

UNION POSTALE

Moving the postal sector
forward since 1875

August N°1/18



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POSTAL
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UNION POSTALE

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, featuring international news and developments from 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. It is distributed widely to the UPU's 192 member countries, including thousands of decision-makers from governments and Posts, as well as other postal stakeholders. All regard it as an important source of information about the UPU and the postal sector at large.

UNION POSTALE is also published in French, Arabic, Chinese, German, Russian and Spanish.

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Second Extraordinary Congress • *Addis Ababa*

3 to 7 September 2018
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

UPU is holding its second-ever Extraordinary Congress, calling together some 1,000 delegates from its 192 member countries in Addis Ababa this September. They will take crucial decisions regarding the future of the UPU and the postal sector, including:

- Implementation of the UPU's Integrated Product Plan and the Integrated Remuneration Plan
- Reform of the UPU
- Reform of the system applied to contributions by UPU member countries
- Sustainability of the UPU Provident Scheme

Government ministers and other senior decision-makers from around the globe will also participate in a special **Ministerial Strategy Conference September 6 & 7**. They will discuss how the postal sector can better serve nations and citizens and their conclusions will form a basis for the future UPU strategy.

Please visit the UPU website for more details on the event and information for participants.

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“ The UPU and the world’s postal operators are not distant cousins, but rather, close relatives linked by the universal service obligation and a unanimous determination to ensure the success and profitability of this industry. ”

Taking the postal industry forward one step at a time

While on an extended mission to destinations in the Pacific region and south-east Asia, I found myself reflecting on the robustness of the global postal network. In all my meetings, across numerous time zones, industry leaders, ministers and heads of government provided telling insights enabling me to clarify my own vision for this dynamic business.

Everyone I met had a story to tell about the Post and, just as importantly, about the transformational role played by the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in today’s environment. What is clear is that a “one-size-fits-all” solution is unworkable. Tailored approaches are needed, as are efforts to promote e-commerce and to ensure that the journey of any postal item is as frictionless as possible.

In Vanuatu and Fiji, problems revolve around not only low volumes of postal business owing to those countries’ small populations, but also the devastating impact of natural disasters. I pledged that the UPU would never turn away from helping the region and highlighted our increased engagement through training fellowships and workshops. The UPU is also cooperating with the Japanese government on improving regional disaster risk preparedness.

In Viet Nam, some 7,000 kilometers from Vanuatu, I noted that, while the postal story involved a different set of challenges, there was also a narrative of renewal and successful reform. Speaking to officials, I learned that the immense speed of technological change and market demands in the country had compelled the Post to adapt quickly, a challenge from which it did not shy away.

Today, 10 years after separating itself from telecommunications, Vietnam Post is making a profit and is the country’s largest employer, with 42,000 employees. The country’s postal network also has 13,000 service points, each serving an average of around 7,800 people. Such a successful transformation should serve as an example to others, challenging them to achieve similar goals. Changes on the ground, I was told, are also tied to the UPU’s own successful reform.

This insightful observation leads to a much wider realization about the current situation. The UPU and the world’s postal operators are not distant cousins, but rather, close relatives linked by the universal service obligation and a unanimous determination to ensure the success and profitability of this industry. Our points of reference are often the same, many of our experiences are shared, and for this reason, the tools employed for overcoming obstacles are similar. One such tool is reform.

We are quickly coming up on September’s Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where we will discuss several topics that are crucial to the sustainability of our Union, including reform of the Union, the Integrated Product and Integrated Remuneration Plans, reform of the system applied to member countries’ contributions and UPU’s Provident Scheme. I hope these discussions encourage profound change across the industry to meet market needs, and generate the effectiveness and efficiency needed to take the industry forward.

Bishar A. Hussein, Director General,
Universal Postal Union

EDITOR'S NOTE

FORWARD THINKING

This is the last issue of **UNION POSTALE** before UPU heads to its Second Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

There, member countries will spend a busy five days deliberating on topics that are vital to the future sustainability of our Union and the postal sector. It is for this reason that we have focused our cover story on the Extraordinary Congress and what it hopes to achieve.

Readers will also find out what to expect from this year's UPU World Postal Business Forum, which will be held 10-11 October 2018 at POST-EXPO in Hamburg, Germany. That event looks into the future, preparing Posts to seize opportunities in the digital age.

Happy reading and I hope to meet some of you in Addis Ababa.

Kayla Redstone, Editor-in-chief



Name
Mark Prosser

Directorate
Logistics

Position
**Head of the English
 Translation Service**

Nationality
British

If you read any UPU document in English, chances are that it has passed by the careful eyes of Mark Prosser and his team in the English Translation Service.

As head of the service, Prosser is responsible for overseeing all incoming and outgoing English translation and editing work. In 2017 alone, the group had a hand in translating and editing some 1,865,000 words of English text submitted via 2,266 requests.

Prosser started with the UPU as a junior translator hired to help with work for the 1999 Universal Postal Congress in Beijing, expecting to stay only for the duration of his three-year contract. He has recently celebrated his 20th anniversary with the UPU.

Even after two decades at the UN specialized agency, Prosser says the work has held his interest. Though his managerial duties keep him occupied most of the time, he still looks forward to translating and editing documents himself whenever he can.

“The Post is evolving and we’re dealing with new challenges now, so the terminology is always changing,” he explains.

The type of work his team does has also changed, notes Prosser. While French is the UPU’s official language, English is now

considered a working language and more staff choose to write in English. This means more editing work for his team – nearly 80 percent of all requests, to be exact.

Prosser is not only skilled with words, he is also a talented photographer and can often be seen snapping photos around the UPU’s International Bureau (IB) with his iPhone. He even shot the winning image in a photo competition for UPU staff.

“The IB is an interesting building filled with art and some original features from its construction in the 1970s. But you can find beauty in any building,” says Prosser.

His winning shot featured some of the colourful, but often overlooked flora on the IB rooftop terrace.

“A good photo is all about changing your angle,” he explains.

See the winning photo, along with other finalists, on the next page. **KR**

Hidden corners of the IB

Staff at UPU's International Bureau (IB) in Berne, Switzerland, were asked to wake up their inner artists and let their imaginations discover the unseen corners of their workspace from behind a camera lens. Their photos were displayed in an exhibition at the IB and the following images represent the top 13 selected by a vote open to all staff and visiting delegates.



M. Prosser | Reflections



M. D'Apice | Le Pégase en noir et blanc



L. Biolley | Green light at the garage



A. Barreto | The light from within



S. Alexander | UPU in color



T. Brinkley | Conference Room A(lps)



Winning Photo, M. Prosser | Ecosystem: Plant life on the roof terrace



T. Brinkley | Gilt on Red Leather



P. Parampath | Morning light with Pegasus



A. Barreto | Autumn welcome



A. Barreto | Legends of the post



M. Prosser | Stairwell



M. Prosser | Mermaid

Asia-Pacific mission proves no country left behind

UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein's visit to the Pacific this past June affirmed that no member – no matter how remote – will be forgotten in the organization's mission to modernize postal services worldwide.

"On behalf of the UPU, it is my responsibility to ensure that all members of the Union are given equitable treatment and attention in helping them develop and modernize their postal services. My visit here was to gain first-hand appreciation of issues affecting the region so as to enable the UPU to design better intervention programmes where required," Mr Hussein said in his opening remarks at the UPU's subregional meeting on important policy



UPU's Director General with Fiji's President Jioji Konrote

"On behalf of the UPU, it is my responsibility to ensure that all members of the Union are given equitable treatment and attention in helping them develop and modernize their postal service"

issues for the Pacific Island countries in Nadi, Fiji.

The UPU-sponsored capacity-building meeting provided important information on the topics for the upcoming Extraordinary Congress, as well as on postal financial service opportunities, UPU disaster risk management activities, the Quality of Service Fund, and available training through the Trainpost platform.

Mr Hussein highlighted the UPU's concrete activities for the subregion this cycle, such as providing more than 40 fellowships for Pacific countries to attend UPU workshops and launching a least developed country action plan, involving equipment procurement and training for each country.

This occasion marked the first-ever visit by a UPU Director General to the Pacific Islands.

Leadership support

While in the region, the Director General took the opportunity to meet with high-level leaders.

During a meeting with Fijian Acting Prime Minister and Attorney General, Mr Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Mr Hussein expressed the need for Fiji and countries in the subregion to become more involved in UPU activities.

Mr Sayed-Khaiyum urged the UPU to tailor training courses and other technical assistance to issues specific to the subregion. He pledged greater participation in UPU forums and at the same time urged the Union to consider holding more meetings in Fiji to enable more countries in the subregion to attend.

"We are small countries in size and population and with low volumes of postal business; the UPU should take into consideration these situations when addressing issues of the subregion," he said.



UPU's Director General with the President of Vanuatu

A meeting between Mr Hussein and Vanuatu's President, Pastor Obed Moses Tallis, focused on the upcoming Extraordinary Congress. President Tallis offered his country's full support for UPU reforms to be discussed during the September meeting.

He also encouraged other small islands to participate in the UPU's decision-making processes, asking the UPU in turn to support the subregion with challenges in areas such as natural disasters, transportation, communication and energy.

Mr Hussein emphasized, "It is important for your country and the Pacific Islands in general to be represented at the Congress, where they will be able to articulate to members the problems facing them."

Mr Hussein later went on to attend the Asian-Pacific Postal Union Executive Council meeting in Viet Nam, where he met with the country's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Vu Duc Dam. Mr Dam joined President Tallis in backing UPU reform.

"In Viet Nam, we have effected major reforms in our postal services and we have seen the benefit of this," Mr Dam said, adding that the UPU should spearhead global change for the postal business. **DD & KR**



At the Viet Nam meeting

A PIECE OF POSTAL HISTORY TOURS THE GLOBE



UPU is taking its historic collection of international reply coupons (IRCs) on the road.

Next stop: **Macao**

IRCs allow a recipient in a foreign country to send a reply letter free of charge. The sender simply purchases an IRC from the post office, includes it with their international letter and then the sender can exchange the coupon for the minimum postage for an international priority or unregistered airmail letter.

Though little known when compared the postage stamp, the IRC has been around for more than 110 years. The first Universal Postal Congress in 1878 took note of a growing need to find a solution for prepaid international letter post. It was there that 13 postal administrations decided to exchange prepaid reply cards.

More countries began using the cards, leading the 1906 Universal Postal Congress to add the service to the UPU Convention. The first IRCs were sold in 1907. Their design has changed numerous times since then – with nine different models, 21 iterations and three special anniversary editions – making them an attractive collector's item.

Raising awareness

In an effort to raise awareness of the philatelic product, the UPU has taken it on a tour around the world, showcasing it at stamp exhibitions, seminars and training workshops far and wide.

“We have drawn up a development plan to promote IRCs among collectors and make new generations aware of IRCs as a secondary philatelic product akin to postal stationery,” says Olfa Mokeddem, manager of UPU's Philately and International Reply Coupons Programme.

The philatelic product will be showcased during the 35th Asian International Stamp Exhibition taking place in Macao, China, in September 2018. Interested collectors will be able to purchase a special edition of the IRC created on the occasion of the event, along with UPU service stamps. These will be available at a booth shared with the United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA).

The 35th Asian International Stamp Exhibition will be held from 21-24 September at The Venetian Macao Conference and Exhibition Centre. For more information about the Macao event, check out the website: www.macao2018.org.mo **KR**



Above: The first IRC
Top left: Special edition IRC to be sold in Macao

Go GREEN with OSCAR

TEXT: Lovisa Selander, *Sustainable Development Expert, UPU*

INFOGRAPHICS: Sonja Denovski

In 2012, member countries tasked the UPU with providing an online tool for postal operators to measure their greenhouse gas emissions. The result is OSCAR – the Online Solution for Carbon Analysis and Reporting – available free of charge to designated operators of UPU member countries. OSCAR's second annual campaign saw an impressive increase in participation from around the globe.

OSCAR builds on the work carried out by the UPU since 2008 to perform an annual inventory of greenhouse gas emissions from its designated operators worldwide. With the launch of the online platform, designated operators have access to a user-driven, interactive tool that is tailor-made for the postal sector and allows them to analyze the climate impact of their operations.

The second OSCAR campaign was finalized at the end of 2017 based on greenhouse gas emissions data gathered in 2016. The results show an increasing interest in sustainability and carbon accounting among UPU designated operators. Eighty-three countries connected to the platform in 2017 compared with 58 the year before, representing a 43 percent increase.

Who uses OSCAR?

OSCAR is used by Posts around the globe. The latest campaign saw a particular increase in users from Eastern Europe and Northern Asia, but the geographical distribution has stayed even during the two years the solution has been in use.

Emissions

In total, OSCAR users reported 44 million tonnes of CO₂e for 2016.

CO₂e, or "carbon dioxide equivalent", is used to describe the impact of different greenhouse gases in a common unit. For any quantity and type of greenhouse gas, CO₂e signifies the amount of CO₂ that would have the equivalent global warming impact.

This figure is expected to increase as OSCAR users continue to refine their carbon reporting and include additional emission sources in their analysis. The infographic on page 13 compares this figure to the global emissions of a few other sectors, as well as to the world's combined emissions from industrial activities.

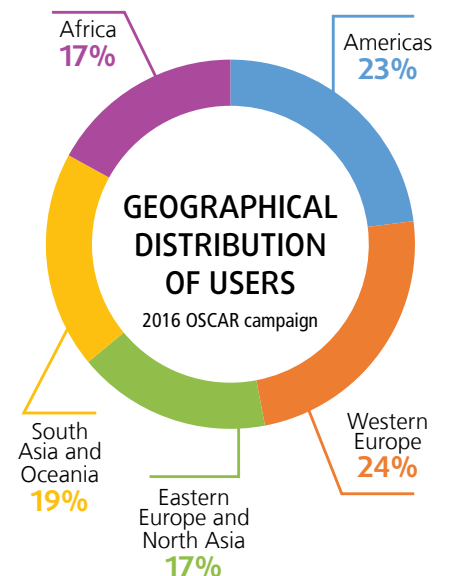
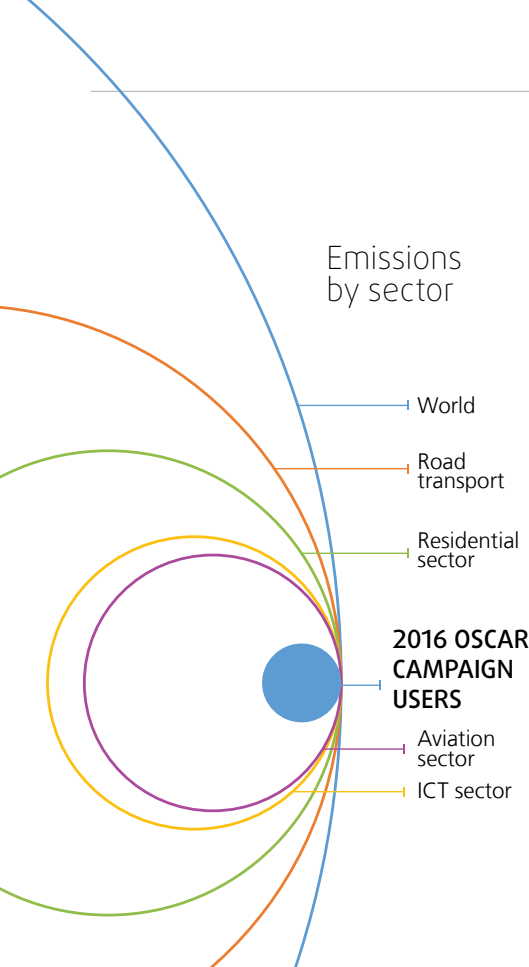


Photo: unsplash.com/@mahiruysal



The data indicates that, on average, a designated operator is responsible for 0.1 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions originating from industrial activity in its country.

Sustainability in operations

OSCAR also gives users a chance to share information on their ongoing sustainability efforts. This qualitative section of the tool

was completed by some 80 percent of active users during the last campaign, providing useful indicators about postal operators' environmental priorities and strategies.

Around half of the respondents report having environmental strategies in place that include an environmental management system, annual sustainability reporting, and targets for emission reduction. Slightly fewer have signed the UN Global Compact.

When it comes to environmental activities, the most popular ones as reported by OSCAR users are:

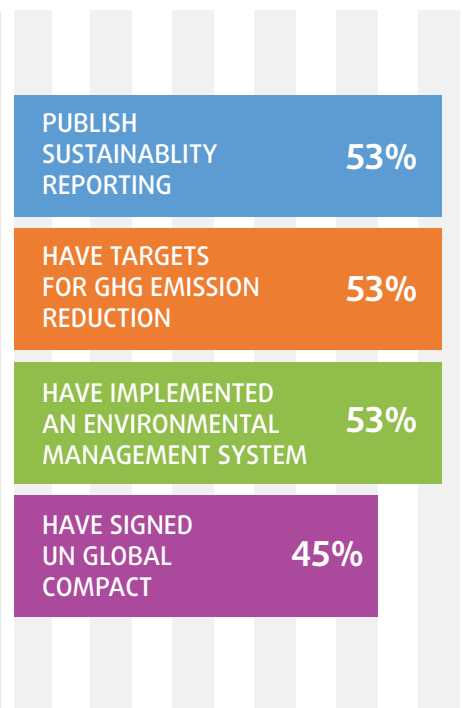
Engagement with suppliers and/or green procurement:

- Waste management and recycling
- Eco-driving
- Alternative vehicles
- Water management and water-saving measures
- Saving schemes for electricity and heating
- Producing renewable energy (with solar power being the most popular choice)

Others are exploring new, innovative packaging solutions, and some are already offering climate-neutral delivery options.

Take part in this year's OSCAR campaign!

The 2017 OSCAR campaign is currently under way. **Until 1 November 2018**, designated operators can log on to OSCAR to report their 2017 data. Several new features have been added this year: updated



guidance materials and resources in all six OSCAR languages to assist with data reporting and results interpretation, along with a more transparent display of the methodology behind OSCAR, as well as the possibility to export graphs as image files for use in reports and presentations.

Submissions are validated on an ongoing basis, meaning that users that finalize their reporting early do not have to wait until the end of the year for their results.

For more information, visit <https://oscar.post> or e-mail oscar@upu.int.

We look forward to your contribution! **LS**

Testimonial: BotswanaPost

In what way does having access to tools such as OSCAR benefit your organization, and what is the main reason for your engagement?

Reducing our carbon footprint will deliver savings that support both our environmental and financial goals. The biggest sources of greenhouse gas emissions are the items that cost BotswanaPost a lot of money, such as fuel, electricity, raw materials, business travel and waste disposal. For example, the organization is now opting to use diesel vehicles over petrol and making efforts to ensure that service of vehicles is done on a timely basis.

OSCAR helps the organization to know the amount of carbon its business releases into the atmosphere; as a result, the organization is coming up with innovations to curb carbon emissions, for example, by using hybrid systems such as solar and grid to power operations.

How do you utilize the results of OSCAR?

BotswanaPost uses the results to sensitize and create awareness among its employees about carbon emissions and the importance of caring for the environment. Results are also made public in order for the public to scrutinize our environment programme. The senior management also uses the report to make decisions on fleet management, the purchasing of new fleet vehicles, etc.

What role do you think sustainability will play for your organization, and for the postal sector at large, in the future?

As consumers become increasingly informed and proactive, only companies with comprehensive, credible and transparent sustainability programmes will be rewarded in the marketplace. **LS**

Looking to Addis

Delegates from UPU's 192 member countries are preparing to meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the Second Extraordinary Congress. They will set their sights on designing a UPU for the future.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone



Photo: The African Union Commission headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | Source: 123rf.com

The Universal Postal Congress held each four years is UPU's supreme decision-making body and the only one able to make changes to UPU's Acts.

The last Universal Postal Congress held in Istanbul in 2016 had set before it a heavy agenda of items key to securing a sustainable future for UPU. Member countries spent three weeks in committee and plenary sessions deliberating, even forming ad hoc study groups working toward building consensus.

After much effort, the Congress ultimately decided some topics – including the implementation of the Integrated Product Plan (IPP) and Integrated Remuneration Plan (IRP), UPU reform and several proposals related to the financial security of the Union – be revisited at a 2018 Extraordinary Congress.

Delegates from government, regulators and designated postal operators will meet between 3-7 September at the African Union Commission Conference Centre in Addis Ababa for only the second-ever Extraordinary Congress called in UPU's 144-year history.

"We may have our differences in opinions, we have our different views, but at the end of the day we have a common destiny and a common responsibility to make sure that the organization moves forward and produces results," said UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein during the last meeting of UPU's Council of Administration ahead of the Extraordinary Congress.

Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz added: "We should be guided by the fact that we cannot achieve good results in an environment that is rapidly changing if we remain static. Change is not only necessary, but inevitable. Change should be a permanent feature of our work."

What is an Extraordinary Congress? A Congress called by or with the support of at least two-thirds of UPU's member countries, which takes place between regular Universal Postal Congresses. The first Extraordinary Congress was called in 1900 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the UPU.

Changing with the market

One topic deemed too important to wait until the 2020 Congress was UPU's Integrated Product Plan (IPP), which aims to help Posts take advantage of the growing e-commerce market by proposing changes to UPU's portfolio of postal services as defined in the Acts of the Union. At the moment, this refers to letter post, parcel post and Express Mail Service (EMS) items.

"The goal of IPP is to modernize the UPU suite of physical products and services to meet emerging e-commerce and supply chain requirements," says Wendy Eitan, UPU's E-Commerce and Physical Services Integration Coordinator.

"The changes are geared toward meeting the needs of modern customers, who are tending to send goods rather than documents," she adds.

The 26th Universal Postal Congress in Istanbul already approved the first phase of the plan, which had member countries implement several changes meant to reflect a growing number of goods being shipped in the letter post stream via small packets. These changes included classifying postal items by content and applying a standardized barcode on all small packets containing goods by 1 January 2018.

They may sound like simple changes, but they will play a crucial role in facilitating e-commerce. For instance, the barcode will be used to communicate vital electronic advanced data (EAD) between supply chain partners, such as Airlines and Customs, to ensure goods can pass through the mail stream uninterrupted. This puts member countries ahead of the curve when it comes to new advanced data legislation scheduled to come into effect by 2021.

The Extraordinary Congress will be asked to decide on proposed changes to the future physical services portfolio based on extensive studies carried out since the Istanbul Congress.

Modern remunerations

Integrated Remuneration Plan (IRP) provides responses to product changes proposed in the IPP. But it has an even broader goal: to modernize, rationalize and integrate the UPU's remuneration systems to ensure cost coverage while keeping postal services affordable and competitive.

"The UPU remuneration systems have continuously been reviewed and evolved not only to reflect changes in the products, but also changes in customer's behaviour and in how customers are using those products,"

says Altamir Linhares, who manages UPU's Remuneration Governance, Development and Integration programme.

Postal products are currently remunerated via different systems – terminal dues for letter post and inward land rates for parcels. These rates have developed independently from one another over the years and have been reviewed and evolved separately. With customer use of the letter and parcel streams beginning to overlap, their related remuneration structures can no longer be considered in silos.

The Istanbul Congress recognized that there were some areas of improvement in the current remuneration structure, giving UPU a mandate to modernize, rationalize and integrate UPU's remuneration systems to ensure rates keep pace with changing market needs.

IPP & IRP will:

- Modernize the portfolio of UPU products and services to ensure they meet current customer needs;
- Set out new and progressive requirements for advanced data to ensure postal items move through the supply chain as quickly as possible;
- Modernize the remuneration systems to ensure cost coverage whereas keeping postal services affordable and competitive;
- Create a framework for regularly evaluating the product and service needs of the postal market



Photo: The iconic statue of the Lion of Judah in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | Source: 123rf.com



Cover Photo: African Union Conference Centre building | Andrew Moore

The IRP lays down a roadmap for the development of an Integrated Remuneration System, which will be proposed for adoption by the 27th Universal Postal Congress in 2020.

Renewing UPU

Members will also take several decisions directed toward the sustainability of UPU, including reform of the organization's structure and working methods.

The 1994 Seoul Congress introduced the organization's current structure, including the Council of Administration (CA) and Postal Operations Council (POC), to allow the Union to take faster decisions. Reform has been on the minds of member countries ever since, with each successive Congress instructing the CA to study ways to further improve the Union's efficiency.

Reform was raised again during the 2016 Congress, where member countries decided to implement several changes to UPU, including the introduction of a new set of working principles to increase the efficiency of its governmental and operational pillars – the CA and POC. It also established an ad hoc group to advise on further reform measures.

After much study, consultation and deliberation over the last two years, that ad hoc group found consensus on several points – some affirming the Union's current structure and others suggesting improvements.

They agreed that UPU should retain its role as an intergovernmental organization, continue with the functional separation between UPU's CA and POC and that the CA should continue to have enhanced authority on cross-cutting matters. The ad hoc group also agreed that the coordinating body that exists between the two councils should be formalized.

Proposed changes focus primarily on the make-up of the councils, particularly the POC. The ad hoc group found that improvements could be made to ensure that, in addition to qualified geographical representation, equitable geographical representation be reflected in the POC's membership, as is already done in the CA. Guided by this principle, underrepresented

Why is reform needed?

- Promote faster decision-making and greater efficiency
- Ensure equitable representation of member countries and regions
- Secure the effective management of resources
- Enhance the role and relevance of UPU

regions would be provided with additional seats, increasing POC membership from 40 to 48 countries. The election process would also be simplified.

Sustainable financing

Changes to UPU's financing will also be discussed during the Extraordinary Congress, with a view to securing the future sustainability of the organization.

While the volume of UPU's work has continued to grow, its funding has remained tightly restricted. The Istanbul Congress established a task force to study potential improvements to the contribution system of

UPU member countries. Member countries are expected to decide on proposals based on the task force's findings in Addis Ababa.

They will also discuss the UPU's Provident Scheme, which has accumulated a funding deficit over the last several years. Another task force dedicated to matters relating to the Fund has proposed solutions for its stability and long-term sustainability.

Reaching policy-makers

The Addis Ababa meeting provides an opportunity to gather postal policy-makers for another purpose: a Ministerial Strategy Conference. Ministers responsible for the Post and heads of UN organizations will gather September 6 and 7 to discuss preparing the postal sector to deliver socio-economic development, in the presence of government representatives, regional bodies and postal leaders from the UPU's 192 member countries.

They will consider the best policies, investments, regulations and partnerships to ensure the Post can unleash its potential in service delivery and profitability. Conclusions from the conference will feed into UPU's future strategy. **KR**

MINISTERIAL STRATEGY CONFERENCE

Theme: Gearing up the postal sector to drive socio-economic development

- Developing effective policies for a strong sector
- Encouraging investments in the postal sector
- Regulation in the age of digital innovation
- Sustaining the relevance of the sector through partnerships

Behind the Scenes

UNION POSTALE caught up with two of the key faces behind Congress preparations, who are ensuring that UPU is ready to hit the ground running in Addis Ababa. UPU's Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz is at the helm of the Secretariat's Congress Organizing Committee, while Ziyen Gedlu, Communication and International Relations Chief Officer, Ethiopian Postal Service, has played a pivotal role in coordination in the host country.

Pascal Clivaz

Deputy Director General, UPU

What is the role of a UPU Congress?

Congress is UPU's supreme decision-making body and the only place where we have the chance to meet the plenipotentiaries of UPU's 192 member countries, while at the same time meeting with other postal stakeholders. They gather at Congress every four years to take decisions on the future of the UPU – setting the course of its strategy and priorities and making any necessary changes to its governing rules, the Acts of the Union.

Which postal stakeholders can we expect to meet at a UPU Congress?

Each government sends plenipotentiary representatives who are enabled to take decisions on behalf of their country. In the delegations, we tend to meet representatives from government, regulators and designated postal operators. But we also see a variety of different stakeholders who come to participate in the discussions.

There are of course the restricted unions of each region, international organizations and other UN bodies, and even private organizations who are part of UPU's Consultative Committee.

Although these observers cannot vote, they have an opportunity to share their views and ensure that we can take into consideration the needs of all stakeholders in the postal supply chain. Our engagement with the industry has encouraged us to look deep into the organization and to continually evolve and improve. UPU is the only organization that is able to bring together all of these players in one place.

What changes have you noticed since the Doha Congress (2012) and where do you see UPU's Congress going in future years?

The major change is the level of attention given to UPU discussions. This time even the President of the United States has paid attention to our organization.

Congress tends to discuss the system for remunerating the delivery of Post between UPU member countries. It also decides on UPU's work plan. However, the postal

industry is changing so rapidly that we can always expect to discuss a variety of different topics which surface based on market needs.

For example, during the 2016 Congress in Istanbul we discussed opening up UPU's products and services to the wider postal sector and as well as modernizing UPU's portfolio of products to ensure that all member countries can participate in e-commerce. Member countries also decided to implement changes to the working methods of the UPU to ensure that it can respond to the sector's quick pace of change.

I'm proud to say that we made great strides as a Union during the last Congress and I expect we will do the same at the next. We need to be forward thinking and we need to be agile. The subjects we discussed in Istanbul and those we will touch on during the Second Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa should have us see a dynamic, reliable and totally renewed UPU by the time we meet in Abidjan in 2020.

Why is there a need to organize the Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa in September?

We had a very ambitious agenda ahead of us when we met in Istanbul in 2016. That Congress discussed a number of subjects that were critical to the future sustainability of our Union and the postal sector itself. They included Reform of the UPU, the Integrated Product Plan, the Integrated Remuneration Plan, UPU's pension fund and the system applied to member countries' contributions.

We made significant headway there and we were able to take steps forward on some of these matters. For example, the implementation of several reform measures related to UPU's working methods and the decision to move ahead with the first phase of the Integrated Product Plan. However, member countries decided that these areas needed further study to ensure a fit-for-purpose UPU, but they agreed these decisions were too important to wait until the 2020 Congress. That is why the Congress decided to hold an Extraordinary Congress in 2018, with Ethiopia generously stepping forward as host.

What are your expectations of the Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa?

The agenda for Addis Ababa is one of the most important in UPU's long history and Congress can lay the foundation for a better future for the global postal network.

I expect these five days to be long ones, as the subjects we will discuss are highly complex. But I am optimistic that we will achieve consensus. The groups tasked with studying these areas have been meticulous in their work, defining every need and exploring every possibility to make proposals that will suit the entire UPU membership.

We have already been able to achieve the consensus of the members of UPU's Council of Administration who approved the proposals to move ahead to the Extraordinary Congress.

If we apply determination and a spirit of solidarity as a Union, I believe we can achieve real change.

Do you think we will continue organizing Extraordinary Congresses in the future?

An Extraordinary Congress is just that – extraordinary. It is only called when countries decide it is absolutely necessary to meet between Congresses. This is only the second time countries have called an Extraordinary Congress. The first one was called nearly 120 years ago.

Changing the interval of regular Congresses is a different matter altogether. There has been discussion about the possibility of having all 192 member countries meet every two years for a "Midterm Congress", but this idea is still under discussion. That decision will need to be made by the Union's members, taking into consideration any financial or strategic impacts on UPU's work.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for the hard work that went into making this Extraordinary Congress possible. Without their tireless dedication, we would not have been able to achieve all we have in the two years since Istanbul. **KR**





Ziyen Gedlu

Communication and International Relations Chief Officer, Ethiopian Postal Service

Why did the Ethiopian Postal Service volunteer to host UPU's Second Extraordinary Congress?

The Ethiopian Post had a number of reasons to make this decision. First of all, it is a great capacity-building and learning journey for us. At the Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa, we are looking forward to learning from other postal operators' best experiences and practices in the sector. This Congress is also a great opportunity for our country to improve its image in the global arena by attracting the world's attention to our ability to organize such an important event.

Apart from the Ethiopian Postal Service, who else is involved in the preparation for the Extraordinary Congress?

The Ethiopian Post is not alone in the preparation process for the Extraordinary Congress. We have a lot of support and assistance from the Ethiopian Ministry of Communication and Information

Technology, the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ethiopian Federal Police, the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ethiopian Information Network Security Agency, the Addis Ababa City Administration Mayor's Office, the Ethiopian Revenues and Customs Authority, National Bank of Ethiopia, and other national stakeholders.

Why did UPU member countries decide to organize the Extraordinary Congress?

A UPU Congress is the biggest postal convention where the Union's member countries discuss the results of their work, pass a whole range of resolutions about future programs, and choose the strategic direction the Union will pursue. Normally, a UPU Congress is held once at the end of every four-year cycle.

At the previous Congress in Istanbul during 2016 delegates had many important items on their agenda, such as the Integrated Remuneration Plan, the Integrated Product Plan, the UPU Reform, the contribution system, and UPU Provident Scheme. They could not reach a consensus on these matters and, therefore, they decided to host an Extraordinary Congress to make the relevant decisions that could not wait another four years.

What are your expectations from this Extraordinary Congress?

The Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa will last for only five days and member countries will have to talk about a number of critical subjects. Ministers and senior decision makers will discuss how the postal sector can help drive the economic development reaching relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals. They will also review the implementation of the Istanbul World Postal Strategy.

It is a very difficult task to cover all of the matters within such a short period of time. However, I am confident that if delegates are disciplined and efficient in their proceedings they will be able to finish their remaining work and will find a consensus on these subjects. I also hope all participants will enjoy their stay in Ethiopia, as many of them will be visiting our country, and Africa in general, for the first time.

This Extraordinary Congress is very special to us and we are paying close attention to its preparation. Ethiopia is delighted and proud to host this Extraordinary Congress because we will be the first African nation to organize such a major event. **OM**

Having dreamt of working in the postal industry since early childhood, Sudhangshu Shekhar Bhadra, Additional Director General at Bangladesh Post Office, tells **UNION POSTALE** how he has dedicated his life to the Post and started writing books on postal matters.



Combining tough work with passion

INTERVIEW BY: Olena Muravyova
PHOTO: Sudhangshu Shekhar Bhadra

You have dedicated 30 years of your life to working for the Post. What made you choose this industry?

I started my postal career at the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) in 1988. BCS is a huge employer in our country and provides the most prestigious jobs with good benefits and security, and I was craving to have one.

Moreover, I have always cherished a dream to work for the Post because of its undisputable value. Since the very dawn of civilization, we have been dependent on the Post. Wherever you were born, wherever you live or whoever you are, it is impossible to identify your physical address without a post office.

The Post provides a whole range of products and services through its countrywide network. No other public service has such a vast network. The Post is committed to offering fast, reliable, and affordable services to people with different lifestyles and postal workers are proud of serving them. Not only do they provide services to their community but are also engaged with it.

Why and how did you start writing books about the Post?

Writing books about the Post was one of my childhood dreams. I have always known that writing is hard. Writing books about the Post is even harder. However, I believe everyone should make an effort to do

something challenging at some point in his or her life because this shapes our character and makes us appreciate what we have achieved. Writing makes me understand myself better. It also gives me new, deeper respect for other authors and their work. Writing is the best way to share an idea or a story. If it matters to me, maybe it will also matter to others.

I think, most people dream of writing a book but they never do, not because they cannot do this or do not know how, but because they are afraid to even start. An unrealized dream is always safer for them than any action because it could fail.

What postal matters do you write about and which ones are you interested in the most? What inspired you to write Postalpedia 2?

So far, I have written four books, namely Postalpedia 1, World Postal History Postalpedia 2, Dak Bakitto o Dak Sahitto and Chithi Chirantan. The first two books are on postal history, the third one is about distinguished people in the postal sector, and the fourth one is a collection of the most famous letters in the world.

I am predominantly interested in postal history.

“Wherever you were born, wherever you live or whoever you are, it is impossible to identify your physical address without a post office”

Among all other postal matters, this one attracts and interests me the most. Postal history is a study of postal systems and the ways they operate. While visiting different countries I put a lot of effort into gathering as much information on postal history as possible for writing my books.

Inspired by the exciting, yet challenging, journey of writing Postalpedia 1, I realized one single book could not cover all the important milestones in postal history. Therefore, I started working on Postalpedia 2. I was rigorously studying different sources, even the rarest books. I visited postal and philatelic museums in Washington DC, London, Shanghai, and Kolkata, and took part in several philatelic auctions. As a result, I obtained a rich collection of postal materials for writing Postalpedia 2. My goal was to write a book that would become a true companion for postal employees in their daily life to give them practical knowledge on general postal matters. I would consider my life a worthy one if this book fulfilled anyone's slightest thirst for knowledge.

How do you manage to combine your job, working as Additional Director General of Bangladesh Post Office, with writing?

It is a tough task to accomplish. Holding my position at Bangladesh Post, I have to undergo tremendous pressure and workload every day. However, writing gives me peace and harmony. It is a relentless journey towards self-actualization. I also feel the responsibility to share my humble knowledge with others. Therefore, nothing can stand in the way of my writing and I always manage to devote some time every day to this passion of mine.

Could you please describe your contribution to the work of UPU? How are you going to be involved in the upcoming UPU Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

Throughout my postal career, I have been actively involved in the work of UPU. I am the first and only officer of Bangladesh Post to become a UPU Certified Quality Auditor and Consultant. I was appointed Country Project Manager of the UPU Quality of Service Fund (QSF).

“I believe everyone should make an effort to do something more challenging at some point in his or her life because this shapes our character and makes us appreciate what we have achieved.”

I was a Convener of the Preparatory Committee formed for Bangladesh's participation in the 25th UPU Congress in Doha, Qatar in 2012. During the next Congress held in Istanbul, Turkey in 2016, I served as Alternative Plenipotentiary of the Bangladeshi delegation. At the 2017 Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) Congress in Tehran, Iran, and at the 2018 APPU Executive Council Meeting in Da Nang, Viet Nam, I successfully chaired the Postal Financial Services Working Group's meetings. During the 2017.2 UPU POC Session, I was head of the Bangladeshi

“Writing gives me peace and harmony. It is a relentless journey towards self-actualization.”

delegation and the first person to deliver a speech in Bengali at the UPU Headquarters in Berne, Switzerland.

As the Designated Representative of Bangladesh to UPU, I will be supporting the proposal on UPU Reform at the Extraordinary Congress. In my opinion, many important decisions on different work issues have remained pending since the previous Congress in 2016 and I will do my best to work with my peers to find a consensus on them. I believe if we work actively in a coherent and coordinated manner, together we will reach very good work results for the prosperous future of UPU and each of its member countries. **OM**

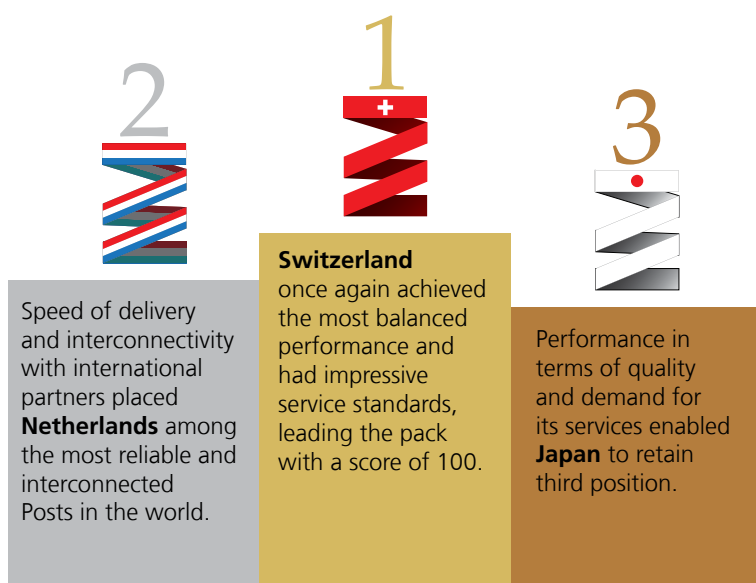
Interview edited for length and clarity.

New UPU report highlights postal network as development engine

The Postal Development Report combines the organization's annual ranking of postal development with new insights into the Post's role in sustainable development.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone

INFOGRAPHICS: Sonja Denovski



The report provides a benchmark of global postal development using UPU's comparative Integrated Index for Postal Development (ZIPD), while giving an overview of regional trends and identifying potential links between postal development and progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"As part of the United Nations family, UPU has a role to play in ensuring its member countries can progress on sustainable development. The Postal Development Report not only helps countries measure the progress of Posts, but also shows clear links between a robust postal network and achievement of the sustainable development goals," said UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein.

Ranking

ZIPD uses UPU's unparalleled collection of postal big data and statistics to measure postal development across four dimensions – reliability, reach, relevance and resilience – providing a ranking of 173 countries.

For the second year running, Switzerland placed first in the comparative index, achieving the top score for its balanced performance, including top volume per capita and a well-diversified portfolio. Netherlands ranked second thanks to its delivery speed and interconnectivity with international partners. The demand for Japan's postal services, as well as their quality is credited for its third-place ranking.

The report also identifies regional champions, with Poland, Singapore, Tunisia, Brazil and Nigeria each leading the way in their respective regions.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable development

The Postal Development Report also compares countries' ZIPD rankings to progress on the indicators of four key sustainable development goals: Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, Goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities and Goal 17 on partnerships for the goals.

With some 31 percent of the world's population—or about two billion people—currently excluded from financial services globally, the report finds that Posts could contribute to the achievement of financial inclusion by leveraging their vast networks. A link between a country's score in the ranking and the percentage of adults with bank accounts is evidence that Posts could have an invaluable role in offering financial services, positively impacting national economies and helping countries maximize growth potential for financial inclusion.

The report demonstrates the ability of Posts to enable the spread of innovation, noting a positive relationship between postal development and robust global value chains.

Deputy Director of UPU Pascal Clivaz said, "The report sends a vital message that the world's posts are a trusted and reliable partner for the private sector and can connect businesses with customers, while encouraging innovation and creativity."

Posts are also a trusted partner for e-commerce. With about 47 percent of the world’s population currently having internet access, this role is likely to be even more prominent in future years. According to the report, countries with high internet usage have shown higher postal development, demonstrating the need for strong postal infrastructure to sustain internet growth as more people shop online.

A strong postal network could help a country respond to natural disasters. The research found that postal infrastructure is relatively more resilient than other national

physical infrastructure, as its operations rely primarily on people. Qualitative data shows that the Post has helped a number of countries recover after a significant environmental event by providing a critical communication channel between governments and citizens. Examples include an 8.8 magnitude earthquake in Chile in 2010, and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013.

Read UPU’s Postal Development Report 2018:
www.upu.int/en/the-upu/strategy/2ipd **KR**

Champions in UPU’s developing regions

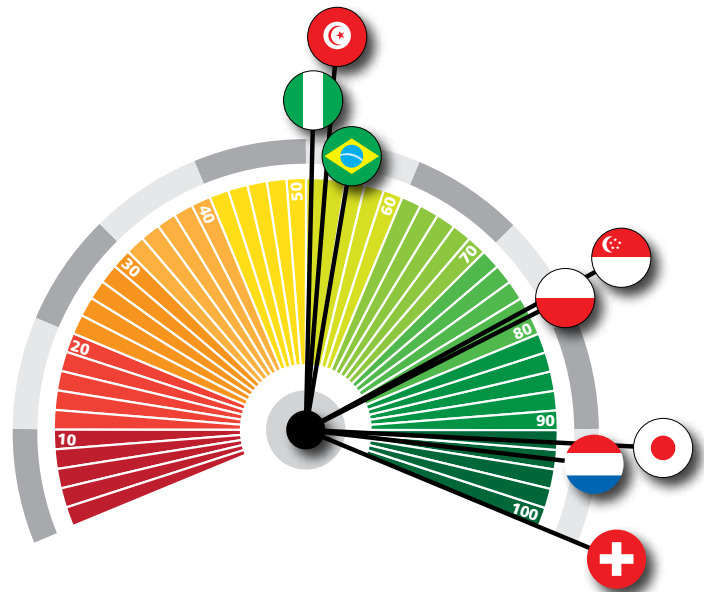
Eastern Europe & CIS: This was the highest performing region, with **Poland** emerging as regional champion and sixth in the overall ranking for its outstanding connectivity.

Asia-Pacific: In addition to being regional champion, **Singapore** also landed 10th place in the overall ranking thanks to its high reliability and reach.

Arab region: **Tunisia** leads as Arab champion thanks to the resilience of its business model despite declining letter volumes.

Latin America: **Brazil** took the regional lead for its postal connectedness and demand for its diversified services.

Africa: Service reliability and connectivity earned **Nigeria** its spot as regional champion for Africa.



Top 3 and regional champions among 173 countries ranked on a 2IPD Comparative index, with the **top scorer receiving 100 points and the bottom receiving 0**

- » Switzerland – 100
- » Netherlands – 93.7
- » Japan – 91.6
- » Poland – 78.3
- » Singapore – 78.2
- » Brazil – 54
- » Tunisia – 51.9
- » Nigeria – 50.86



Students at Al Tatweer Kindergarten discussed happiness and positivity in an Emirates Post Group Innovation Month workshop.
Photo: Emirates Post Group

EMIRATES POST PROMOTES INNOVATION AND HAPPINESS

TEXT: Olena Muravyova

Emirates Post Group (EPG) put innovation front and centre in February, taking part in a national initiative called UAE Innovation Month. Under the overarching theme “Innovation Starts with You”, it carried out a number of activities to promote a widespread culture of creative thinking in the United Arab Emirates.

The Post focused its activities on young people, running a series of workshops for pupils and students. It facilitated brainstorming sessions on artificial intelligence and ways to improve postal services at Abu Dhabi University and the American University of Ras Al Khaimah and organized interactive workshops at Umm Al Momineen Secondary School for Girls in Fujairah and Al Dawha School in Sharjah, where pupils presented science projects on robotics and digital solutions.

EPG also paid visits to centres for differently abled people. “We wanted to underline the active role that differently abled people play in our society and include them in our innovation journey,” said Maya Al Baradie, EPG’s Director of Public Relations. The concept of innovation was explored with children at a centre for the care and rehabilitation of people with disabilities and a club for differently abled people in Ras Al Khaimah. “With the UAE looking into space exploration ... we asked them to imagine how EPG could provide postal services in space. It was a fun visit with games and colouring sessions,” added Al Baradie. The children were also given building block puzzles to inspire them to shape their own futures.

Emirates Post ended the Innovation Month on an optimistic note, arranging a happiness and positivity workshop at Al Tatweer Kindergarten. “Our discussions revolved around a letter’s journey and the happiness created by sending gifts. We explained to children how to use their imagination to find solutions to any challenges they face,” said Al Baradie.

Postal employees were also able to take part in the month-long initiative through a series of interactive lectures. For instance, in cooperation with the Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs, EPG arranged a talk on innovation in elections, at which participants discussed EPG’s electronic voting system and a new application for watching parliamentary sessions online.

According to Al Baradie, the Post will continue to support this initiative to strengthen the country’s position as a global innovation hub. It also plans to invite other designated operators to share best practices. “We are willing to collaborate with postal operators ... and are looking at ways of spreading the important messages of innovation and happiness,” she said. **DM**

POSTI SEEKS SAVINGS WITH SMART BOXES

TEXT: Olena Muravyova

Finnish postal operator Posti and Swedish mobile operator Telia have created a first-of-its-kind smart post-box installed with NB-IoT technology. According to the Post, this innovation is an important step towards its key strategic goal of improving current services with digitalization and developing the digital monitoring of letters and other addressed mail.

NB-IoT is a narrow-band radio technology designed for the Internet of Things (IoT). It has low bandwidth and power consumption allowing multiple sensors to be connected to the network. According to Sami Reponen, Chief Process Officer at Posti, this creates numerous opportunities for the technology's application. For example, it provides real-time information on the post-boxes' use, fullness and state. It reports when they should be emptied and records the time when they are emptied, which is especially important during peak seasons like Christmas when post-boxes fill up faster.

With more than a billion items mailed each year by Posti, this kind of information saves valuable time, preventing unnecessary visits to post-boxes, which helps preserve the environment. Moreover, cutting down on unnecessary trips also leads to significant financial savings.

Currently, Posti is in the development phase of the pilot, focused on data collection and

fine-tuning the hardware and software. "We have not changed any of our processes or procedures yet in order to save costs and resources," explains Reponen. However, with the first sensor installed before Christmas, the results have already been promising.

In the future, every mail carrier will receive all the required information on a continuous basis. Posti also aims to track items centrally and in real time. "Assets can be monitored instantly with predictive diagnostics," Reponen says.

"In addition to cost reductions, we are aiming at improving our mail delivery quality as we are recording when the box was emptied. That enables us to analyze our procedures and processes and improve them if needed," Reponen explains.

Among the numerous advantages of the project are the logistical benefits. Posti's truck fleet comprises approximately 3,300 vehicles whose daily routes make almost six times of the world's circumference or four and a half trips around the world. Therefore, it is crucial for Posti to manage their logistics. The modernized post-boxes could help it do so more effectively.

Not only can the technology be applied to gather information about letters, but it also enables packages to be tracked according to the environmental monitoring data it receives. Posti carefully measures and records any temperature changes so that batteries inside the post-boxes will last longer.

Ten people from Posti, Telia and the technology suppliers are developing the solution. They are currently testing five smart letter boxes equipped with needed devices and sensors in Helsinki and Oulu regions. "This way we will gain the experience from different areas with NB-IoT network coverage," Reponen says. If the trial is successful, the project will be implemented at the national level, modernizing all 5,000 mailboxes.

Jonas Hagner, Director of ICT Operations at Posti, presented the innovation on 23 May 2018 at the LPWA World event held in London. **OM**



Photo: Posti

ALGÉRIE POSTE FOCUSES ON MOBILE SERVICES

TEXT: Fella Rabbahi

Algérie Poste has made it a priority to successfully transition to digital technology and to invest in enhancing its mobile services, with the goal of competing with new stakeholders.

The Post launched its new “BaridiMob” application during the 37th ordinary session of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) Administrative Council in Algeria, which was attended by high-level guests such as UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussen, Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz, the Algerian Minister of Post, Telecommunications, Technologies and Digitalization and Minister of Commerce.

Director General of Algérie Poste Abdelkarim Dahmani expressed his full satisfaction with the new application during the launch, noting that Algérie Poste has made great strides in terms of development and modernization.

This application, essential to building customer loyalty, offers a variety of postal financial and monetary services. Specifically, customers can check their current account balance and view mini-statements of their last 10 Algérie Poste bank card transactions. Customers can also cancel or suspend their card, and make transfers not exceeding 50,000 dinars per day between chequing accounts.

The app also includes geolocation features, allowing customers to locate Algérie Poste ATMs, postal facilities and other useful information quickly and easily.

To use the application, customers need a smartphone (Android or IOS), an Internet connection, an Edahabia card and a “BaridiMob” membership.

First mobile post office

Continuing on the patch of innovation, Algérie Poste also launched its first-ever mobile post office in Algiers this past May.

The office is actually a bus converted into a post office with the latest operational and security equipment, a satellite Internet connection, MobiConnect, and solar panels. Customers visiting the mobile office can access the same financial and postal services offered by a regular post office.

For added security, the mobile post office is also equipped with an anti-intrusion system and surveillance cameras; it can travel across the country, fulfilling its role as a roaming post office in complete safety.

The aim of this initiative is to bring Algérie Poste's services closer to customers for easier access, especially after regular post offices close, allowing those who are out and about to access postal services whenever it is convenient for them.

This initiative is the first of its kind in Africa. **FR**



Photo: Algérie Poste

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a black smartphone. The background is blurred, showing a stack of colorful banknotes and a stack of silver coins in the foreground. The overall theme is financial inclusion and digital finance.

How the Financial Inclusion Global Initiative aims to achieve universal access to financial services

TEXT: International Telecommunication Union

An estimated 2 billion adults worldwide are still without a bank account, but 1.6 billion of them have a mobile phone. 'Mobile money' started in Kenya just over ten years ago, and digital channels have since become a cornerstone of financial inclusion strategies worldwide.

The 'Financial Inclusion Global Initiative' (FIGI) is a three-year programme of collective action to advance research in digital finance and accelerate digital financial inclusion in developing countries. The initiative will capitalize on information and communication technologies (ICTs) in extending the reach of the financial system.

Led by ITU, the World Bank and CPMI – with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – FIGI will enact the manifesto provided by the PAFI guiding principles, the Level One guidelines and the ITU policy recommendations for digital financial services.

FIGI runs two parallel work streams, an 'operational' work stream and a 'knowledge' work stream.

FIGI's operational work stream will provide technical assistance to China, Egypt and Mexico in their efforts to create policy environments able to stimulate financial inclusion. China, Egypt and Mexico have demonstrated strong political will to expand financial inclusion, with large numbers of people standing to benefit. These countries host the ingredients necessary to form case studies of great value to other countries around the world.

FIGI's knowledge work stream will advance research in three fields of critical importance to digital financial inclusion. Three working groups will research three foundational aspects of digital financial inclusion: the relationship between reliable ID systems and financial inclusion; digital payment acceptance by merchants and their customers; and security and trust in digital financial services.

"Recognizing this growing momentum, a variety of international efforts had emerged to provide policy guidance to assist the pursuit of financial inclusion."

Three annual FIGI symposia will showcase national experiences in promoting digital financial inclusion and share the latest findings of the three working groups. The first FIGI symposium in Bangalore, India, 29 November to 1 December 2017, shone a spotlight on India's world-renowned biometric ID programme, Aadhaar, and the foundation that Aadhaar provides for financial inclusion. The Bangalore symposium evidenced that building trust in digital financial services will call for more work to provide an assurance of security.

FIGI is the successor to the ITU Focus Group on Digital Financial Services active from 2014 to 2016, a group which issued 85 policy recommendations for digital financial services and 28 supporting thematic reports.

The proposal to launch this Focus Group came at exactly the right time. We were seeing excellent country case studies emerging, with developing countries leading the way in the use of digital channels to increase financial inclusion. Innovators were finding their feet, developing the business case for digital financial inclusion and gaining an understanding of their ecosystem. ICT and financial-services companies were moving into new competitive space, with each sector determining the competitive advantages that they could draw from their different expertise. ICT and financial-services regulators, too, found themselves in new shared territory – with different mandates and expertise, they had different perspectives on the opportunities and risks related to digital finance.

Recognizing this growing momentum, a variety of international efforts had emerged to provide policy guidance to assist the pursuit of financial inclusion. Our Focus Group was successful in bringing greater cohesion to these efforts.

The Focus Group's work was driven by the collaboration of more than 60 organizations from over 30 countries. Asked what made the Focus Group unique, all of the group's participants highlighted its diversity. This was the first initiative to bring together all the actors working in the interests of financial inclusion.

The greatest success of the ITU Focus Group was the spirit of collaboration that it engendered among its very diverse set of participants. We opened new lines of communication to build a strong understanding of the components of the digital finance ecosystem and where innovation could drive growth and innovation.

In the next phase of our collaboration, we will be certain that we are speaking on the same terms. The DFS Glossary issued by the Focus Group, a joint publication of ITU and UPU, will make a critical contribution in service of this aim.

Our Focus Group responded to a diverse set of challenges by mobilizing a diverse set of expertise. We are moving forward in exactly this spirit. The inclusive, partnership-oriented approach of FIGI is a model of collaboration that ITU is pleased to support. FIGI will demonstrate the cohesive model of behaviour that will be the defining factor in our achievement of United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

UPU's World Postal Business Forum: Helping to seize opportunities in the digital age



World Postal Business Forum 2017

The digital age is changing not only the way we live, but also the way we think about the world. One of the most startling advances is in the way businesses deal with consumers. In the past, potential buyers read advertising and then bought their goods. Today, goods are purchased at the touch of a button. The high-end touchscreen is replacing the high street shop window.

Statistics reinforce the scale of this revolution. One study by Moz.com found that 67 percent of respondents' purchasing decisions were impacted by online reviews; while 28 percent of all online activity is spent on social networks.

These changes have had a profound impact on postal operators and their interaction with customers. In the words of Khalil Daoud, CEO at Liban Post, speaking during the Universal Postal Union's 2018 World CEO Forum in Istanbul, "The greatest challenge for Posts is to think like their customers, to find out what they want, and to find the right products."

How to think like a customer is not, however, the only challenge. Posts in the 21st Century need to combine their duties to the Universal Service Obligation with a modern outlook that demands they match the private sector's profitability and efficiency. Recent years have also seen controversies over remuneration rates and concerns over the delivery of prohibited and dangerous goods.

Held on the margins of the highly successful POST-EXPO, UPU's World Postal Business Forum (WPBF) has always been a forum for discussing the sector's future. This year, it is

tackling some of the tough issues arising from digitalization. The forum's title is "Dealing with challenges, while seizing opportunities in the digital age," and is dedicated to ensuring participants receive practical information on digital developments that can add real value to their businesses.

After an opening session with guest speaker Kenan Bozgeyik, CEO of Turkish Post, the first panel discusses the digital economy, as well as embracing the "Internet of things" in order to develop electronic, financial and physical postal services clustered around data processing. The panel will seek to answer some of the big questions about digitalization and e-commerce: What does the future hold for postal operators and how can they continue to leverage postal big data, while at the same time protecting their reputation and responding to the privacy concerns of customers?

The movement of dangerous goods and the security of postal workers and the public is the subject of the second session. Concerns exist about the possible movement of deadly opioids and other dangerous substances, as well as the smuggling of ivory and other endangered wildlife products. The panel will discuss how these movements can be stopped and whether data mining and machine learning offer sensible solutions.

After this session, participants will have a special invitation lunchtime session where a guest speaker will provide insights on branding and how it can help win investments and customers for the postal sector. This year also sees an emphasis on communications with a session on public relations followed by a special workshop on crisis communications. Leading these sessions is TJ Walker described as the "leading speaking expert/media trainer in the world" by Bloomberg TV, Comedy Central's Daily Show and Fox News.

Alongside these sessions, and in a specially dedicated area that combines the UPU POST-EXPO Stand, as well as a specially prepared "discussion zone", UPU Staff, including the Postal Technology Centre's head of Account Relations and Product Management, David Avsec, will give a series of detailed presentations on postal supply chain integrated solutions, inclusive e-commerce and cloud solutions. **DD**



World Postal Business Forum 2017



POST-EXPO 2018

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UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION'S WORLD POSTAL BUSINESS FORUM

9 – 11 OCTOBER 2018, HAMBURG, GERMANY

Come and join us at the **World Postal Business Forum**, co-organised with Post-Expo.

This year, the UPU is offering an exciting programme that is both more interactive and devoted to giving something back to the participants. Visit the Post-Expo website for full programme details:

www.postexpo.com

Stay abreast of our latest technologies by visiting the **UPU stand on the upper floor**, where our postal experts eagerly await your questions and can update you on matters of postal supply chain management, inclusive e-commerce and cloud solutions.



Why not participate in our selfie stamp photo contest?

Simply take a photo of yourself at the stand and register your entry with your email address. By entering this contest, you could win a travel voucher worth 1,000 Swiss Francs. Results of the winner will be announced via email, after the event.

Travel voucher must be reserved through Carlson Wagonlit, von Werdt-Passage 5 | 3001 Bern (Switzerland) office.

Australia

AUSTRALIA POST has launched a new campaign that reflects the company's vision: putting people first. Created by Australian advertising agency The Monkeys and entitled "Everyone Matters", the campaign features the stories of five ordinary Australians and the role of Australia Post in their day-to-day lives. The campaign was rolled out in July via broadcast, radio, digital, press and out-of-home advertising, as well as social media channels.

Canada

CANADA POST has opened its first three concept stores with self-service shipping stations and parcel drop boxes, enabling customers to prepare and send items at any time. Some of the stores offer additional services, such as fitting rooms where customers can try on clothing they have ordered, and drive-through parcel centres where they can collect mail without leaving their vehicle.

China

CHINA POST GROUP opened a travelling artefacts exhibition to mark the 140th anniversary of "Large Dragons", the first Chinese postage stamp set. The stamps date back to 1878 and feature a dragon, the symbol of the Qing Dynasty. The highlights of the exhibition are a complete "Large Dragons" set from Tianjin Postage Museum and a postbox blueprint from the Second Historical Archives of China in Nanjing. The exhibition will tour Tianjin, Beijing, Yingkou, Yantai and Shanghai.

Costa Rica

CORREOS DE COSTA RICA, supported by the National Council for Trade Facilitation, will launch the Exporta Fácil project, which seeks to create an easy export solution for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Exporta Fácil will simplify customs and administrative procedures for Costa Rican SMEs to help them expand into international markets and send their products via the post to other UPU member countries. The Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal (PUASP) will prepare a pilot plan for the project's implementation.

Finland

POSTI GROUP and Finnish software company Vaisala will launch "RoadAI" – artificial intelligence assisted road infrastructure management – to provide an up-to-date situational picture service in the country by integrating its nationwide transport and delivery operations with an innovative monitoring system. According to the Post, the system will help increase the efficiency of road maintenance, promote the flow of traffic and increase road safety.

Ireland

AN POST made its first parcel delivery via drone at the beginning of July. The flight took place between Roonagh Pier in Mayo and Clare Island and was reported by the Post to be Ireland's first-ever autonomous parcel delivery from the mainland to an island using a drone.

Italy

POSTE ITALIANE has established a partnership with UniCredit, an Italian global financial and banking services company, in the consumer credit business in order to expand its product portfolio. Under the agreement, the Post will promote and sell salary- and pension-backed loans issued by UniCredit. In the future, the offer could also include personal loans.

Japan

JAPAN POST'S Toll Group opened Toll City on 18 July, a logistics hub located in Singapore. The 228 million Singapore dollar (166.7M USD) hub is equipped with the latest technologies, such as driverless vehicles, 3D printing, innovative telematics to track and optimize the road fleet in real time, and smart RFID cabinets to ensure real-time accuracy and accountability of the inventory. The new hub also uses automated handling machines, in-warehouse cycle counting drones, voice picking and intelligent conveyor systems, and exoskeletons for warehouse operations.

Morocco and China

POSTE MAROC'S Barid Al-Maghrib Group has signed three cooperation agreements with **CHINA POST GROUP** aimed at strengthening e-commerce exchanges and facilitating money transfers between the two countries. As a result, China Post's online shopping platform, Ule.com, will sell Moroccan products. The agreements also seek to establish a money transfer service between China and Morocco, enhancing cooperation between the Al-Barid Bank and the Postal Savings Bank of China.

Norway

POSTEN NORGE and Norwegian transportation company Buddy Mobility will develop the "world's first self-driving mail and parcel robot" with innovative control and sensor technology. Once notified that they have received post, recipients can either meet the robot on the street to collect their items or reschedule the delivery to their door at a suitable time. The robot can serve up to 100 households per day. This technology will be tested in Kongsberg until the end of the year.

Netherlands

POSTNL, together with Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport and Dutch company Scarabee, launched a new luggage collection and check-in service for travellers flying from the airport with Turkish airline Corendon. A postal worker can now collect a passenger's luggage from their home, scan and verify it via the airport's systems, and check it in for them.

Philippines

The **PHILIPPINE POSTAL CORPORATION (PHLPOST)** and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) will launch a door-to-door service for pensioners. Under the Proof of Life programme, postal workers will deliver the GSIS Status Verification forms to pensioners aged 80 and over and conduct required identity checks. This year, approximately 66,691 pensioners will benefit from the programme.

Thailand

THAILAND POST has launched an express mail service (EMS) with a 23% reduced rate for parcels weighing from 3 to 20 kilogrammes. The initiative aims to raise annual EMS volumes by 18%. According to the Post, from April to May, EMS volumes already increased by 21% year-on-year. EMS generates more than 30% of the Post's revenue.

Singapore

SINGAPORE POST has signed a three-year logistics and warehousing agreement with the American company Specialized Bicycle Components. The Post will take charge of warehousing and sea freight for the company and handle last-mile deliveries and returns from Singapore and Malaysia.

United Arab Emirates

EMIRATES POST GROUP has organized a series of blood donation drives at its post offices in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah and Ras Al Khaimah. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Prevention's blood bank, the project supports the national "My blood for my country" initiative. According to the Post, "Blood donation drives significantly support the blood inventory at our national hospitals, which in turn, may result in saving the lives of many patients".

United Kingdom

ROYAL MAIL will introduce a "dog awareness" course for mail carriers in September to protect them from attacks. According to the latest data, an average of 44 dog attacks occur every week in the UK, leaving some postal staff with serious injuries. During the virtual course, students will learn how to detect hazards and will pick up self-defence techniques.

All items by Olena Muravyova.



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