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The Secretary of State presents his compliments to Their Excellencies and Messieurs and Mesdames the Chiefs of Mission and has the honor to update the policies for the use of chancery and consular premises for social events. This note supersedes the Department's circular diplomatic note dated May 15, 2002.

In accordance with Article 41(3) of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and Article 55(2) of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, mission or consular premises must not be used in any manner incompatible with mission or consular functions. The Department has interpreted this provision to mean that mission or consular premises, including the Chief of Mission residence, may not be leased or rented for social events or used for functions that are not related to the conduct of diplomatic or consular purposes.

If a mission wishes to use all or a portion of its property that is incompatible with its existing status as a diplomatic or consular facility, the mission must first request approval from the Department's Office of Foreign Missions (OFM) for the proposed change of use. The consequence of such approvals will be the loss of both inviolability and any existing authorizations for an exemption of real estate taxes for the relevant portion of the property being or intended to be used for

commercial activities, such as hosting wedding receptions or other private functions for a fee.

The Department recognizes, however, that the use of chancery or consular premises for social events organized in support of charitable causes is well-established and furthers the promotion of friendly relations between states. The decision whether to host such events is entirely within the discretion of the Chief of Mission. Any fees charged in connection with these events should be limited to the cost incurred by the mission as host and not intended to make a profit.

Inquiries regarding this matter may be directed to OFM at 202-895-3500, option 5, or to OFMProperty@state.gov.

Department of State,

Washington, February 12, 2015.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'CEJ', is located in the bottom right corner of the page.