



**AUDIT OF
THE CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE
RAMALLAH**

November 2004

**Foreign Affairs Canada and International Trade Canada
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Audit Division (SIV)**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An audit of the General Relations (GR), Consular and Administration Programs in Ramallah was conducted during the period November 24 to 28, 2003. A previous audit of the Administration Program was conducted in March 1999.

The Mission in Ramallah operates in an environment with high ambient stress, punctuated by bouts of extreme stress. Violence is always nearby and life outside the Chancery walls can be disturbing and depressing. *** The Mission is still a new one, having opened in 1999 and still growing, but with the addition of a Canada-based Management and Consular Officer (MCO), it should have reached equilibrium with 15 staff (6 CBS, 9 LES) - two of which are PSAT funded positions.

The Mission's primary purpose remains working to promote a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians and to implement an aid program that would assist with building the Palestinian economy. To achieve this, there is a highly effective team in the GR Program who have good access to key contacts in both the West Bank and Gaza. Effective and high quality reporting is being produced which is well received in Headquarters. The impact of the recent posting to the region of the Special Coordinator to the Middle East Peace Process has yet to be felt as terms of reference for the position are still being clarified.

The Mission has expanded significantly in the past year to a level that has resulted in staff working under extremely tight conditions. Plans are underway to expand the Chancery with a completion date scheduled for November 2004. The environment in Ramallah is by itself very difficult, and the working conditions exacerbate the situation. Stress levels are high amongst the staff and there is some tension between the LES. There is a need to pay more attention to the management of this Mission. It is also suggested that, in order to assist staff to better cope, the HQ Employee Assistance Program visit the Mission.

There have been too few Committee on Mission Management meetings and staff meetings. Communications in the Mission need to improve. The arrival of the new MCO has been a welcome addition and there is now a sense of more accountability and rigour to the administration of the Mission. Notwithstanding, there are human resource matters that need to be regularized particularly as they relate to staffing of positions, appraisals and leave and attendance. Overtime is high and could be lessened with the introduction of a visitor service policy. The notion of changing the work week to coincide with local conditions may offer opportunities for savings as well.

The Mission works closely with Tel Aviv. While a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between both missions was drafted in 1999, it was never officially approved. It is now time to revisit and formalize this document particularly with the arrival of the new MCO and the Coordinator for the Peace Process.

A total of 22 audit recommendations are raised in the report; 19 are addressed to the Mission and three to Headquarters. Management has responded to each recommendation indicating action already taken or decisions made as well as future actions. The Mission has implemented seven of the recommendations while 12 are in the process of being implemented. Two of the Headquarter recommendations are in the process of being implemented the other recommendation deals with the length of the posting cycle to Ramallah which Headquarters would prefer to maintain at its current three-year term.

SCOPE, OBJECTIVES, MISSION RESOURCES

Audit Scope and Objectives

The scope of the audit included a review of Mission management and the General Relations (GR), Consular and Administration Programs.

The audit objectives were to:

- assess management controls and systems, procedures and activities that make up the programs;
- determine the extent of compliance with legislation, regulations and operating policies;
- assess the reliability and adequacy of information available for decision-making and accountability purposes;
- ensure resources are judiciously used and that the Department is receiving value-for-money; and,
- make recommendations, where warranted, to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of programs.

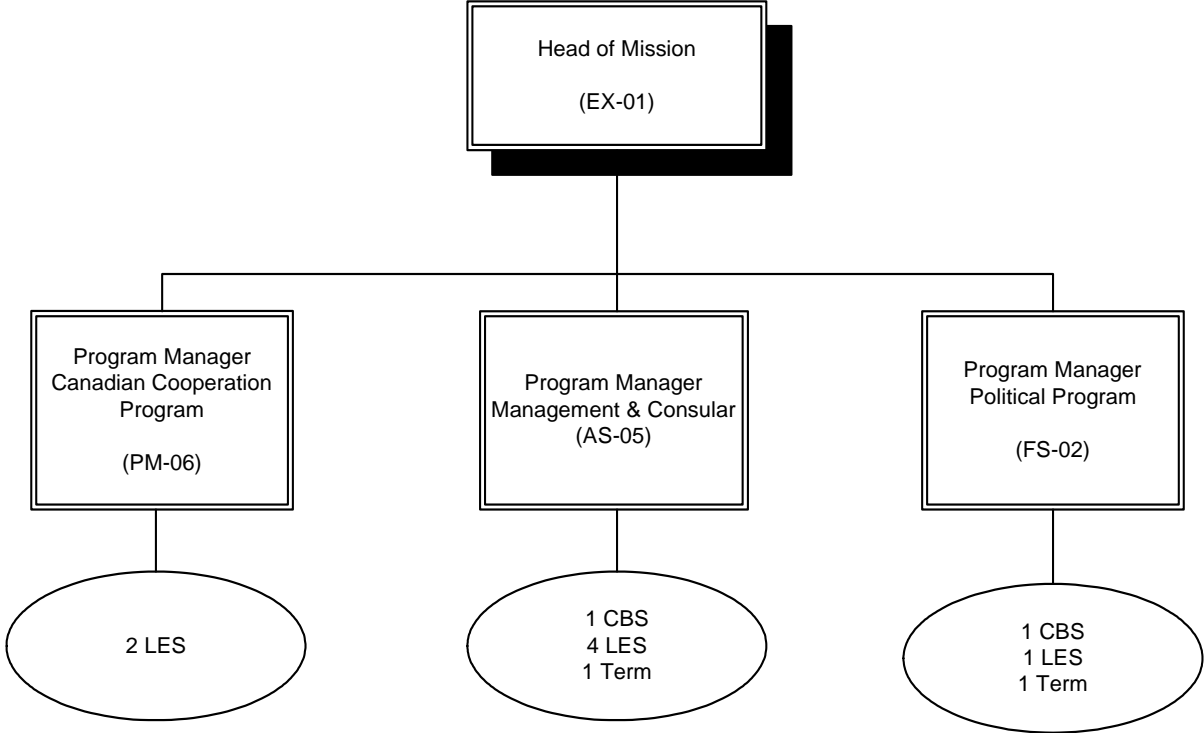
Physical Resources

ASSETS	OWNED	LEASED
Chancery	0	1
OR	0	0
SQs	0	6
Vehicles	7	0

Financial Information 2003/2004

Operating	\$821,289
LES Salaries	288,958
CB Overtime/Salaries/Benefits	438,939
Capital	50,900
Total	\$1,600,086

Organization Chart



MISSION MANAGEMENT

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 The Mission, which opened officially in March 1999 and reports to Headquarters, has as its primary purpose working to promote a peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. The Mission maintains a special relationship with the Mission in Tel Aviv, and while it is not a spoke of Tel Aviv, the two missions are inherently intertwined. There is a Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) prepared in 1999 which sets out the responsibilities between both missions for all programs including General Relations, Cooperation, Consular and Administration. This MOU, however, has never been officially approved and the relationship between missions, has, at times, been difficult. With the newly created MCO position and the arrival of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, it is now an opportune time to revisit the MOU to clarify its content.

1.1.2 Ramallah is an extremely difficult environment in which to operate. With Canada-based staff living in East Jerusalem, staff must go through several check-points on their way to and from work. The Mission was closed for 15 working days in 2002 and six days in 2003 due to security concerns. Stress levels are high amongst CBS and there has been some tension between the LES. Headquarters may wish to consider limiting the posting cycle to two years without extension. The Mission, together with GMD (Middle East and North Africa Bureau), needs to also consider arranging for HPDA (Employee Assistance Program) to visit the Mission to diffuse the tension and help staff better cope with the situation.

1.1.3 The Mission has been expanding significantly with the recent additions of the MCO, an LE-05 Program Assistant in each of the Canadian Cooperation (CIDA) and Political Programs, and a new term Driver position. The LE-04 Receptionist is also a recent hire. The Special Coordinator to the Middle East Process is currently living in Tel Aviv but following the Chancery renovation project, it is expected she will operate from Ramallah.

1.1.4 The Mission's growth has had a profound impact on office space. Space in the Chancery is extremely tight and offers little privacy for most employees. The situation is impacting negatively on staff. Plans are underway to expand the Chancery with a completion date scheduled for November 2004.

1.1.5 The Mission has paid little attention to management and administrative issues in the past. There have been too few Committee on Mission Management (CMM) meetings and staff meetings. The MCO's arrival in September 2003 has already had a positive impact on administrative operations. Administration had largely been carried out by the LE-07 Office Manager and Coordinator who, under the circumstances, did an admirable job. A sense of accountability and rigour has been introduced which had not been evident previously. The Mission had been operating

without clear guidelines and policies on many issues. It is important that, if the momentum is to continue, the MCO receive the full support of Mission management.

1.1.6 The MCO has not been given specific goals and objectives by the HOM. An Accountability Agreement is needed specifying in clear and measurable terms what the expectations are from the MCO position. This will then form the basis upon which the performance of the MCO can be evaluated and held accountable.

Recommendations for the Mission

- 1.1.7 **The Mission should collaborate with Tel Aviv to revisit the contents of the draft MOU written in 1999 to clarify the relationship and to formalize the document.**
- 1.1.8 **The Mission should consult with GMD to have HPDA visit the Mission to assist both Canada-based and LES better cope with conditions in Ramallah.**
- 1.1.9 **An Accountability Agreement should be established between the HOM and the MCO which sets out the goals and objectives for the MCO in measurable terms to improve accountability and establish a basis upon which her performance can be evaluated.**

Mission Actions and Time Frames

- 1.1.7 **We worked at length on a draft MOU with the previous HOM in Tel Aviv who believed that the 1999 document was too rigid. We agreed with his assessment. In 2002, the two missions agreed on a more general cooperation agreement that served us well. We are not aware of any major problems affecting cooperation between the two missions. However, we agree that this issue should be reviewed when the new Head of Office arrives in Ramallah in the late summer and updated to include factors such as moving the GXD position to the field and the posting of an MCO to Ramallah. From our experience, we found we were better served by a flexible understanding than a document that attempted to rigidly allocate responsibilities.**
- 1.1.8 **The MCO has contacted HPDA to discuss this question. It was agreed, given the departure this summer of two key senior staff, that the fall may be a better time for a visit to the post.**

- 1.1.9** The HOM has been discussing, as needed, the work plan with the MCO. On the basis of that experience, he will leave a draft Accountability Agreement for his successor.

Recommendation for HCD

- 1.1.10** The posting cycle for Ramallah should be firmly established at two years with no opportunity for extension.

HCD Action and Time Frame

- 1.1.10** From HCD and HMA's perspective, three year postings are desirable, especially where language training is involved. A higher level of predictability also makes succession planning easier. Most officers are requesting and staying three years in Ramallah.

Mission Comment

- 1.1.10** The Mission does not agree that the posting cycle for Ramallah should be firmly established at two years. Our experience has been that, despite difficulties, Canada-based staff generally have wished to extend their postings. That is also the experience of other western missions here, most of which have two to four year postings. The substantial decline in the level of violence in the Ramallah area since it peaked in 2002 supports our contention that Canada-based staff should continue to have the option of extending for a third year.

GENERAL RELATIONS PROGRAM

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The Mission has a highly regarded Political Program. The HOM in many ways functions as Chief Political Officer of the Mission. The Program is well resourced with an FS-02 Program Manager, an FS-01 Political Officer, an LE-09 Political/Public Affairs Officer and a term LE-05 Administrative Assistant.

2.1.2 The Mission maintains a good working relationship with Tel Aviv and there is much dialogue and sharing taking place. The posting of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process to the region will no doubt change the dynamics but, at the time of our visit, the incumbent had not been very active pending development of her terms of reference. There is some uneasiness in Ramallah on how this experiment will work but this should dissipate once the terms of reference are developed and promulgated.

2.1.3 The Program has a good team in place and it is well managed. Each officer has a portfolio of files to oversee and report on. There are frequent meetings to share ideas and to discuss work plans. There is little direct tasking from HQ so much of the work is reactive, in response to local events, or driven by visits to the region.

2.1.4 The Mission has good access to all key contacts and works hard at maintaining them. Staff travel frequently within the West Bank and Gaza to make and maintain contacts and to better report on key events (check-points, developments with the wall, etc).

2.1.5 The Program is prolific in its reporting and the reports are well received in HQ and regarded as high quality. Like in most GR Programs, staff feel there should be more direction from HQ on topics and frequency of reporting and more feedback on reports produced.

2.1.6 The GR Program has absorbed the resources that had been allocated to the Trade Program, and, to some extent, the Public Affairs Program, because there were simply no viable opportunities. The LES Officer position was intended to carry out these functions, but this position is now exclusively dedicated to political files. Trade work is strictly responsive and there have been no demands for service. The Public Affairs activities focussed almost totally on media relations. Given the local circumstances this reallocation of resources is logical.

2.1.7 A significant portion of the Program's work-load is related to managing visits. The Mission has a heavy visitor load, and due to local security circumstances, require much time and effort from the Program on both substance and logistical issues.

2.1.8 Hospitality funds are well used but more activity could be generated, especially at the junior level. Hospitality usage should be discussed at weekly meetings and programmed like any other event.

2.1.9 Goals and objectives were found to be general and more process-based than results-based. It would be more useful to develop a results-oriented approach (measurable where possible) to better guide staff and mentor staff.

Recommendation for the Mission

2.1.10 Accountability Agreements should be established setting out in measurable terms the expected results of individual officers. The preparation of these Agreements should be a collaborative effort between the officers and their manager.

Mission Action and Time Frame

2.1.10 We are preparing Accountability Agreements to coincide with the next appraisal cycle.

CONSULAR PROGRAM

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 The Mission currently has no formalized consular responsibilities. Recent circumstances have demonstrated that the Mission is filling a consular role during crisis situations and in cases where the Mission has easier access to clients. There are clients who are unable to leave Palestinian territory for basic consular services such as notarial services and filling passport application forms. Other services such as providing lawyer and doctor lists, maintaining the ROCA system, and initial visits to detainees in Palestine could be more effectively delivered from Ramallah. If it is determined that Ramallah should be fulfilling this role, consideration would have to be given to granting the MCO a consular designation. The Office Manager would also benefit from consular training. Overall responsibility for consular services in Palestine should remain with the Mission in Tel Aviv, who should remain the first point of contact for consular inquiries.

Recommendation for the Mission

3.1.2 **The LE-07 Office Manager should receive appropriate consular training.**

Mission Action and Time Frame

3.1.2 **A two week CFSI course was taken by the Office Manager in February 2004.**

Recommendation for GMD

3.1.3 **GMD, in consultation with the Mission and JPD, should evaluate the role of the MCO in Ramallah in assisting Tel Aviv in delivering consular services to clients who are unable to exit Palestinian territory.**

GMD Action and Time Frame

3.1.3 **There are two concerns with the MCO in Ramallah taking on a formal role in providing consular services to Canadians unable to exit Palestinian territory. Firstly, the MCO in Ramallah will shortly be taking on new administrative duties, limiting the scope for other activities. Secondly, there are legal issues with having the MCO take a more active consular role. A priority is to have the MCO take on the full administrative load for Ramallah, where the Office is currently operating on a micro mission SIGNET platform. Due to**

existing poor communications, which will be upgraded during the upcoming Chancery renovation, the Mission cannot currently take on IMS and has difficulty in accessing other administration software such as PRIME and Peoplesoft. Following the renovation, the MCO will have to take on more administration responsibilities. Only after all administration duties are successfully incorporated, would it be possible to recommend that the Office assume additional consular responsibilities. This would not be before the summer 2005.

A second issue pertains to the legal status of the Office in Ramallah. The Oslo Accords, under which the Office was established, restrict the ability of diplomatic missions on Palestinian territory to perform consular duties. It would be necessary to review the framework of how we provide consular services.

It is important to note as well that the existing cooperation between the Embassy in Tel Aviv and the Office in Ramallah is meeting current needs, with few cases of Canadians unable to exit Palestinian territories, and assistance provided in Palestinian territories as necessary and on a case-by-case basis. For this reason as well as the above considerations, we would recommend the continuation of the status quo, with the option of revisiting the question after 12 months.

Mission Comment

- 3.1.3** We think it would be useful to look at how Ramallah might play more of a role in assisting Tel Aviv in providing a range of services, including consular, immigration and visa.

ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The new MCO has identified several administrative issues requiring attention which are serving as her work plan for this fiscal year. The priorities identified in the plan appear reasonable.

4.1.2 Much has been accomplished since the MCO arrived at the Mission. Occupancy agreements and distribution accounts for staff quarters (SQs) have been completed; effort is underway to recover the VAT (Value-added tax) from Palestinian authorities; Administration staff have had their appraisals completed; staff are now submitting attendance forms on time; landlords have been met as have administrative counterparts from like-minded missions; a Driver position has been re-classified; two contractors have been converted to term positions; an armoured vehicle has been decommissioned; and the MCO's SQ has been refitted.

4.2 Human Resources (HR)

4.2.1 There are HR issues that need attention. Some of these issues have been identified in the MCO's work plan for this fiscal year.

4.2.2 Hiring practices at this Mission are somewhat irregular. Competitions were not held for the staffing of two Program Assistant positions and the new term Driver position. The incumbent in the LE-05 CIDA Program Assistant position is the former Receptionist. *** The incumbent in the term Driver position reports to her spouse, the MSG, who is the vehicle dispatcher. *** It is important that, when the term positions are staffed, competitions be held. It is suggested that the dispatcher duties be assigned to someone other than the MSG. The Receptionist may be a candidate for this role.

4.2.3 Employees taken on strength are routinely paid above the minimum step in the salary band. *** The LES Services Division (HLD) has indicated it will follow up this issue with the Mission. *** Only under exceptional circumstances should these employees be paid above the initial step 1 in the salary band. Given there is little problem in attracting suitable candidates, justification for hiring above the minimum salary is not evident.

4.2.4 The Mission is using the same pay scale as Tel Aviv although salaries are said to be lower in the West Bank. The Mission is also using the same LES Handbook as Tel Aviv. As there are issues peculiar to Ramallah, and given that the Mission now has its own MCO, a separate Handbook and scale should be considered for Ramallah. LES classification authority is not yet exercised by Ramallah as the MCO has not taken the classification course. Classification actions must be referred to Tel Aviv for decision.

4.2.5 Appraisals have not been a priority of this Mission and most LES until recently have never had one completed. The MCO, since her arrival, has completed appraisals for staff in Administration. Currently three LES appraisals remain outstanding - two in the CIDA Program and one in the Political Program. It is important that individuals know the basis upon which their performance is to be assessed and that appraisals take place annually. It also provides an opportunity to evaluate training needs and identify professional development. The Mission has identified a requirement for the Receptionist to receive French language training. This should be a priority. No annual increments have been denied because of performance. This is a highly knowledgeable and competent group of employees.

4.2.6 LES leave and attendance is now closely monitored but this has not always been the case. *** Some LES are showing little or no recorded leave taken last fiscal year. *** This needs to be adjusted.

4.2.7 Job descriptions generally reflect the duties being carried out. In the case of the two LE-09 positions, however, there is a need to review the position descriptions given the lack of coincidence with current duties.

4.2.8 Overtime at the Mission is high. Significant overtime and accumulated leave was accrued last fiscal year, some of which was cashed out at year-end and some charged to this year's budget. It is important that Program Managers insist that employees take their annual leave throughout the year. Overtime should be approved in advance. Most overtime is incurred by the drivers and the two LE-09 incumbents. There is a need for a driving policy for visitors to be established. Most delegations arrive at the airport early in the morning or on weekends. Visitors should be asked to take a taxi if going to Jerusalem or, if going to the West Bank, should be charged for transportation. Saturday and Sundays are working days for many of the interlocutors in Ramallah and meetings, press conferences and work shops are often scheduled at these times. A proposal to shift the work week from Sunday to Thursday to avoid some overtime as is done in many Arab countries was not met with much enthusiasm by Mission management.

4.2.9 Health insurance is an issue for the LES. Health insurance currently applies to only four LES who hold an Israeli ID. Coverage is limited to Israel only and does not apply to the West Bank or Gaza. LES with West Bank ID do not have any medical coverage and must pay out-of-pocket. Previous medical coverage was with a Palestinian company but it was ineffective and was cancelled by the carrier in October 2002. A company in the West Bank has been identified as a potential insurer and the MCO is planning on discussing coverage with this firm. This is an issue that is sensitive to the LES for which priority should be given. HLD is currently working with the Mission in the analysis of data received from markers in order to determine if any appropriate marker comparable health coverage exists in Ramallah.

Recommendations for the Mission

- 4.2.10** Competitions should be held for the staffing of all positions and files should be maintained demonstrating clearly the justification for the employee selection.
- 4.2.11** New employees should be hired at the first step of the salary band unless there are exceptional circumstances justifying hiring at additional steps.
- 4.2.12** The need for a separate LES handbook and pay scale for Ramallah should be explored with HLD and, if justified, be developed and formalized.
- 4.2.13** Performance appraisals and position descriptions should be brought up to date.
- 4.2.14** Employees should be strongly encouraged to take annual leave ***.
- 4.2.15** A visitor policy should be established to identify occasions under which official vehicles are to be used and visitors charged for services received.
- 4.2.16** The Mission should assess if there are benefits to be gained by moving to a Sunday to Thursday work week in line with many other missions in the region.
- 4.2.17** The provision of health insurance for the LES in the West Bank should be given priority by the Mission, markers should be consulted and information gathered and sent to HLD for evaluation and recommendation.

Mission Actions and Time Frames

- 4.2.10** Implemented.
- 4.2.11** Agreed and will implement.
- 4.2.12** It was agreed in 2002 with the Department that Ramallah should use the UN's salary data. In May of that year on the basis of the UN data it was discovered that Ramallah's staff would have been paid on average some 6 percent more than staff in Tel Aviv. It was therefore agreed the two missions should have the same pay scale as an interim measure and that in future salaries for both posts should be

determined using UN data. The UNDP has been contracted to do a salary survey this year. We agree that a separate local staff handbook should be prepared for Ramallah and will work on this with HLD as priorities permit.

4.2.13 Agreed and will implement.

4.2.14 * Program managers have been reminded of the need to encourage their staff to take leave.**

4.2.15 A new policy with regard to recovery of Driver overtime has been implemented for both visitors and CBS.

4.2.16 Many LES are resistant to this measure. It was also agreed that Ramallah should be in line with Tel Aviv and other local missions on the work week. The CMM decided not to implement this recommendation at this time. But we agree that it is a measure that should be periodically reviewed given the soundness of the concept.

4.2.17 Documentation regarding medical coverage has been forwarded to HQ for evaluation and recommendation.

4.3 Physical Resources

4.3.1 The Mission has six Crown-leased SQs all located in the Palestinian neighbourhoods of Beit Hanina and Shuafat in East Jerusalem. These SQs are located about 20 kms from Ramallah. In addition to the Chancery, the Mission pays \$12,000 US annually for the rental of an office in Gaza which is shared with *** others. There has been infrequent use of this office by Mission staff over the past year. *** If their search is unsuccessful, the Mission has indicated that it will likely terminate the current arrangements and lease space on an as required basis.

4.3.2 There is currently no Housing Committee at this Mission and responsibility for housing selections fall to Administration. A spouse of one of the officers sometimes assists in finding accommodation. Recommendations are approved by the HOM. A visit to all SQs found them to be spacious and in line with departmental standards.

4.3.3 One officer was unsatisfied with his SQ because of its location and insisted on moving. The new apartment is within a block of the old SQ. This move cost US \$3,400 and the rent on the new SQ is an additional US \$500 per month. The vacated SQ is now occupied by another officer who is totally satisfied with the accommodation. There appears little justification for this move.

4.3.4 One SQ lease expired November 1, 2003 but is still occupied. There are continual problems with the landlord. There have been maintenance issues with this SQ and it is suggested the Mission continue on a month-to-month arrangement with this landlord until the occupant departs the Mission this summer.

4.3.5 It is suggested that a Housing Committee be established with members from each of the programs at the Mission. A spouse of one of the officers could also serve on this Committee. This will deflect pressure off Administration to recommend suitable housing to the HOM.

Recommendation for the Mission

4.3.6 A Housing Committee should be established with specific terms of reference to advise on the allocation of staff quarters and to make recommendations to the HOM on new accommodation.

Mission Action and Time Frame

4.3.6 Agreed. The Housing Committee will review accommodation being acquired for new arrivals this summer.

Official Vehicles

4.3.7 The Mission currently has a complement of seven official vehicles, four of which are armoured. CBS and some LES are driven to work in the armoured vehicles. Maintenance has been troublesome and the Mission is looking at alternatives. All drivers have had in-Canada training. Vehicle logs, while updated, are being maintained in the various sections. These logs need to be maintained by Administration and reviewed collectively each month.

Recommendation for the Mission

4.3.8 Logs for all vehicles should be maintained by staff in the Administration Section.

Mission Action and Time Frame

4.3.8 The logs for the Mission vehicles are maintained by the Administration Section. The CIDA/PSU vehicles (one armoured and one soft-skin) logs will continue to be maintained by that Section as these two vehicles do not form part of the Mission fleet. Currently, the Mission has only four vehicles as one armoured vehicle has been transferred to Riyadh.

4.4 Financial Management

4.4.1 The Mission is financed through the Tel Aviv Mission bank account. Small expenditures are paid from a petty cash fund. Ramallah does not require its own separate bank account. The Mission has IMS ‘read-only’ access but because of the difficulties with the micro-mission platform is unable to use it.

4.4.2 The Office Manager handles accounting duties effectively. The Mission, with a reference level of \$1,600,086, does not have a budget or spending ceilings. It is important, given the materiality, that a budget be established in close consultation with management. Results of the mid-year review, which were discussed at the CMM, indicate that the Mission is on target for the totality of its reference level. Financial reports need to be prepared and circulated monthly to management and discussed quarterly at a CMM. The MCO has had no IMS or budget training.

4.4.3 Financial procedures can be made more efficient by eliminating the forwarding of financial documentation (80 invoices per month) to Tel Aviv where the information is inputted into IMS and used for paying vendors. Currently, Ramallah exercises accountability for its Mission expenditures by signing the Document Input form under Sections 34 and 33 of the Financial Administration Act. Given this, there is no requirement for Tel Aviv to have the back-up documentation to process payments. By eliminating this step, Ramallah will not be required to photocopy its invoices and drivers will be able to reduce the travel between both missions. Moreover, the Mission will no longer have to request original documentation from Tel Aviv when requesting its VAT refunds from the Palestinian authorities. The Document Input form can be faxed weekly to Tel Aviv for processing. Tel Aviv will need to provide Ramallah with a listing of its payments at month-end for the MCO in Ramallah to approve. This listing will be used in the Tel Aviv reconciliation process.

4.4.4 The Mission submitted three months of accounting records to SIV. A full audit was not possible as Ramallah’s accounts are maintained in Tel Aviv and filed together as one set of general accounts from both missions. Under this arrangement, it is not possible for Ramallah to review its own accounts. Accounting records maintained in Ramallah consist of copies of some invoices and the Document Input Forms. It is suggested Ramallah maintain its original documentation for monthly review of its full accounting records by management.

Recommendations for the Mission

4.4.5 The Mission should establish a budget with ceilings for each expenditure item and financial reports should be prepared monthly for management and discussed quarterly at the CMM.

4.4.6 Given that accountability rests with the Mission for its spending and payment activities, original documentation should be retained in

Ramallah and Tel Aviv should process payments based on Document Input forms received from Ramallah.

- 4.4.7 The MCO should receive training on IMS and budgeting when there is an appropriate time.**

Mission Actions and Time Frames

- 4.4.5 Agreed and will implement.**

- 4.4.6 Agreed to by Tel Aviv and implemented.**

- 4.4.7 “Read-only” distance training has now been completed by the MCO.**

4.5 Information Technology

4.5.1 Mission users experience long delays in accessing emails and opening attachments. Applications such as IMS are not used due to excessive delays in retrieving information, or the common occurrence of freezing workstations. The Mission has a number of stand alone workstations for the purposes of researching the internet as the SIGNET browser is excessively slow. Given the local security situation, it is important that the Mission be provided with satisfactory communications tools.

4.5.2 In response to a high number of Mission closures in 2002 owing to the local security situation, the Mission took the decision to pay for internet connections for all CBS and the two LEPs. Given the situation has changed, this practice needs to be discontinued immediately as per departmental policy.

4.5.3 The Mission currently provides all staff with two cell phones to provide coverage in Palestine and Israel. Bills are itemised and circulated to staff to identify and pay for personal calls. The honour system is not working, as little or no money is collected. The MCO is investigating service providers who can provide full coverage in both regions.

Recommendation for SXD

- 4.5.4 The planned upgrade to the small mission platform for Ramallah should be undertaken as soon as possible.**

SXD Action and Time Frame

- 4.5.4 The upgrade to the mission platform is currently scheduled for December of 2004. Implementations are scheduled by regions in order to minimize implementation costs. It must be pointed out that**

the platform upgrade will not necessarily address some of the symptoms outlined in 4.5.1 such as slow access to IMS or internet. That is basically a function of the limited telecommunications bandwidth to the Mission. We are currently negotiating a new telecommunication contract for MITNET which we are confident will allow us to increase bandwidth in many missions.

Recommendation for the Mission

- 4.5.5 The practice of providing internet at the home of CBS and LES needs to be discontinued.**

Mission Action and Time Frame

- 4.5.5 It has been agreed at the CMM that security conditions dictate that staff must have the capacity to work from home. Accordingly, effective 01 April 2004, all CBS and LES with home internet will be billed quarterly for one-half the costs. The HOM has his own broadband connection which he pays for himself as he would have that connection whether needed for work purposes or not. But he has found over the past two years that such a connection is essential for checking email received over the departmental system outside normal working hours and on days when travel in the area has precluded coming into the Office.**