

FIRST PROGRESS REPORT -- October 31, 1983

A. Settlement Section:

My family and I arrived in Yaoundé, Cameroon, on August 25th and were warmly received by USAID official, Mr. Ray Martin and his family. As the C.U.S.S. flat had not been prepared in expectation of our arrival, we were kindly offered temporary shelter in a USAID flat usually reserved for TDY personnel from Washington. In fact, I am most appreciative to USAID-Yaoundé officials for easing our transition here in many ways even though by the nature of my contract my family and I were not entitled to such supportive services.

While staying at the USAID flat, I spent a good amount of time, effort and funds to get the C.U.S.S. flat sufficiently secure for our occupation as well as for the storage of some vital reagents. These measures were done on the advice of Professor Jacob Ngu. I moved into the C.U.S.S. flat on October 6th and by October 15 felt we were comfortably settled.

The financial record of this transitional period has been forwarded to the grant administrator, Tropical Medicine Center, The Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health.

B. Scientific Section:

While preparations were being made for our permanent settlement in the C.U.S.S. flat, I was unable to conduct any experiments in the lab since my reagents and equipment had not yet arrived. I used the time between August 26th and October 24th to prepare the groundwork for the research programme, as follows:

1. October 8: a two-hour meeting with Professor Jacob Ngu to discuss the objectives, structure and requirements of the study. Agreements were reached on the following:

- a) The professor would draw up a fitting questionnaire for the classification of onchocerciasis patients in the endemic village of Batchenga. The work was completed and typed by October 18 (copy attached).
- b) Dr. Boto was to prepare a condensed summary of the goal(s) and line of research he wants to follow in the lab for the next 1.5 years. This was completed and typed by Oct. 17th. It was essentially an abstract from the original grant.

2. October 20th: in a 1/2 hr meeting, Professor Ngu informed me that he has recruited one clinical specialist, Dr. Youmbissi, (whom I have met) to train and supervise two final year medical students who will conduct nodulectomy for us and develop their theses in the immunology of onchocerciasis. Our team will make a trial run in a visit to Batchenga (endemic village) on November 2, 1983.

3. Laboratory space: a large laboratory space has been reserved for my work. With the assistance of my colleagues, Drs. Titanji, Asonganyi and Lando, I emptied and cleaned a number of drawers and shelves to accomodate my reagents. Since I have to share the space with Dr. Lando. I believe that the lab will be unable to accomodate the extra reagents and apparatus I have. I have been given access to another large, unoccupied laboratory on the first floor of C.U.S.S. building (I am currently on the second floor) for storage. I expect to place heavy equipment including a refrigerator and paper cutter in that lab. There are very light and vital extra reagents which I will have to keep in my flat as a precautionary security measure, based on local advice.

4. Arrival of reagents and apparatus:

A. The first shipments (dangerous chemicals) arrived directly from Aldrich Chemical Company, U.S.A. Five boxes arrived as the shipment record (bill of lading) indicated, but none of them contained diaminobenzidine or dibasic sodium phosphate as recorded on the bill. I believe they were not packed from the company. I can replace the sodium salt but not the diaminobenzidine. Could I please request Dr. Alan Scot to track these two reagents to ensure they reach me immediately? (Record of shipment attached). In the same effort, could he please order the following to be air-freighted to me

i. directly from New England Nuclear

- a) ³H-methyl thymidine, approximately 5 mCi in saline or any aqueous suspension.
- b) ³⁵S-methionine -- highest possible specific activity, about 2-5 mCi.

ii. from JHU: (these may come with Dr. Levy, at room temp.)

a) Bio RAD (for Dr. Lando)

1. Econo columns:

<u>catalog number</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
737-2220	10
737-3204	6

2. anti-C₃ antibody (Does it exist?)
- b) PH meter ACCUFET MODEL 230A PH/ION METER.
Please buy us 4 spare electrodes (plunger)
Cat. no. 13-639-90.
- c) two vials of active trypsin.
- d) two vials of proteinase-K (Worthington or Sigma)
- e) CM-52

B. Refrigerated reagents arrived on October 18th. They spent 4 days at Yaoundé Airport because someone at C.U.S.S. failed to realize the urgency of a note he was asked to deliver to Professor Ngu's lab. Upon opening the shipments, however, we found it still at about 8°C!! All was presumably fine inside the package. The following did not arrive: Ficoll-Hypaque, fetal calf serum and Concanavalin A in the refrigerator on Dr. Rao's door. (John knows exactly where.)

C. 8 cartons from the JHU arrived at Yaoundé Airport. We collected them on October 26th. I am pleased to state that most of the vital reagents and equipment arrived intact, including very delicate glassware. As of this writing, virtually all that arrived are in their proper place in the laboratory.

5. October 28th: visit by Professor Victor Ngu, formerly the Vice-chancellor of C.U.S.S. and now the Director of DGREST. He addressed the laboratory of Prof. Jacob Ngu for 1 hr. From what I heard before his arrival in the lab, as the Director of DGREST, he holds a ministerial position responsible for plotting the course of development in medical and basic sciences for Cameroon. In brief, he appealed for the development of reliable diagnostic tests for the 3 major ills of Cameroon: trypanosomiasis, schistosomiasis and onchocerciasis. The tone was very encouraging for local innovations in this area which he said the government had considerable interest in and expected research laboratories at C.U.S.S. to come up with some solutions. As if to emphasize this point, he offered his laboratory at C.U.S.S. for our group to expand into.

6. Other commitments: I arrived two months before the current final year medical students took their final exams or had their thesis defence. Some of them had developed their dissertations in the immunology of filariases. I was invited to be on the examining panel as an external examiner. This meant covering the subject matter as presented in the theses and textbooks as well as in recent publications.

Encl.

Respectfully submitted,

William Boto, Ph.D.