its location no longer meet the functional and operational requirements of the Mission, and a move to a better location with more functional space is planned.

Chancery

5.3.2 Since the re-opening of the Mission in 1995 operations have increased on a continual basis. The Chancery is located in a leased building which is also occupied by the British Embassy's Consular Section, as well as the building owner. Following the recent expansion of the Immigration Program and the addition of resources to the Consular Program, the Chancery is now full to capacity and a new location is actively being sought with the support of SRD.

Staff Quarters (SQs)

5.3.3 As this is currently a Category III Mission, there is no Official Residence. A spacious four bedroom apartment serves as the HOM's SQ. HQ is reviewing the viability of upgrading the Mission to a Category II. In this event, the existing apartment may be retained as an Official Residence because it is suitable in terms of layout, size and functionality. The location of the new Chancery, which will be in the downtown district, might, however, require that a new property be leased.

5.3.4 Five of the nine SQs are located near the current Chancery, while the others are located more in the downtown area. The proximity to services is better for the latter SQs, but occupants must commute a long distance to the Chancery. This situation will be reversed if the Chancery moves to downtown and the Mission is keeping a watch on the real estate market in order to be prepared for acquiring new SQs, if needed. Some occupants currently are over-housed as per the guidelines but living space is not generous and there is little storage. The balconies in most cases are the only viable playground space for children due to the total lack of green space in the city. Still, the Mission has experienced a renewed interest as a posting destination by CBS with children.

Distribution Accounts

5.3.5 Distribution Accounts are up-to-date for all SQs but not for the Chancery. Occupancy Agreements are signed and on file. The Office Manager is implementing a system of bar-coding of all assets, which will help a great deal in listing and tracking all items belonging to the Crown.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.3.6 Complete Distribution Accounts for the Chancery.

Mission Response

5.3.6 Chancery Distribution Accounts are complete and all items were entered into the Mission's new bar code system in the spring of 2001.

Recreation Facilities

5.3.7 The Mission has no recreation facilities. The city itself has very little open space and no green space. Staff can access a part of the city known as the Corniche, which is a long cement boardwalk along the seafront, but while officially designated as an area for pedestrians, bicycles and motor-scooters are encountered frequently. The beaches are not clean and the water is very polluted and not recommended for

swimming. The Mission will need to explore all options for offering recreation facilities to staff.

5.4 Finance

5.4.1 Financial management is the responsibility of the MCO who is the designated Mission Financial Officer. Assisting the MCO are the Office Manager and the Administrative Assistant. This function is generally well managed. At the time of the audit, the Administrative Assistant was in Canada on IMS and accounting training.

5.4.2 One area of concern identified by HQ related to delays in the entry of information into IMS by the hub Mission, Damascus, and the resulting lack of bank reconciliations during 2000. The Office Manager went to Damascus for some IMS training and also to assist with the clearing of the back-log. The Mission has “read-only” access to IMS. Some cheque entering capabilities have been granted recently, enabling the Mission to more quickly deal with the back-log. This represents a high-risk situation for the Department. SIXP is awaiting replies to a series of questions regarding their review of the accounts for the period May to August 2000, and will produce a separate report of findings.

Mission Comment

5.4.2 Since the technical problems with the IMS system were finally resolved in the spring of 2001, all bank reconciliations have been completed and the Mission is able to obtain up-to-date reports from IMS. The Mission Accountant is undergoing training for full IMS capability. This will enable the transfer of all functions to the Mission and the end of the hub and spoke relationship with Damascus. The Property and Materiel Manager and the MCO will be back up IMS resources.

5.4.3 The Office Manager tracks expenditures against the budget on a QuattroPro spreadsheet. Instead of sending only this document with data and the related coding to the hub for input, the Mission is sending all vouchers and supporting documentation. This important reference information is being stored there as well. The hub mission does not require all the supporting documentation to simply do the IMS data input. This was noted in the previous audit report.

5.4.4 The fact that the Mission does not have full IMS access prevents data from being entered in a timely fashion. There are coding errors and, in general, the reconciliation process is far behind. The hub and spoke relationship with Damascus is not functioning well and should be reviewed and possibly terminated.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.4.5 Cease sending all supporting accounts documentation to the hub.

Mission Response

5.4.5 The Mission has stopped sending all the supporting documents to Damascus. Now a weekly spreadsheet is created with all transactions and is forwarded to Damascus for entry into IMS.

Recommendation for SMS

5.4.6 Consideration should be given to providing the Mission full IMS access.

SMS Response

5.4.6 Beirut now has full IMS access.

Hospitality Expenses

5.4.7 Hospitality diaries were reviewed during the audit and the following points were noted:

- norms have not been developed for entertaining in commercial facilities such as restaurants;
- the quality of hospitality diaries needs to be improved, in particular with the inclusion of the reasons for the events and outcomes;
- the number of guests and rate used for hospitality at home should be explicit;
- FAA Sections 33 and 34 should be signed on all EXT904's. A CBS Program Manager must sign the HOM's claim;
- the MCO should be provided with complete claims, including EXT52 Hospitality Diary Forms and the supporting documentation, in order to properly certify under FAA Section 33; and,
- a maximum of 50% of clothing can be claimed under Indirect Representation.

Recommendations for the Mission

- 5.4.8 Update restaurant norms and include guidelines for appropriate restaurant costs.**
- 5.4.9 Maintain diaries to a higher standard, including appropriate detail.**
- 5.4.10 Ensure that the MCO is provided with the complete diary and that FAA Sections 33 and 34 are signed on all hospitality claim forms.**

Mission Responses

- 5.4.8 The Mission has surveyed local establishments to update restaurant norms and is waiting for approval of the figures by the CMM.**
- 5.4.9 The Mission has been reviewing diaries and has requested managers to provide any missing information.**
- 5.4.10 Noted and implemented.**

5.5 Information Management

5.5.1 This function is overseen by the MCO and well managed by a recently hired LES Systems Administrator (SA). The SA currently handles SIGNET, MITNET and general trouble-shooting. He is backed up by the Office Manager and also by the Commercial Officer. He offers training for users on Departmental software programs as the need arises. Additional training for some staff may be required on electronic filing and the SA is prepared to offer sessions. The Mission has a Technology Committee which reviews both hardware and software matters.

5.5.2 The SA has had the standard training course in Canada, and felt this was adequate for supporting SIGNET and the user community in general. Further training would be desirable, focussing on remedies and in the areas of telephone maintenance and script programming on OCTEL, as this is a feature of his job description and minor systems problems do occur. Given the location of the OCTEL hardware inside the sensitive area of the Chancery, he cannot access the system. Many problems are resolved remotely or by the occasional visit from the Regional Technician resident in Damascus.

Mission Comment

- 5.5.2 The Military Security Guard received training in OCTEL, and can thus perform on-site remedies for many of the systems problems.**

Records Management

5.5.3 Files are managed as per regulations, with destruction taking place regularly. The [I] drive is organized by section, with each Program having an allocation of space for filing. Most staff understand the importance of filing and there has been good buy-in of the electronic filing facilities. The SA intends to do some house-cleaning to make more efficient use of disk space.

Fax Machines

5.5.4 The number of fax machines is insufficient to meet operational needs. For example, a single unclassified fax serves Immigration, Trade, Political, Consular and Administration. The Commercial Assistant is charged with the distribution of all incoming faxes and some consideration should be given to rotating this role with other sections. Barring any system issues that might limit the number of faxes, a second fax machine should be set up in the Administration/Consular Section because of the high volume of traffic for these Programs.

Recommendation for the Mission

5.5.5 Consider acquiring an additional fax machine for the Administration and Consular Section.

Mission Response

5.5.5 The Mission purchased a fax machine for the Consular Section and it was installed by the EL in early 2001.

MISSION RESOURCES FACT SHEET

Personnel (FTEs)

	CBS	LES	Total
HOM	2	1	3
International Business Development	1	2	3
General Relations	1	0.5	1.5
Consular	1	3.5	4.5
Administration	2	6	8
Immigration	2	5	7
Total	9	18	27

Physical Resources

ASSETS	OWNED	LEASED
Chancery	0	1
OR*	0	0
SQs	0	8*
Vehicles	3	0

* As a Category III Mission, the HOM is allocated an SQ, not an OR. Also, one SQ is occupied by an employee-couple.

Financial Information FY 2000/2001

LES Salaries	\$466,826
Operational	1,357,709
CB Overtime	5,000
Capital	99,800
Total	\$1,929,335