

UNION POSTALE

June 2008

Moving the postal sector forward

2



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of the United Nations

World Postal Strategy
All for one,
one for all



IPS

International Postal System

The Complete management system of your international mail

For the past twelve years, the Postal Technology Centre of the UPU has been working together with several postal operators around the world in order to develop the International Postal System (IPS).

What IPS does is integrate international mail management applications that combine mail processing, operational management and EDI messaging into one application.

IPS provides a means for postal operators to have an **accurate and comprehensive view of their mail movement** covering every point between origin and destination, including transit offices of exchange, international carriers, and handling through Customs.

The purpose of IPS is to **help Posts to improve and manage the quality of their international mail service** through a comprehensive measurement of the mail delivery cycle and end-to-end monitoring of items, receptacles and dispatches.

International Postal Services, now in use by over 120 postal organizations, came about because of the cooperation and sharing of knowledge between administrations under the umbrella of the Telematics Cooperative. Developed by the PTC, it is complete software is capable of managing the entire mail process. IPS can be manipulated in order to adapt to the needs of any organization and can be easily interfaced with other applications.

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Illustrator Ray Hegelbach shows postal workers handling mail off conveyor belts shaped like the human being's DNA structure to evoke the well-coordinated actions UPU member countries will need to carry out to successfully achieve the objectives of the next World Postal Strategy.

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Decent work – Doing the write thing

The UPU has just launched its 38th annual international letter-writing competition. Youngsters aged up to 15 are being invited to write a letter explaining how decent working conditions can lead to a better life.

This theme was chosen in conjunction with the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is getting involved in the contest for the first time ever. The aim is to throw the spotlight on the ILO's massive worldwide campaign on decent work, in which the UPU is also invited as a pilot UN agency.

According to the ILO, decent work means an end to child labour and forced labour, the elimination of gender inequality, and a safer working environment for all. It also means

promoting an environment in which people are able to work in dignity, earn enough to feed their family, educate their children and make provision for retirement.

UPU member countries are invited to participate in the 2009 letter-writing competition, which each year sees over six million young people writing letters in the hope of being selected by the UNESCO jury as the world's top letter-writer.

To explain the concept of decent work, the ILO provides a brief Flash presentation (available in 25 languages) on its website (www.ilo.org/public/english/dw/).

More information on the 38th international letter-writing competition is available at www.upu.int. **RL**

DECENT WORK

A better world starts here.

www.ilo.org/decentwork



Exhibition shows how to send it like Beckham



Football fever struck the UPU during Euro 2008, the European soccer championships hosted by Switzerland and Austria from 7 to 29 June. The UPU staged a stamp exhibition entitled "Stamps score a goal" in its official birthplace, the former Swiss Diet building (now the Restaurant zum Äusseren Stand), where the organization was founded back in 1874. Two thousand football-themed stamps from all over the world were on show. Over the years, almost 7,000 postage stamps

devoted to the sport have been issued. The exhibition showcased several rare thematic collections, along with the stamps issued for Euro 2008. There was also a "round-up" of the numerous circular stamps issued by UPU member countries over the years, along with a collection devoted to successive World Cup tournaments. Berne, the UPU's home city, played host to three first-round matches during Euro 2008.

LW

The figure

150 000 000 000

Editor's note

A strong sense of community

UPU member countries will adopt a new world postal strategy at the 24th Universal Postal Congress, which is being held in Geneva from 23 July to 12 August. Will this new strategic plan inject the postal sector with the dynamism it needs to evolve rapidly, remain relevant in a fast-changing world, and continue fulfilling its role as a driver of the economy?

There is no shortage of challenges facing the postal sector: the challenge of meeting the delivery needs of private and business customers, who are increasingly turning to e-commerce; the challenge of providing migrant workers with

more accessible, reliable and secure money transfer services; the challenge of providing customers with the high quality of service they have come to expect... to meet all these challenges, governments will need to embrace this strategy – and ensure that no weak link is allowed to undermine the world postal network's efficiency as a whole. For some countries, this will mean reforming their postal sector; others will be called upon to raise their game in terms of quality of service; others still will need to invest in new technologies to remain competitive and efficient.

As the president of the South Korean Post points out in this edition's interview, improving world postal services calls for a strong sense of community, since improvements made at the domestic level will have repercussions at the international level as well. If the four objectives set by the strategy for 2009 to 2012 are properly implemented, the position of the postal services, as a significant element of social and economic infrastructure, will be strengthened.

Isn't that a challenge worth pursuing?

Rhéal LeBlanc, editor-in-chief

Focus on modernization and reform

In a joint declaration signed on 23 May 2008 in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic), 22 countries and territories, together with the UPU and the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal (PUASP), pledged to further modernize and reform the postal sector, particularly in the Latin America region. The signatories had gathered for a regional conference of government authorities responsible for the postal sector.

Latin America's highly fragmented postal sector contains large numbers of private enterprises vying

for business with the public operators. With UPU assistance, postal reform has already been launched in about 10 countries. But others have yet to go down this road, with the UPU drawing up an integrated postal reform and development plan (IPDP) as a first stage.

These national plans, which mark a move away from the old approach based solely on restructuring of the public postal operator, cover the entire postal sector, its regulatory and legal framework, and the universal postal service.

The Santo Domingo Declaration

aims to make governments more aware of the need to modernize their countries' designated operators and provide appropriate resources for their development. It also restates the importance of continually improving quality of service and increasing the sector's role in the development of international trade.

The UPU and PUASP will also continue to support countries in their efforts to secure funding, and will urge their members to release the funds needed to implement their own strategies. **LW**

That's the sum, in euros, the French Post spent on vehicle and aircraft fuel in 2007. With their fleet of 60,000 motor vehicles, 30,000 bicycles and three TGV high-speed trains, La Poste's delivery staff are estimated to travel the equivalent of 50 times round

the globe each day. In an effort to slash this bill, but also green up the business, La Poste is looking to purchase more eco-friendly vehicles and train its 60,000 staff in "green driving" – in other words, smooth driving with a minimum of gear changes. The operator

hopes this change in driving habits alone will cut fuel consumption by 8% per year... one way of dealing with rising fuel costs, as well as helping the postal sector to clean up its act. **LW**

General debate attracts high-level participants

International decision-makers will participate in a high-level debate on 25 July 2008, focusing on the theme "The postal sector – an essential component of the global economy".

Three panel discussions – on how postal services can work effectively in an era of globalization, the challenges and the new frontiers for the postal sector in an ever-changing world, and partnerships for the global supply chain – will be held during the day.

In addition to several chief executives representing Posts from industrialized and developing countries, confirmed participants include Pascal Lamy, director general of the World

Trade Organization, Achim Steiner, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Giovanni Bisignani, director general and CEO of the International Air Transport Association, Lenin Moreno, Ecuador's vice-president, Hiroya Masuda, Japanese minister of internal affairs and communications, Jean Ping, president of the African Union Commission, and Nick Stahey-eff, CEO of eBay International.

"The general debate will be one of the highlights of Congress, and of particular strategic importance for the entire postal community. Indeed, it represents an opportunity for UPU members as well as postal stakeholders the world over to exchange

insights on the postal sector's future. The debate aims to confirm the sector's appropriate positioning in view of the world's economic reality, the new issues affecting the sector, and the UPU's next four-year strategy," said UPU Director General Edouard Dayan. **RL**

Kenya to chair the 24th Universal Postal Congress



Ambassador Bishar A. Hussein, chairman designate of the 24th UPU Congress.

Kenya will chair the 24th Universal Postal Congress in Geneva from 23 July to 12 August 2008, as well as the UPU's Council of Administration (CA) for 2009 – 2012.

Ambassador Bishar A. Hussein, a former postmaster general of Kenya Post, who was, until recently, Kenya's representative to the United Arab Emirates, has been designated chairman of the Congress.

When the CA decided in February to hold the 24th Congress in Geneva instead of Nairobi, it also passed a resolution inviting Kenya to chair the Congress and the next CA. Kenya has now formally accepted these invitations.

"The Congress presents a unique opportunity to leaders, policy makers, regulators, operators and other key stakeholders, such as customers' organizations, to reposition the Post and make it more competitive in the rapidly changing environment," said

Ambassador Hussein, who also expressed his pleasure at rejoining the international postal fraternity.

In the coming four-year cycle, Kenya will also chair the CA, the UPU body that fixes the UPU budget, supervises the work of the Union and sets its strategic course between Congresses.

Samuel Poghiso, Kenya's minister for Information and Communications, thanked the UPU for giving his country these opportunities, which honoured the entire African continent, he said.

"Kenya will endeavour to ensure that information and communication technologies are optimized to eradicate the bottlenecks in the advancement of the global postal networks. This is a key element as the UPU and other relevant authorities strive to implement the next world postal strategy," said the minister. **RL**

New book on postal economics

Will postal services constitute "the" infrastructure of the 21st century? It's a question the UPU is asking in a new book on postal economics and development published just in time for the 24th Universal Postal Congress.

Prepared by economists Joëlle Toledano, chair of the UPU's postal economics group and a member of the French Electronic Communications and Postal Regulation Authority, and José Anson of the International Bureau, the book's five chapters broaden the terms of an economic debate previously focused overwhelmingly on the Posts of industrialized countries. The book also provides a global overview of the factors driving the growth of postal markets, and some possible positive developments in the future.

The starting point for this book, written over four years, was the observation that there was a distinct lack of rigorous analysis on how postal systems function in developing countries. The authors therefore carried out research in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia. "There is no 'one model fits all' postal development solution," explains Toledano. "Just because a Post operates successfully according

to a certain economic model in an industrialized country, this doesn't mean it should operate in the same way in a developing country. This is equally true for competition conditions, or the organization of deliveries, or the institutional set-up."

The book also highlights several opportunities that could not only help promote the sector's viable economic development, but also respond to the integration needs of economic players lacking access to basic services, such as financial services for citizens excluded from the commercial banking system, or export services for micro-enterprises and other small businesses. In this area, Brazil provides a particularly interesting model.

In conclusion, the book discusses the three institutional elements of liberalization, privatization and regulation in the context of other network industries found in the developing countries.

This book is available from the International Bureau (35 CHF for member countries; 50 CHF for others). Write to publications@upu.int to order your copy, or complete the online form in the Publications section of www.upu.int. **RL**

Ready for Congress

At print time, almost 1,800 participants had already registered for the 24th Universal Postal Congress, and 161 member countries were sending representatives. These numbers should still increase before 23 July, the day the Congress opens in Geneva. Furthermore, the International Bureau received 560 proposals from member countries. Congress will study 330 proposals of a general nature or aimed at modifying the UPU Acts. The next Postal Operations Council will look at the others when it holds its first session following Congress, in October, at UPU headquarters in Berne. These proposals will modify international rules concerning letter post, postal parcels and postal payment services. **RL**

All for one, one for all

One vision, one mission and four objectives, associated with three areas of development, aimed at strengthening the physical, financial and electronic dimensions of the world postal network... these are the ingredients of the new World Postal Strategy that will be presented to the 24th Universal Postal Congress.

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By
Rhéal LeBlanc
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Illustration:
Ray Hegelbach

At the end of the current four-year period, during which meetings, conferences and round tables have enabled all postal sector stakeholders to fine-tune the roadmap for the next four years, the foundations have been laid for modernizing and stimulating the development of postal services worldwide, and for taking up the numerous challenges facing a postal sector marked by globalization, liberalization of markets, stiff competition, penetration of new technologies, differing levels of resources and regional and national inequalities.

While the Bucharest World Postal Strategy (BWPS) consisted of five objectives, the Nairobi Postal Strategy (the name has been retained despite the decision to switch the 2008 Congress from Nairobi to Geneva) comprises only four. Does this mean that the new strategy is less ambitious? No: not only do its objectives cover what was provided for in the BWPS, but they are more detailed and better focused on 18 programmes based on the three main areas identified at the 2006 Strategy Conference in Dubai: the interoperability of postal networks, development and governance. Moreover, the implementation will be through a regional approach based on



well-defined indicators, which will allow achievements and shortcomings to be monitored.

Says Jean-Luc Dutordoit, chairman of the Nairobi strategy team, which reports to the strategic planning group: "The strategy is sufficiently flexible to be implemented in each region of the world, in line with geographical, economic and social conditions. The end goal is the same for all, but the implementation of the strategy may vary, depending on individual situations. The universal service in Belgium, in Russia or in Mali, for example, are hardly one and the same thing."

Does the strategy contain too much or too little detail? "Opinions are divided, but the choices that have been made are comprehensive enough to accommodate all points of view. We have adopted a win-win approach. Nobody should emerge from the process feeling that they have been given a raw deal. The aim is to steer all parties in the right direction, aware of their various limitations, but without forcing their hand."

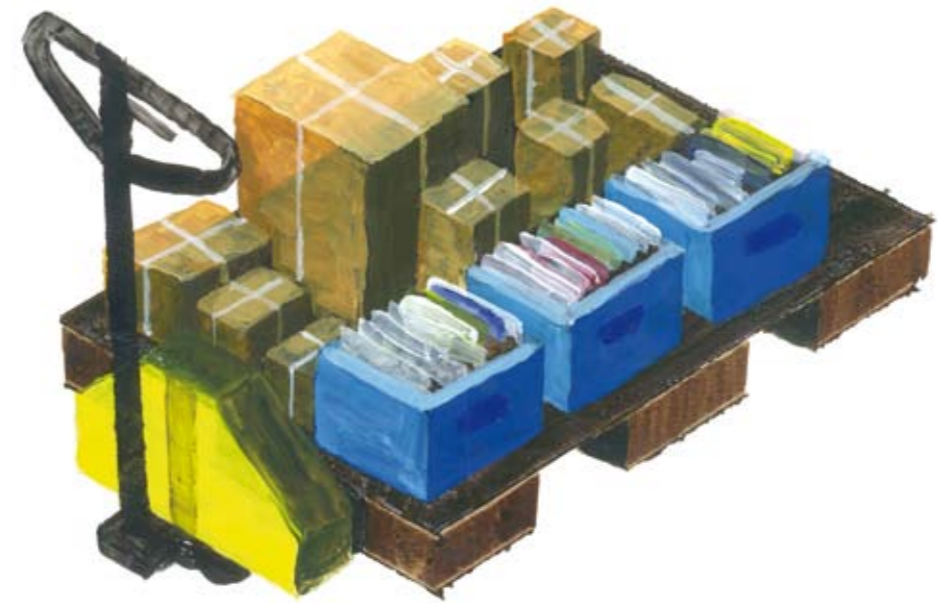
In addition to improving the interoperability, quality and efficiency of the world postal network; stimulating a universal postal service adapted to the social, economic and technological environment; promoting sustainable development of the postal sector and its economy; and fostering the growth of the postal market(s) and services, the strategy's overarching aim is clear: to have the postal sector recognized as an essential component of the global economy.

"The decision-makers must be made aware of the vital importance of the Post," says Pascal Clivaz, director of finance and strategic planning at the International Bureau. "The Post is important to a country's economy, not only as a means of communication and transport, but as a means of transferring money and of providing many other services. It also contributes to social cohesion through the provision of services such as pension payments in rural areas. Many people and businesses would simply be unable to function without the Post."

This theme will also be central to the general debate, which will set the tone for the 24th Universal Postal Congress on 25 July 2008.

Regional approach

Extensively consulted in the preparation of the current strategy, the UPU's 17 restricted unions will be called on to play a key role in its implementation, in accordance with the regional approach recommended by the UPU since 2005. This approach, aimed at strengthening the world postal network, has already borne fruit: some sixty postal reform projects are in progress (see article on page 16), over 130 member countries participate in the continuous testing of service quality, and the number of countries participating in the electronic postal payments network has doubled in the last few years. Moreover, at each of the regional round tables held in 2007 to allow all postal stakeholders to give their views on the draft strategy, the regional approach was emphasized as a key factor for success.



While contributing to the implementation of the world strategy, the regions must be able to decide on their own priorities. Certain countries give first priority to quality of service, whereas others place postal reform or the development of financial services at the top of their agenda.

Breaking away from zero nominal growth

There remains the question of financing. As UPU Director General Edouard Dayan has pointed out on numerous occasions, the principle of zero nominal growth, under which the organization has had to operate with the same budget since 1997, remains a major hurdle. Given the number of challenges and the ambitious nature of the projects, more resources are needed to ensure that the strategy is implemented successfully.

At the first round table, held in Martinique in September 2007, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados expressed their concerns about the zero nominal growth constraint, as did France. According to some, the organization's ability to function without increasing its financial resources, which was first seen as a sign of strength, has

become its Achilles' heel. In an effort to reverse this situation, proposals will be presented to Congress to allow member countries that so wish to increase their contribution to the Union's budget without impacting on other members' contributions. It will also be proposed that the UPU be given greater flexibility to finance projects through the private sector, while ensuring that the organization remains strictly neutral.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), another United Nations specialized agency, recently abandoned the principle of zero nominal growth, which it had applied for a number of years. The UPU is now the only UN agency operating under this constraint, and its director general feels the UPU could go down the same road as UNESCO. But the Universal Postal Congress alone, which represents the will of its member countries, is empowered to take such a decision.

Addressing priorities

Standardizing the way postal items are addressed will help improve quality of service, the cornerstone of interconnection between networks.

By Jérôme Deutschmann

Of the 1,042 Filipino mail carriers who deliver mail to Manila's 12 million residents, one in particular, Floro Camote, stands out. His special talent is to make sure that the mail reaches its destination promptly by allocating street names and numbers to the homes in the shantytown that makes up his round. The situation is certainly not ideal, but by creating his own addressing system, this postman is improving the quality of his work.

Although four-figure postcodes have been around for over 20 years in the Philippines, the way they are used varies from one town to another. By 2010, the Philippine Postal Corporation expects to identify new delivery areas and allocate postcodes to them that reflect both the country's new geographical realities and UPU standards.

According to UPU data, some 60 countries worldwide have no postcodes, and over 100 have no addressing policy. Quality, a key factor in enabling better interconnection between networks, is currently one of the main drivers of postal sector development.

Reliability

But how can the quality of service be improved? Operators and customers alike often sum up the answer in two words: reliable addressing, which means being as precise as possible, and following UPU standards.

As a recent study conducted by the United States Postal Service (USPS) showed, missent items generate considerable costs. It found that, annually, 1.6 billion items are returned to sender, 2 billion are reforwarded, and 6 billion rejected. In other words, around 8 billion items fail to reach their destination. And the cost to USPS of reprocessing missent mail? 1.8 billion dollars a year.

So how can the confidence of the high-volume direct mailers, the public services that use express couriers and the customers who have turned to private operators be regained? The UPU recommends that regulators and operators raise governments' awareness of the need for effective addressing to strengthen their economy. With this in mind, Joe Lubenow, an addressing expert and member of PostCom, has announced plans for a world forum on addressing, to be held jointly by the Consultative Committee and other UPU partners. "All postal sector players must be aware of the economic impact of proper addressing," he points out.

Standardizing addresses

At present, high-volume mailers have no reliable means of collecting worldwide data on the unsuccessful delivery of their advertising matter. Feedback, when it exists, is slow to arrive. As WorldVu's Merry Law, who edits *The Guide to Worldwide Postal-Code and Address Formats*, explains, "For some countries, the mailer receives the returned item with some indication of the reason why it could not be delivered, whereas some countries charge for non-deliverable return service. There are no hard and fast rules. Each country has its own approach. I believe that providing direct mailers with a country by country guide to addressing specifics contributes to the UPU's work on standardization in this area."

The UPU wants to become the reference point for addressing. As such, the organization will promote



Standard addresses improve mail delivery, reduce processing costs and increase revenue through international trade.

addressing as a key factor for economic growth, particularly in the least developed countries. Its addressing unit advises operators, analyzes their needs and encourages governments to set up national and regional addressing projects. In short, it must show them that whole sections of the economy depend on efficient addressing.

The introduction of standardized addressing in the United Arab Emirates is a good example of successful cooperation at national level between various economic players. In a four-way partnership created to achieve door-to-door delivery and win new market shares, the government, municipalities, private businesses and Emirates Post agreed on a system for dividing up the country, identification maps of the different areas, a national postcode system, and a system for allocating street names and house numbers.

Public services need to contact residents. Dividing up the country and making detailed maps of urban areas enables communities to organize their services and collect taxes more effectively. Allocating a postcode to a post office or delivery point reduces the amount of handling, and therefore the cost of processing the mail. This lays the foundations for automated sorting. "Delivery quality is linked to the postcode system, because it often enables misreadings by optical character recognition systems to be corrected," says Essam Mohamed Al Saghir, who oversees automation at Emirates Post.

A competitive tertiary sector and quality of service also go hand in hand for Posta Uganda, which has made this an abiding principle. In order to attract customers, door-to-door delivery coverage must be extended. Incomplete addressing leads to random mail transmission, and adversely affects processing and delivery. The lack of computerized mapping and a reliable database for checking addresses has a direct effect on the growth of high-volume mailing activity. To improve the testing of traffic and delivery times, Posta Uganda, which delivers mainly via a network of private post office boxes, has decided to introduce postcodes. The Ugandan operator has formulated a project financed by the UPU Quality of Service Fund with the twofold objective of creating a postal database and an addressing system.

Project leaders analyzed the postal and geopolitical context, chose a coding system, and developed an addressing standard. The QSF is financing consultants' missions, the promotional campaign, the software for the database, miscellaneous computer equipment and postal staff training. The ambitious project aims to cover all towns with over 25,000 inhabitants, to increase door-to-door delivery from 3.2% to 35% and to reduce processing and transmission times for domestic mail to J+1 for 60% of items in the capital, and to J+3 for 90% of items in the rest of the country.

Standard S42

Missent mail has a direct impact on a country's economic activities, given the growing market share of e-commerce and mail order business in many developing countries. The UPU is currently promoting international addressing standards, such as standard S42 on address components and formats, one of its main preoccupations.

Ruth Jones, who chairs the S42 working group, points out the many advantages a standard address template offers. "There are several benefits, including faster, more accurate mail delivery, reduced processing costs and increased revenue through international trade. To date we've developed addressing templates for 13 countries and the list is growing quickly."

If all goes according to plan, there is every reason to believe that our Filipino mail carrier, Floro Camote, will one day be using international addressing standards when he delivers to the shantytown homes on his round.

Objective 2 – Stimulating a universal postal service adapted to the social, economic and technological environment

The right to communication



Syria Post's vision is to develop 12 areas to offer customers more products and services and make the post office a central part of the community.

Promoting the universal postal service remains at the heart of the UPU's mission to ensure citizens worldwide have access to essential communication services.

By Graeme Lee

While providing the universal postal service is a governmental obligation of every UPU member country, each can define it as it sees fit. As it stands, some 137 have defined the universal postal service, with formal definitions included in the national legislation in 64 % of countries, according to the most recent UPU study.

Much work obviously remains, and the issues are quite diverse from region to region. Where European countries are pondering how to finance universal postal service in a liberalized environment, developing ones, especially in Africa, are struggling with simply building the basic postal infrastructure or how to properly regulate a market teeming with non-licensed competitors impinging on the universal postal service provider.

Each country has to determine how to best offer the universal postal service. But some countries are realizing that focusing on a Post's competitive advantages can generate the ideal conditions to meet their obligation under the UPU international treaty.

Take Syria, for example, a country of close to 20 million inhabitants. With a network of 400 post offices reaching every corner of the country, Syria Post boasts a reach far in excess of any of its competitors. Despite this network advantage, it is estimated the public operator handles less than half of all domestic mail. Its major competitors are bus companies with no obligation to deliver universal

service. Should Syria Post's obligation to deliver universal service be considered a burden or a privilege?

Network viability

To answer this question, one has to know the true cost of delivering universal service and the compensation given to Syria Post though reserved and other services. A project funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) revealed that more than half of all post offices in the country were loss-making. In common with many other post office networks, it was found that the majority of rural post offices carried out relatively few transactions per day. A business with a purely commercial focus would choose to close offices making losses, but for a postal business with a universal service obligation, this is not an option.

How to make the whole network more viable then? Syria Post looked at how to boost revenues in profitable post offices, rather than raise the revenues of loss-making ones. By adopting the mantle "think like a customer, act like a competitor," the public operator understood it would gain far more from the competitive market than from the universal service element of the market. In turn, a strong and competitive Syria Post would be better positioned to deliver universal service throughout the country.

"Delivering universal service is one of our core objectives," says Ahmad Saad, Syria Post's director general. "To best achieve it, we must diversify our product range and compete in the most lucrative sectors of the postal market."

To better understand customers' needs, Syria Post carried out a market survey and reviewed competitor services. The survey of 500 businesses and 1,000 social customers identified speed as the most important factor in

choosing a mail supplier, and cost as the least important. Competitors rated highly in terms of speed, opening hours, innovation and customer care. Syria Post rated highly on network reach, post office locations, reliability and security. Such information was key to better understanding and meeting customers' needs.

Domestic competitors also proved to operate in the main centres only, while some smaller competitors operated only between the three major cities of Damascus, Aleppo and Latakia. Competitors opened until 10 p.m. or later (compared to only 4 p.m. in post offices), and generally provided same-day express services between major cities because of their bus networks. Customers, however, collected their item from the competitor's office.

Becoming more aggressive

"Syria Post needed to change from being a passive player in the market to being more aggressive," explains Modammed Zakarya, deputy general manager for postal services. "The market was leading its own development, with competitors following customers' needs. We were in danger of being left behind."

A four-stage plan was thus adopted based on the commercial strategy. The plan aims to improve operations and introduce sales and marketing (stage one), develop the products (stage two), provide an IT platform (stage three), and integrate products to provide customers with a one-stop shop (stage four), all by 2012.

The UNDP also funded the development of a commercial strategy for Syria Post. It focused on how Syria Post could better compete against its major competitors. This included developing better relationships with key customers through account management, reviewing opening hours in key locations, and improving transit speed new product areas to make better use of post office outlets.

It is key for the national postal sector that Syria Post leads the development of the market with new services and product innovation. This will lead to a healthier and more competitive market, providing customers with a wider range of services. This will benefit customers, competitors and, most importantly, guarantee the delivery of universal service throughout Syria.

Postal reform gives a boost

To modernize a postal sector in line with the changing market environment, governments must consider a global approach.

By
Laurent Widmer

The UPU's development cooperation cycle 2005–2008 is drawing to a close on a positive note. During this period, some 60 integrated postal reform and development plans (IPDPs) have been formulated.

Replacing an approach based solely on the restructuring of the public postal operator, these national plans now consider the whole regulatory and legal framework of the postal sector and take particular account of the universal postal service.

Each IPDP is launched at the request of the government authority responsible for the sector, which subsequently carries out the reform. As a first stage, the UPU forms a national team, made up of the supervisory ministry, the regulator, the operator and representatives of the ministries (e.g. planning and finance) involved in the reform process.

Says Rudy Cuadra, one of the initiators of the IPDP approach at the UPU: "The commitment of all stakeholders is crucial to the success of the approach. Moreover, the authorities must be committed to the reform, as they alone can guarantee an appropriate framework for the sector's sustainable development."

Of the IPDPs formulated to date, some have progressed more than others. In Africa, countries have struggled to secure funding for their plans. But in numerous developing countries, the postal market was non-existent until

recently, and changes to the legal framework take time, explains Cuadra. "Let's not forget that the biggest postal sector reform effort in Europe, which is still in progress in certain countries, was launched in the early 1990s. The IPDP should be seen as a basis for long-term change," he says.

Costa Rica: a case in point

Costa Rica, a small Central American country (4.2 million inhabitants) sandwiched between Panama and Nicaragua, became one of the first IPDP beneficiary countries in 2005.

"Before the reform, the Costa Rican postal market was dominated by several operators providing a wide range of services on an informal basis, particularly in the metropolitan area and in seven provinces," explains Cuadra.

A market study quickly showed that the legislation and rules governing the postal sector were obsolete and ill-adapted to the service requirements of today's society, and that the regulatory framework needed to be updated. On this basis, the IPDP set out the urgent need to establish a suitable legal and institutional framework for the postal sector, geared towards the provision of appropriate services.

"Three years on, 80 % of Costa Rica's IPDP has been implemented, making it one of the most advanced. It has even survived a change of government. This shows just how robust the approach is," says a delighted Cuadra.

The priority actions undertaken to organize and develop the operator very quickly bore fruit. In accordance with the IPDP, the State requested that public utility bills and correspondence, as well as business mail, should be carried and delivered by the designated operator, and not



The IPDP, a basis for long-term change.

by the services themselves, as was previously the case. Such practice had weakened the designated operator and hampered the development of the universal service. Moreover, the Costa Rican and Brazilian Posts concluded an agreement to develop the operator. Under the UPU's coordination, the designated operator's processes were comprehensively reviewed in just one year, and the quality of service improved in several regions (delivery times shortened from J+4 to J+1). Through the UPU's Quality of Service Fund (QSF), a modern addressing system will be introduced, which will improve delivery services and help develop hybrid mail. In addition to QSF funding, Costa Rica's IPDP received funding from the government, the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration.

Fund-seeking instrument

"The IPDP approach is a good way of impressing upon governments and potential lenders that the postal sector is an integral part of a country's infrastructure and,

in the broader sense, an invaluable support for its economic development," points out Abdel Ilah Bousseta, director of development cooperation at the International Bureau. In addition to government funds, various IPDPs have received funding from other sources. Syria's was partly financed by the United Nations Development Programme, while Azerbaijan obtained funding from the World Bank to develop its financial services. In Panama, as part of the "Compite Panamá" programme, the Inter-American Development Bank and the private sector financed a large part of the IPDP projects, particularly those relating to the universal postal service and regulation.

From 2009 to 2012, the UPU will continue to help countries implement their IPDPs and secure funds, and provide indicators to measure their progress.

A proven methodology

The IPDPs arose from the decisions taken by the 2004 Bucharest Congress to establish institutional and structural postal sector reform as a priority. Says Abdel Ilah Bousseta: "There was a need to develop an initiative that would take account of all postal sector specificities. The IPDP methodology provides for various situations and involves the sector's key stakeholders." Tailor-made for each country, the IPDP involves all national postal sector

stakeholders. It is a lever for governments wishing to embark on a structured postal reform process, and to define a sectoral policy based on the reform and regulation of the universal service and the modernization of the designated operator.

60 years of cooperation



“The UPU may be one of the smallest UN specialized agencies, but its work is key to the broader mission of our organization,” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, when he visited UPU headquarters in April.

The UPU is celebrating 60 years as a United Nations specialized agency. A look back at an active role in some major UN endeavours.

At UPU headquarters to chair the biannual meeting of the UN Chief Executives Board for Coordination last April, Ban Ki-moon marked the anniversary by recalling postal services' important contribution to world development.

“This is an exciting time for the United Nations, but it is also a time when we are challenged to exert our best efforts to rise to the expectations that the world is placing on us,” said the secretary-general. “The UPU is a big part of this. Postal services are particularly important at a time when hundreds of millions of people have relocated from their country of origin and are anxious to share news and resources with their relatives.”

The secretary-general also noted the UPU's efforts to help the global community achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Whether in the area of poverty reduction, global security, development, humanitarian aid or aid for trade, the UPU contributes to efforts to address the world's major challenges by taking part in UN system coordination meetings attended by leaders of UN organizations and agencies, as well as the World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The secretary-general recognized the postal sector's contribution to development in particular. “The capacity of postal services to provide information, goods and

fund transfers can lend valuable support to the growth of small businesses in developing countries and help them to access markets in industrialized states,” he said.

A short history

The UPU joined the United Nations on 1 July 1948. An agreement, already envisaged at the Lake Success meetings in 1946 and the Paris Congress in 1947, was approved by a committee of member country postal experts under the aegis of the UN Economic and Social Council. In becoming a United Nations specialized agency, the UPU undertook to abide by the principles of the UN Charter, to coordinate its activities with other international organizations and to participate in United Nations meetings.

In 1948, the first cooperation projects between the UPU and the UN were confined to the exchange of information and documentation and to technical assistance. Those relations have been developing and intensifying ever since.

As its director general explains, all UPU activities fall within the scope of UN policy. “Communication, which the UPU develops between peoples through the efficient operation of postal services as part of its mission, is at the heart of efforts to maintain peace, promote health and education and provide humanitarian aid where needed,” says Edouard Dayan. “In addition to its legal

By
Dora Precup

commitments under the agreement and its participation in UN conferences, the UPU has become involved in activities and specific projects to help achieve UN objectives, particularly the Millennium Development Goals.”

According to Mauricio Rojas Cartin, director of international relations at Correos de Costa Rica, the UPU, as a member of the UN family, can act strategically and effect change. Thanks to the UPU's relations with governmental authorities, he explains, important postal reform projects can be justified and development projects more easily financed. Member countries also benefit from the UPU's relations with other international organizations responsible for such issues as customs matters, international air transport and telecommunications.

“Our country serves as a good example,” Rojas Cartin points out. “The reorganization of the public postal operator and its modernization plan, activities undertaken within the framework of national laws that encourage us to work in coordination with a UN agency, would not otherwise have been possible.”

Development and technical assistance

Over the years, the UPU has helped to reconstruct many countries' postal service as part of national policies. It is a role it still fully assumes today. With the help of its regional advisers in the field, the UPU keeps the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) informed about postal services in different regions and their objectives. This close cooperation, started in the 1960s, makes it possible to carry out postal reform projects throughout the world, such as in Mongolia, Maldives, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The UPU also provides the services of experts, offers training fellowships and makes postal training materials available.

Africa, the continent with the largest number of least developed countries, is a top priority for the UN, and the UPU. Close to 40 % of the organization's technical assistance budget goes to projects on that continent. Thanks to the Quality of Service Fund, a hundred or so projects totalling more than nine million USD have been financed in Africa since 2001, in cooperation with other agencies such as the World Bank, the UNDP and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Promoting the postal sector's role

Over the years, the UPU has also taken part in various UN programmes and conferences to promote the postal sector's role as a driver of economic and social development. In 2003 and 2005, the action plans of the World Summit on the Information Society acknowledged this role, and the UPU became a full partner with other organizations in implementing the action line to develop e-business worldwide.

More recently, as part of the World Trade Organization's “Aid for Trade” initiative, the UPU defended the local access to international trade logistics that postal networks provide to millions of businesses, particularly small and medium-sized ones. These businesses are generally recognized as important economic drivers on a national, regional and, increasingly, global level.

For Rojas Cartin, the UPU's UN connection gives its decisions and projects more legitimacy. “Playing a leading role among international organizations, the UPU helps our countries to adapt more easily to the changes needed to improve the quality of universal postal services,” he says.

How does the UPU contribute to the major missions of the UN?

Health

Over the years, the UPU has examined the conditions for transporting dangerous goods and adopted the relevant postal regulations required. In 1952, the UPU cooperated with the World Health Organization in examining the conditions for transporting pathogenic biological substances by post. In 1999, an agreement was concluded on secure packing for transporting perishable biological samples and an information programme on dangerous goods for all Posts. In 2005, a new regulation allowed samples for biomedical and genetic research to be exchanged by post.

Many Posts have implemented measures to protect mail handlers, or undertaken public service projects. For example, the Hungarian Post offers a free mobile service for detecting breast cancer; Brazilian mail carriers on their rounds tell young mothers about the benefits of breast-feeding and distribute medicines. Post offices in countries like Cape Verde, Kenya, Madagascar and South Africa display information about AIDS and malaria. The German Post helps to fight AIDS through joint actions with the private sector. It was the first postal operator to become involved in the activities and programmes of the Global Business Coalition on AIDS/HIV.

Economic development

The postal sector has a significant impact on a country's economic and social development. It provides a range of services that help to keep economies healthy. For example, delivering goods ordered by telephone or catalogue or over the Internet generates considerable income for millions of businesses worldwide. Nevertheless, the postal network must be reliable.

With its postal reform assistance, financing system and multi-year integrated projects, the UPU helps member countries to develop and strengthen their postal network. Since 2005, six new regional development plans (RDPs) have been harmonizing postal activities and structuring their financing in the world's major regions. Budget credits are now better allocated, synergies are being created between various regional partners, and performance is improving. As an example, 32 % of the 4.4 million CHF needed to finance RDP projects comes from external partners. Assisted by the regional restricted unions, the UPU also undertakes many training initiatives to develop postal markets such as direct mail, EMS and parcels.

Reducing poverty

A robust and well organized postal network helps to develop trade and increase income for both individuals and businesses. With more than five million postal employees worldwide – nearly 10 million if related sectors are included – the postal sector is one of the largest employers in the world. Moreover, money transfers sent worldwide over official networks total more than 200 billion USD, representing the second largest source of investment after direct foreign investment. This is why the UPU has focused on developing secure and reliable electronic money transfer services to replace the obsolete paper money order, now more than one hundred years old.

Environment and sustainable development

The UPU strives to make member countries aware of the need to protect the environment, and promotes social responsibility with its postal partners. Several postal operators have adopted more environment-friendly measures and policies and developed programmes to recycle and manage waste and acquire vehicles that run cleaner or use alternative fuels. Under an agreement signed in April 2008, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UPU are working to reduce CO₂ emissions produced by the postal sector. With UNEP expertise, it will be possible to calculate the volume of greenhouse emissions generated and measure the effectiveness of a range of solutions proposed to postal operators for reducing these emissions. As a member of the UN's environment management group, the UPU has access to a global network of correspondents in its member countries to help raise awareness among postal sector players of the need to adopt green policies and share best practices.

Access to education

The UPU has been cooperating with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) since 1955 to facilitate social, cultural and commercial communication between countries through the universal postal system, promote written communication and develop information and learning in general. In many countries, books and periodicals are delivered via the postal network. In Mongolia, for example, more than 15 million newspapers circulate by post, while in Brazil, millions of school textbooks are delivered by the

Post each year. The Benin Post is considering the sale of school materials in offices located in areas where such products are not available.

For the last 37 years, a UNESCO jury has selected the winners of the UPU's international letter-writing competition for young people. The UPU also offers staff from developing countries fellowship programmes at postal training centres. TRAINPOST, the UPU's online training system, provides training centres with information and documentation needed to train postal staff.

Humanitarian aid

Tsunamis in south Asia, hurricanes in Grenada, El Salvador and Guatemala, floods in Romania, earthquakes in Pakistan and Indonesia, war in Liberia: since 2004, the UPU has lent support to a dozen or so countries affected by natural disaster or war. Thanks to projects totalling several hundreds of thousands of CHF, the Posts of these countries were able to replace destroyed or damaged equipment and provide a viable postal service. In a show of solidarity, many member countries responded to the UPU's calls for financial or technical assistance.

Fruitful cooperation

Over the years, the UPU has established working relations with a number of UN agencies and other international organizations. For example, it:

- works with the International Organization for Migration to improve postal money transfer services;
- cooperates with the International Telecommunication Union to bring new technologies to post offices to give citizens ideal access to the information society;
- prepares, with the support of the International Organization for Standardization, international standards of mutual interest;
- promotes the role that postal infrastructure plays in global trade, through its involvement in the World Trade Organization's "Aid for Trade" initiative;
- improves customs clearance procedures for international mail through close cooperation with the World Customs Organization;
- works with the International Air Transport Association to facilitate international mail delivery;
- cooperates with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to combat narcotics trafficking and money laundering through the post;
- receives support from the United Nations Development Programme for its cooperation policy and for managing the Junior Professional Officer Programme;
- cooperates with the United Nations Postal Administration on stamp issues (humanitarian mail stamp issued in 2007);
- participates in the meetings of UN coordination bodies, including the high-level committee on management, which discusses questions relating to finance and human resources, and the high-level committee on programmes.



우정사업본부

The postal power of ubiquity

By
Rhéal LeBlanc

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If there is one postal operator whose future relies on the use of new technologies, it is Korea Post, explains its president, Kyung-won Jung.

In the future, South Koreans will be able to decide what to have for dinner by looking at a screen on their fridge. The integrated device will identify the fridge's contents and suggest an appropriate recipe, and even a wine. And if consumers don't have the wine in their cellar, they will simply have it delivered by pressing a button. But the delivery person won't be the local store owner. It will be a postal employee.

Although South Korea is a developing country, its postal service is widely recognized for its use of new technologies and its expertise. As one of the most trusted public services in the country, Korea Post is part of a national strategy to create a "ubiquitous" society, where interconnecting various social services, including the postal service, will be at the heart of making people's lives easier and more enjoyable.

New technologies have also enabled Korea Post to halt a downturn in physical mail volumes, which have been increasing at a rate of up to 2 % annually since 2006, after having experienced a slowdown after 2003.

Korea Post's president, Kyung-won Jung, explains how his company is achieving these results and what the postal future has in store for citizens.

How is Korea Post using new technologies to improve postal services, and what is your long-term strategy?

Kyung-won Jung Using information and communication technologies (ICTs) to bring innovation to postal services has been at the centre of our strategic plans since Korea Post was created in 2000. Ultimately, our mid and long-term goals are focused on achieving uPost, which we started to implement in 2007.

As e-commerce developed, we recognized the need to refine and automate our internal processes. Accordingly, we set up a system called PostNet, to which all post offices and mail centres are connected. Through this system, data is captured and exchanged internally. It is the backbone of many other systems used for our logistics business, our Internet Post Office (ePost), and services with a strategic focus such as door-to-door

delivery and pick-up and Express Mail Service (EMS).

Using new technologies, we have strengthened our competitiveness by better managing work flows, setting up a logistics business – where we manage, on behalf of major companies, the orders and deliveries of products ordered online – and better marketing our services. Using a customer relationship management approach, we track consumer trends and continuously feed our customer management database, which we use to market our services and products to targeted consumer groups in various regions of the country.

Furthermore, we use a quality control system to better monitor postal flows and vehicles in real time. Using RFID technology, we are also building a system to automatically capture information about mail arrivals and departures.

Tell us about uPost, or the Ubiquitous Post Office.
uPost represents the future of Korea's postal business, where the best possible postal services will be easily accessible at any time, from anywhere.

All the changes we have implemented so far and will implement serve as the basis for achieving uPost by 2011. When the service is fully operational, customers will be able to use their mobile phones for some services, such as asking for mail dispatch services and checking the status of deliveries in real time. We will continue to rely on the best technology to build uPost. That's why we have introduced RFID technology in our operations and distributed wireless personal data assistants to our workers to support real-time work processes and build the next generation of PostNet.

Everyone is indeed looking at RFID technology these days to improve the quality of postal services. How is Korea Post using this technology? We began studying RFID technology in 2002. In 2006 and 2007, we were already using it to monitor the dispatch and arrival of mail pallets and controlling mail containers. Finally, we successfully completed a pilot test targeting three mail centres.

Starting this year, we plan to apply this technology to containers travelling through all our mail centres. Additionally, 20 RFID readers will be set up in each mail centre; some 600 readers and 40,000 tags will be used nationwide. We expect to begin operations in all mail centres by July 2009.

We will continue to monitor technological developments and price trends for tags, particularly when applying RFID to individual postal items such as packages.

Using new technologies, Korea Post has been able to stop its physical mail volumes from decreasing and has seen its parcel and express services boom since 2000. What was the key to your success? E-mailing and e-billing services are replacing letter post and overall mail volumes and our revenues have been gradually decreasing since they hit a peak in 2002. To counter this effect, we decided to increase the sale of packages and EMS and, at the same time, diversify mail acceptance points.

Door-to-door delivery and pick-up services as well as the EMS service have become our strategic focus, and we have enhanced the marketing of our products to overcome sales decline caused by lower mail volumes. More e-commerce has also pushed us to develop and expand our logistics business, and we have established ePost to allow customers to send mail online.

Since the modern postal system was introduced, package services in Korea have been part of the universal postal service, along with letters. Our door-to-door delivery service was introduced several years ago as part of an effort to live up to customers' changing needs, as e-commerce and online shopping evolved. This service was first launched in August 1999, and it opened a new era for postal services.

Korea Post's package business and EMS service owe their success to our door-to-door delivery and pick-up policy. This service is particularly convenient for small and medium-sized companies.

Since we launched this service option, we have established a network that links cities and rural areas through 3,600 post offices across the country.

In addition to providing discounted postal rates to large

mailers, EMS also offers an online track and trace service. Today, Korea Post, together with other Kahala Group members, including the U.S, China, Japan, Australia and Hong Kong, provides guaranteed EMS delivery service, which has greatly improved customer trust.

What services are offered through the Internet Post Office?

Since 2000, ePost offers 34 million Internet users more than 25 online services, with track and trace and e-mail being free, for example. At the online shopping mall, customers can buy regional specialties such as agricultural, fish and livestock products for delivery nationally or anywhere in the world. Customers can also sell and buy items online securely, similar to eBay. Furthermore, we offer a hybrid mail service, congratulatory and condolence cards, as well as selling stamps. Orders accepted online are sent to post offices nationwide or outside agencies, where documents are printed and delivered to addressees. ePost also offers a self-service picture card service, and a convenient electronic purse for settling small amounts of money.

All these services have boosted Korea Post's image as an e-business enterprise, and are contributing to the national economy by promoting regional economic development. With the shopping mall alone we made revenue of 54 million USD in 2006.

What other new business areas have you been developing thanks to improved processes and technology?

Hybrid mail, electronic certification, e-stamps and direct mail are some of them.

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“Each postal operator has to work hard to reduce the technology gap and improve the international mail service.”

In the case of hybrid mail, post offices convert electronic data into printed matter for physical delivery. It is particularly effective for direct mail. In Korea, printing companies mostly produce direct mail via the Post, while private couriers currently dominate with the delivery of catalogues and other services. We use the latest printing facilities of outsourced companies located in eight provinces.

But eventually we aim to apply online services to the entire process, providing seamless and efficient service from mail acceptance to delivery online.

Our electronic certification service is also one of the safest communication means as Korea Post can guarantee the authenticity of the e-documents sent.

Technologically, Korea Post is advancing at a very rapid pace. Are you concerned that an insufficient interconnectivity among other postal services in the world could affect your own ability to meet international customers' needs? In general, the end-to-end delivery of international mail depends on countries' postal infrastructure. For

instance, one country may have a well-established postal infrastructure and be able to deliver mail to a destination country within one or two days. But if that country takes an additional five to seven days to deliver the same mail to destination, then the standards are not being met.

This indicates there is a clear gap between countries and their use of information technology to provide efficient postal services.

Besides providing for effective tracking and tracing of postal items, properly interconnected networks enable operators to exchange customs data, create direct mail destined for other countries through hybrid mail, exchange information regarding international mail for the settlement of terminal dues, identify service failures relating to international mail service and, ultimately, establish a single network for guaranteed delivery. As the postal market opens up, postal operators are expanding their activities abroad. Better interconnected postal services worldwide are therefore more important than ever.

Each postal operator has to

work hard to reduce the technology gap and improve the international mail service. As the postal market becomes more global and competitive, operators must increasingly provide new postal services that meet customer needs. In the end, poorly interconnected networks greatly affect competition in the market. It even becomes a matter of business survival.

In this regard, all postal operators, as well as the UPU, should strive for better interconnectivity not only to survive in a competitive market, but also to achieve a win-win situation.

One of the UPU's objectives is to improve the interconnection of postal networks worldwide. How can Korea Post's expertise contribute to this goal?

We continue to collaborate with industry, academia and government in an effort to accumulate experience and know-how about the use of information technology in the postal sector. We follow a cycle where we ask the Electronics and Telecommunications and Research Institute, a Korean government research organization, to



Korea Post's identity card

Post offices	3,581
Total staff	43,270 (15,433 mail carriers)
Mail volume	4.8 billion pieces
Parcels and EMS	115.7 million pieces
Tracking inquiries	205 million
Korean Customer Satisfaction Index:	
Ranked first in public service sector, nine years in a row	
Door-to-door parcel delivery service:	
Ranked first for four years in a row	

develop the technology we need. Then, once this technology is developed, IT companies use it to produce machines or equipment we in turn purchase for our post offices.

So far, the expertise we have gained from such a collaborative process has been very popular. Other Posts worldwide have used us as a benchmark. In particular, when other countries are interested in our uniquely developed technology, the companies involved in developing or producing it are available to give further information.

Interconnecting a global postal network can only be achieved, I believe, based on mutual trust and cooperation. Interconnectivity creates synergies when international organizations like the UPU establish mutual standards or strict timetables for implementing them.

We are certainly willing to participate in any UPU activity and technological development that allow us to share our experience and know-how, and we will dispatch experts and provide benchmarking opportunities when necessary.

Will the concept of universal postal service in Korea change with your strategy and vision for the Post of the future?

We are preparing to revise the postal law designed to protect the rights of postal users, but we will respect the principles of the universal service based on UPU recommendations and other cases we have studied. In South Korea, universal service will apply to letter-post items weighing less than 2 kg, parcels weighing less than 20 kg and registered mail. But how frequently we collect and deliver mail

and what delivery standards and service conditions we apply could change according to our strategy and vision.

What should Posts do or not do when adopting new technologies to retain market share, grow revenues and move further into the information society?

Many Posts are working very hard to develop and implement strategies to cope with a rapidly changing postal landscape. To those that want to make better use of new technologies, I recommend they take a comprehensive approach and share the need for using new technologies with other Posts. For instance, employees must understand that having a customer service approach via the Internet is a strategic means for dramatically improving internal processes, fostering innovation, improving customer satisfaction and generating

new revenue. New technologies are not just a substitute for the physical postal business.

All Posts have to consider the overall environment they face today. They must strive to identify possible problems and improvements in meeting customers' needs and understand competitive market trends and IT development policies.

Postal operators should look at what other Posts are doing. In particular, when doing a benchmarking exercise, learning about the motivation and success factors behind technological developments is only one thing; applying the same principles to one's own environment is quite another.

At the same time, in introducing new technologies, Posts should consider what works for them. In many cases, it is difficult for Posts to adopt new technologies because of their particular environment and situation. Ignoring such factors and hurrying to introduce new technologies would be like a

person wearing clothes that don't fit him or her.

Leaders must fully understand the necessity of change, and effective management requires strong leadership qualities and a strong set of beliefs. These are important drivers that help us weather any difficulties.

Korea Post is a strong supporter of UPU activities. How do you view your role in the international arena? And how could postal services worldwide work better together to bring major improvements to service?

Since the 1994 Seoul Congress, Korea Post has participated in many UPU activities as a member of the Postal Operations Council (POC) and the Council of Administration (CA), and has often dispatched experts or provided financial support for major projects. With regard to the Quality of Service Fund (QSF), we have allowed needy countries to use some of our funds for specific projects. We

have also provided resources from the fund to countries affected by natural disasters to help them rehabilitate their postal infrastructure.

In addition, we have committed to undertake various activities through the Asia-Pacific Postal Union (APPU). We have dispatched consultants, invited participants to training courses organized by the Asia Pacific Postal College, and provided field trips to Korean postal facilities. Our joint and cooperative activities with the UPU and the APPU will continue.

As we work together to improve postal services, we need to have a strong sense of community. At this year's UPU Congress, member countries will adopt the next four-year world postal strategy. Once a strategy is adopted, all should actively join the community effort. To me, this sense of community is a critical factor in improving the global postal network.



Mobile post office in Sichuan



Ruins of a branch post office in Yinxiu county

On 12 May, China was hit by one of the most devastating natural disasters of the last 30 years.

Asia's disaster woes

By
**Jérôme
 Deutschmann**

An earthquake measuring eight on the Richter scale shook the province of Sichuan, leaving nearly 87,000 people dead, over 373,000 injured, and some 5 million homeless.

The toll for the postal community was also high: 17 dead, 141 injured and 38 reported missing.

China Post, the sole operator, reported 38 post offices totally destroyed, 168 partially damaged, and 60 vehicles and over 3,000 items of equipment damaged.

Following the earthquake, the State Post Bureau, the Chinese Government agency responsible for the postal sector, set up a disaster relief committee to organize emergency aid. Initial efforts focused on bringing aid to postal staff and their families. Survivors of the aftershocks and flooding caused by overflowing lakes and cracked dams were taken to safety. Postal employees came to the aid of their colleagues, bringing comfort, basic supplies and drinking water. Postal vehicles were requisitioned to transport the injured.

In addition to these practical emergency measures, the postal authorities drew up a plan to restore postal premises and facilities. Twenty-two post offices in the severely affected areas have now resumed operations,

but a further 55 remain closed. Under the auspices of the ministry of transport, containers, tents and prefabricated buildings are currently being used as temporary post offices providing basic services. Mail delivery has been suspended in 95 towns and villages. Given the extent of the damage, the State Post Bureau has asked the Government to provide 785 mobile homes. In addition, the restoration of postal infrastructures is to be a priority in the national reconstruction plan.

National and international solidarity

The Chinese people have shown their solidarity with the earthquake victims by donating aid on an unprecedented scale. Postal enterprises donated 10 million USD, of which 3 million came from postal staff. Hundred of generators, tents, and tons of food supplies were sent to the victims.

The entire sector responded to the appeal: China Post Ningxia provided its Sichuan branch with 10 trucks; China Post Logistics provided five eight-ton covered vans to carry relief equipment, and China Post sent 30 mail transport vehicles.

Express courier businesses also responded generously. SF Express donated 1.3 millions USD, ZJS Express lent its vehicles, China's three DHL companies (Sinotrans,



A hastily set up temporary post office.



A post office in Dujiangyan county.

Global Forwarding and Exel Supply Chain) donated 145,000 USD to the victims and, in an operation organized by the International Telecommunication Union, FedEx Switzerland transported satellite equipment free of charge, enabling communication links to be restored. Cargo planes carrying tons of food supplies and medicine took off from the United States and Hong Kong. UPS, for its part, transported over 10,000 tents, 1,100 camp beds and medical equipment.

Free postage and special stamps

For those with families far away and unable to travel, China Post is providing a free parcel and letter-post service. By the end of May, the Sichuan branch had received 2,600 parcels and 7,000 letters and delivered them to victims of the disaster; it also provided 17,000 customers with a free remittance service, through which over 8 million USD was sent to those affected.

On 20 June, China Post issued special stamps. Half the revenue from the 13 million stamps printed will be donated to the disaster victims.

DHL helps victims of the Myanmar disaster

DHL, the international express postal business, has signed an agreement with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to come to the aid of the victims of cyclone Nargis in Myanmar by sending in its Singapore-based Disaster Response Team (DRT). This team is responsible for managing a 3,000 m² warehouse made available to non-governmental organizations. Located 30 minutes from Yangon airport, this building is the central supply point for non-governmental organizations. The team is also providing technical and logistical expertise for loading and unloading containers, sorting deliveries and expediting distribution.

Market focus

eBay and La Poste France offer e-postage

La Poste and eBay have signed a partnership that will enable French Internet vendors to purchase their postage online. The new service, in the pipeline since December 2007, allows eBay users to print out their own postage labels for letters and parcels direct from the auction site.

The sender simply enters the weight, the destination and the required service (standard or registered post). Once payment has been received via PayPal, the label is simply printed out and attached to the packet to be sent.

Source: journaldunet.com

Criminal records from the post office

In Switzerland, potential employers sometimes ask applicants to provide a "police clearance" document certifying they have no criminal record. Swiss citizens can now order this document over the post office counter. Customers simply present their identity card, the counter clerk checks and enters their details, and the police clearance document arrives by post within three to five days. Naturally, counter staff have no access to the police records. This service is fulfilling a growing need: there were 217,000 requests for these documents in 2003, rising to 290,000 in 2007.

Source: Agence télégraphique suisse

Canada Post and FedEx Express launch Priority Worldwide

Canada Post and FedEx Express Canada have joined forces to create Priority Worldwide, a new international express product. The product will be sold through Canada Post's retail and commercial networks, and delivered via the extensive FedEx delivery network. This global service, due for

launch in the last quarter of 2008, offers time-certain deliveries: by noon the next business day to most destinations in the United States, and within two to three working days in most other industrialized countries. The product also includes tracking, delivery confirmation and

signature upon delivery. Customers will be able to use the service to ship envelopes up to 500 g, packets up to 1.5 kg and parcels up to 30 kg.

Source: Canada Post

EMS in French-speaking Africa

Some 20 managers of Express Mail Service (EMS) mail processing centres in French-speaking Africa attended a workshop in Lomé, Togo, aimed at raising service standards in their region. The workshop, which focused on management of operations and performance in the EMS

network, resulted in an action plan for performance improvement. According to the International Bureau's EMS coordinator for Africa, Ms. Awa Cissé, the seminar showed participants methods for reading reports, analyzing data and pinpointing weaknesses. The hope is

that, from 2009, Africa's EMS network will be as efficient as those of other EMS operators around the world.

Source: Xinhua

Market focus

Merger gets parliamentary approval

The Danish and Swedish Parliaments, on 12 June and 18 June respectively, approved the proposed merger between Post Danmark A/S and Posten AB. Now it's up to the relevant regulatory authorities to approve and sign the final agreement. It would be the first time that two national postal operators come together as one. The merger, announced in April, would result in a combined company jointly owned by the Swedish state, the Danish state, CVC Capital Partners and the employees. The merged company

would have annual revenue of about 45 billion Swedish Crowns and include over 50,000 employees. A press release issued by Posten said the merger aims to help both companies "meet the markets' increasing challenges through an increased competitiveness, and secure the possibility to maintain a first-class mail and parcel business in both countries, continuing to reach all enterprise customers and households."

Source: Posten AB

Eco site

A new website launched by the United States Postal Service (USPS) offers visitors a chance to buy eco-friendly products and gives them tips on recycling advertising mail or removing their name from mailing lists. It also provides advice for marketers on how to reduce direct mail volumes, as well as information on the operator's own efforts to green up its act.

Another feature is a calculator enabling visitors to measure how much fuel they use on trips to and from their post office, and the carbon footprint they leave behind.

The aim is to encourage customers to use the shipping tools available via the USPS website. The new site is one of a raft of green initiatives, which include the recycling of more than a million tones of paper, plastic and other materials each year, and the planned renovation of the country's 37,000 post offices, aimed at achieving a 30% decrease in energy consumption by 2015.

Source: ohmygov.com

Modernization across the board

The Indian Post, keen to increase its competitiveness, both domestically and internationally, and lift itself out of the financial doldrums, is looking to modernize its services. The operator is exploring a wide range of business segments, from currency exchange to train ticket reservations, and is launching new direct mail and cash transfer services. India Post – with 155,516 post offices, the world's biggest postal network – plans to computerize the entire network, including 64,000 offices in rural areas. One of the prime objectives is to provide customers with banking services throughout the country. The operator also hopes to

increase its market share in the money transfer sector, given the millions of Indian expatriate workers in the Gulf, Europe and the US. To boost its international presence, the Indian operator has set up a new global business division, signed a cooperation agreement with Deutsche Post, and entered into talks with its Swiss, French and Omani counterparts.

Source: The Economic Times

Certification authority confirmed

The Serbian Post has become the first and only certification authority in the country, making the postal sector a major player in the information society and the digital economy. Serbia's ministry of telecommunications and the information society approved the public operator's status as a certification authority. Now, to comply with European laws, the Serbian Post aims to get accreditation to issue qualified digital certificates authenticating electronic signatures on documents.

Source: PTT Communications «Srbija»

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