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JUNE 2011

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UNION POSTALE



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Afghanistan Post
boosts addressing



Japan Post

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Cover: Rob Gilhooly

June 2011

Union Postale is the Universal Postal Union's flagship magazine, founded in 1875. It is published quarterly in seven languages and takes a closer look at UPU activities and features international news and developments within the postal sector. The magazine regularly publishes well researched articles on topical issues facing the industry, as well as interviews with the sector's leading individuals. The colour publication is distributed to Posts around the world from our 191 member countries, including thousands of decision-makers, who regard it as an important source of information, as well as postal stakeholders.

Union Postale is also published in French, Arabic, Chinese, German, Russian and Spanish.

Manager, Communication Programme: Rhéal LeBlanc (RL)
Editor-in-chief: Faryal Mirza (FM)
Contributors: Jane Daly, Jérôme Deutschmann (JD), Ruby Pratka (RP), Julian Ryall, Toshihide Suzuki
Photographers: Rob Gilhooly, Kamran Jebreili, Alexandre Plattet
Design and layout: Die Gestalter, St. Gallen, Switzerland
Cover redesign: BlackYard, Berne, Switzerland
Printer: Gassmann, Biel, Switzerland
Administrative assistant: Gisèle Coron
Subscriptions: publications@upu.int
Advertising: faryal.mirza@upu.int

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Union Postale
International Bureau
Universal Postal Union
P. O. Box
3000 BERNE 15
SWITZERLAND

Phone:
+41 31 350 35 95
Fax:
+41 31 350 37 11
E-mail:
faryal.mirza@upu.int
Website:
http://www.upu.int

in brief

Financial inclusion

Gates Foundation helps support partnerships



The time is right to look at new cash-in and out models Photo: Gettyimages

A grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will enable the UPU to explore how to extend access to financial services to the poor through postal networks. Some 700,000 USD will fund work on how Posts can enter into partnerships with financial institutions and mobile-money operators to better serve the underprivileged, exchange know-how among stakeholders and initiate pilot projects.

Given the increasing attention the UPU has recently paid to financial inclusion, the organization is the right partner for this project, says Tamara Cook, the Foundation's programme officer. "The UPU is the historical convener of all things postal as a United Nations agency that pre-dates the UN's establishment. The

timing is ripe to bolster the UPU's internal capacity as an advisor to Posts considering new models to leverage their infrastructure as cash-in and out points for financial institutions and mobile-money providers," Cook said. Welcoming the grant, the UPU's director general, Edouard Dayan, said: "This collaboration highlights the UPU's important contribution to international efforts to fight poverty and foster economic and social development."

Worldwide reach

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's *Financial Services for the Poor* initiative is working with a wide range of public and private partners to harness technology and innovation to bring quality, afford-

able and safe savings accounts and other financial services to the poor in the developing world.

The UPU is an ideal partner to open up access to financial services to the world's most disadvantaged people. Today, some 1.5 billion people worldwide are already using their local post office for financial services. They include 400 million individuals holding postal accounts, predominantly in developing countries.

The UPU's global network contains 660,000 postal outlets staffed by 5.5 million employees. Its presence in rural areas is unmatched by any other logistical or banking network, with 500,000 branches in developing countries alone.

Posts also look back on a long tradition of providing financial services. The first postal savings bank was created in 1861 in Great Britain. The first UPU Act on international postal money orders was signed in 1878. It was updated at the 2008 UPU Congress to help Posts provide secure electronic money transfers, boosting consumer protection and data confidentiality. **FM**



Financial Services for the Poor

www.gatesfoundation.org/

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The Date

October 1, 2011

Member countries voted in this date for the entry into force of new rules on handling items containing lithium batteries.

Editor's note

When faced with images of the destruction left by the Great East Japan Earthquake, how could anyone fail to be moved? Across 18 devastated prefectures, almost 16,000 people have died and nearly 10,000 are still missing. When news started to filter through of Japan Post's efforts to ensure a seamless as possible service to their customers in the area, the opportunity to cover the story in the magazine was not to be missed. The challenge as an editor was to find a capable team on the ground to entrust the story to, with experience of moving in disaster zones and dealing sensitively with people, who have lost much dear to them.

The result is a story about the earthquake's survivors, who include customers and postal employees, all

equally devastated by a horrific turn of events. Their story is told by Julian Ryall, a veteran journalist, and Rob Gilhooly, an experienced photographer. Together, they spent two days among survivors in Miyagi Prefecture, learning about their lives and the impact of postal services in the aftermath.

On his return from the affected area, Julian wrote to me, saying: "The Post officials in Ishinomaki were fantastic and could not have been more helpful."

This speaks volumes about these employees' professionalism. Despite suffering from their own personal tragedies, these survivors still find the strength to wake up in the morning, put on their uniforms and serve their community. **Faryal Mirza, Editor-in-chief**

Trade facilitation

Brazil to offer its expertise

Brazil will share its know-how on facilitating trade through the Post with the UPU. This will enable other countries to benefit from export initiatives, such as Brazil's successful *Exporta Fácil* programme. Through the cooperation, the UPU will use Brazil's methodology to assist countries set up export mechanisms through their postal networks. The assistance will include training.

Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, Brazil's *Exporta Fácil* is available in more than 8,000 post offices. The system expedites the process for small and medium-sized businesses wanting to export goods abroad

Luciana Cortes Roriz Pontes, postal affairs undersecretary from Brazil's ministry of communications, signed the agreement with UPU Director General Edouard Dayan at UPU headquarters in May. "We will jointly develop a range of tools to assist other governments and their Posts to implement similar concepts to *Exporta Fácil* in their countries," said Pontes.

Last year, goods worth more than 220 million USD were exported through Brazil's postal network, bringing the total value of goods exported by *Exporta Fácil* since 2001 to 1 billion USD.

Other Latin American countries, including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay, have created their own version of *Exporta Fácil* with help from the Postal Union for the Americas, Portugal and Spain, a UPU restricted union, and the Interamerican Development Bank. Chile and Argentina are set to launch their own programmes soon.

"Today these countries are reaping the benefits of having made the right decision to invest in postal operations, transforming them into true partnerships in their external policy," said Pontes. **RL**

Addressing

Tackling key issues in West Africa

Addresses are essential for countries to run smoothly and for their economies to function properly. That premise formed the basis for the fourth workshop on quality of service, held in Monrovia, Liberia, from February 28 to March 4, 2011.

Five countries participated: Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The workshops highlighted the need for standardised and reliable addressing. Postal operators need to be able to process and deliver mail efficiently. Governments must be able to collect taxes, pay out benefits and process fund transfers.

"This is a very useful workshop, since, in a sector with strong international competition, we need proper addressing to develop our business, not only in Liberia but also in the rest of Africa," said Frederick Norkeh, Liberia's minister of posts and telecommunications. **JD**

in brief

Postal security

New committee to develop global standards



Explosives found in planes belonging to the private courier, UPS, triggered the TSA measures Photo: Gettyimages

A new UPU inter-committee security group of postal operators and international organizations has met in April for the first time to discuss the development of global postal security standards to improve the security of the global supply chain.

"It is essential to work together at the international level to define global standards in this area that apply to all actors rather than having individual countries or supranational bodies setting standards for everyone," said UPU director general, Edouard Dayan.

The move follows last November's introduction of new security measures by the United States Transportation Security Agency (TSA) for US-bound international mail after two explosive packages from Yemen were intercepted in the network of private couriers last October.

The measures, nevertheless, forced the national Posts of UPU member countries worldwide to change their operational procedures overnight. Posts send more than 418 million letters, packages and express mail items to the US every year. Some Posts stopped accepting

or delayed US-bound mail items, including courier products, and faced higher transportation costs and the shutdown of major mail transit hubs. This caused mail backlogs around the world. Several countries resumed full service at the end of March and early April. Others are still experiencing mail blockages or delays. Some transit hubs are still not accepting mail destined for the US from other countries.

At the April meeting, representatives from Posts, the International Air Transport Association, World Customs Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization and World Trade Organization reviewed existing postal, customs and airline standards and processes. Recommendations are expected by the end of the year on how to harmonise the latter in a coordinated fashion.

With the European Union also developing air transportation security requirements and the possibility of further extensions of the TSA measures, the UPU is seeking a coordinated international solution to meet security needs without hampering the movement of mail or flow of trade.

Full understanding

Director General Dayan said he fully understood the need for temporary heightened security measures to ensure people's safety and the global supply chain's integrity. However, permanent measures could potentially breach the UPU treaty as they would compromise the principles of freedom of transit and universal service. "Concerns of national importance require balancing with other considerations, such as the free flow of trade and mail," Dayan added.

The UPU is in close contact with the TSA to explain the mail network's specificity. Both parties are working together towards relaxing the measures for low-risk mail in conjunction with the United States Postal Service. Dayan recently met with TSA head administrator, John Pistole, at UPU headquarters to discuss the postal sector's concerns. The two agreed to work more closely together.

Business impact

"Posts are used to dealing with temporary shocks like the Iceland volcano that disrupted air and postal traffic last year," said Andreas Taprantzis, the UPU's Postal Operations Council chair. "But we worry about security measures that risk producing a more permanent shock that could seriously undermine the postal sector's ability to meet customer needs and its growing market share in the small packets and parcels business."

According to UPU research, the postal sector is experiencing double digit growth in small packets and parcels, fuelled by e-commerce and trade expansion. In 2010, Posts saw their express and parcel volumes rise by more than 15 per cent from 2009. **RL**

Restricted unions

New postal union for the Mediterranean



The union will defend its members' interests Photo: flickr.com

Thirteen Posts from Europe and the Arab region have created the UPU's 17th restricted union, the Postal Union for the Mediterranean. Based in the Italian capital, Rome, the union consists of the Posts of Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Palestine, Slovenia, Syria and Turkey.

The Postal Union's main goals include defending its members' collective interests, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and strengthening the interoperability of postal services. In practical terms, the body is dedicated to improving the quality of letter and parcel post and money-transfer services.

According to Article 8 of the UPU Constitution, member countries or their designated operators can set up regional postal communities, known as restricted unions.

Manning the ship

The new entity's board chairman is Sherif Battisha, Egypt Post's deputy chairman, while Stefan Gori, Poste Italiane's head of international business strategy, is its secretary general. Speaking to Post&Parcel, Battisha underlined that the new union would hopefully be a "catalyst of innovation and growth for the whole region". He added: "As postal operators, we have well-known and trusted brands, and thus we should leverage this more...to contribute to the growth of this region, which has a population of 500 million and [generates] 12 per cent of the world's gross domestic product." **RL**

April 2011



The Qatari government has confirmed that the soon-to-be opened National Convention Centre in Doha, Qatar, will host the UPU Congress in 2012.

May 2011



More than 60 countries have sent entries to the 40th edition of the International Letter-writing Competition for young people, which closed in May 2011. The results will be announced in August.

May 2011



The European Telecommunications Standards Institute and the UPU have agreed to strengthen their cooperation in secure electronic communication services and radio frequency identification interoperability.

May 2011



UPU Director General Edouard Dayan addresses the World Meteorological Organization's 16th World Congress on how "postal services are critical for people affected by natural disasters, who have only the Post to send news to their loved ones or receive gifts or money".

in brief

Who's who at the UPU

Variety spices up legal life

Name Elise Bischoff
Position Lawyer
Department Legal Affairs
Nationality French



For Elise Bischoff, no two days at work are ever the same. Bischoff is a lawyer in the UPU legal affairs directorate and loves the endless variety the job brings. "More and more issues have a legal aspect, so we are increasingly involved in a number of matters," she says. "We consider issues stemming from private to contract law, from international to employment law." She adds: "It would probably be hard to find that kind of variety in any other workplace."

Bischoff and her three colleagues handle all the legal aspects of running the International Bureau, from the internal to the external. They give legal advice to UPU organs, negotiate contracts with suppliers and advise Posts in UPU member countries. On the employee

front, they answer questions on employment rights and the organization's pension fund.

Recently, Bischoff worked on legal issues relating to matters dealt with at the 2011 Postal Operations Council. She is also drafting a legal agreement to facilitate electronic exchange of customs data between Posts.

A native of Paris, France, Bischoff specialised in European and international law during her university studies. She says her ambition had always been to join an international organization. She joined the UPU four years ago. "At first, I knew nothing about the postal sector," she says, "but the idea of working on behalf of the member countries made me happy." **RP** Photo: Alexandre Plattet

Quality of service

Regional road show visits East Africa



The land of many hills played host Photo: flickr.com

Participants from 10 countries in English-speaking Eastern Africa have learnt how to analyze quality performance and better manage customers and processes in a workshop in Kigali, Rwanda.

The workshop was the second

in a series of five. These aim to support the implementation of up-to-date technology to enhance quality of service in letter post, parcels and express mail services.

Ignace Gatare, the Rwandan minister for information communi-

cations technology, opened the proceedings. He affirmed his government's commitment to raising quality performance. "We will continue to do our best to make postal services viable and vibrant... the Post must play its role in the socio-economic development of our country," Gatare said.

Actions speak louder

Rodah Masaviru, the Pan African Postal Union's secretary general, said such workshops helped to improve the quality of postal services in their entirety. However, she noted more was necessary. "Discussions alone are not enough. They need to be followed up by action," Masaviru said. **FM**

Direct mail exchange

Israel and Palestine encouraged to resolve stalemate

UPU Director General Edouard Dayan is encouraging Israel and Palestine to find an operational solution to enable Palestine to exchange mail directly with all UPU member countries.

In a report to the Postal Operations Council (POC) in May 2011, Dayan said bilateral discussions between Israel and Palestine were continuing through a joint technical committee. The discussions, however, have not yet resulted in an operational agreement.

"Everything is in place for direct mail exchanges to happen," said Dayan. "The IB has facilitated the discussions between the two parties since the 2008 Congress in Geneva. We strongly encourage both parties to agree on an operational solution." The UPU director general added that he and his staff were committed to continuing their role as facilitator on an impartial basis.

The operational agreement hinges on how direct mail exchanges between Palestine and the rest of the world could take place by having mail items routed through Amman, Jordan.

Israel and Palestine jointly declared at the 2008 UPU Congress in Geneva that they would work together to enable Palestine to have direct mail exchanges with the rest of the world. The Geneva declaration followed a UPU Congress resolution (R 115/1999), adopted in Beijing in 1999, which conferred UPU observer

status on Palestine. This came with the right to direct mail exchange.

UPU assistance

From 2008–11, the IB worked to put in place the regulatory and technical framework enabling direct exchanges of mail items in line with its bodies' decisions and the Union's rules. This included a multi-year cooperation programme to provide training and a postal development plan to Palestine.

The IB also assigned an international mail processing centre code to the Palestinian international office of exchange in Ramallah to facilitate international mail exchange. The UPU duly informed its 191 member countries of the office's opening. Despite this, mail leaving or destined for Palestine still transits through Israel.

The UPU also classified Palestine as able to receive terminal dues. However, as no direct mail exchanges are currently taking place, Palestine is receiving no remuneration at this current time. It would also be eligible to receive funding from the UPU Quality of Service Fund for improving service quality.

Palestine is using the UPU's electronic network to monitor the flow of postal items and has been admitted as an observer to meetings of its EMS Cooperative. The POC adopted a resolution in 2009 to facilitate the exchange of parcels between Palestine and other countries. **RL**

.post

POC approves policy and project

The Postal Operations Council (POC) has approved an update to the domain management policy for .post in May. This included the list of domain names reserved by the UPU, of which there are 317. According to the document, the reservation is "aimed at preserving a portion of the .post name space for development or improvement of existing and future international postal products and services".

The POC also gave the green light to developing the first .post pilot project. This focuses on international postal registered electronic mail. The UPU's e-services programme is now developing the necessary business requirements and technical specifications to enable it to find a system provider.

Other developments

The UPU and International Post Corporation (IPC) are in talks to explore a closer collaboration on .post matters. This follows UPU Director General Edouard Dayan presenting .post to IPC board members in May at their invitation. Participants included a number of chief executives from large Posts.

In December 2009, the UPU became the first United Nations agency to be granted a top-level domain by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers. **FM**



Temporary shelter, Kadonowaki Junior High School, May 2011: If Yoshinori Shoji calls out a resident's name, they know they have mail.

Natural disaster no bar to delivery



.....

Faced with destroyed infrastructure, Japan Post continues to provide postal services in the aftermath of the country's most powerful earthquake on record, despite their own staff being among the dead and survivors.

.....
By
Julian Ryall
in Miyagi
Prefecture,
Japan
.....
Photos:
Rob Gilhooly

Very carefully, Yoshinori Shoji, a letter carrier with Japan Post, steps between the flimsy cardboard partitions towards the front of the school gymnasium. A team of volunteers in blue bibs are waiting on the stage, which is piled high with spare blankets, boxes of bottled drinks and food. One of them hands Shoji a microphone and he starts calling out names. "Fujinuma. Ueki. Sakurai." "Here," replies a woman, who had been folding newspapers and adding them to a stack for recycling. Yumi Sakurai comes forward to take a single item of mail from the letter carrier, giving a slow bow as she accepts the postcard and shuffling back to the blankets that have been laid out on the floor. These mark the home she has shared with her 72-year-old mother, Takako, since the twin disasters of earthquake and tsunami struck this part of north-east Japan on March 11.

Sakurai looks at the postcard in her hands, advising her of a supermarket sale. "This is not all that helpful, but it's good that the post can be delivered even when we are living here," says Sakurai, 48. "We used to live down in the waterfront district where our house was destroyed by the tsunami, but it has been a real surprise that postal services were operating again so quickly after it happened and that they have managed to trace all the people who lost their homes." She adds: "I must say that it makes us feel good when we hear them call out our names," she says. "I guess I'll be hearing it many more times as I don't know when we will be able to go home," she adds with a shrug. "There is nothing left there now." Sakurai is one of 373 residents of the coastal town of Ishinomaki, about 80km north-east of the Miyagi Prefecture capital of Sendai, who lost their homes nearly three months ago and have since been living at the Kadonowaki Junior High School.

Still standing

The school survived the wave that roared out of the Pacific Ocean on that Friday afternoon because it is built

on a hill dominating the town centre, but the waters washed around its base and destroyed everything in their path. The story is the same in communities the length of the Tohoku coast of north-east Japan, with the government putting the toll at 15,019 confirmed dead and more than 9,500 still missing. Many of those were residents of Ishinomaki. Of its pre-quake population of 162,822, 5,468 residents have either been confirmed killed or are still missing.

The survivors are trying to make the best of the situation in the temporary evacuation centres. They try to recreate their homes in miniature, walling off their allocated space with cardboard and potted plants by the entrance. Blankets cover the floors and children's school satchels are neatly lined up inside. Outside, laundry is hanging on a wire fence and dogs – that occupational hazard for letter carriers the world over, even in disaster zones – yap at Shoji as he makes his next deliveries.

Heads pop up from behind the partitions of people's homes as he starts reading out more names. Tadao Sasaki is fast asleep on the floor of his few square metres of space, so Shoji gently lays this letter beside him. He places the card for Yumiko Sasaki on a blanket. The elderly lady in the cardboard box next door promises that she will point it out to her friend as soon as she gets back. The neighbour looks hopeful that she will also receive some mail but is disappointed today.

Slowly recovering

It is, however, a clear sign that things are returning to normal in Ishinomaki. "Apart from the fact that we are not able to do night deliveries yet, our delivery services are mostly back to normal now," said Toshiya Fujiwara, operations planning manager at Japan Post's Ishinomaki branch. "Adjustments have had to be made to counter services because seven of the 15 post offices in our district were destroyed by the earthquake and tsunami and we have not yet been able to rebuild or relocate them." The task, he admits, is a huge one – even for an organization as ubiquitous and entrenched in Japanese society as the post office.

The Japan Post Group was set up on October 1, 2007, under the Japan Post Network Act, which broke the service up into four companies offering services to customers under a holding company. The Japan Post Network operates counter services, while the Japan Post Service oversees mail delivery. The remaining two sections are the Japan Post Bank and Japan Post Insurance; all the companies operate in tandem. In total, there were 24,531 post offices across the country before the earthquake, of which 4,295 were contracted offices.

Aftermath

After the March disasters, 175 postal buildings were damaged, including 97 that were completely destroyed. A further 134 facilities – including distribution centres, post offices and tourist hotels operated by Japan Post – were unusable as of the end of May. Sixty-one of the group's employees were killed or are still listed as missing. Around 160 four-wheel vehicles and 350 motorcycles were destroyed, while some 500 letterboxes were washed away. "We have been affected on all sides," said a spokesman for the Japan Post headquarters in Tokyo, speaking anonymously. "Our staff in offices across Tohoku suffered, but, at the same time, we had a strong role to play there and we needed to restart our services as quickly as possible."

The response was little short of phenomenal. "Immediately after the disasters, staff, who had no place to live and whose offices had been destroyed, tried to start work again," the Tokyo spokesman said. Today, post offices and delivery centres are making sure that mail gets through to 1,112 temporary shelters across the north-east of Japan, with mail that cannot be delivered being returned to senders. Deliveries into the total evacuation zone around the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear plant, which was crippled by the earthquake and tsunami and has been leaking radioactivity into the surrounding environment, have been put on hold. "Here in Tokyo, we thought that the Tohoku staff must have been devastated but they were pushing ahead, even though they had lost everything themselves," said the Tokyo spokesman. "That may be a Japanese virtue, but also, as we were only privatised three years ago, most of our staff started as government officials," he added. "As we entered government service, we pledged to work for the public. I believe that feeling – that commitment to the public – continues to influence the staff."

Disaster strikes

This is exactly the sort of commitment shown in Ishinomaki. "I was delivering mail when the earthquake happened," said Yoichi Kawashima, a letter carrier based at the Ishinomaki branch. "I had just got off my motorbike when the ground started to shake. I've experienced lots of smaller quakes in the past and you get into the habit of closing the lid on the box on the back of the bike, but this one was very different. I noticed the force of the quake turning the handlebars of the bike. I was about 40 metres away from a new house and could see it shaking violently from side to side." He went on: "I thought the earthquake would only last for a couple of minutes, so I waited, but it went on and on." He added: "It was as if I could hear the sound of the earth moving beneath my feet. My motorbike fell over. I realised this was not a minor tremor."



A homeless woman comes forward to collect her post from Yoshinori Shoji; others look on, hoping to be next.

Avoiding shattered roof tiles and sections of the road that had succumbed to liquefaction, Kawashima attempted to return to the office. He opted to take the coast road as he thought the most direct route – through a tunnel – would be too dangerous. Taking back roads because the main routes were jammed with traffic, he was close to the seafront when he noticed the Kitakami River was very low. “I didn’t think much of it until I met someone in a car coming in the other direction, who wound down his window and told me to get out of there very quickly as a tsunami was coming,” he remembered.

As Kawashima headed for the emergency evacuation centre closest to the branch, he could see the first big waves sweeping along the roads. He ran up the stairs of a large apartment building until he reached the fifth floor, from where he could see the waves breaking over the levees of the river and rolling through the town around him. There were constant aftershocks and a series of waves tore through buildings and carried cars away.

Post in the dark

Anticipating that the emergency centre would be full, Kawashima decided to wait for a lull in the waves and

try to make his way back to the post office. When he arrived, water was already up to a height of 50cm throughout the building and it was getting dark as night fell. It was also bitterly cold. He met up with his colleague, Fujiwara, and about 70 people, who were stranded on the second floor of the office. “I had been in the office on the second floor when suddenly the whole building started shaking,” said Fujiwara, who has worked for Japan Post for 30 years. “It got stronger and stronger and went on for a long time. It would calm down and then suddenly start moving again. All the desk drawers opened and the steel safe started to move. We tried to close the drawers but they just came open again. A cupboard fell over and window glass broke.”

When the initial tremor passed, Fujiwara went down to the first floor to see if anyone was hurt and the extent of the damage. There were a series of aftershocks, he recalled, and it was snowing. As they waited, one of his colleagues received a message on his mobile phone that a 10-metre-high tsunami was coming. Not all the letter carriers had made it back to the office, so Fujiwara decided to stay behind. “Then, we saw the wave coming towards us from the train station,” he said. “I hadn’t thought that a wave would be able to reach us.”



.....
Post office, Shizugawa, Minami Sanriku



.....
**Amongst the rubble,
Higashimatsushima, Miyagi
Prefecture**

The water level began to rise very quickly, so staff began putting letters, parcels and personal items on the shelves in high cupboards. Of the 70 people marooned in the building, around 10 were customers. "As it began to get dark, we went up to the second floor," said Fujiwara. "There was no electricity, it was cold and dark and the aftershocks were still going on. We all went into the office canteen and gave out the emergency equipment that we had, but there was not enough for everyone. We had around 12 blankets, 10 sleeping bags and some helmets. Nobody lied down and we all just sat in the chairs all night. I don't think anyone slept."

It was three days before Fujiwara could speak with his wife and two daughters, who were in another town out of danger's reach. Kawashima only got through to his family after he had first been airlifted out of the post office by an air force helicopter four days later and then walked home.

Prior to the disaster, the office delivered around 95,000 mail items to some 85,000 households daily and was the headquarters for 15 post offices in surrounding towns and villages. And, while the main office was still standing, the water had destroyed all the electrical equipment – computers, fax machines, phones, automated sorting machines – and the fleet of 30 lorries and 50 motorbikes used to deliver post.

New start

"It took three days for the water to start to go, but, after that, we started to get ready to resume deliveries," said Hidemi Onodera, office head. "It took us a few days to get everything ready, but we started deliveries again on March 18, limiting them to important documents, recorded deliveries and small packages." Everything had to be delivered on foot or by bicycle, while the loss of communications made it difficult to contact staff. "People wanted to post letters because they had

no way of communicating with people outside," said Onodera. "There were no phone lines, no electricity, no computers to send emails and no mobile phone links, but people wanted to let family and friends know that they were safe." Such was the demand that a table was set up at the main gate from where people could send mail.

Post also began to flow into the town. Tom Hammerlund, an American, has taught in Sendai for eight years but went to stay with his Japanese wife's family in Morioka after the earthquake. His mother-in-law wanted to send supplies to her relatives in Ishinomaki. She would normally have used a courier service but instead chose Japan Post's *Letter Pack* service. This enables the sender to put items up to 4 kg in a special A4-sized envelope, which costs 500 JPY (6.18 USD) to send anywhere in Japan. "Before the earthquake, I questioned the need for postal services, especially in the digital age," Hammerlund said. "Now, if postal services were not here, people would be in trouble. Other courier services are either not operating or operating at limited capacity."

It is a similar story in Minami Sanriku, a further 80 km north of Ishinomaki, where Jun Sasaki's home narrowly avoided destruction when the tsunami streamed up through the valley from the seafront. Even though his smallholding is 3 km from the ocean, the waters stopped less than 100 metres from his front gate. "We went for about 40 days without any post. Then I had a phone call to say I had some letters and they began to come regularly after that," said Sasaki, a retired official with the Miyagi prefectural agricultural cooperative. "Now it's back to normal and we get deliveries every day. There were two post offices in Minami Sanriku but they are both gone now, so we have to go to Yokoyama," he added. "We know staff have been working very hard to get things back to normal and get deliveries through.

They're putting a lot of effort into it and we think they're doing a great job in a very difficult situation."

Infrastructure destroyed

A letterbox that serves Shizugawa, a suburb of Minami Sanriku, is just 20 yards from Sasaki's front gate, but the post office on the waterfront is a shell. Security cameras and lights are left dangling on wires from their sockets. An air-conditioning unit is hanging loose and wall sheeting has been ripped away. The cash machine has gone and the ceiling is festooned with cables hung with seaweed, fishing rope, a child's satchel and items of clothing. Inside are mounds of rubble, plasterboard, broken glass, chairs, twisted metal, fishing buoys. A computer screen. A huge tree – a full eight metres long and complete with roots. Tatami mats, unrecognisable parts of machinery that may have belonged to this post office but may equally have been brought here from somewhere else in this ravaged town. The storeroom has twisted steel shelves holding post-office documents and manuals. A bag of sweets lies amid the debris. A huge safe has had its door ripped off. It lies on its side with a thin crust of mud on the inside, while the door lies on the other side of the room.

Back in Ishinomaki, Akihiro Nikaido is postmaster of the city's post office and says counter operations are 30 per cent busier than before the quake struck. "When we open at 9 am, there are people lining up outside waiting to come in," he said. Sadly, many of them go directly to the counter for insurance claims and are here to find out about compensation for the loss of their homes, their possessions and members of their families. Today, Masakazu Saijo is fielding their queries. Saijo lost his own home in the quake, Nikaido says, and, as he was

living in emergency accommodation with little water and no shampoo, he decided it would be easier to cut his hair very short.

Workmen are removing damaged shelving from the rear of the office and the walls are bare. The office equipment is all new and a box of replacement savings-books is awaiting collection. The company introduced emergency measures immediately after the scale of the disaster became apparent and permitted customers to withdraw their savings without providing bank books or cash cards. So far, there have been around 22,000 such transactions.

Nikaido points out another of his staff, who has also lost his home but has begun to rebuild it on the same spot. One of the women at the counter worked at a sub-office that was completely destroyed so has been transferred here. Another of the young men lost both his grandparents and still spends his free time looking for their bodies. Despite all their problems – and many of them are living in emergency shelters – they are all immaculately turned out in their smart grey and orange uniforms, smiling and chatting with the customers. "People come to this post office from all over the district because they know we can get everything done here," said Nikaido. "The staff are all qualified and well trained. When people, who have been affected by this tragedy, come here, they are surprised at how the staff are able to put on a brave face and go about their jobs."

Both Julian Ryall, a freelance journalist, and Rob Gilhooly, a photographer, are based in Japan. They spent two days in Miyagi Prefecture to research this story.



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Inside the Shizugawa post office



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Toshiya Fujiwara was stranded with 70 employees and customers in the Ishinomaki post office during the earthquake and tsunami.

EMS on fast track in Asia-Pacific

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As Posts around the world continue to cast a worried eye at declining volumes, the Express Mail Service (EMS) is bucking the trend, especially in one part of the world.

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By
Jane Daly

EMS is designed to be faster than regular mail but what sets it apart from other expedited postal delivery services is its globally cooperative nature. Its network of 168 designated operators from UPU member countries covers 180 countries. Posts, which offer the service on a voluntary basis, are both customers and suppliers to each other and are thus interdependent for success. In addition, all must rely on sound infrastructure and reliable, accessible and affordable transportation links within the EMS countries. The service can deliver both documents and parcels, with a weight range from 0.5 to 30kg.

The latest figures reveal that global EMS exports surpassed 51 million items in 2009, an increase of 6.4 per cent on 2008's total of 48 million. The traffic's lion share is generated in the Asia-Pacific market, accounting for 78 per cent of all items. This is followed by North America at 11 per cent and Europe at six per cent.

Driving growth

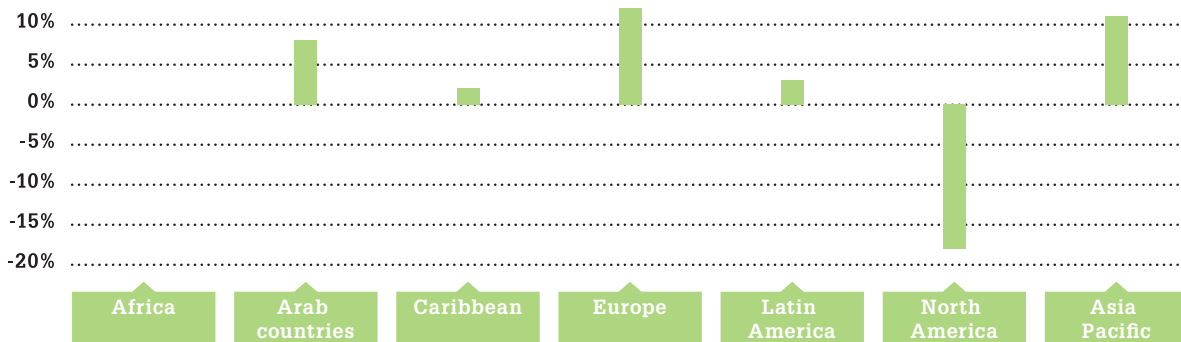
Brian Hutchins, EMS Unit head at the UPU, says that a number of factors have contributed to the growth of

EMS globally and particularly in Asia-Pacific. "As more consumers access the internet and use the global marketplace, the overall demand for shipping increases," Hutchins explains. "Shipping is a substantial part of the cost of these transactions, so any savings that EMS can offer will be valued by both the consumer and the seller."

Mohd Effendi Muhammad, Pos Malaysia's deputy general manager, international operations, says EMS's attractive pricing structure meets regional business and consumer demands for cost-cutting and tighter budgets. "EMS is a complete solution for customers choosing a reliable, speedy service and wide delivery coverage at a very reasonable price. Rates are competitive when compared to those charged by the private sector," he said.

There is also the sheer size of this region to contend with. It is comprised of 36 countries, of which three are industrialised, 19 developing and 14 least-developed. The market covers an area of 31 million square kilometres and has a combined population of nearly

Trend of exports by region, 2009



North America and Africa showed the biggest decrease; the increase in the other regions ranged from 8 to 12 per cent.

Source: EMS Unit

3.8 billion inhabitants. China alone passes the one-billion population mark. As its economy grows, more of its citizens and businesses are able to purchase goods and/or to sell to other markets. This has a knock-on positive effect on the growth of shipping in general and EMS traffic is expected to follow suit.

No limits

A market that goes beyond physical borders, which enables consumers to shop around the world, requires a global supply chain. "Manufacturers are looking for the best-priced parts and economical labour and many companies are moving to the Asia-Pacific market," says Hutchins. "As a result, both consumers and businesses are increasingly ordering products and parts to be shipped from Asia-Pacific."

Hutchins notes that the evolving miniaturisation of products is also having a favourable impact. "As parts get smaller and lighter, shipping them from more cost-effective supply chain locations like Asia-Pacific becomes an increasingly attractive option for businesses, rather than producing the parts themselves," he says.

Pos Malaysia's Muhammad says influences driving growth in Asia-Pacific are music to the ears of EMS providers. "According to China Market Research Group, e-commerce in China grew 100 per cent last year to 70 billion USD. Led by Taobao, a popular Chinese website similar to eBay, the industry is expected to grow another 60 to 80 percent this year," he explains. "And according to Tuan800, a website that tracks Chinese industry, China's emerging consumers are expected to boost the sector tenfold this year to 3 billion USD."

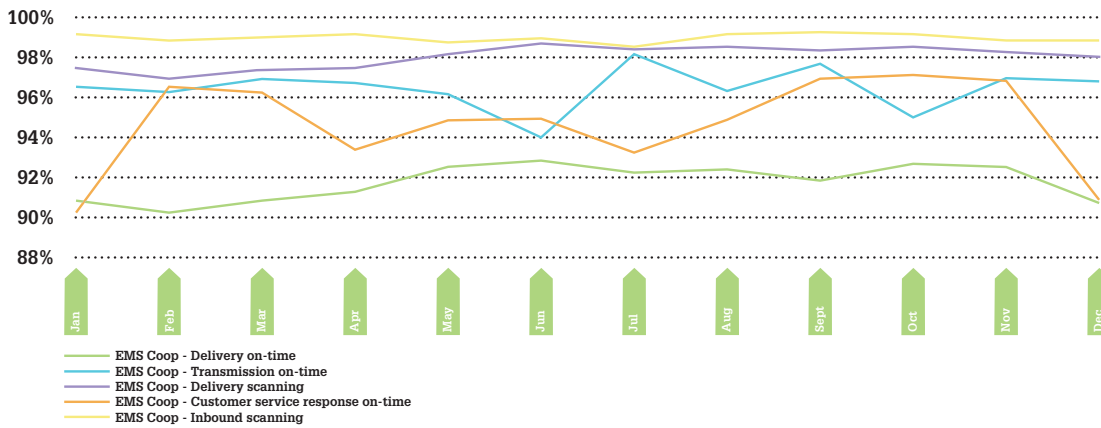
Performance pays

The EMS Cooperative's *Pay for Performance* scheme links payment to the quality of the delivery service. Currently 90 EMS operators participate, all of whom have improved their levels of performance since implementing the plan.

Due also to the publication of independently-audited performance figures to all members and peer pressure, there has been a steady but marked overall improvement in delivery performance from 80.5 per cent on time at the beginning of 2004 to 87.9 per cent in December 2010.

Furthermore, nearly 160 EMS operators (145 EMS Cooperative members) now have tracking systems in full use and exchange data with their partners. The quality of tracking data has also improved considerably over the same period. The EMS Cooperative membership made the exchange of tracking data mandatory from 2008.

Status of EMS in Asia-Pacific, 2010



Source: EMS Unit

Operators honoured

In May 2011, a record number of EMS awards were presented, rewarding performance in 2010. A total of 44 awards were given, up from 38 for previous period. Fourteen gold awards went to: Azerbaijan, Barbados, Chile, Macao, Hong Kong, El Salvador, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Slovenia and Switzerland. These recipients met a set of strict criteria, including on-time delivery in 95 per cent of deliveries.

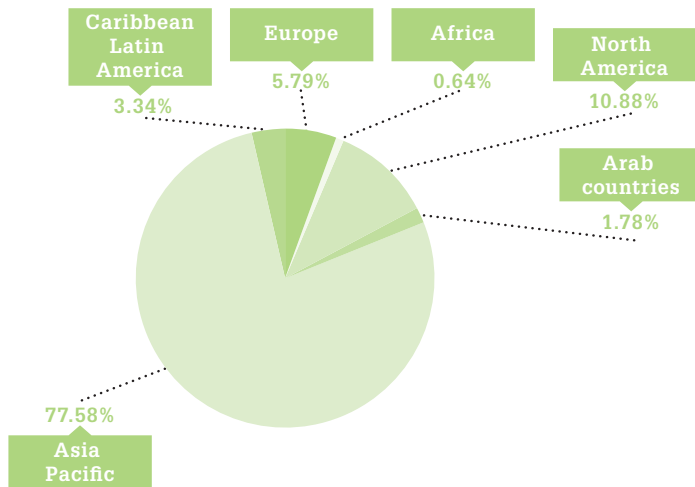
Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Moldova, Mongolia, Portugal, Senegal, Slovakia, Spain, United States, Uruguay, Sweden and Viet Nam received silver awards. Belgium, Belize, Mauritius, Netherlands, St. Lucia, China, Greece, Ethiopia and Thailand took bronze.

Three special customer-care awards were also handed out to Japan, Ukraine and Hungary. **RP**

In both Malaysia and Thailand, small to medium-sized businesses have contributed to the growth of EMS traffic. In Malaysia, inbound volumes increased by 8 per cent and outbound by 4.5 per cent in 2010. "Pos Malaysia's courier arm, PosLaju, has the biggest market share in the domestic courier business," Muhammad said. Thailand Post's Suchada Buddharuksa, executive vice president, marketing and business development, is seeing similar results. "The Thai economy focuses on tourism and export. Small and medium-sized enterprises from these sectors are our major customers," Buddharuksa said. Consumer trust also plays an important role. "With its characteristics of reliability, visibility – thanks to track and trace – and reasonable prices, EMS in Thailand has become a brand of choice in the customers' mind," she adds.

For continued success in Asia-Pacific, sustained improvement is critical. In the fast-growing courier industry, dominated by both international and local players, designated operators face stiff competition. In some cases, they also are striving to overcome service-quality issues of the past. "Every operator realises the importance of service reliability and speed to win customers' trust," says Muhammad. "Most EMS operators in Asia-Pacific have comprehensive delivery networks in towns and rural areas. While EMS rates are very competitive compared to couriers, we need to add value with service features, especially on-time delivery, compliance of scanning events, on-time data transmission and status updates and reliable customer care."

Export traffic by region, 2009



The majority of EMS traffic was generated in Asia-Pacific. In second place: North America. Source: EMS Unit

Cooperation

Offering a guiding light is the EMS Cooperative. Created in 1998, it promotes cooperation among Posts offering the service. It plays an important role in encouraging all members to continuously improve performance. Its *Pay for Performance* scheme releases payment for EMS delivery to member Posts only on proof of final delivery. This makes proper item scanning, tracking and status updates essential.

The Cooperative also sets and measures members' performance using five key indicators. Standards are set at 95 per cent for on-time delivery and at 98 per cent for delivery tracking; inbound item tracking; timely transmission of tracking data; and prompt, quality customer-service responses. Countries that meet or exceed standards based on annual performance-award criteria are ranked as bronze, silver or gold (see sidebar).

"The standards we set are based on the same five key performance indicators that we know attract customers to EMS," says Wendy Eitan, Cooperative chair. "Performed correctly, these ensure customer satisfaction through speed, the ability to know where a package is in the system and a price that's more attractive than courier services."

Eitan says satisfying customers' needs is essential to securing and protecting market share from private competitors and this is an important factor behind the region's success. "Countries generating large EMS

volumes in Asia-Pacific have put a lot of focus on meeting customers' expectations and are really striving to achieve market and cross-border performance standards," she says.

Future opportunities

Along with the UPU's EMS Unit, the EMS Cooperative also fosters innovation that serves the global supply chain from end to end. As outlined in the Cooperative's business plan for 2013–2016, this includes developing improvements to end-to-end tracking, measurement of the transport segment, electronic transmission of customs information, new e-commerce services – such as return service and cash-on-delivery – and improved customer-service response.

"Looking at just one end of the pipe is no longer an option," Hutchins sums up. "Customers want to focus on their business and let someone else handle the shipping, payment, returns or transfer of money between Posts. That's what we do best. Our member countries can be the innovators, making EMS the flagship to bring customers together from around the world and meet their demands for speed, reliability, innovation and trust."

Jane Daly is a communications specialist based in Canada.

Four digits improve mail processing

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A new postcode system has just been launched in Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Postal e-services are also on the rise. The Post's president, Mohammad Yasin Rahmaty, explains more.

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By
Faryal Mirza

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Photos: Kamran
Jebreili/AP

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Afghanistan Post launched new postcodes in March 2011. Why was this necessary?

Mohammad Yasin Rahmaty: Before the postcode's launch, letter carriers found it very difficult to find addresses and deliver to the rightful addressee. Due to migration from villages to cities, we had to renew our postal-network design and processes. Postcodes facilitate processing and delivery to customers.

With the UPU's technical help, we designed and implemented new postal codes, which comprise four digits and extend up to delivery post-offices around the country.

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How did customers react to the launch?

The launch went well. We had asked counter staff to guide customers on how to write the postal code on envelopes. Since the launch, we are monitoring all items deposited in provincial post offices at the counter and received by the general post office (GPO) in Kabul. Around 90 per cent of domestic mail-items now have the new postal code on the envelope. We also see the new postcodes written on international mail items.

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How are postal staff dealing with processing mail with the new postcodes?

We have had good feedback from them and are satisfied with the progress so far. We had trained





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**Street scene near Pashtunistan
 roundabout, Kabul, April 2011**

them before the launch and installed the relevant data on their computers. Before the launch, we also telephoned all the major post offices in the provinces and wrote them a letter, explaining how to introduce the postcode.

A new postcode department in our postal administration was also set up to monitor these activities. The department employs staff trained to introduce the postcode to the provinces and districts. Three people from this department are based at the Kabul GPO. There is also one staff member in each major province, of which there are six.

What challenges lie ahead?

There are no street numbers or home numbering in Afghanistan. This is quite a challenge when

faced with implementing postcodes beyond the delivery office. We have to extend the postal codes up to the villages and to more districts, which have not yet been included in the postal code system, because of customer needs. We need street and home numbering for delivering postal items to the rightful addressee.

There are plans to introduce home and street numbering in Afghanistan within the next three years. Once this happens, we will revise and improve the postal code but the first step has been taken. Improvements to the system will follow.

What are the Afghan postal market's main characteristics?

Our major customer is the govern-

ment, which accounts for about 85 per cent of our custom. Business clients make up about five per cent, while householders account for a minor share. Popular services include traditional letter-post items, small packets and express mail service or EMS, as well as e-services from our telekiosks.

We offer our services mainly to the government and businesses because of the advancement of telecommunications. Most people in Afghanistan use mobile phones and other tools, like emails, to communicate.

Who uses the telekiosks?

Customers without internet access at home. They come to the post office to check and send emails or use our e-services. The latter is

called e-Post and provides money transfers and salary payments, among others, in 11 provincial capitals. We also train students on computers. The telekiosks are mainly found in Kabul but there are nine telekiosks in as many city post offices. We plan to increase their numbers in the provinces as well.

Which e-services are popular?

Hybrid mail, which was recently introduced. It is popular because it is sometimes difficult to send mail physically from some provinces due to security issues. Three provinces provide hybrid mail with traffic to and from Kabul. Facilities to receive and send such emails between post offices exist in 11 provinces. This will increase to 18 within the next year. We recently concluded a deal with an Afghan telecom company to provide internet services to post offices in 18 provinces.

How does hybrid mail work in Afghanistan?

It depends on the customer. If they can write an email, they can use a telekiosk to do so and pay for the service at the counter. The email is printed out and delivered by a letter carrier. If the customer does not have the ability to write email, a special employee can help, who

writes the message for the customer and ensures that it is sent to the addressee.

In which areas does Afghanistan Post hope to improve?

We have to respond better to customer demands. For this, we need more cooperation and technical assistance from the UPU to improve our services and achieve our rightful position on the market.

We have drafted a new postal development plan, whose main objective is to improve the quality of postal services. The expansion of our product range is another goal, as well as introducing new services to meet market demand, including other e-services.

Another objective is improving the track-and-trace of EMS items. We offer EMS to customers in all our provinces but tracking and tracing is not taking place everywhere because of the internet's non-availability.

The post in brief



Afghanistan Post

- 464 post offices in 34 provinces
- 34 cities and 381 districts or delivery zones
- 10,000 post-office boxes
- 925 postal officials with 585 contractual staff
- Core business is accepting and delivering letter post items and parcels
- Afghanistan's population is approximately 28 million of whom four million live in Kabul, the capital city.

Elements of new postcode

- Four digits
- First two digits indicate the province and run from 10 to 43
- Last two digits indicate the city and district delivery zone
- City delivery zones are numbered 01-50
- District delivery zones run from 51-99



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Amanollah, a postal employee, helps a customer open his post box at the Kabul GPO

.....
Afizeh (2nd from left) sorts outgoing domestic mail



Putting a stamp on AIDS

Nearly 3 million individual stamps are circulating within and across borders this year to draw attention to 30 years of the AIDS epidemic and the importance of continuing to prevent new HIV infections.

By
Rhéal LeBlanc

At least 20 Posts around the world have joined an initiative to issue stamps and other philatelic products to commemorate the landmark year. Participating Posts include: Belarus, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Croatia Post (Mostar), Fiji, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, New Caledonia, Malawi, Moldova, Pakistan, Slovakia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uruguay. The United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) has also issued three stamps for sale in the UN Offices in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

"Stamps – these formidable mini works of art – are noble ambassadors that leave important messages in the hands of all who receive mail," said Edouard Dayan, UPU director general. "The UPU is proud that so many Posts have responded to our call to raise awareness of critical issues like HIV. Once again, this initiative goes to show the incredible outreach value of postal services worldwide."

Since the start of the epidemic, 60 million people have become infected with HIV and nearly 30 million people have died of AIDS-related causes.

Most Posts have designed their own stamps. Others are doing it differently. Ukrposhta, Ukraine's designated operator, has launched a national competition inviting artists to design a stamp on the theme of 30 years of AIDS. The winning stamp will be issued on World AIDS Day, December 1, 2011.

Many stamps were issued in June to coincide with the 2011 High Level Meeting on AIDS, which took place at the UN in New York from June 8–10. The meeting provided a platform for UN member states and partners to review progress and chart the future course of the global AIDS response.

"[Issuing stamps] is an excellent and important initiative to get people around the world talking about AIDS," said Michel Sidibé, executive director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). "One of the greatest barriers in the AIDS response is the stigma and discrimination surrounding the disease. By initiating dialogue around HIV, these little stamps will play a big role in helping to break down some of those barriers."



In June, the UNPA counter in the General Assembly building in New York is also hosting a display on the AIDS stamps prepared in conjunction with the UPU.

Global campaign

The philatelic initiative is part of the global HIV campaign launched in 2009 by the UPU, UNAIDS, the International Labour Organization and UNI Global. The campaign relies on the global postal network's vast outreach to draw attention to the importance of HIV prevention.

More than 23,000 post offices around the world have carried out awareness campaigns using posters, postcards, a website (www.unaids.org/preventHIV) and public events to inform people about HIV. The campaigns have potentially reached millions of people. In Cameroon alone, the Post estimates that campaign materials are viewed daily by 36,000 people.

This is the first time that Posts worldwide have made a concerted effort to draw attention to AIDS, but philately has been raising awareness about the disease for years. A quick survey of the UPU's World Numbering System reveals that more than 60 different AIDS themed stamps have been issued since 2002, when the database was created.



www.wnsstamps.ch
World Numbering System

www.upu.int/en/aids_stamps
Slideshow:
AIDS stamps through the years

A nose for the Post

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Amina Moussa Wais has worked at the counter for three years at a busy post office in Djibouti.



Amina Moussa Wais takes the bus to work as it is too far to walk, she says. During the journey, she might be spotted with her nose buried in a detective novel, her genre of choice. "You could say that reading these stories is my hobby," she reveals.

The 27-year-old woman is single and lives at home. For her, the Post is a place where human exchanges take place. This thought propelled her to applying for a job on the counter staff in the first place.

Three years later, she packs a busy schedule, based at Djibouti's main post office. Six days out of seven, she serves some 100 customers daily. She divides them into nationalities – Djiboutian or foreign – but, given her hobby, it is not clear if she has acquired a talent for spotting the criminal among them.

Taking home

Wais's monthly salary is nearly 370 EUR (523 USD) a month, in a country where the gross domestic product per capita is an annual 3,200 EUR (4,525 USD). She works 36 hours a week and has no paid holidays.

Her clientele ranges from the very old to the very young. She provides a number of postal services, including domestic and international money transfers.

"However, the most popular service with private and business customers alike is paying for postage to send letters and parcels," she says.

Apart from selling ordinary and express mail services, Wais's customers can also buy top-up cards for their mobile phones or pay their telephone bills at the counter.



facts & figures

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Djibouti	
Official languages	Arabic and French
Country population	870,000
Total area	23,000 km ²
GDP per capita	4,525 USD
Currency	Djibouti franc
Main industries	exports coffee, salt, hides, dried beans, cereals, other agricultural products and wax
Main postal services	express and business mail services, philately, ordinary mail
Number of post offices	10

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By
Faryal Mirza
and
Djibouti Post

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Photo:
Djibouti Post

Digest

Botswana

BotswanaPost has opened a new international mail exchange centre. Built at a cost of 7.2 million USD, the centre uses cutting-edge technology to process both domestic and international mail. It can handle up to 36,000 letters an hour. **JD**

Brazil

Correios has created a Braille postal service for its blind customers. Correspondence addressed to or sent by one of the 150,000 blind people living in Brazil is forwarded to a processing centre at Belo Horizonte, where the writing is converted to Braille or vice versa. The aim is to enable blind people to communicate more easily with service providers and public authorities. **JD**

Canada

With help from **Canada Post**, the police have seized over 40,000 counterfeit stamps and 10,000 reused stamps from corner stores in Montreal and Toronto. **Canada Post** says it lost 2.6 million CAD (2.7 million USD) in revenues from the illegal activity. Five people were arrested and three charged with counterfeiting. The accused could face fines of up to 1 million CAD or up to five years in prison. **RP**

Estonia

Eesti Post reports the number of orders received by its e-invoicing service has tripled over the past year, largely thanks to new functions geared toward the public sector.

The service, launched in 2009, allows invoices to be sent via email in PDF format. **RP**

France

As part of efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, **La Poste** is launching an ecological letter service for private and business customers. Available from October 1, 2011, mail items will be transported by train and delivered the second day after posting.

Another new service is the online letter, prepared by the sender online and then printed by **La Poste** for next-day delivery. Senders will be able to generate their letter from anywhere in the world up to 7 pm local time, for delivery to an address in France the following day. **JD**

Germany

Deutsche Post DHL reported a 6.9 per-cent rise in revenues in the first quarter of 2011, to 12.8 billion EUR (18.2 billion USD). The company reported strong growth in DHL and stable mail revenues thanks to a 'dynamic' parcel sector. The group reported a 27 per cent increase in net profits from the same period last year, to 325 million EUR. The company expects the economic recovery and increased international shipping, particularly in Asian markets, to bring further growth. **RP**

Great Britain

The European Commission (EC) has authorised 180 million GBP (291 million USD) in British government aid for the **Royal Mail**. The subsidy will help unprofitable rural offices

stay open, says an EC press release. It also approved up to 1.15 billion GBP in 'working capital' assistance, allowing Post Office Ltd to hold enough cash to continue its services.

The EC said the subsidy will enable the Post Office to "continue performing its fundamental social and economic role...without unduly distorting competition". **RP**

Switzerland

Swiss Post reports a total profit of 910 million CHF (1.03 billion USD) in 2010, an increase of 25 per cent from 2009. The company reports that its financial services division, PostFinance, was responsible for 61 per cent of that growth. In other postal services, efficiency improvements and an increase in parcel volumes driven by the economic recovery countered lower mail volumes, although the post offices and sales unit continued to operate at a loss. **RP**

United States

The **United States Postal Service** will undergo cuts to operations to save 750 million USD annually. These include closing seven district offices and offering voluntary retirement to employees with over 25 years of service. Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe said that the 'leaner and less bureaucratic structure' would continue to meet the needs of employees, customers and the industry. **RP**

PHILANIPPON links the world


By Toshihide Suzuki, Japan Post

Japan Post will host PHILANIPPON 2011, the Japan world stamp exhibition, in Yokohama, Japan, from July 28 to August 2, 2011, jointly with the Philatelic Federation of Japan and Japan Philatelic Society Foundation.

The exhibition will promote the spread of philatelic culture, especially among

children through the theme of 'Stamps Link the World'. Visitors can look forward to many stage events and hands-on workshops as well as the customary international competition and framed collections treasured by some of the world's leading collectors. Also planned is an exhibit of animation and manga-themed stamps from around the world.

Visitors can also view and purchase unique stamps issued in Japan and other countries at stamp-selling booths in which some 50 postal operators and some 60 stamp dealers from around the world are expected to participate.

 www.philanippon.jp



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