UPU UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

Decisions of the 2021 Abidjan Congress

Final texts of the Acts signed at Abidjan, of the decisions other than those amending the Acts, and of the consolidated versions of these Acts

Berne 2022
Universal Postal Union

The present volume should be quoted under the following reference:

Decisions of the 2021 Abidjan Congress

Note on the printing of the texts adopted by the 2021 Abidjan Congress reproduced in this volume.

Bold type appearing in the texts of the Constitution and the Eleventh Additional Protocol thereto, the General Regulations and the Third Additional Protocol thereto, and the Rules of Procedure of Congresses denotes amendments adopted by the 2021 Abidjan Congress.

The declarations made on signature of the Acts and the consolidated versions of the said Acts are reproduced in this volume for information purposes; it should be noted that these texts do not, strictly speaking, form part of the Acts adopted by the 2021 Abidjan Congress.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms used in the Decisions of the 2021 Abidjan Congress

art.	Article of an Act
C number/year	Decision, resolution, recommendation or formal opinion of Congress
CA	Council of Administration
CA number/year	Decision, resolution, recommendation or formal opinion of the Council of Administration
CC	Consultative Committee
CEP number/year	Decision, resolution, recommendation or formal opinion of the Postal Operations Council
Congress–Doc	Congress document
Const. or Constitution	Constitution of the Universal Postal Union
Conv. or Convention	Universal Postal Convention
EMS	Express Mail Service
Gen. Reg. or General Regulations	General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union
IBRS (item)	International business reply service
J	Day of posting of items
M bag	Bag made up by a sender and containing printed matter addressed to a single addressee and for a single destination.
POC	Postal Operations Council
SDR	Special drawing right
UN	United Nations
UPU or Union	Universal Postal Union

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[1] In accordance with article 24.2 of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses, the International Bureau renumbers the provisions contained in the consolidated versions of the Acts of the Union referred to in this document, with a view to correctly reflecting the order of these provisions in the aforementioned Acts.

Eleventh Additional Protocol to the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union[2]

The plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union, having met in Congress at Abidjan, in view of article 30.2 of the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have adopted, subject to ratification, acceptance or approval, the following amendments to that Constitution.

Article I
(Preamble modified)

With a view to developing communications between peoples by the efficient operation of the postal services, and to contributing to the attainment of the noble aims of international collaboration in the cultural, social and economic fields, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the contracting countries have, subject to ratification, **acceptance or approval,** adopted this Constitution.

The mission of the **Universal Postal** Union **(hereinafter the "Union")** is to stimulate the lasting development of efficient and accessible universal postal services of quality in order to facilitate communication between the inhabitants of the world by:

– guaranteeing the free circulation of postal items over a single postal territory composed of interconnected networks;

– encouraging the adoption of fair common standards and the use of technology;

– ensuring cooperation and interaction among stakeholders;

– promoting effective technical cooperation;

– ensuring the satisfaction of customers' changing needs.

Article II
(Art. 1 amended)
Scope and objectives of the Union

1 The countries adopting this Constitution shall form, under the intergovernmental organization entitled the Universal Postal Union, a single postal territory for the reciprocal exchange of postal items. Freedom of transit shall be guaranteed throughout the entire territory of the Union, subject to the conditions specified in the Acts of the Union **and any additional protocols thereto (hereinafter collectively "Acts of the Union")**.

2 The aim of the Union shall be to secure the organization and improvement of the postal services and to promote in this sphere the development of international collaboration.

3 The Union shall take part, as far as possible, in postal technical assistance sought by its member countries.

[2] In line with Abidjan Congress–Doc 39, various changes have been made to the English version of the Constitution to introduce gender-neutral language. As these editorial amendments do not affect the official French text, they are not marked as changes in this volume.

Article III
(Art. 1bis amended)
Definitions

1 For the purpose of the Acts of **the Union,** the following terms shall have the meanings defined below:

1.1 Postal service: all international postal services, whose scope is determined and regulated by the Acts of the Union. The main obligations of postal services are to satisfy certain social and economic objectives of member countries, by ensuring the collection, processing, transmission and delivery of postal items.

1.2 Member country: a country that fulfils the conditions of article 2 of the Constitution.

1.3 Single postal territory (one and the same postal territory): the obligation upon the contracting parties to the Acts of the Union to provide for the reciprocal exchange of postal items, including freedom of transit, and to treat postal items in transit from other countries like their own postal items, without discrimination, subject to the conditions specified in the Acts of the Union.

1.4 Freedom of transit: obligation for an intermediate member country to ensure the transport of postal items passed on to it in transit for another member country, providing similar treatment to that given to domestic items, subject to the conditions specified in the Acts of the Union.

1.5 (Deleted.)

1.6 (Deleted.)

1.6bis Postal item: generic term referring to anything dispatched by the designated operator of a member country (letter post, parcel post, money orders, etc.), as described in the Universal Postal Convention **(hereinafter "Convention")**, the **Agreements of the Union (as referred to in article 22 of the Constitution)** and their respective Regulations.

1.7 Designated operator: any governmental or non-governmental entity officially designated by the member country to operate postal services and to fulfil the related obligations arising out of the Acts of the Union on its territory.

1.8 Reservation: an exemption clause whereby a member country purports to exclude or to modify the legal effect of a clause of an Act, other than the Constitution and the General Regulations, in its application to that member country. Any reservation shall be compatible with the object and purpose of Union as defined in the preamble and article 1 of the Constitution. It must be duly justified and approved by the majority required for approval of the Act concerned, and inserted in the Final Protocol thereto.

Article IV
(Art. 4 amended)
Exceptional relations

1 Member countries whose designated operators **provide postal services on behalf of** territories not included in the Union are bound to act as intermediaries for other member countries. The provisions of the Convention and its Regulations shall be applicable to such exceptional relations.

Article V
(Art. 8 amended)
Restricted Unions. Special Agreements

1 Member countries, or their designated operators if the legislation of those member countries so permits, may establish Restricted Unions and make Special Agreements concerning the **postal** service, provided always that they do not introduce provisions less favourable to the public than those provided for by the Acts to which the member countries concerned are parties.

2 Restricted Unions may send observers to Congresses, to the Council of Administration, to the Postal Operations Council, and to other conferences and meetings organized by the Union.

3 The Union may send observers to Congresses, conferences and meetings of Restricted Unions.

Article VI
(Art. 9 amended)
Relations with the United Nations

1 The relations between the Union and the United Nations shall be governed by the **agreements** whose texts are annexed to this Constitution.

Article VII
(Art. 11 amended)
Accession or admission to the Union. Procedure

1 Any member of the United Nations may accede to the Union.

2 Any sovereign country which is not a member of the United Nations may apply for admission as a member country of the Union.

3 Accession or application for admission to the Union must entail a formal declaration of accession to the Constitution and to the obligatory Acts of the Union. It shall be addressed by the government of the country concerned to the Director General of the International Bureau, who shall notify the accession or consult the member countries on the application for admission, as the case may be.

4 A country which is not a member of the United Nations shall be deemed to be admitted as a member country if its application is approved by at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union. Member countries **whose replies have not been received by the International Bureau** within a period of four months counting from the date of the consultation shall be considered as having abstained. **The aforementioned replies, to be submitted by physical or secure electronic means to the International Bureau, shall be signed by a duly authorized representative of the governmental authority of the member country concerned. For the purposes of this paragraph, "secure electronic means" shall refer to any electronic means used for the processing, storage and transmission of data that ensure that completeness, integrity and confidentiality of such data are maintained during the submission of the aforementioned replies by a member country.**

5 Accession or admission to membership shall be notified by the Director General of the International Bureau to the governments of member countries. It shall take effect from the date of such notification.

Article VIII
(Art. 12 amended)
Withdrawal from the Union. Procedure

1 Each member country may withdraw from the Union by notice of denunciation of the Constitution given by the government of the country concerned to the Director General of the International Bureau, such notice to then be communicated by the Director General of the International Bureau to the governments of member countries.

2 Withdrawal from the Union shall become effective one year after **receipt of** the notice of denunciation provided for in paragraph **1 by** the Director General of the International Bureau.

Article IX
(Art. 21 amended)
Expenditure of the Union. Contributions of member countries

1 Each Congress shall fix the maximum amount which:

1.1 the expenditure of the Union may reach annually;

1.2 the expenditure relating to the organization of the next Congress may reach.

2 The maximum amount for expenditure referred to in paragraph 1 may be exceeded if circumstances so require, provided that the relevant provisions of the General Regulations are observed.

3 The expenses of the Union, including where applicable the expenditure envisaged in paragraph 2, shall be jointly borne by the member countries of the Union. For this purpose, each member country shall choose the contribution class in which it intends to be included**, subject to the relevant provisions** laid down in the General Regulations.

4 In the case of accession or admission to the Union under article 11, the country concerned shall **choose the** contribution class into which it wishes to be placed for the purpose of apportioning the expenses of the Union**, equally subject to the relevant provisions laid down in the General Regulations**.

Article X
(Art. 22 amended)
Acts of the Union

1 The Constitution shall be the basic Act of the Union. It shall contain the organic rules of the Union and shall not be subject to reservations.

2 The General Regulations shall embody those provisions which ensure the application of the Constitution and the working of the Union. They shall be binding on all member countries and shall not be subject to reservations.

3 **The Convention** and its Regulations shall embody the rules applicable throughout **the postal service**. **These** Acts shall be binding on all member countries. Member countries shall ensure that their designated operators fulfil the obligations arising from the Convention and its Regulations.

4 The Agreements of the Union, and their Regulations, shall **respectively define and** regulate the services other than those **defined and regulated in the Convention and its Regulations** between those member countries which are parties to them. They shall be binding on those member countries only. Signatory member countries shall ensure that their designated operators fulfil the obligations arising from the Agreements **of the Union** and their Regulations.

5 The Regulations, which shall contain the rules of application necessary for the implementation of the Convention and of the Agreements **of the Union**, shall be drawn up by the Postal Operations Council, bearing in mind the decisions taken by Congress.

6 The Final Protocols annexed to the Acts of the Union referred to in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 shall contain the reservations to those Acts.

Article XI
(Art. 25 amended)
Signature, authentication, ratification**, acceptance,** approval **of and accession to** the Acts of the Union

1 The Acts of the Union arising from the Congress shall be signed by the plenipotentiaries of the member countries.

2 The Regulations shall be authenticated by the Chair and the Secretary General of the Postal Operations Council.

3 The **Acts of the Union** shall be ratified**, accepted or approved** as soon as possible by the signatory member countries**, in accordance with their respective constitutional regulations**.

4 (Deleted.)

5 When a member country does not ratify**, accept or approve the Acts of the Union** which it has **signed, those** Acts shall be no less valid for the other member countries that have ratified**, accepted** or approved them.

6 **Member countries may, at any time, accede to the Acts of the Union which they did not sign, in accordance with the relevant procedures set forth in the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.**

7 **Accession of member countries to the Acts of the Union shall be notified in accordance with article 26.**

Article XII
(Art. 26 amended)
Notification of **ratification, acceptance,** approval **of and accession to** the Acts of the Union

1 The instruments of ratification**, acceptance, approval of and accession to the Acts** of the Union shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Director General of the International Bureau, who shall notify the governments of the member countries of their deposit.

Article XIII
(Art. 27 deleted)
Accession to the Agreements

(Deleted.)

Article XIV
(Art. 28 amended)
Denunciation of **Agreements of the Union**

1 Each member country may cease being a party to one or more of the Agreements **of the Union, subject by analogy to the** conditions laid down in article **12**.

Article XV
(Art. 29 amended)

1 A member country shall have the right to present, either to Congress or between Congresses, proposals concerning the Acts of the Union to which it is a party.

2 However, proposals concerning the Constitution and the General Regulations may be submitted only to Congress.

3 Moreover, proposals concerning the Regulations shall be **submitted to** the Postal Operations Council **through the intermediary of** the International **Bureau.**

Article XVI
(Art. 30 amended)
Amendment of the Constitution

1 To be adopted, proposals submitted to Congress and relating to this Constitution must be approved by at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union having the right to vote.

2 Amendments **to the Constitution** adopted by a Congress shall form the subject of an additional protocol **and enter** into **force on the date specified therein as decided by** the same Congress. **Without prejudice to the binding character of the Constitution as provided for in article 22.1, the said amendments** shall be ratified**, accepted, approved or acceded to** as soon as possible by member **countries. The** instruments of such ratification**, acceptance, approval or accession** shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 26.

Article XVII
(Art. 31 amended)
Amendment of the General Regulations, the Convention and the Agreements **of the Union**

1 The General Regulations, the Convention and the Agreements **of the Union** shall define the conditions to be fulfilled for the approval of proposals which concern them.

2 **Amendments to the General Regulations, the Convention and** the Agreements **of the Union shall form the subject of an additional protocol and** enter into force **on the date decided by Congress. Without prejudice to the binding character of the aforementioned Acts of the Union as provided for in article 22, the said amendments shall be ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to as soon as possible by member countries. The instruments of such ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 26. This provision shall also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to any amendments to the Convention and the Agreements of the Union adopted between Congresses.**

Article XVIII
Entry into force and duration of the Additional Protocol to the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union

This Additional Protocol shall come into force on 1 July 2022 and shall remain in force for an indefinite period.

In witness whereof the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries have drawn up this Additional Protocol, which shall have the same force and the same validity as if its provisions were inserted in the text of the Constitution itself, and they have signed it in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each member country by the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

Third Additional Protocol to the General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

Third Additional Protocol to the General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

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[1] In accordance with article 24.2 of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses, the International Bureau renumbers the provisions contained in the consolidated versions of the Acts of the Union referred to in this document, with a view to correctly reflecting the order of these provisions in the aforementioned Acts.

Third Additional Protocol to the General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union[2]

The plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union, having met in Congress at Abidjan, in view of article 22.2 of the Constitution concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have, by common consent and subject to article 25.4 of the Constitution, adopted the following amendments to the General Regulations.

Article I
(Art. 106 amended)
Composition and functioning of the CA

1 The Council of Administration shall consist of forty-one members who shall exercise their functions during the period between two successive Congresses.

2 The role of Chair shall devolve by right on the host member country of Congress. If that member country waives this right, it shall become a de jure member and, as a result, the geographical group to which it belongs shall have at its disposal an additional seat, to which the restrictive provisions of paragraph 3 shall not apply. In that case, the Council of Administration shall elect as Chair one of the members belonging to the geographical group of the host member country.

3 The forty other members of the Council of Administration shall be elected by Congress on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution. At least a half of the membership is renewed at each Congress; no member country may be chosen by three successive Congresses. **Without prejudice to the foregoing, one seat in the geographical group to which member countries defined as Pacific Island countries and territories (as per the relevant list established by the United Nations) belong shall be reserved for those member countries.**

4 Each member of the Council of Administration shall appoint its representative(s). The members of the Council of Administration shall take an active part in its work.

5 The office of member of the Council of Administration shall be unpaid. The operational expenses of this Council shall be borne by the Union.

6 The CA shall define, formalize and/or set up the standing groups and task forces or other bodies to be established within its structure, with due regard being paid to the Union’s strategy and business plan adopted by Congress.

Article II
(Art. 107 amended)
Functions of the CA

1 The Council of Administration shall have the following functions:

[2] In line with Abidjan Congress–Doc 39, various changes have been made to the English version of the General Regulations to introduce gender-neutral language. As these editorial amendments do not affect the official French text, they are not marked as changes in this volume.

1.1 Supervises all the activities of the Union between Congresses, ensuring compliance with the decisions of Congress, studying questions with respect to governmental policies on postal issues, and taking account of international regulatory developments such as those relating to trade in services and to competition.

1.2 Promotes, coordinates and supervises all forms of postal technical assistance within the framework of international technical cooperation.

1.3 Examines the draft quadrennial **Union** business plan approved by Congress, and finalizes it by bringing the activities set out in the draft plan for the four-year period into line with the actual resources available. The plan should also, if appropriate, be in line with the results of the prioritization process carried out by Congress. The finalized version of the quadrennial **Union** business plan, completed and approved by the CA, will then form the basis for the preparation of the annual Programme and Budget as well as for the annual operating plans to be drawn up and implemented by the CA and POC.

1.4 Considers and approves the annual programme and budget and the accounts of the Union, while taking into account the final version of the **Union** Business Plan, as described in article 107.1.3.

1.5 Authorizes the ceiling of expenditure to be exceeded, if circumstances so require, in accordance with article 145.3 to 5.

1.6 Authorizes election of a lower contribution class, if it is so requested, in accordance with the conditions set out in article 150.6.

1.7 Authorizes a change of geographical group if it is so requested by a member country, taking into account the views expressed by the member countries which are members of the geographical groups concerned.

1.8 Creates or abolishes International Bureau posts financed by the regular budget, taking into account the restrictions imposed by the expenditure ceiling fixed.

1.9 Decides on the contacts to be established with member countries in order to carry out its functions.

1.10 After consulting the Postal Operations Council, decides on the relations to be established with the organizations which are not observers within the meaning of article 105.1 and 105.2.1.

1.11 Considers the reports by the International Bureau on UPU relations with other international bodies and takes the decisions which it considers appropriate on the conduct of such relations and the action to be taken on them.

1.12 Designates in due course, after consulting the Postal Operations Council and the Secretary General, the specialized agencies of the United Nations, international organizations, associations, enterprises and qualified persons to be invited as ad hoc observers to specific meetings of Congress and its Committees when this is in the interest of the Union or the work of the Congress and instructs the Director General of the International Bureau to issue the necessary invitations.

1.13 Designates the member country where the next Congress is to be held in the case provided for in article 101.3.

1.14 Determines in due course and after consulting the Postal Operations Council the number of Committees required to carry out the work of Congress, and specifies their functions.

1.15 Designates, after consulting the Postal Operations Council and subject to the approval of Congress, the member countries prepared:

1.15.1 to assume the positions of Vice-Chairs of Congress and Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Committees, taking as much account as possible of the equitable geographical distribution of the member countries; and

1.15.2 to sit on the Restricted Committees of the Congress.

1.16 Designates those of its members that will serve as members of the Consultative Committee.

1.17 Considers and approves, within the framework of its competence, any action considered necessary to safeguard and enhance the quality of and to modernize the international postal service.

1.18 Studies, at the request of Congress, the Postal Operations Council or member countries, administrative, legislative and legal problems concerning the Union or the international postal service; it shall be for the Council of Administration to decide, in the above-mentioned fields, whether it is expedient to undertake the studies requested by member countries between Congresses.

1.19 Formulates proposals which shall be submitted for the approval either of Congress or of member countries in accordance with article 140.

1.20 Submits subjects for study to the Postal Operations Council for examination in accordance with article 113.1.6.

1.21 Reviews and approves, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council, the draft Strategy for presentation to Congress.

1.22 Receives and discusses reports and recommendations from the Consultative Committee and considers recommendations from the Consultative Committee for submission to Congress.

1.23 Provides control over the activities of the International Bureau.

1.24 Approves the annual report on the work of the Union and the annual Financial Operating Reports prepared by the International Bureau and, where appropriate, furnishes observations on them.

1.25 Establishes principles, as may be considered necessary, for the Postal Operations Council to take into account in its study of questions with major financial repercussions (charges, terminal dues, transit charges, basic airmail conveyance rates and the posting abroad of letter-post items), follows closely the study of these questions, and reviews and approves, for conformity with the aforementioned principles, Postal Operations Council proposals relating to these questions.

1.26 Approves, within the framework of its competence, the recommendations of the Postal Operations Council for the adoption, if necessary, of regulations or of a new procedure until such time as Congress takes a decision in the matter.

1.27 Considers the annual report prepared by the Postal Operations Council and any proposals submitted by the Council.

1.28 Approves the four-yearly report prepared by the International Bureau in consultation with the Postal Operations Council, on the performance of member countries in respect of the execution of the Union Strategy approved by the preceding Congress, for submission to the following Congress.

1.29 Establishes the framework for the organization of the Consultative Committee and concurs in the organization of the Consultative Committee, in accordance with the provisions of article 122.

1.30 Establishes criteria for membership of the Consultative Committee and **revokes membership in accordance with those criteria, as further detailed in the relevant rules of procedure referred to in article 122**.

1.31 Lays down the Financial Regulations of the Union.

1.32 Lays down the rules governing the Reserve Fund.

1.33 Lays down the rules governing the Special Fund.

1.34 Lays down the rules governing the Special Activities Fund.

1.35 Lays down the rules governing the Voluntary Fund.

1.36 Lays down the Staff Regulations and the conditions of service of the elected officials.

1.37 Lays down the Regulations of the Social Fund.

1.38 Exercises, within the context of article 152, overall supervision of the creation and activities of user-funded subsidiary bodies.

1.39 Adopts its Rules of Procedure and the amendments to those Rules.

Article III
(Art. 108 amended)
Organization of CA sessions

1 At its constituent meeting, which shall be convened and opened by the Chair of Congress, the Council of Administration shall elect four Vice-Chairs from among its **members. The** Chair and Vice-Chairs shall be member countries from each of the five geographical groups of the Union.

2 The Council of Administration shall meet twice a year, or additionally on an exceptional basis, at Union headquarters, in accordance with the relevant procedures set forth in its Rules of Procedure.

3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, of the Council of Administration shall form the Management Committee. This Committee shall prepare and direct the work of each session of the Council of Administration. It shall approve, on behalf of the Council of Administration, the annual report prepared by the International Bureau on the work of the Union and it shall take on any other task which the Council of Administration decides to assign to it or the need for which arises in the course of the strategic planning process.

4 The Chair of the Postal Operations Council shall represent that body at meetings of the Council of Administration when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Postal Operations Council.

5 The Chair of the Consultative Committee shall represent that organization at meetings of the Council of Administration when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Consultative Committee.

Article IV
(Art. 110 amended)
Reimbursement of travel expenses

1 The travel expenses **of representatives of members** of the Council of Administration participating in its meetings shall be borne by **their** member country. However, one representative of each of the member countries classified as developing or least developed countries according to the lists established, respectively, by the Council of Administration and the United Nations shall, except for meetings which take place during Congress, be entitled to reimbursement of the price of an economy class return air ticket **and/**or first class return rail ticket, or expenses incurred for travel by any other means, **in the latter case** subject to the condition that the amount does not exceed the price of the economy class return air ticket. The same entitlement shall be granted to each member of its Committees or other bodies when these meet outside Congress and the sessions of the Council.

Article V
(Art. 112 amended)
Composition and functioning of the POC

1 The Postal Operations Council shall consist of forty-eight members who shall exercise their functions during the period between successive Congresses.

2 The members of the Postal Operations Council shall be elected by Congress on the basis of qualified geographical distribution. At least one third of the members of each geographical group shall be renewed at each Congress. **Without prejudice to the foregoing, one seat in the geographical group to which member countries defined as Pacific Island countries and territories (as per the relevant list established by the United Nations) belong shall be reserved for those member countries.**

3 Each member of the Postal Operations Council shall appoint its representative(s). The members of the Postal Operations Council shall take an active part in its work.

4 The operational expenses of the Postal Operations Council shall be borne by the Union. Its members shall not receive any payment.

5 The Postal Operations Council shall define, formalize and/or set up the standing groups, task forces, user-funded subsidiary bodies or other bodies to be established within its structure, with due regard being paid to the Union's strategy and business plan adopted by Congress.

Article VI
(Art. 113 amended)
Functions of the POC

1 The Postal Operations Council shall have the following functions:

1.1 Coordinates practical measures for the development and improvement of international postal services.

1.2 Takes, subject to Council of Administration approval within the framework of the latter's competence, any action considered necessary to safeguard and enhance the quality of and to modernize the international postal service.

1.3 Decides on the contacts to be established with member countries and their designated operators in order to carry out its functions.

1.4 Takes the necessary steps to study and publicize the experiments and progress made by certain member countries and their designated operators in the technical, operational, economic and vocational training fields of interest to other member countries and their designated operators.

1.5 Takes, in consultation with the Council of Administration, appropriate steps in the sphere of technical cooperation with all member countries of the Union and their designated operators and in particular with the new and developing countries and their designated operators.

1.6 Examines any other questions submitted to it by a member of the Postal Operations Council, by the Council of Administration or by any member country or designated operator.

1.7 Receives and discusses reports as well as recommendations from the Consultative Committee and, when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are involved, to examines and comments on recommendations from the Consultative Committee for submission to Congress.

1.8 Designates those of its members that will serve as members of the Consultative Committee.

1.9 Conducts the study of the most important operational, commercial, technical, economic and technical cooperation problems which are of interest to all member countries or their designated operators, including questions with major financial repercussions (charges, terminal dues, transit charges, airmail conveyance rates, parcel-post rates, and the posting abroad of letter-post items), and prepares information, opinions and recommendations for action on them.

1.10 Provides input to the Council of Administration for the development of the draft Union Strategy and draft quadrennial **Union** business plan to be submitted to Congress.

1.11 Studies teaching and vocational training problems of interest to member countries and their designated operators, as well as to the new and developing countries.

1.12 Studies the present position and needs of the new and developing countries and prepares appropriate recommendations on ways and means of improving their postal services.

1.13 Revises the Regulations of **the Union; in this regard**, the Postal Operations Council shall be subject to Council of Administration guidance on matters of fundamental policy and principle.

1.14 Formulates proposals which shall be submitted for the approval either of Congress or of member countries in accordance with article 140; the approval of the Council of Administration is required when these proposals concern questions within the latter's competence.

1.15 Examines, at the request of a member country, any proposal which that member country forwards to the International Bureau under article 139, prepares observations on it and instructs the International Bureau to annex these observations to the proposal before submitting it for approval to the member countries.

1.16 Recommends, if necessary, and where appropriate after approval by the Council of Administration and consultation of all the member countries, the adoption of regulations or of a new procedure until such time as Congress takes a decision in the matter.

1.17 Prepares and issues, in the form of recommendations to member countries and their designated operators (or as binding provisions if the Acts of the Union so provide), standards for technological, operational and other processes within its competence where uniformity of practice is essential; it shall similarly issue, as required, amendments to standards it has already set.

1.18 Establishes the framework for the organization of user-funded subsidiary bodies and concurs in the organization of these bodies in accordance with the provisions of article 152.

1.19 Receives and discusses reports from the user-funded subsidiary bodies on an annual basis.

1.20 Adopts its Rules of Procedure and the amendments to those Rules.

Article VII
(Art. 114 amended)
Organization of POC sessions

1 At its first meeting, which shall be convened and opened by the Chair of Congress, the Postal Operations Council shall choose from among its members a Chair and four Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs/**Co-Chairs. The** Chair and four Vice-Chairs shall be member countries from each of the five geographical groups of the Union.

2 The Postal Operations Council shall meet twice a year, or additionally on an exceptional basis, at Union headquarters, in accordance with the relevant procedures set forth in its Rules of Procedure.

3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, of the Postal Operations Council shall form the Management Committee. This Committee shall prepare and direct the work of each meeting of the Postal Operations Council and take on all the tasks which the latter decides to assign to it or the need for which arises in the course of the strategic planning process.

4 On the basis of the Union Strategy adopted by Congress and, in particular, the part relating to the strategies of the permanent bodies of the Union, the Postal Operations Council shall, at its session following Congress, prepare a basic work programme containing a number of tactics aimed at implementing the strategies. This basic work programme, which shall include a limited number of projects on topical subjects of common interest, shall be revised annually in the light of new realities and priorities.

5 The Chair of the Consultative Committee shall represent that organization at meetings of the Postal Operations Council when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Consultative Committee.

Article VIII
(Art. 116 amended)
Reimbursement of travel expenses

1 The travel expenses of representatives of **members of** the Postal Operations Council **participating in its meetings** shall be borne by **their** member **country**. However, one representative of each of the member countries **classified as** least developed countries according to the list established by the United Nations shall, except for meetings which take place during Congress, be entitled to reimbursement of the price of an economy class return air ticket **and/**or first class return rail ticket, or expenses incurred for travel by any other means, **in the latter case** subject to the condition that the amount does not exceed the price of the economy class return air ticket.

Article IX
(Art. 119 amended)
Composition of the CC

1 The Consultative Committee shall consist of:

1.1 non-governmental organizations **(including organizations** representing customers, delivery service providers, **postal employees or postal employers); philanthropic entities; standardization, financial and development organizations;** suppliers of goods and services to the postal services sector**; transportation entities and other private sector entities;** and like organizations of individuals and companies which have an interest in supporting the mission and objectives of the Union;

1.1bis high-level figures from the postal sector recommended by member countries or the bodies of the Union concerned, including the Consultative Committee**.**

1.1ter (Deleted.)

1.2 (Deleted.)

1.3 (Deleted.)

1bis **All members of the Consultative Committee shall** be **established (and, if so required by the member country concerned, duly** registered**) or, in the case of the high-level figures referred to in 1.1bis, have permanent residence,** in a Union member country.

2 The operational costs of the Consultative Committee shall be shared **by members** of the **Consultative** Committee**, except** as **otherwise** determined by the Council of Administration. **In this regard, and as further outlined in the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Committee, different membership fees may apply depending on the specific legal nature and financial capability of members of the Consultative Committee.**

3 The members of the Consultative Committee shall not receive remuneration or any other compensation.

Article X
(Art. 120 amended)
Membership of the CC

1 **Membership** of the Consultative Committee shall be determined through a process of application and acceptance established by the Council of Administration **and** carried out in accordance with article 107.1.30.

1bis Any requests for membership of the Consultative Committee as submitted by the entities or high-level figures referred to in article 119 shall be accompanied by the prior written authorization or recommendation of the corresponding Union member country, in accordance with article 119.1bis of that article.

2 Each member of the Consultative Committee shall appoint its own representative**(s)**.

Article XI
(Art. 121 amended)
Functions of the CC

1 The Consultative Committee shall have the following functions:

1.1 Examines documents and reports of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council. In exceptional circumstances, the right to receive certain texts and documents may be restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires**, in accordance with articles 109.2.3 and 115.2.3.**

1.2 Conducts and contributes to studies of issues of importance to the Consultative Committee's members.

1.3 Considers issues affecting the postal services sector and issues reports on such issues.

1.4 Provides input to the work of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, including submitting reports and recommendations and giving opinions **to** the two Councils.

1.5 Makes recommendations to Congress, subject to the approval of the Council of Administration and, when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are involved, subject to examination and comment by the Postal Operations Council.

Article XII
(Art. 124 amended)
CC observers

1 **Member** countries of the Union and the observers and ad hoc observers referred to in article 105 may participate in the sessions of the Consultative Committee, without the right to vote.

2 For logistical reasons, the Consultative Committee may limit the number of attendees per observer and ad hoc observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.

3 In exceptional circumstances, observers and ad hoc observers may be excluded from a meeting or a portion of a meeting or may have their right to receive documents restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chair. The case-by-case situations shall be reported to the Council of Administration and to the Postal Operations Council when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are concerned. If it considers this necessary, the Council of Administration may subsequently review restrictions, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council where appropriate.

Article XIII
(Art. 127 amended)
Duties of the Director General

0bis The Director General shall be the legal representative of the Union.

1 The Director General shall organize, administer and direct the International Bureau.

2 Regarding the classification of posts, appointments and promotions:

2.1 the Director General shall be empowered to classify posts in grades G 1 to D 2 and to appoint and promote officials in those grades;

2.2 for appointments in grades P 1 to D 2, the Director General shall consider the professional qualifications of the candidates **who** are nationals **of a member country** or **who** exercise their professional activities **in a member country**, taking into account equitable geographical **and language** distribution**, and gender balance**. D 2 posts shall as far as possible be filled by candidates from different regions and from regions other than those from which the Director General and Deputy Director General originate, bearing in mind the paramount consideration of the efficiency of the International **Bureau;**

2.3 the Director General shall also consider, for the appointment of a new official, that, in principle, persons occupying grade D 2, D 1 and P 5 posts must be nationals of different member countries of the Union;

2.4 for the promotion of an official of the International Bureau to grades D 2, D 1 and P 5, the Director General shall not be bound to apply the same principle as under 2.3;

2.5 the requirements of equitable geographical and language distribution **and gender balance** shall rank behind merit in the recruitment process;

2.6 the Director General shall inform the Council of Administration once a year of appointments and promotions in grades P 4 to D 2.

3 Furthermore, the Director General shall have the following duties:

3.1 acts as depositary of the Acts of the Union and as intermediary in the procedure of accession and admission to and withdrawal from the Union;

3.2 notifies the decisions taken by Congress to all the Governments of member countries;

3.3 notifies all member countries and their designated operators of the Regulations drawn up or revised by the Postal Operations Council;

3.4 prepares the draft annual budget of the Union at the lowest possible level consistent with the requirements of the Union and submits it in due course to the Council of Administration for consideration; communicates the budget to the member countries of the Union after approval by the Council of Administration and executes it;

3.5 executes the specific activities requested by the bodies of the Union and those assigned to the Director General by the Acts;

3.6 takes action to achieve the objectives set by the bodies of the Union, within the framework of the established policy and the funds available;

3.7 submits suggestions and proposals to the Council of Administration or to the Postal Operations Council;

3.8 following the close of Congress, submits proposals to the Postal Operations Council concerning changes to the Regulations required as a result of Congress decisions, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Postal Operations Council;

3.9 prepares, for the Council of Administration and on the basis of directives issued by the Councils, the draft Union Strategy and draft quadrennial UPU business plan to be submitted to Congress;

3.10 prepares, for approval by the Council of Administration, a four-yearly report on the member countries' performance in respect of the Union Strategy approved by the preceding Congress, which will be submitted to the following Congress;

3.11 (Deleted.)

3.12 acts as an intermediary in relations between:

3.12.1 the **Union** and the Restricted Unions;

3.12.2 the **Union** and the United Nations;

3.12.3 the **Union** and the international organizations whose activities are of interest to the Union;

3.12.4 the **Union** and the international organizations or the associations or enterprises that the bodies of the Union wish to consult or associate with their work;

3.13 assumes the duties of Secretary General of the bodies of the Union and supervises in this capacity, taking into account the special provisions of these General Regulations, in particular:

3.13.1 the preparation and organization of the work of the Union's bodies;

3.13.2 the preparation, production and distribution of documents, reports and minutes;

3.13.3 the functioning of the secretariat at meetings of the Union's bodies;

3.14 attends the meetings of the bodies of the Union and takes part in the discussions without the right to vote, with the possibility of being represented.

Article XIV
(Art. 132 amended)
Information. Opinions. Requests for explanation and amendment of the Acts. Inquiries. Role in the settlement of accounts

1 The International Bureau shall be at all times at the disposal of the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and member countries and their designated operators for the purpose of supplying them with any necessary information on questions relating to the service.

2 In particular it shall collect, collate, publish and distribute all kinds of information of interest to **the postal** service**;** give an opinion **or provide dispute settlement services (in the latter case on a paid basis and in accordance with the relevant procedures adopted by the Council of Administration)**, at the request of the parties involved, on questions in dispute**;** act on requests for explanation and amendment of the Acts of the Union**;** and, in general, carry out such studies and editorial or documentary work as are assigned to it by those Acts or as may be referred to it in the interest of the Union.

3 It shall also conduct inquiries requested by member countries and their designated operators to obtain the views of other member countries and designated operators on a particular question. The result of an inquiry shall not have the status of a vote and shall not be formally binding.

4 It may act as a clearing house in the settlement of accounts of all kinds relating to the postal service.

5 The International Bureau shall ensure the confidentiality and security of commercial data provided by member countries and/or their designated operators for the performance of its duties arising from the Acts or decisions of the Union.

Article XV
(Art. 138 amended)
Procedure for submitting proposals to Congress

1 Subject to the exceptions provided for in paragraphs 2 and 5, the following procedures shall govern the submission of proposals of all kinds to Congress by member countries:

1.1 proposals which reach the International Bureau at least **four** months before the date fixed for Congress shall be accepted;

1.2 no drafting proposal shall be accepted during the period of **four** months preceding the date fixed for Congress;

1.3 proposals of substance which reach the International Bureau in the interval between **four** and **three** months before the date fixed for Congress shall not be accepted unless they are supported by at least two member countries;

1.4 proposals of substance which reach the International Bureau in the interval between **three** and two months before the date fixed for Congress shall not be accepted unless they are supported by at least eight member countries; proposals which arrive after that time shall no longer be accepted;

1.5 declarations of support must reach the International Bureau within the same period of time as the proposal to which they refer.

2 Proposals concerning the Constitution or the General Regulations shall reach the International Bureau not later than **four** months before the opening of Congress; any received after that date but before the opening of Congress shall not be considered unless Congress so decides by a majority of two thirds of the member countries represented at Congress and unless the conditions laid down in paragraph 1 are fulfilled.

3 Every proposal must, as a rule, have only one aim and contain only the changes justified by that aim. Similarly, each proposal liable to lead to significant costs for the Union shall be accompanied by an indication of its financial impact, prepared by the member country submitting the proposal, in consultation with the International Bureau, so that the financial resources needed for its implementation can be determined.

4 Drafting proposals shall be headed “Drafting proposal” by the member countries which submit them and shall be published by the International Bureau under a number followed by the letter R. Proposals which do not bear this indication but which, in the opinion of the International Bureau, deal only with drafting points shall be published with an appropriate annotation; the International Bureau shall draw up a list of these proposals for Congress.

5 The procedure prescribed in paragraphs 1 and 4 shall apply neither to proposals concerning the Rules of Procedure of Congresses, nor to proposals submitted by the Council of Administration or the Postal Operations Council.

Article XVI
(Art. 138bis amended)
Procedure for amending proposals submitted in accordance with article 138

1 Amendments to proposals already made, **including** those submitted by the Council of Administration or the Postal Operations Council, **may be** presented to the International Bureau in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

2 (Deleted.)

Article XVII
(Art. 140 amended)
Consideration of proposals amending the Convention or the Agreements between Congresses

1 Every proposal concerning the Convention, the Agreements and their Final Protocols shall be subject to the following procedure: where a member country has sent a proposal to the International Bureau, the latter shall forward it to all member countries for examination. They shall be allowed a period of 45 days in which to examine the proposal and forward any observations to the International Bureau. Amendments shall not be admissible. Once these 45 days have elapsed, the International Bureau shall forward to member countries all the observations it has received and invite each member country to vote for or against the proposal. Member countries **whose votes have not been received by the International Bureau** within a period of 45 days shall be considered **as having** abstained. The aforementioned periods shall be reckoned from the dates of the International Bureau circulars. **Any documentation and observations arising from the aforementioned procedure shall be submitted by physical or secure electronic means and, in the case of member country submissions to the International Bureau, be signed by a duly authorized representative of the governmental authority of the member country concerned. For the purposes of this paragraph, "secure electronic means" shall refer to any electronic means used for the processing, storage and transmission of data that ensure that the completeness, integrity and confidentiality of the data are maintained during the submission of the aforementioned documentation and observations by the International Bureau or a member country.**

2 If the proposal relates to an Agreement **of the Union** or its Final Protocol, only the member countries which are parties to that Agreement may take part in the procedure described in paragraph 1.

Article XVIII
(Art. 141 deleted)

Article 141
Procedure for submitting proposals to the Postal Operations Council concerning the preparation of new Regulations in the light of decisions taken by Congress

(Deleted.)

Article XIX
(Art. 144 amended)
Entry into force of the Regulations and of the other decisions adopted between Congresses

1 The Regulations **and any amendments thereto** shall **enter** into force on **the date specified therein as decided by the Postal Operations Council, and shall remain in force for an indefinite period**.

2 Subject to the provisions of paragraph 1, decisions on amending the Acts of the Union which are adopted between Congresses shall not take effect until at least three months after their notification.

Article XX
(Art. 145 amended)
Fixing of the expenditure of the Union

1 Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 2 to 6, the annual expenditure relating to the activities of bodies of the Union may not exceed **38,890,030** Swiss francs for the years **2022 to 2025**. In the event that the Congress planned for **2025** is postponed, the same ceilings shall also apply to the post-**2025** period.

2 The expenditure relating to the convening of the next Congress (travelling expenses of the secretariat, transport charges, cost of installing simultaneous interpretation equipment, cost of reproducing documents during the Congress, etc.) shall not exceed the limit of 2,900,000 Swiss francs.

3 The Council of Administration shall be authorized to exceed the limits laid down in paragraphs 1 and 2 to take account of increases in salary scales, pension contributions or allowances, including post adjustments, approved by the United Nations for application to its staff working in Geneva.

4 The Council of Administration shall also be authorized to adjust, each year, the amount of expenditure other than that relating to staff on the basis of the Swiss consumer price index.

5 Notwithstanding paragraph 1, the Council of Administration, or in case of extreme urgency, the Director General, may authorize the prescribed limits to be exceeded to meet the cost of major and unforeseen repairs to the International Bureau building, provided however that the amount of the increase does not exceed 125,000 Swiss francs per annum.

6 If the credits authorized in paragraphs 1 and 2 prove inadequate to ensure the smooth running of the Union, these limits may only be exceeded with the approval of the majority of the member countries of the Union. Any consultation shall include a complete description of the facts justifying such a request.

Article XXI
(Art. 146 amended)
Regulation of member countries' contributions

1 Countries which accede to the Union or are admitted to the status of members of the Union as well as those which leave the Union shall pay their contributions for the whole of the year during which their admission or withdrawal becomes effective.

2 Member countries shall pay their contributions to the Union's annual expenditure in advance on the basis of the budget laid down by the Council of Administration. These contributions shall be paid not later than the first day of the financial year to which the budget refers. After that date, the sums due shall be chargeable with interest in favour of the Union at the rate of 5% per annum from the fourth month.

3 Where the arrears of mandatory contributions, not including interest, owed to the Union by a member country are equal to or more than the amount of the contributions of that member country for the preceding two financial years, such member country may irrevocably assign to the Union all or part of the credits owed it by other member countries, in accordance with the arrangements laid down by the Council of Administration. The conditions of this assignment of credit shall be determined by agreement reached between the member country, its debtors/creditors and the Union.

4 A member country which, for legal or other reasons, cannot make such an assignment must undertake to conclude a schedule for the amortization of its arrears.

5 Other than in exceptional circumstances **as decided by Congress or the Council of Administration**, recovery of arrears of mandatory contributions owed to the Union may not extend over more than ten years. **In cases where Congress or the Council of Administration approves a payment agreement longer than twenty years, the minimum amount of the annual arrears contribution should be at least equal to the annual contribution of the member country signatory to the agreement.**

6 **Also in** exceptional circumstances, **as decided by Congress or** the Council of Administration**, either body** may release a member country from all or part of the interest owed if that country has paid the full **principal** amount of its debts in arrears.

6bis In similarly exceptional circumstances, Congress or the Council of Administration may, upon written request of the member country concerned, decide to release that member country from its debts in arrears and immediately lift the automatic sanctions imposed against it, subject to payment of an amount at least equivalent to one half of the total amount of debts in arrears (excluding any interest incurred thereon) owed by that member country.

6ter **Congress or the Council of Administration may also, upon written request of a member country with long-standing debts in arrears, decide to exceptionally release that member country from its debts in arrears and immediately lift the automatic sanctions imposed against it, provided the member country concerned pays its last five years of mandatory contributions to the Union's annual expenditure (including the current financial year and excluding any interest incurred thereon).**

6ter.1 **For the purposes of paragraph 6ter, "long-standing debts in arrears" shall be defined as any amounts in arrears (including interest) pertaining to mandatory contributions to the Union's annual expenditure incurred over a period longer than the last five financial years.**

6ter.2 **Equally for the purposes of paragraph 6ter and specifically in the case of least developed countries and small island developing states as defined in article 150.1, Congress or the Council of Administration may exceptionally determine that the "last five years of mandatory contributions" of the member country concerned shall be calculated on the basis of the current contribution class to which that member country belongs, in which case the relevant current contribution class amount shall be multiplied five times.**

6quater **In the case of least developed countries and small island developing states, as defined in article 150.1, that are authorized to benefit from either of the exceptional payment arrangements outlined in paragraphs 6bis and 6ter of this article, at least 50% of the amounts paid by the member country concerned shall be earmarked for Union-led postal technical assistance projects aimed at benefiting that same member country.**

6quinquies **Any principal or interest amounts released in the framework of the exceptional payment arrangements outlined in paragraphs 6bis and 6ter of this article shall not be cancelled, but set aside and provisioned by the Union in accordance with its relevant financial rules. In the event the member country concerned subsequently falls under automatic sanctions, the aforementioned amounts shall once more be registered by the Union, with immediate effect, as debts in arrears for the member country in question.**

7 A member country may also be released, within the framework of an amortization schedule approved by the Council of Administration for its accounts in arrears, from all or part of the interest accumulated or to accrue; such release shall, however, be subject to the full and punctual execution of the amortization schedule within an agreed period of ten years at most.

8 The provisions under paragraphs 3 to **7** apply by analogy to the translation costs billed by the International Bureau to member countries belonging to the language groups.

9 The International Bureau shall send bills to member countries at least three months before their due date. The original bills shall be sent to the correct address provided by the member country concerned. Electronic copies of the bills shall be sent via e-mail as pre-advice or alerts.

10 Furthermore, the International Bureau shall provide member countries with clear information each time it charges them interest on overdue payment of particular bills, so that member countries can easily verify to which bills the interest corresponds.

Article XXII
(Art. 150 amended)
Contribution classes

1 Member countries shall contribute to defraying Union expenses according to the contribution class to which they belong. **The structure of the contribution classes shall commence at one unit and rise in incremental one-unit steps to a level defined with reference to the most recent scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. Member countries shall choose their contribution class on the basis of their economic capacity while considering the aforementioned scale of assessments. The member countries listed by the United Nations as the least developed countries shall pay half a contribution unit. Small island developing states with a population of less than 200,000 (as listed by the United Nations) shall pay one tenth of a contribution unit.**

2 Notwithstanding the contribution classes listed in paragraph 1, any member country may elect to contribute a higher number of **units, for** a minimum term equivalent to the period between Congresses. The announcement of a change shall be made at the latest at Congress. At the end of the period between Congresses, the member country shall return automatically to its original number of contribution units unless it decides to maintain its contribution of a higher number of units. The payment of additional contributions will increase the expenditure accordingly.

3 Member countries shall **choose their number of units** upon their admission or accession to the Union, **while considering the most recent scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations,** in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 21.4 of the Constitution.

4 **Member countries paying above the economic capacities assessed through reference to the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations shall have the right to reduce their number of units by up to a maximum of two units per Congress cycle, provided that this does not result in a lower contribution than they would pay under the current scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. The cost of any such reduction shall be borne in solidarity by all member countries in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 21.3 of the Constitution. Member countries paying at a level below their economic capacity, as assessed through reference to the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations, shall be invited to increase their number of units by at least two per Congress cycle until they have reached the level of the current scale of assessments referred to above. Those member countries that fail to do so shall not benefit from the reduction in the value of the contribution unit resulting from the increase in the overall number of contribution units.**

5 (Deleted.)

6 Nevertheless, in exceptional circumstances such as natural disasters necessitating international aid programmes, the Council of Administration may authorize a temporary reduction in contribution class once between two Congresses when so requested by a member country if the said member establishes that it can no longer maintain its contribution at the class originally **chosen.**

7 The temporary reduction in contribution class in application of paragraph 6 may be authorized by the Council of Administration for a maximum period of two years or up to the next Congress, whichever is earlier. On expiry of the specified period, the country concerned shall automatically revert to its original contribution class.

8 **Changes** to a higher class shall not be subject to any restriction.

Article XXIII
(Art. 153 amended)
Arbitration procedure

1 If a dispute has to be settled by arbitration between member countries, each member country must advise the other party in writing of the subject of the dispute and inform it, by means of a notice to initiate arbitration, that it wishes to initiate arbitration.

2 If the dispute concerns questions of an operational or technical nature, each member country may ask its designated operator to act in accordance with the procedure provided for in the following paragraphs and delegate such power to its operator. The member country concerned shall be informed of the progress of the proceedings and of the result. The respective member countries or designated operators shall hereafter be referred to as “parties to the arbitration”.

3 The parties to the arbitration shall appoint either one or three arbitrators.

4 Where the parties to the arbitration choose to appoint three arbitrators, each party shall, in accordance with paragraph 2, select a member country or designated operator not directly involved in the dispute, to act as an arbitrator. When several member countries and/or designated operators make common cause, they shall count only as a single party for the purposes of these provisions.

5 Where the parties agree to the appointment of three arbitrators, the third arbitrator shall be jointly agreed upon by the parties and shall not need to be from a member country or designated operator.

6 If the dispute concerns one of the Agreements, the arbitrators may be appointed only from among the member countries that are parties to that Agreement.

7 The parties to the arbitration may jointly agree to appoint a single arbitrator, who shall not need to be from a member country or designated operator.

8 If one or both parties to the arbitration do not, within a period of three months from the date of the notice to initiate arbitration, appoint an arbitrator or arbitrators the International Bureau shall, if so requested, itself call upon the defaulting member country to appoint an arbitrator, or shall itself appoint one automatically. The International Bureau **shall** not be involved in the deliberations **or act as arbitrator** unless otherwise mutually requested by the parties. **In the latter case, the International Bureau shall serve as an arbitrator on a paid basis and in accordance with the relevant dispute settlement procedures adopted by the Council of Administration.**

9 The parties to the arbitration may mutually agree to reconcile the dispute at any time before a ruling is delivered by the arbitrator or arbitrators. Notice of any withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the International Bureau within 10 days of the parties reaching such agreement. Where the parties agree to withdraw from the arbitration process, the arbitrator or arbitrators shall lose their authority to decide the matter.

10 The arbitrator or arbitrators shall be required to make a decision on the dispute based on the facts and evidence before them. All information regarding the dispute must be notified to both parties and the arbitrator or arbitrators.

11 The decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators shall be taken by a majority of votes, and notified to the International Bureau and the parties within six months of the date of the notice to initiate arbitration.

12 The arbitration proceedings shall be confidential, and only a brief description of the dispute and the decision shall be advised in writing to the International Bureau within 10 days of the decision being delivered to the parties.

13 The decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators shall be final and binding on the parties and not subject to appeal.

14 The parties to the arbitration shall implement the decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators without delay. Where a designated operator is delegated power by its member country to initiate and adhere to the arbitration procedure, the member country shall be responsible for ensuring that the designated operator implements the decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators.

Article XXIV
(Art. 155 amended)
Languages used for documentation, for debates and for official correspondence

1 In the documentation published by the Union, the French, English, Arabic and Spanish languages shall be used. The Chinese, German, Portuguese and Russian languages shall also be used, provided that only the most important basic documentation is produced in these languages. Other languages may also be used on condition that the member countries which have made the request bear all of the costs involved.

2 The member country or countries which have requested the use of a language other than the official language constitute a language group.

3 Documentation shall be published by the International Bureau in the official language and in the languages of the other duly constituted language groups, either directly or through the intermediary of the regional offices of those groups in conformity with the procedures agreed with the International Bureau. Publication in the different languages shall be effected in accordance with a common standard.

4 Documentation published directly by the International Bureau shall, as far as possible, be distributed simultaneously in the different languages requested.

5 Correspondence between the member countries or their designated operators of member countries and the International Bureau and between the latter and outside entities may be exchanged in any language for which the International Bureau has available a translation service.

6 The costs of translation into any language, including those resulting from the application of paragraph 5 **and article 136**, shall be borne by the language group which has asked for that language. The member countries using the official language shall pay, in respect of the translation of non-official documents, a lump-sum contribution, the amount of which per contribution unit shall be the same as that borne by the member countries using the other International Bureau working language. All other costs involved in the supply of documents shall be borne by the Union. The ceiling of the costs to be borne by the Union for the production of documents in Chinese, German, Portuguese and Russian shall be fixed by a Congress resolution.

7 The costs to be borne by a language group shall be divided among the members of that group in proportion to their contributions to the expenses of the Union. These costs may be divided among the members of the language group according to another system, provided that the member countries concerned agree to it and inform the International Bureau of their decision through the intermediary of the spokesman of the group.

8 The International Bureau shall give effect to any change in the choice of language requested by a member country after a period which shall not exceed two years.

9 For the discussions at meetings of the Union's bodies, the French, English, Spanish, Russian and Arabic languages shall be admissible, by means of a system of interpretation – with or without electronic equipment – the choice being left to the judgment of the organizers of the meeting after consultation with the Director General of the International Bureau and the member countries concerned.

10 Other languages shall likewise be admissible for the discussions and meetings mentioned in paragraph 9.

11 Delegations using other languages shall arrange for simultaneous interpretation into one of the languages mentioned in paragraph 9, either by the system indicated in the same paragraph, when the necessary technical modifications can be made, or by individual interpreters.

12 The costs of the interpretation services shall be shared among the member countries using the same language in proportion to their contributions to the expenses of the Union. However, the costs of installing and maintaining the technical equipment shall be borne by the Union.

13 Member countries and/or their designated operators may come to an understanding about the language to be used for official correspondence in their relations with one another. In the absence of such an understanding, the language to be used shall be French.

Article XXV
(Art. 158 amended)
Entry into force and duration of the General Regulations

1 (Deleted.)

2 These General Regulations shall come into force on 1 January 2014 and shall remain in force for an indefinite period.

Article XXVI
Entry into force and duration of the Additional Protocol to the General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

This Additional Protocol shall come into force on 1 July 2022 and shall remain in force for an indefinite period.

In witness whereof the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries have drawn up this Additional Protocol, which shall have the same force and the same validity as if its provisions were inserted in the text of the General Regulations itself, and they have signed it in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each member country by the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

Universal Postal Convention

Universal Postal Convention
Final Protocol to the Universal Postal Convention

Universal Postal Convention

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[1] In accordance with article 24.2 of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses, the International Bureau renumbers the provisions contained in the consolidated versions of the Acts of the Union referred to in this document, with a view to correctly reflecting the order of these provisions in the aforementioned Acts.

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Universal Postal Convention

The undersigned, plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union (hereinafter the “Union”), having regard to article 22.3 of the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have by common consent and subject to article 25.4 of the Constitution drawn up in this Universal Postal Convention (hereinafter the “Convention”) the rules applicable throughout the international postal service.

Section I
Rules applicable in common throughout the international postal service

Article 1
Definitions

1 For the purposes of the Convention, the following terms shall have the meanings defined below:

1.1 letter-post item: item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Convention and Regulations;

1.2 parcel-post item: item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Convention and Regulations;

1.3 EMS item: item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Convention, Regulations and associated EMS instruments;

1.4 documents: a letter-post, parcel-post or EMS item consisting of any piece of written, drawn, printed or digital information, excluding objects of merchandise, whose physical specifications lie within the limits specified in the Regulations;

1.5 goods: a letter-post, parcel-post or EMS item consisting of any tangible and movable object other than money, including objects of merchandise, which does not fall under the definition of “documents” as provided in paragraph 1.4 above and whose physical specifications lie within the limits specified in the Regulations;

1.6 closed mail: labelled receptacle(s) sealed with or without lead, containing postal items;

1.7 misrouted mails: receptacles received at an office of exchange other than the one mentioned on the (receptacle) label;

1.8 personal data: information needed to identify a postal service user;

1.9 missent items: items received at an office of exchange meant for an office of exchange in another member country;

1.10 transit charges: remuneration for services rendered by a carrier in the country crossed (designated operator, other service or combination of the two) in respect of the land, sea and/or air transit of letter-post items;

1.11 terminal dues: remuneration owed to the designated operator of the country of destination by the designated operator of the dispatching country in compensation for the costs incurred in the country of destination for letter-post items received;

1.12 designated operator: any governmental or non-governmental entity officially designated by the member country to operate postal services and to fulfil the related obligations arising out of the Acts of the Union on its territory;

1.13 small packet: item conveyed under the conditions of the Convention and the Regulations;

1.14 inward land rate: remuneration owed to the designated operator of the country of destination by the designated operator of the dispatching country in compensation for the costs incurred in the country of destination for parcels received;

1.15 transit land rate: remuneration owed for services rendered by a carrier in the country crossed (designated operator, other service or combination of the two) in respect of the land and/or air transit of parcels through its territory;

1.16 sea rate: remuneration owed for services rendered by a carrier (designated operator, other service or a combination of the two) participating in the sea conveyance of parcels;

1.17 inquiry: a complaint or query relating to the use of a postal service submitted in accordance with the conditions of the Convention and its Regulations;

1.18 universal postal service: the permanent provision of quality basic postal services at all points in a member country's territory, for all customers, at affordable prices;

1.19 transit à découvert: open transit through an intermediate country, of items whose number or weight does not justify the make-up of closed mails for the destination country.

Article 2
Designation of the entity or entities responsible for fulfilling the obligations arising from adherence to the Convention

1 Member countries shall notify the International Bureau, within six months of the end of Congress, of the name and address of the governmental body responsible for overseeing postal affairs. Within six months of the end of Congress, member countries shall also provide the International Bureau with the name and address of the operator or operators officially designated to operate postal services and to fulfil the obligations arising from the Acts of the Union on their territory. Between Congresses, member countries shall notify the International Bureau of any changes in the governmental bodies as soon as possible. Any changes with regard to the officially designated operators shall also be notified to the International Bureau as soon as possible, and preferably at least three months prior to the entry into force of the change.

2 When a member country officially designates a new operator, it shall indicate the scope of the postal services that the latter will provide under the Acts of the Union, as well as the operator's geographical coverage on its territory.

Article 3
Universal postal service

1 In order to support the concept of the single postal territory of the Union, member countries shall ensure that all users/customers enjoy the right to a universal postal service involving the permanent provision of quality basic postal services at all points in their territory, at affordable prices.

2 With this aim in view, member countries shall set forth, within the framework of their national postal legislation or by other customary means, the scope of the postal services offered and the requirement for quality and affordable prices, taking into account both the needs of the population and their national conditions.

3 Member countries shall ensure that the offers of postal services and quality standards will be achieved by the operators responsible for providing the universal postal service.

4 Member countries shall ensure that the universal postal service is provided on a viable basis, thus guaranteeing its sustainability.

Article 4
Freedom of transit

1 The principle of the freedom of transit is set forth in article 1 of the Constitution. It shall carry with it the obligation for each member country to ensure that its designated operators forward, always by the quickest routes and the most secure means which they use for their own items, closed mails and à découvert letter-post items which are passed to them by another designated operator. This principle shall also apply to missent items and misrouted mails.

2 Member countries which do not participate in the exchange of postal items containing infectious substances or radioactive substances shall have the option of not admitting these items in transit à découvert through their territory. The same shall also apply to printed papers, periodicals, magazines, small packets and M bags the content of which does not satisfy the legal requirements governing the conditions of their publication or circulation in the country crossed.

3 Freedom of transit for parcels shall be guaranteed throughout the territory of the Union.

4 If a member country fails to observe the provisions regarding freedom of transit, other member countries may discontinue their provision of postal services with that member country.

Article 5
Ownership of postal items. Withdrawal from the post. Alteration or correction of address and/or name of the addressee (name of the legal person, or family name, given name or patronymic (if any)). Redirection. Return to sender of undeliverable items

1 A postal item shall remain the property of the sender until it is delivered to the rightful owner, except when the item has been seized in pursuance of the national legislation of the country of origin or destination and, in case of application of article 19.2.1.1 or 19.3, in accordance with the national legislation of the country of transit.

2 The sender of a postal item may have it withdrawn from the post or have its address and/or the name of the addressee (name of the legal person, or family name, given name or patronymic (if any)) altered or corrected. The charges and other conditions are laid down in the Regulations.

3 Member countries shall ensure that their designated operators redirect postal items if an addressee has changed his address, and return undeliverable items to the sender. The charges and other conditions are laid down in the Regulations.

Article 6
Postage stamps

1 The term “postage stamp” shall be protected under the present Convention and shall be reserved exclusively for stamps which comply with the conditions of this article and of the Regulations.

2 Postage stamps:

2.1 shall be issued and put into circulation solely under the authority of the member country or territory, in conformity with the Acts of the Union;

2.2 are a manifestation of sovereignty and constitute proof of prepayment of the postage corresponding to their intrinsic value when affixed to postal items, in conformity with the Acts of the Union;

2.3 must be in circulation, for postal prepayment or for philatelic purposes, in the member country or territory of issue, according to its national legislation;

2.4 must be accessible to all citizens within the member country or territory of issue.

3 Postage stamps comprise:

3.1 the name of the member country or territory of issue, in roman letters, or, if the International Bureau of the Union is so requested by the member country or territory of issue, the abbreviation or initials officially representing the member country or territory of issue, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Regulations;[2]

3.2 the face value, expressed:

3.2.1 in principle, in the official currency of the country or territory of issue, or as a letter or symbol;

3.2.2 through other identifying characteristics.

4 Emblems of state, official control marks and logos of intergovernmental organizations featuring on postage stamps shall be protected within the meaning of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

5 The subjects and designs of postage stamps shall:

5.1 be in keeping with the spirit of the Preamble to the Constitution and with decisions taken by the Union's bodies;

5.2 be closely linked to the cultural identity of the member country or territory, or contribute to the dissemination of culture or to maintaining peace;

5.3 have, when commemorating leading figures or events not native to the member country or territory, a close bearing on the country or territory in question;

5.4 be devoid of political character or of any topic of an offensive nature in respect of a person or a country;

5.5 be of major significance to the member country or territory.

6 Postal prepayment impressions, franking machine impressions and impressions made by a printing press or another printing or stamping process in accordance with the Acts of the Union may be used only with the authorization of the member country or territory.

7 Prior to issuing postage stamps using new materials or technologies, member countries shall provide the International Bureau with the necessary information concerning their compatibility with mail processing machines. The International Bureau shall inform the other member countries and their designated operators accordingly.

Article 7
Sustainable development

Member countries and/or their designated operators shall adopt and implement a proactive sustainable development strategy focusing on environmental, social and economic action at all levels of postal operations and promote sustainable development awareness.

Article 8
Postal security

1 Member countries and their designated operators shall observe the security requirements defined in the Universal Postal Union's security standards and shall adopt and implement a proactive security strategy at all levels of postal operations to maintain and enhance the confidence of the general public in the postal services provided by designated operators, in the interests of all officials involved. This strategy shall include the objectives defined in the Regulations, as well as the principle of complying with requirements for providing electronic advance data on postal items identified in implementing provisions (including the type of, and criteria for, postal items) adopted by the Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council, in accordance with the Union's technical messaging standards. The strategy shall also include the exchange of information on

[2] An exception shall be granted to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the country which invented the postage stamp.

maintaining the safe and secure transport and transit of mails between member countries and their designated operators.

2 Any security measures applied in the international postal transport chain must be commensurate with the risks or threats that they seek to address, and must be implemented without hampering worldwide mail flows or trade by taking into consideration the specificities of the mail network. Security measures that have a potential global impact on postal operations must be implemented in an internationally coordinated and balanced manner, with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders.

Article 9
Violations

1 Postal items

1.1 Member countries shall undertake to adopt the necessary measures to prevent, prosecute and punish any person found guilty of the following:

1.1.1 the insertion in postal items of narcotics and psychotropic substances, as well as dangerous goods, where their insertion has not been expressly authorized by the Convention and Regulations;

1.1.2 the insertion in postal items of objects of a paedophilic nature or of a pornographic nature using children.

2 Means of postal prepayment and postal payment itself

2.1 Member countries shall undertake to adopt the necessary measures to prevent, prosecute and punish any violations concerning the means of postal prepayment set out in this Convention, such as:

2.1.1 postage stamps, in circulation or withdrawn from circulation;

2.1.2 prepayment impressions;

2.1.3 impressions of franking machines or printing presses;

2.1.4 international reply coupons.

2.2 In this Convention, violations concerning means of postal prepayment refer to any of the acts outlined below committed by any persons with the intention of obtaining illegitimate gain for oneself or for a third party. The following acts shall be punished:

2.2.1 any act of falsifying, imitating or counterfeiting any means of postal prepayment, or any illegal or unlawful act linked to the unauthorized manufacturing of such items;

2.2.2 manufacture, use, release for circulation, commercialization, distribution, dissemination, transportation, exhibition or display (also in the form of catalogues and for advertising purposes) of any means of postal prepayment which has been falsified, imitated or counterfeited;

2.2.3 any act of using or circulating, for postal purposes, any means of postal prepayment which has already been used;

2.2.4 any attempt to commit any of these violations.

3 Reciprocity

3.1 As regards sanctions, no distinction shall be made between the acts outlined in 2, irrespective of whether national or foreign means of postal prepayment are involved; this provision shall not be subject to any legal or conventional condition of reciprocity.

Article 10
Processing of personal data

1 Personal data on users may be employed only for the purposes for which they were gathered in accordance with applicable national legislation.

2 Personal data on users shall be disclosed only to third parties authorized by applicable national legislation to access them.

3 Member countries and their designated operators shall ensure the confidentiality and security of personal data on users, in accordance with their national legislation.

4 Designated operators shall inform their customers of the use that is made of their personal data, and of the purpose for which they have been gathered.

5 Without prejudice to the foregoing, designated operators may transfer electronically personal data to the designated operators of destination or transit countries that need these data in order to fulfil the service.

Article 11
Exchange of closed mails with military units

1 Closed letter-post mails may be exchanged through the intermediary of the land, sea or air services of other countries:

1.1 between the post offices of any member country and the commanding officers of military units placed at the disposal of the United Nations;

1.2 between the commanding officers of such military units;

1.3 between the post offices of any member country and the commanding officers of naval, air or army units, warships or military aircraft of the same country stationed abroad;

1.4 between the commanding officers of naval, air or army units, warships or military aircraft of the same country.

2 Letter-post items enclosed in the mails referred to under 1 shall be confined to items addressed to or sent by members of military units or the officers and crews of the ships or aircraft to or from which the mails are forwarded. The rates and conditions of dispatch applicable to them shall be fixed, according to its regulations, by the designated operator of the member country which has made the military unit available or to which the ships or aircraft belong.

3 In the absence of special agreement, the designated operator of the member country which has made the military unit available or to which the warships or military aircraft belong shall be liable to the designated operators concerned for the transit charges for the mails, the terminal dues and the air conveyance dues.

Article 12
Posting abroad of letter-post items

1 A designated operator shall not be bound to forward or deliver to the addressee letter-post items which senders residing in the territory of its member country post or cause to be posted in a foreign country with the object of profiting by the more favourable rate conditions there.

2 The provisions set out under 1 shall be applied without distinction both to letter-post items made up in the sender’s country of residence and then carried across the frontier and to letter-post items made up in a foreign country.

3 The designated operator of destination may claim from the designated operator of posting, payment of the internal rates. If the designated operator of posting does not agree to pay these rates within a time limit set by the designated operator of destination, the latter may either return the items to the designated operator of posting and shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of the redirection costs, or handle them in accordance with its national legislation.

4 A designated operator shall not be bound to forward or deliver to the addressees letter-post items which senders post or cause to be posted in large quantities in a country other than the country where they reside if the amount of terminal dues to be received is lower than the sum that would have been received if the mail had been posted in the country where the senders reside. The designated operator of destination may claim from the designated operator of posting payment commensurate with the costs incurred and which may not exceed the higher of the following two amounts: either 80% of the domestic tariff for equivalent items, or the

rates applicable pursuant to articles 29, 30.5 to 30.11, 30.12 and 30.13, or 31.17, as appropriate. If the designated operator of posting does not agree to pay the amount claimed within a time limit set by the designated operator of destination, the designated operator of destination may either return the items to the designated operator of posting and shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of the redirection costs, or handle them in accordance with its national legislation.

Article 13
Use of the Union's forms

1 Unless otherwise provided by the Acts of the Union, only designated operators shall use the Union's forms and documentation for the operation of postal services and exchange of postal items in accordance with the Acts of the Union.

2 Designated operators may use the Union's forms and documentation for the operation of extraterritorial offices of exchange (ETOEs), as well as international mail processing centres (IMPCs) established by designated operators outside their respective national territory, as further defined in paragraph 6, in order to facilitate the operation of the aforementioned postal services and exchange of postal items.

3 The exercise of the possibility outlined in paragraph 2 shall be subject to the national legislation or policy of the member country or territory in which the ETOE or IMPC is established. In this regard, and without prejudice to the designation obligations contained in article 2, designated operators shall guarantee the continued fulfilment of their obligations under the Convention and be fully responsible for all their relations with other designated operators and with the International Bureau.

4 The requirement set forth in paragraph 3 shall equally apply to the destination member country for the acceptance of postal items from such ETOEs and IMPCs.

5 Member countries shall inform the International Bureau on their policies with regard to postal items transmitted and/or received from ETOEs or IMPCs. Such information shall be made available on the Union's website.

6 Strictly for the purposes of this article, ETOEs shall be defined as offices or facilities established for commercial purposes and operated by designated operators or under the responsibility of designated operators on the territory of a member country or territory other than their own, with the objective of drawing business in markets outside their respective national territory. IMPCs shall be defined as international mail processing facilities for the processing of international mail exchanged either in order to generate or receive mail dispatches, or to act as transit centres for international mail exchanged between other designated operators.

7 Nothing in this article shall be construed to imply that ETOEs or IMPCs (including the designated operators responsible for their establishment and operation outside their respective national territory) are in the same situation under the Acts of the Union as designated operators of the host country, nor impose a legal obligation on other member countries to recognize such ETOEs or IMPCs as designated operators on the territory where they are established and operated.

Section II
Quality of service standards and targets

Article 14
Quality of service standards and targets

1 Member countries or their designated operators shall establish, publish and update delivery standards and targets for their inward letter-post items and parcel-post items in the relevant compendia as specified in the Regulations.

2 These standards and targets, increased by the time normally required for customs clearance, shall be no less favourable than those applied to comparable items in their domestic service.

3 Member countries or their designated operators of origin shall also establish and publish end-to-end standards for priority and airmail letter-post items as well as for parcels and economy/surface parcels.

4 Member countries or their designated operators shall measure the application of quality of service standards.

Section III
Charges, surcharges and exemption from postal charges

Article 15
Charges

1 The charges for the various postal services defined in the Convention shall be set by the member countries or their designated operators, depending on national legislation, in accordance with the principles set out in the Convention and its Regulations. They shall in principle be related to the costs of providing these services.

2 The member country of origin or its designated operator, depending on national legislation, shall fix the postage charges for the conveyance of letter- and parcel-post items. The postage charges shall cover delivery of the items to the place of address provided that this delivery service is operated in the country of destination for the items in question.

3 The charges collected, including those laid down for guideline purposes in the Acts, shall be at least equal to those collected on internal service items presenting the same characteristics (category, quantity, handling time, etc.).

4 Member countries or their designated operators, depending on national legislation, shall be authorized to exceed any guideline charges appearing in the Acts.

5 Above the minimum level of charges laid down in 3, member countries or their designated operators may allow reduced charges based on their national legislation for letter-post items and parcels posted in the territory of the member country. They may, for instance, give preferential rates to major users of the Post.

6 No postal charge of any kind may be collected from customers other than those provided for in the Acts.

7 Except where otherwise provided in the Acts, each designated operator shall retain the charges which it has collected.

Article 16
Exemption from postal charges

1 Principle

1.1 Cases of exemption from postal charges, as meaning exemption from postal prepayment, shall be expressly laid down by the Convention. Nonetheless, the Regulations may provide for exemption from postal prepayment, transit charges, terminal dues and inward rates for letter-post items and postal parcels sent by member countries, designated operators and Restricted Unions and relating to the postal services. Furthermore, letter-post items and postal parcels sent by the International Bureau of the Union to Restricted Unions, member countries and designated operators shall be exempted from all postal charges. However, the member country of origin or its designated operator shall have the option of collecting air surcharges on the latter items.

2 Prisoners of war and civilian internees

2.1 Letter-post items, postal parcels and postal payment services items addressed to or sent by prisoners of war, either direct or through the offices mentioned in the Regulations of the Convention and of the Postal Payment Services Agreement, shall be exempt from all postal charges, with the exception of air surcharges. Belligerents apprehended and interned in a neutral country shall be classed with prisoners of war proper so far as the application of the foregoing provisions is concerned.

2.2 The provisions set out under 2.1 shall also apply to letter-post items, postal parcels and postal payment services items originating in other countries and addressed to or sent by civilian internees as defined by the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war, either direct or through the offices mentioned in the Regulations of the Convention and of the Postal Payment Services Agreement.

2.3 The offices mentioned in the Regulations of the Convention and of the Postal Payment Services Agreement shall also enjoy exemption from postal charges in respect of letter-post items, postal parcels and postal payment services items which concern the persons referred to under 2.1 and 2.2, which they send or receive, either direct or as intermediaries.

2.4 Parcels shall be admitted free of postage up to a weight of 5 kilogrammes. The weight limit shall be increased to 10 kilogrammes in the case of parcels the contents of which cannot be split up and of parcels addressed to a camp or the prisoners' representatives there ("hommes de confiance") for distribution to the prisoners.

2.5 In the accounting between designated operators, rates shall not be allocated for service parcels and for prisoner-of-war and civilian internee parcels, apart from the air conveyance dues applicable to air parcels.

3 Items for the blind

3.1 Any item for the blind sent to or by an organization for the blind or sent to or by a blind person shall be exempt from all postal charges, with the exception of air surcharges, to the extent that these items are admissible as such in the internal service of the sending designated operator.

3.2 In this article:

3.2.1 a blind person means a person who is registered as blind or partially sighted in his or her country or who meets the World Health Organization's definition of a blind person or a person with low vision;

3.2.2 an organization for the blind means an institution or association serving or officially representing blind persons;

3.2.3 items for the blind shall include correspondence, literature in whatever format including sound recordings, and equipment or materials of any kind made or adapted to assist blind persons in overcoming the problems of blindness, as specified in the Regulations.

Section IV
Basic and supplementary services

Article 17
Basic services

1 Member countries shall ensure that their designated operators accept, handle, convey and deliver letter-post items.

2 Letter-post items containing only documents are:

2.1 priority items and non-priority items, up to 2 kilogrammes;

2.2 letters, postcards and printed papers, up to 2 kilogrammes;

2.3 items for the blind, up to 7 kilogrammes;

2.4 special bags containing newspapers, periodicals, books and similar printed documentation for the same addressee at the same address called "M bags", up to 30 kilogrammes.

3 Letter-post items containing goods are:

3.1 priority and non-priority small packets, up to 2 kilogrammes;

3.2 items for the blind, up to 7 kilogrammes, as specified in the Regulations;

3.3 special bags containing newspapers, periodicals, books and similar printed documentation for the same addressee at the same address called "M bags", up to 30 kilogrammes, as specified in the Regulations.

4 Letter-post items shall be classified on the basis of both the speed of treatment of the items and the contents of the items in accordance with the Regulations.

5 Within the classification systems referred to in 4, letter-post items may also be classified on the basis of their format as small letters (P), large letters (G), bulky letters (E) or small packets (E). The size and weight limits are specified in the Regulations.

6 Higher weight limits than those indicated in paragraph**s** 2 and 3 apply optionally for certain letter-post item categories under the conditions specified in the Regulations.

7 Member countries shall also ensure that their designated operators accept, handle, convey and deliver parcel-post items up to 20 kilogrammes.

8 Weight limits higher than 20 kilogrammes apply optionally for certain parcel-post items under the conditions specified in the Regulations.

Article 18
Supplementary services

1 Member countries shall ensure the provision of the following mandatory supplementary services:

1.1 registration service for outbound priority and airmail letter-post items;

1.2 registration service for all inbound registered letter-post items.

2 Member countries may ensure the provision of the following optional supplementary services in relations between those designated operators which agreed to provide the service:

2.1 insurance for letter-post items and parcels;

2.2 cash-on-delivery service for letter-post items and parcels;

2.3 tracked delivery service for letter-post items;

2.4 delivery to the addressee in person of registered or insured letter-post items;

2.5 free of charges and fees delivery service for letter-post items and parcels;

2.6 cumbersome parcels services;

2.7 consignment service for collective items from one consignor sent abroad;

2.8 merchandise return service, which involves the return of merchandise by the addressee to the original seller, with the latter’s authorization.

3 The following three supplementary services have both mandatory and optional parts:

3.1 international business reply service (IBRS), which is basically optional. All member countries or their designated operators shall, however, be obliged to operate the IBRS “return” service;

3.2 international reply coupons, which shall be exchangeable in any member country. The sale of international reply coupons is, however, optional;

3.3 advice of delivery for registered letter-post items, parcels and insured items. All member countries or their designated operators shall admit incoming advices of delivery. The provision of an outward advice of delivery service is, however, optional.

4 The description of these services and their charges are set out in the Regulations.

5 Where the service features below are subject to special charges in the domestic service, designated operators shall be authorized to collect the same charges for international items, under the conditions described in the Regulations:

5.1 delivery for small packets weighing over 500 grammes;

5.2 letter-post items posted after the latest time of posting;

5.3 items posted outside normal counter opening hours;

5.4 collection at sender's address;

5.5 withdrawal of a letter-post item outside normal counter opening hours;

5.6 poste restante;

5.7 storage for letter-post items weighing over 500 grammes (with the exception of items for the blind), and for parcels;

5.8 delivery of parcels, in response to the advice of arrival;

5.9 cover against risks of force majeure;

5.10 delivery of letter-post items outside normal counter opening hours.

Section V
Prohibitions and customs matters

Article 19
Items not admitted. Prohibitions

1 General

1.1 Items not fulfilling the conditions laid down in the Convention and the Regulations shall not be admitted. Items sent in furtherance of a fraudulent act or with the intention of avoiding full payment of the appropriate charges shall not be admitted.

1.2 Exceptions to the prohibitions contained in this article are set out in the Regulations.

1.3 All member countries or their designated operators shall have the option of extending the prohibitions contained in this article, which may be applied immediately upon their inclusion in the relevant compendium. Any member country or its designated operator wishing to extend or amend the list of articles that it prohibits, or admits conditionally, as imports (or in transit) shall inform the International Bureau, which shall then update the relevant compendium accordingly.

2 Prohibitions in all categories of items

2.1 The insertion of the articles referred to below shall be prohibited in all categories of items:

2.1.1 narcotics and psychotropic substances, as defined by the International Narcotics Control Board, or other illicit drugs which are prohibited in the country of destination;

2.1.2 obscene or immoral articles;

2.1.3 counterfeit and pirated articles;

2.1.4 other articles the importation or circulation of which is prohibited in the country of destination;

2.1.5 articles which, by their nature or their packing, may expose officials or the general public to danger, or soil or damage other items, postal equipment or third-party property;

2.1.6 documents having the character of current and personal correspondence exchanged between persons other than the sender and the addressee or persons living with them;

3 Dangerous goods

3.1 The insertion of dangerous goods as described in the Convention and Regulations shall be prohibited in all categories of items.

3.2 The insertion of replica and inert explosive devices and military ordnance, including replica and inert grenades, inert shells and the like, shall be prohibited in all categories of items.

3.3 Exceptionally, dangerous goods may be admitted in relations between member countries that have declared their willingness to admit them either reciprocally or in one direction, provided that they are in compliance with national and international transport rules and regulations.

4 Live animals

4.1 Live animals shall be prohibited in all categories of items.

4.2 Exceptionally, the following shall be admitted in letter-post items other than insured items:

4.2.1 bees, leeches and silk-worms;

4.2.2 parasites and destroyers of noxious insects intended for the control of those insects and exchanged between officially recognized institutions;

4.2.3 flies of the family Drosophilidae for biomedical research exchanged between officially recognized institutions.

4.3 Exceptionally, the following shall be admitted in parcels:

4.3.1 live animals whose conveyance by post is authorized by the postal regulations and/or national legislation of the countries concerned.

5 Insertion of correspondence in parcels

5.1 The insertion of the articles mentioned below shall be prohibited in postal parcels:

5.1.1 correspondence, with the exception of archived materials, exchanged between persons other than the sender and the addressee or persons living with them.

6 Coins, bank notes and other valuable articles

6.1 It shall be prohibited to insert coins, bank notes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles:

6.1.1 in uninsured letter-post items;

6.1.1.1 however, if the national legislation of the countries of origin and destination permits this, such articles may be sent in a closed envelope as registered items;

6.1.2 in uninsured parcels; except where permitted by the national legislation of the countries of origin and destination;

6.1.3 in uninsured parcels exchanged between two countries which admit insured parcels;

6.1.3.1 in addition, any member country or designated operator may prohibit the enclosure of gold bullion in insured or uninsured parcels originating from or addressed to its territory or sent in transit à découvert across its territory; it may limit the actual value of these items.

7 Printed papers and items for the blind:

7.1 shall not bear any inscription or contain any item of correspondence;

7.2 shall not contain any postage stamp or form of prepayment, whether cancelled or not, or any paper representing a monetary value, except in cases where the item contains as an enclosure a card, envelope or wrapper bearing the printed address of the sender of the item or his agent in the country of posting or destination of the original item, which is prepaid for return.

8 Treatment of items wrongly admitted

8.1 The treatment of items wrongly admitted is set out in the Regulations. However, items containing articles mentioned in 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 3.1 and 3.2 shall in no circumstances be forwarded to their destination, delivered to the addressees or returned to origin. In the case of articles mentioned in 2.1.1 discovered while in transit, such items shall be handled in accordance with the national legislation of the country of transit. In the case of articles mentioned in 3.1 and 3.2 discovered during transport, the relevant designated operator shall be entitled to remove the article from the item and dispose of it. The designated operator may then forward the remainder of the item to its destination, together with information about the disposal of the inadmissible article.

Article 20
Customs control. Customs duty and other fees

1 The designated operators of the countries of origin and destination shall be authorized to submit items to customs control, according to the legislation of those countries.

2 Items submitted to customs control may be subjected to a presentation-to-Customs charge, the guideline amount of which is set in the Regulations. This charge shall only be collected for the submission to Customs and customs clearance of items which have attracted customs charges or any other similar charge.

3 Designated operators which are authorized to clear items through the Customs on behalf of customers, whether in the name of the customer or of the designated operator of the destination country, may charge customers a customs clearance fee based on the actual costs. This fee may be charged for all items declared at Customs according to national legislation, including those exempt from customs duty. Customers shall be clearly informed in advance about the required fee.

4 Designated operators shall be authorized to collect from the senders or addressees of items, as the case may be, the customs duty and all other fees which may be due.

Section VI
Liability

Article 21
Inquiries

1 Each designated operator shall be bound to accept inquiries relating to parcels or registered or insured items posted in its own service or that of any other designated operator, provided that the inquiries are presented by customers within a period of six months from the day after that on which the item was posted. The transmission and processing of inquiries between designated operators shall be made under the conditions laid down in the Regulations. The period of six months shall concern relations between claimants and designated operators and shall not include the transmission of inquiries between designated operators.

2 Inquiries shall be free of charge. However, additional costs caused by a request for transmission by EMS shall, in principle, be borne by the person making the request.

Article 22
Liability of designated operators. Indemnities

1 General

1.1 Except for the cases provided for in article 23, designated operators shall be liable for:

1.1.1 the loss of, theft from or damage to registered items, ordinary parcels (with the exception of parcels in the e-commerce delivery category (“ECOMPRO parcels”), whose specifications are further defined in the Regulations) and insured items;

1.1.2 the return of registered items, insured items and ordinary parcels on which the reason for non-delivery is not given.

1.2 Designated operators shall not be liable for items other than those mentioned in 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, nor for ECOMPRO parcels.

1.3 In any other case not provided for in this Convention, designated operators shall not be liable.

1.4 When the loss of or total damage to registered items, ordinary parcels and insured items is due to a case of force majeure for which indemnity is not payable, the sender shall be entitled to repayment of the charges paid for posting the item, with the exception of the insurance charge.

1.5 The amounts of indemnity to be paid shall not exceed the amounts mentioned in the Regulations.

1.6 In cases of liability, consequential losses, loss of profits or moral damage shall not be taken into account in the indemnity to be paid.

1.7 All provisions regarding liability of designated operators shall be strict, binding and complete. Designated operators shall in no case, even in case of severe fault, be liable above the limits provided for in the Convention and the Regulations.

2 Registered items

2.1 If a registered item is lost, totally rifled or totally damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity set in the Regulations. If the sender has claimed an amount less than the amount set in the Regulations, designated operators may pay that lower amount and shall receive reimbursement on this basis from any other designated operators involved.

2.2 If a registered item is partially rifled or partially damaged, the sender is entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the actual value of the theft or damage.

3 Ordinary parcels

3.1 If a parcel is lost, totally rifled or totally damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity of an amount set in the Regulations. If the sender has claimed an amount less than the amount set in the Regulations, designated operators may pay that lower amount and shall receive reimbursement on this basis from any other designated operators involved.

3.2 If a parcel is partially rifled or partially damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the actual value of the theft or damage.

3.3 Designated operators may agree to apply, in their reciprocal relations, the amount per parcel set in the Regulations, regardless of the weight.

4 Insured items

4.1 If an insured item is lost, totally rifled or totally damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the insured value in SDRs.

4.2 If an insured item is partially rifled or partially damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the actual value of the theft or damage. It may, however, in no case exceed the amount of the insured value in SDRs.

5 If a registered or insured letter-post item is returned and the reason for non-delivery is not given, the sender shall be entitled to a refund of the charges paid for posting the item only.

6 If a parcel is returned and the reason for non-delivery is not given, the sender shall be entitled to a refund of the charges paid by the sender for posting the parcel in the country of origin and the expenses occasioned by the return of the parcel from the country of destination.

7 In the cases mentioned in 2, 3 and 4, the indemnity shall be calculated according to the current price, converted into SDRs, of articles or goods of the same kind at the place and time at which the item was accepted for conveyance. Failing a current price, the indemnity shall be calculated according to the ordinary value of articles or goods whose value is assessed on the same basis.

8 When an indemnity is due for the loss of, total theft from or total damage to a registered item, ordinary parcel or insured item, the sender, or the addressee, as the case may be, shall also be entitled to repayment of the charges and fees paid for posting the item with the exception of the registration or insurance charge. The same shall apply to registered items, ordinary parcels or insured items refused by the addressee because of their bad condition if that is attributable to the designated operator and involves its liability.

9 Notwithstanding the provisions set out under 2, 3 and 4, the addressee shall be entitled to the indemnity for a rifled, damaged or lost registered item, ordinary parcel or insured item if the sender waives his rights in writing in favour of the addressee. This waiver shall not be necessary in cases where the sender and the addressee are the same.

10 The designated operator of origin shall have the option of paying senders in its country the indemnities prescribed by its national legislation for registered items and uninsured parcels, provided that they are not lower than those laid down in 2.1 and 3.1. The same shall apply to the designated operator of destination when the indemnity is paid to the addressee. However, the amounts laid down in 2.1 and 3.1 shall remain applicable:

10.1 in the event of recourse against the designated operator liable; or

10.2 if the sender waives his rights in favour of the addressee.

11 Reservations concerning the exceeding of deadlines for inquiries and payment of indemnity to designated operators, including the periods and conditions fixed in the Regulations, shall not be made, except in the event of bilateral agreement.

Article 23
Non-liability of member countries and designated operators

1 Designated operators shall cease to be liable for registered items, parcels and insured items which they have delivered according to the conditions laid down in their regulations for items of the same kind. Liability shall, however, be maintained:

1.1 when theft or damage is discovered either prior to or at the time of delivery of the item;

1.2 when, national regulations permitting, the addressee, or the sender if it is returned to origin, makes reservations on taking delivery of a rifled or damaged item;

1.3 when, national regulations permitting, the registered item was delivered to a private mail-box and the addressee declares that he did not receive the item;

1.4 when the addressee or, in the case of return to origin, the sender of a parcel or of an insured item, although having given a proper discharge, notifies the designated operator that delivered the item without delay that he has found theft or damage. He shall furnish proof that such theft or damage did not occur after delivery. The term “without delay” shall be interpreted according to national law.

2 Member countries and designated operators shall not be liable:

2.1 in cases of force majeure, subject to article 18.5.9;

2.2 when they cannot account for items owing to the destruction of official records by force majeure, provided that proof of their liability has not been otherwise produced;

2.3 when such loss or damage has been caused by the fault or negligence of the sender or arises from the nature of the contents;

2.4 in the case of items that fall within the prohibitions specified in article 19;

2.5 when the items have been seized under the national legislation of the country of destination, as notified by the member country or designated operator of that country;

2.6 in the case of insured items which have been fraudulently insured for a sum greater than the actual value of the contents;

2.7 when the sender has made no inquiry within six months from the day after that on which the item was posted;

2.8 in the case of prisoner-of-war or civilian internee parcels;

2.9 when the sender’s actions may be suspected of fraudulent intent, aimed at receiving compensation.

3 Member countries and designated operators shall accept no liability for customs declarations in whatever form these are made or for decisions taken by the Customs on examination of items submitted to customs control.

Article 24
Sender's liability

1 The sender of an item shall be liable for injuries caused to postal officials and for any damage caused to other postal items and postal equipment, as a result of the dispatch of articles not acceptable for conveyance or the non-observance of the conditions of acceptance.

2 In the case of damage to other postal items, the sender shall be liable for each item damaged within the same limits as designated operators.

3 The sender shall remain liable even if the office of posting accepts such an item.

4 However, where the conditions of acceptance have been observed by the sender, the sender shall not be liable, in so far as there has been fault or negligence in handling the item on the part of designated operators or carriers, after acceptance.

Article 25
Payment of indemnity

1 Subject to the right of recourse against the designated operator which is liable, the obligation to pay the indemnity and to refund the charges and fees shall rest either with the designated operator of origin or with the designated operator of destination.

2 The sender may waive his rights to the indemnity in favour of the addressee. The sender, or the addressee in the case of a waiver, may authorize a third party to receive the indemnity if national legislation allows this.

Article 26
Possible recovery of the indemnity from the sender or the addressee

1 If, after payment of the indemnity, a registered item, a parcel or an insured item or part of the contents previously considered as lost is found, the sender or the addressee, as the case may be, shall be advised that the item is being held at his disposal for a period of three months on repayment of the amount of the indemnity paid. At the same time he shall be asked to whom the item is to be delivered. In the event of refusal or failure to reply within the prescribed period, the same approach shall be made to the addressee or the sender as the case may be, granting that person the same period to reply.

2 If the sender and the addressee refuse to take delivery of the item or do not reply within the period provided for in paragraph 1, it shall become the property of the designated operator or, where appropriate, designated operators which bore the loss.

3 In the case of subsequent discovery of an insured item the contents of which are found to be of less value than the amount of the indemnity paid, the sender or the addressee, as the case may be, shall repay the amount of this indemnity against return of the item, without prejudice to the consequences of fraudulent insurance.

Section VII
Remuneration

A. Transit charges

Article 27
Transit charges

1 Closed mails and à découvert transit items exchanged between two designated operators or between two offices of the same member country by means of the services of one or more other designated operators

(third party services) shall be subject to the payment of transit charges. The latter shall constitute remuneration for the services rendered in respect of land transit, sea transit and air transit. This principle shall also apply to missent items and misrouted mails.

B. Terminal dues

Article 28
Terminal dues. General provisions

1 Subject to exemptions provided in the Regulations, each designated operator which receives letter-post items from another designated operator shall have the right to collect from the dispatching designated operator a payment for the costs incurred for the international mail received.

2 For the application of the provisions concerning the payment of terminal dues by their designated operators, countries and territories shall be classified in accordance with the lists drawn up for this purpose by Congress in its resolution C 7/2016, as follows:

2.1 countries and territories in the target system prior to 2010 (group I);

2.2 countries and territories in the target system as of 2010 and 2012 (group II);

2.3 countries and territories in the target system as from 2016 (group III);

2.4 countries and territories in the transitional system (group IV).

3 The provisions of the present Convention concerning the payment of terminal dues are transitional arrangements, moving towards a country-specific payment system at the end of the transition period.

4 Access to domestic services. Direct access

4.1 In principle, each designated operator of a country that was in the target system prior to 2010 shall make available to the other designated operators all the rates, terms and conditions offered in its domestic service on conditions identical to those proposed to its national customers. It shall be up to the designated operator of destination to decide whether the terms and conditions of direct access have been met by the designated operator of origin.

4.2 Designated operators of countries in the target system prior to 2010 shall make available to other designated operators of countries that were in the target system prior to 2010 the rates, terms and conditions offered in their domestic service, on conditions identical to those proposed to their national customers.

4.3 Designated operators of countries that joined the target system from 2010 may opt to make available to a limited number of designated operators the application of domestic conditions, on a reciprocal basis, for a trial period of two years. After that period, they must choose either to cease making available the application of domestic conditions or to continue to make their own domestic conditions available to all designated operators. However, if designated operators of countries that joined the target system from 2010 ask designated operators of countries that were in the target system prior to 2010 for the application of domestic conditions, they must make available to all designated operators the rates, terms and conditions offered in their domestic service on conditions identical to those proposed to their national customers.

4.4 Designated operators of countries in the transitional system may opt not to make available to other designated operators the application of domestic conditions. They may, however, opt to make available to a limited number of designated operators the application of domestic conditions, on a reciprocal basis, for a trial period of two years. After that period, they must choose either to cease making available the application of domestic conditions or to continue to make their own domestic conditions available to all designated operators.

5 Terminal dues remuneration shall be based on quality of service performance in the country of destination. The Postal Operations Council shall therefore be authorized to supplement the remuneration in articles 29, 30 and 31 to encourage participation in monitoring systems and to reward designated operators for reaching their quality targets. The Postal Operations Council may also fix penalties in case of insufficient quality, but the remuneration shall not be less than the minimum remuneration according to articles 30 and 31.

6 Any designated operator may waive wholly or in part the payment provided for under 1.

7 M bags weighing less than 5 kilogrammes shall be considered as weighing 5 kilogrammes for terminal dues payment purposes. The terminal dues rates to be applied for M bags shall be:

7.1 for the year 2022, 1.016 SDR per kilogramme;

7.2 for the year 2023, 1.044 SDR per kilogramme;

7.3 for the year 2024, 1.073 SDR per kilogramme;

7.4 for the year 2025, 1.103 SDR per kilogramme.

8 For registered items there shall be an additional payment of 1.463 SDR per item for 2022, 1.529 SDR per item for 2023, 1.598 SDR per item for 2024 and 1.670 SDR for 2025. For insured items, there shall be an additional payment of 1.777 SDR per item for 2022, 1.857 SDR per item for 2023, 1.941 SDR per item for 2024 and 2.028 SDR for 2025. The Postal Operations Council shall be authorized to supplement remuneration for these and other supplementary services where the services provided contain additional features to be specified in the Regulations.

9 For tracked delivery service items there shall be an additional payment of 0.400 SDR per item in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations. The Postal Operations Council shall be authorized to supplement remuneration for tracked delivery service items on the basis of performance in the electronic transmission of information, as specified in the Regulations.

10 For small packets, registered and insured and tracked delivery service items not carrying a barcoded identifier or carrying a barcoded identifier that is not compliant with the Union's Technical Standard S10, there shall be a further additional payment of 0.5 SDR per item unless otherwise bilaterally agreed.

11 The Postal Operations Council shall be authorized to supplement remuneration and/or fix penalties in relation to designated operators' compliance with the requirements for providing electronic advance data on letter-post items containing goods.

12 The remuneration for returned undeliverable letter-post items shall be specified in the Regulations.

13 For terminal dues payment purposes, letter-post items posted in bulk in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations shall be referred to as "bulk mail". The payment for bulk mail shall be established as provided for in articles 29, 30 and 31, as appropriate.

14 Any designated operator may, by bilateral or multilateral agreement, apply other payment systems for the settlement of terminal dues accounts.

15 Designated operators may exchange non-priority mail on an optional basis by applying a 10% discount to the priority terminal dues rate.

16 The provisions applicable between designated operators of countries in the target system shall apply to any designated operator of a country in the transitional system which declares that it wishes to join the target system. The Postal Operations Council may set transitional measures in the Regulations. The full provisions of the target system may apply to any new target designated operator that declares that it wishes to apply such full provisions without transitional measures.

Article 29
Terminal dues. Self-declaration of rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items

1 Beginning with rates in effect for the year 2021 onwards and notwithstanding articles 30 and 31, designated operators may notify the International Bureau by 1 June of the year preceding the year in which the self-declared rates would apply of a self-declared rate per item and a self-declared rate per kilogramme, expressed in local currency or SDR, that shall apply for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items in the following calendar year. The International Bureau shall annually convert the self-declared rates provided in local currency into values expressed in SDR. To calculate the rates in SDR, the International Bureau shall use the average monthly exchange rate of the five-month period ending 31 March of the year preceding the year

for which the self-declared rates would be applicable. The resultant rates shall be notified by means of an International Bureau circular no later than 1 July of the year preceding the year in which the self-declared rates would apply. The self-declared rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items shall be substituted as appropriate in any reference or rate calculation pertaining to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items elsewhere in the Convention or the Regulations. Additionally, each designated operator shall provide the International Bureau with its domestic rates for equivalent services in order to calculate the relevant ceiling rates.

1.1 Subject to 1.2 and 1.3, the self-declared rates shall:

1.1.1 at the average E format weight of 0.158 kilogrammes, not be higher than the country-specific ceiling rates calculated in accordance with paragraph 1.2;

1.1.2 be based on 70%, or the applicable percentage in paragraph 8, of the domestic single-piece charge for items equivalent to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items offered by the designated operator in its domestic service and in effect on 1 June of the year preceding the year for which the self-declared rates would be applicable;

1.1.3 be based on the domestic single-piece charge in force for items within the designated operator's domestic service having the specified maximum size and shape dimensions of bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items;

1.1.4 be made available to all designated operators;

1.1.5 be applied only to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items;

1.1.6 be applied to all bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post flows other than bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post flows from countries in the transitional system to countries in the target system, and between countries in the transitional system, if mail flows do not exceed 100 tonnes per year;

1.1.7 be applied to all bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post flows except for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post flows between countries in the target system as from 2010, 2012 and 2016, and from those countries to countries in the target system prior to 2010, if mail flows do not exceed 25 tonnes per year.

1.2 The self-declared rates per item and per kilogramme for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items shall not be higher than the country-specific ceiling rates determined by a linear regression of 11 points corresponding to 70%, or the applicable percentage in paragraph 8, of the priority single-piece tariffs of equivalent domestic services for 20-gramme, 35-gramme, 75-gramme, 175-gramme, 250-gramme, 375-gramme, 500-gramme, 750-gramme, 1,000-gramme, 1,500-gramme and 2,000-gramme bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items, exclusive of any taxes.

1.2.1 The determination of whether the self-declared rates exceed the ceiling rates shall be tested at the average revenue using the most current worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail in which an E format item weighs 0.158 kilogrammes. In instances in which the self-declared rates exceed the ceiling rates at the average E format weight of 0.158 kilogrammes, the ceiling per-item and per-kilogramme rates shall apply; alternatively, the designated operator in question may choose to reduce its self-declared rates to a level that conforms with paragraph 1.2.

1.2.2 When multiple packet rates are available based on thickness, the lesser domestic tariff shall be used for items up to 250 grammes, and the higher domestic tariff shall be used for items above 250 grammes.

1.2.3 Where zonal rates apply in the equivalent domestic service, the mid-point rate as specified in the Regulations shall be used, and domestic tariffs for non-contiguous zones shall be excluded for determination of the mid-point rate. Alternatively, the determination of the zonal tariff to be used may be based on the actual weighted average distance of inbound bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items (for the most recent calendar year).

1.2.4 Where the equivalent domestic service and tariff include additional features that are not part of the basic service, i.e. tracking, signature and insurance services, and such features are extended across all the weight increments listed in paragraph 1.2, the lesser of the corresponding domestic supplemental rate, the supplemental rate, or the suggested guideline charge in the Acts of the Union shall be deducted from the domestic tariff. The total deduction for all additional features may not exceed 25% of the domestic tariff.

1.3 Where the country-specific ceiling rates calculated in accordance with paragraph 1.2 result in a revenue calculated for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes that is lower than the revenue calculated for the same item at the same weight on the basis of the rates specified below, the self-declared rates shall not be higher than the following rates:

1.3.1 for the year 2020, 0.614 SDR per item and 1.381 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.2 for the year 2021, 0.645 SDR per item and 1.450 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.3 for the year 2022, 0.677 SDR per item and 1.523 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.4 for the year 2023, 0.711 SDR per item and 1.599 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.5 for the year 2024, 0.747 SDR per item and 1.679 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.6 for the year 2025, 0.784 SDR per item and 1.763 SDR per kilogramme.

1.4 Any additional conditions and procedures for the self-declaration of rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items shall be laid down in the Regulations. All other provisions of the Regulations pertaining to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items shall apply to self-declared rates, unless they are inconsistent with this article.

1.5 Designated operators of countries in the transitional system may apply self-declared rates on the basis of sampling of their inbound flows.

2 In addition to the ceiling rates provided for in 1.2, the notified self-declared rates shall not be higher than the maximum revenues defined for the years 2021 to 2025, as follows:

2.1 2021: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2020 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 15%;

2.2 2022: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2021 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 15%;

2.3 2023: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2022 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 16%;

2.4 2024: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2023 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 16%;

2.5 2025: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2024 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 17%.

3 For rates in effect in 2021 and subsequent years, the ratio between the self-declared item rate and kilogramme rate shall not change by more than five percentage points upwards or downwards compared with the ratio of the previous year. For designated operators that self-declare rates under paragraph **7** or apply self-declared rates on a reciprocal basis under paragraph 9, the ratio in effect in 2020 shall be based on the self-declared per-item rate and per-kilogramme rate established as of 1 July 2020.

4 Designated operators that opt not to self-declare their rates in accordance with this article shall fully apply the provisions contained in articles 30 and 31.

5 For designated operators that have elected to self-declare their rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items in a prior calendar year and that do not communicate different self-declared rates for the subsequent year, the existing self-declared rates shall continue to apply unless they do not satisfy the conditions laid out in this article.

6 The International Bureau shall be informed by the designated operator concerned of any reduction in the domestic charge referred to in this article.

7 With effect from 1 July 2020, and notwithstanding paragraphs 1 and 2, a designated operator of a member country that received total annual inbound letter-post volumes in 2018 in excess of 75,000 tonnes (as per the relevant official information provided to the International Bureau or any other officially available information assessed by the International Bureau) may self-declare rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items, other than for the letter-post flows referred to in paragraphs 1.1.6 and 1.1.7. The said designated operator shall also have the right not to apply the revenue increase limits set out in paragraph 2 for mail flows to, from and between its country and any other country.

8 If a competent authority with oversight for the designated operator which exercises the aforementioned option in paragraph 7 determines that, in order to cover all costs for handling and delivery of bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items, the designated operator's self-declared rate any year after 2020 must be based on a cost-to-tariff ratio that exceeds 70% of the domestic single-piece charge, then the cost-to-tariff ratio for that designated operator may exceed 70%, subject to a limitation that the cost-to-tariff ratio to be used shall not exceed one percentage point above the higher of 70% or the cost-to-tariff ratio used in the calculation of the self-declared rates currently in effect, not to exceed 80%, and provided that the designated operator in question furnishes all such supporting information with its notification to the International Bureau under paragraph 1. If any such designated operator increases its cost-to-tariff ratio based on such a determination of a competent authority, then it shall notify the International Bureau of that ratio for publication by 1 May of the year preceding the year in which the ratio shall apply. Further specifications related to the costs and revenues to be used for the calculation of the specific cost-to-tariff ratio shall be provided in the Regulations.

9 Where a designated operator of a member country invokes paragraph 7, all other corresponding designated operators (including those whose exempted outbound flows are referred to in paragraphs 1.1.6 and 1.1.7) may do likewise and self-declare rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items with respect to the aforementioned designated operator without being subject to the maximum revenue increase limits set out in paragraph 2. Paragraph 8 of this article shall also apply to all such corresponding designated operators. With respect to any such corresponding designated operators that elect to apply self-declared rates under this paragraph 9 (including those whose outbound flows are optionally eligible for exemption under paragraphs 1.1.6 and 1.1.7), the self-declared rates of the designated operator that invoked paragraph 7 shall reciprocally apply.

10 Any designated operator that invokes the possibility outlined in paragraph 7 shall, in the calendar year of the entry into force of the initial rates, be required to pay a charge to the Union, for five consecutive years (beginning with the calendar year of application of the option referred to above under 7), in the amount of 8 million CHF per annum, for a total of 40 million CHF. No further payment shall be expected for self-declaration of rates in accordance with this paragraph after the conclusion of the five-year period.

10.1 The charge referred to above shall be exclusively allocated in accordance with the following methodology: 16 million CHF shall be allocated to a tied fund of the Union for the implementation of projects aimed at electronic advance data and postal security under the terms of a letter of agreement executed between the said designated operator and the Union; and 24 million CHF shall be allocated to a tied fund for the purposes of funding long-term liabilities of the Union, as further defined by the Council of Administration, under the terms of a letter of agreement executed between the said designated operator and the Union.

10.2 The charge set forth in this paragraph shall not apply to those designated operators of member countries that apply self-declared rates reciprocally under paragraph 9 as a consequence of another designated operator exercising the option to self-declare rates in accordance with paragraph 7.

10.3 The designated operator paying the charge shall inform the International Bureau each year how the sum of 8 million CHF per annum is to be allocated, provided that the five annual allocations are distributed as set out above, pursuant to the said letter of agreement. A designated operator that exercises the option to self-declare rates in accordance with paragraph 7 shall be provided with due reporting of the expenditures related to the charge remitted, pursuant to this paragraph, under the terms of a letter of agreement executed between the said designated operator and the Union.

11 If a designated operator exercises the option to self-declare rates in accordance with paragraph 7, or if a designated operator reciprocally applies a self-declared rate under paragraph 9, then simultaneously with the introduction of self-declared rates, the said designated operator should consider making available to sending designated operators of Union member countries, on a non-discriminatory basis, proportionately adjusted charges for volume and distance, to the extent practicable and available in the receiving country's published

domestic service for similar services under a mutually agreeable bilateral commercial agreement, within the framework of the rules of the national regulatory authority.

12 No reservations may be made to this article.

Article 30
Terminal dues. Provisions applicable to mail flows between designated operators of countries in the target system

1 Payment for letter-post items, including bulk mail but excluding M bags and IBRS items, shall be established on the basis of the application of the rates per item and per kilogramme reflecting the handling costs in the country of destination. Charges corresponding to priority items in the domestic service which are part of the universal service provision will be used as a basis for the calculation of terminal dues rates.

2 The terminal dues rates in the target system shall be calculated taking into account, where applicable in the domestic service, the classification of items based on their format, as provided for in article 17.5 of the Convention.

3 Designated operators in the target system shall exchange format-separated mails in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations.

4 Payment for IBRS items shall be as described in the Regulations.

5 The rates per item and per kilogramme are separated for small (P) and large (G) letter-post items and bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items. They shall be calculated on the basis of 70% of the charges for a 20-gramme small (P) letter-post item and for a 175-gramme large (G) letter-post item, exclusive of VAT or other taxes. For bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items, they shall be calculated from the P/G format line at 375 grammes, exclusive of VAT or other taxes.

6 The Postal Operations Council shall define the conditions for the calculation of the rates as well as the necessary operational, statistical and accounting procedures for the exchange of format-separated mails.

7 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system in a given year shall not lead to an increase of more than 13% in the terminal dues revenue for a letter-post item in the P/G format of 37.6 grammes and in the E format of 375 grammes, compared to the previous year.

8 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system prior to 2010 for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be higher than:

8.1 for the year 2022, 0.380 SDR per item and 2.966 SDR per kilogramme;

8.2 for the year 2023, 0.399 SDR per item and 3.114 SDR per kilogramme;

8.3 for the year 2024, 0.419 SDR per item and 3.270 SDR per kilogramme;

8.4 for the year 2025, 0.440 SDR per item and 3.434 SDR per kilogramme.

9 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items may not be higher than:

9.1 for the year 2022, 0.864 SDR per item and 1.942 SDR per kilogramme;

9.2 for the year 2023, 0.950 SDR per item and 2.136 SDR per kilogramme;

9.3 for the year 2024, 1.045 SDR per item and 2.350 SDR per kilogramme;

9.4 for the year 2025, 1.150 SDR per item and 2.585 SDR per kilogramme.

10 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be lower than:

10.1 for the year 2022, 0.272 SDR per item and 2.121 SDR per kilogramme;

10.2 for the year 2023, 0.292 SDR per item and 2.280 SDR per kilogramme;

10.3 for the year 2024, 0.314 SDR per item and 2.451 SDR per kilogramme;

10.4 for the year 2025, 0.330 SDR per item and 2.574 SDR per kilogramme.

11 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items may not be lower than:

11.1 for the year 2022, 0.677 SDR per item and 1.523 SDR per kilogramme;

11.2 for the year 2023, 0.711 SDR per item and 1.599 SDR per kilogramme;

11.3 for the year 2024, 0.747 SDR per item and 1.679 SDR per kilogramme;

11.4 for the year 2025, 0.784 SDR per item and 1.763 SDR per kilogramme.

12 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system as from 2010 and 2012 as well as between these countries and countries in the target system prior to 2010 for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be higher than:

12.1 for the year 2022, 0.342 SDR per item and 2.672 SDR per kilogramme;

12.2 for the year 2023, 0.372 SDR per item and 2.905 SDR per kilogramme;

12.3 for the year 2024, 0.404 SDR per item and 3.158 SDR per kilogramme;

12.4 for the year 2025, 0.440 SDR per item and 3.434 SDR per kilogramme.

13 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system as from 2016 as well as between these countries and countries in the target system prior to 2010 or as from 2010 and 2012 for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be higher than:

13.1 for the year 2022, 0.313 SDR per item and 2.443 SDR per kilogramme;

13.2 for the year 2023, 0.351 SDR per item and 2.738 SDR per kilogramme;

13.3 for the year 2024, 0.393 SDR per item and 3.068 SDR per kilogramme;

13.4 for the year 2025, 0.440 SDR per item and 3.434 SDR per kilogramme.

14 For flows below 50 tonnes a year between countries that joined the target system in 2010, 2012 and 2016, as well as between these countries and countries that were in the target system prior to 2010, the per-kilogramme and per-item components shall be converted into a total rate per kilogramme on the basis of a worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail in which P and G format items account for 3.97 items weighing 0.14 kilogrammes and E format items account for 5.45 items weighing 0.86 kilogrammes.

15 The terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 shall substitute the rates pertaining to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items in this article; consequently, the provisions laid down in paragraphs 7, 9 and 11 shall not apply.

16 The payment for bulk mail sent to countries in the target system prior to 2010 shall be established by applying the rates per item and per kilogramme provided for in paragraphs 5 to 11 or article 29, as appropriate.

17 The payment for bulk mail sent to countries in the target system as from 2010, 2012 and 2016 shall be established by applying the rates per item and per kilogramme provided for in paragraphs 5 and 10 to 13 or article 29, as appropriate.

18 No reservations may be made to this article.

Article 31
Terminal dues. Provisions applicable to mail flows to, from and between designated operators of countries in the transitional system

1 In preparation for the entry into the target system of the designated operators of countries in the terminal dues transitional system, payment for letter-post items, including bulk mail but excluding M bags and IBRS items, shall be established on the basis of a rate per item and a rate per kilogramme.

2 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29, the provisions of article 30, paragraphs 1 to 3, 5 and 6, shall apply for the calculation of rates per item and per kilogramme applicable to small (P), large (G), bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items.

3 The rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system in a given year shall not lead to an increase of more than 15.5% in the terminal dues revenue for a letter-post item in the P/G format of 37.6 grammes, and more than 13% in the terminal dues revenue for a letter-post item in the E format of 375 grammes, compared to the previous year.

4 Payment for IBRS items shall be as described in the Regulations.

5 The rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be higher than:

5.1 for the year 2022, 0.285 SDR per item and 2.227 SDR per kilogramme;

5.2 for the year 2023, 0.329 SDR per item and 2.573 SDR per kilogramme;

5.3 for the year 2024, 0.380 SDR per item and 2.973 SDR per kilogramme;

5.4 for the year 2025, 0.440 SDR per item and 3.434 SDR per kilogramme.

6 The rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be lower than:

6.1 for the year 2022, 0.272 SDR per item and 2.121 SDR per kilogramme;

6.2 for the year 2023, 0.292 SDR per item and 2.280 SDR per kilogramme;

6.3 for the year 2024, 0.314 SDR per item and 2.451 SDR per kilogramme;

6.4 for the year 2025, 0.330 SDR per item and 2.574 SDR per kilogramme.

7 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 and in accordance with 2 above, the rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items may not be higher than:

7.1 for the year 2022, 0.864 SDR per item and 1.942 SDR per kilogramme;

7.2 for the year 2023, 0.950 SDR per item and 2.136 SDR per kilogramme;

7.3 for the year 2024, 1.045 SDR per item and 2.350 SDR per kilogramme;

7.4 for the year 2025, 1.150 SDR per item and 2.585 SDR per kilogramme.

8 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 and in accordance with 2 above, the rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items may not be lower than:

8.1 for the year 2022, 0.677 SDR per item and 1.523 SDR per kilogramme;

8.2 for the year 2023, 0.711 SDR per item and 1.599 SDR per kilogramme;

8.3 for the year 2024, 0.747 SDR per item and 1.679 SDR per kilogramme;

8.4 for the year 2025, 0.784 SDR per item and 1.763 SDR per kilogramme.

9 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29, the per-kilogramme and per-item components shall be converted into a total rate per kilogramme on the basis of a worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail as follows:

9.1 for the year 2022, not lower than 6.376 SDR per kilogramme and not higher than 7.822 SDR per kilogramme;

9.2 for the year 2023, not lower than 6.729 SDR per kilogramme and not higher than 8.681 SDR per kilogramme;

9.3 for the year 2024, not lower than 7.105 SDR per kilogramme and not higher than 9.641 SDR per kilogramme;

9.4 for the year 2025, not lower than 7.459 SDR per kilogramme and not higher than 10.718 SDR per kilogramme.

10 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29, the flat rate per kilogramme shall be applied if neither the designated operator of origin nor the designated operator of destination requests the revision mechanism in order to revise the rate on the basis of the actual number of items per kilogramme, rather than the worldwide average. The sampling for the revision mechanism shall be applied in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations.

11 For mail flows from and between countries in the transitional system below 100 tonnes a year, the total rate per kilogramme shall be as follows:

11.1 for the year 2022, 6.376 SDR per kilogramme;

11.2 for the year 2023, 6.729 SDR per kilogramme;

11.3 for the year 2024, 7.105 SDR per kilogramme;

11.4 for the year 2025, 7.459 SDR per kilogramme.

12 For mail flows from countries in the target system to countries in the transitional system below 100 tonnes a year where terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items have been self-declared pursuant to article 29, the per-kilogramme and per-item components shall be converted into a total rate per kilogramme on the basis of a worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail, as referred to in article 30.14, except for the flows in 29.1.5 of 50 tonnes and above where the country in the transitional system samples its inbound flow.

13 For mail flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system above 100 tonnes a year where terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 and where the country of destination decides not to sample the inbound mail, the per-kilogramme and per-item components shall be converted into a total rate per kilogramme on the basis of a worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail, as referred to in article 30.14.

14 Except for the mail flows described in paragraph 11, the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 shall substitute the rates pertaining to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items in this article; consequently, the provisions laid down in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 shall not apply.

15 The downward revision of the total rate in paragraph 10 may not be invoked by a country in the target system against a country in the transitional system unless the latter asks for a revision in the opposite direction.

16 For mail flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system that are below 100 tonnes per year, designated operators may send and receive format-separated mail on an optional basis, in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations. In the case of format-separated exchanges the rates in paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8 above shall apply if the designated operator of destination opts not to self-declare rates pursuant to article 29.

17 The payment for bulk mail to designated operators of countries in the target system shall be established by applying the rates per item and per kilogramme provided for in article 29 or 30. For bulk mail received, designated operators in the transitional system may request payment according to paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8 above and article 29, as appropriate.

18 No reservations may be made to this article.

Article 32
Quality of Service Fund

1 Terminal dues payable by all countries and territories to the countries classified as least developed countries and included in group IV for terminal dues and Quality of Service Fund (QSF) purposes, except for M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, shall be increased by 20% of the rates provided for in article 29 or 31 for payment into the QSF for improving the quality of service in those countries. There shall be no such payment from one group IV country to another group IV country.

2 Terminal dues, except for M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, payable by countries and territories classified as group I countries to the countries classified as group IV countries, other than the least developed countries referred to in paragraph 1 of this article, shall be increased by 10% of the rates provided for in article 29 or 31, for payment into the QSF for improving the quality of service in those countries.

3 Terminal dues, except for M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, payable by countries and territories classified as group II countries to the countries classified as group IV countries, other than the least developed countries referred to in paragraph 1 of this article, shall be increased by 10% of the rates provided for in article 29 or 31, for payment into the QSF for improving the quality of service in those countries.

4 Terminal dues, except in respect of M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, payable by countries and territories classified as group III countries to the countries classified as group IV countries, other than the least developed countries referred to in paragraph 1 of this article, shall be increased by 5% of the rates provided for in article 29 or 31, for payment into the QSF for improving the quality of service in those countries.

5 An increase of 1%, calculated on the basis of terminal dues payable by countries and territories classified as group I, II and III countries to the countries classified as group III countries, except in respect of M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, shall be paid into a common fund to be established for improving the quality of service in countries classified in groups II, III and IV and managed in accordance with the relevant procedures set by the Postal Operations Council.

6 An increase of 0.5%, calculated on the basis of terminal dues payable by countries and territories classified as group I, II and III countries to the countries classified as group III countries, except in respect of M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, shall be paid into a special account to be established as part of the common fund referred to in paragraph 5, specifically for improving the quality of service in group IV countries classified by the United Nations as least developed countries and managed in accordance with the relevant procedures set by the Postal Operations Council.

7 Subject to the relevant procedures set by the Postal Operations Council, any unused amounts contributed under paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this article and accumulated over the four preceding QSF reference years (with 2018 as the earliest reference year) shall also be transferred to the common fund referred to in paragraph 5 of this article. For the purposes of this paragraph, only funds that have not been used in QSF-approved quality of service projects within two years following receipt of the last payment of contributed amounts for any given four-year period as defined above shall be transferred to the aforementioned common fund.

8 The combined terminal dues payable into the QSF for improving the quality of service of countries in group IV shall be subject to a minimum of 20,000 SDR per annum for each beneficiary country. The additional funds needed for reaching this minimum amount shall be invoiced, in proportion to the volumes exchanged, to the countries in groups I, II and III.

9 The Postal Operations Council shall adopt or update, by December 2021 at the latest, procedures for financing QSF projects.

C. Rates for parcel post

Article 33
Parcel post land and sea rates

1 With the exception of ECOMPRO parcels, parcels exchanged between two designated operators shall be subject to inward land rates calculated by combining the base rate per parcel and base rate per kilogramme laid down in the Regulations.

1.1 Bearing in mind the above base rates, designated operators may, in addition, be authorized to claim supplementary rates per parcel and per kilogramme in accordance with provisions laid down in the Regulations.

1.2 The rates mentioned in 1 and 1.1 shall be payable by the designated operator of the country of origin, unless the Regulations provide for exceptions to this principle.

1.3 The inward land rates shall be uniform for the whole of the territory of each country.

2 Parcels exchanged between two designated operators or between two offices of the same country by means of the land services of one or more other designated operators shall be subject to the transit land rates, payable to the designated operators which take part in the routeing on land, laid down in the Regulations, according to the distance step applicable.

2.1 For parcels in transit à découvert, intermediate designated operators shall be authorized to claim the single rate per item laid down in the Regulations.

2.2 Transit land rates shall be payable by the designated operator of the country of origin unless the Regulations provide for exceptions to this principle.

3 Any designated operator which participates in the sea conveyance of parcels shall be authorized to claim sea rates. These rates shall be payable by the designated operator of the country of origin, unless the Regulations provide for exceptions to this principle.

3.1 For each sea conveyance used, the sea rate shall be laid down in the Regulations according to the distance step applicable.

3.2 Designated operators may increase by 50% at most the sea rate calculated in accordance with 3.1. On the other hand, they may reduce it as they wish.

D. Air conveyance dues

Article 34
Basic rates and provisions concerning air conveyance dues

1 The basic rate applicable to the settlement of accounts between designated operators in respect of air conveyance shall be approved by the Postal Operations Council and shall be calculated by the International Bureau according to the formula specified in the Regulations. The rates applying to the air conveyance of parcels sent via the merchandise return service shall be calculated according to the provisions defined in the Regulations.

2 The calculation of air conveyance dues on closed dispatches, priority items, airmail items and air parcels sent in transit à découvert, missent items and misrouted mails, as well as the relevant methods of accounting, are described in the Regulations.

3 The air conveyance dues for the whole distance flown shall be borne:

3.1 in the case of closed mails, by the designated operator of the country of origin of the mails, including when these mails transit via one or more intermediate designated operators;

3.2 in the case of priority items and airmail items in transit à découvert, including missent items, by the designated operator which forwards the items to another designated operator.

4 These same regulations shall be applicable to items exempted from land and sea transit charges if they are conveyed by air.

5 Each designated operator of destination which provides air conveyance of international mail within its country shall be entitled to reimbursement of the additional costs incurred for such conveyance provided that the weighted average distance of the sectors flown exceeds 300 kilometres. The Postal Operations Council may replace the weighted average distance by other relevant criteria. Unless agreement has been reached that no charge should be made, the dues shall be uniform for all priority mails and airmails originating abroad whether or not this mail is reforwarded by air.

6 However, where the terminal dues levied by the designated operator of destination are based specifically on costs, domestic rates or self-declared rates set under article 29, no additional reimbursement for internal air conveyance shall be made.

7 The designated operator of destination shall exclude, for the purpose of calculating the weighted average distance, the weight of all mails for which the terminal dues calculation has been based specifically on costs, domestic rates or self-declared rates set under article 29 of the designated operator of destination.

E. Settlement of accounts

Article 35
Provisions specific to the settlement of accounts and payments for international postal exchanges

1 Settlements and payments in respect of operations carried out in accordance with the present Convention (including settlements and payments for the transport (forwarding) of postal items, settlements and payments for the treatment of postal items in the country of destination and settlements and payments in compensation for any loss, theft or damage relating to postal items) shall be based on and made in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and other Acts of the Union, and shall not require the preparation of any documents by a designated operator except in cases provided for in the Acts of the Union.

2 In order to ensure the provision of the universal postal service, as set forth in article 3, and the integrity of the international postal network, designated operators shall make payments for operations carried out in accordance with the Convention.

F. Fixing of charges and rates

Article 36
Authority of the Postal Operations Council to fix charges and rates

1 The Postal Operations Council shall have the authority to fix the following rates and charges, which are payable by designated operators in accordance with the conditions shown in the Regulations:

1.1 transit charges for the handling and conveyance of letter mails through one or more intermediary countries;

1.2 basic rates and air conveyance dues for the carriage of mail by air;

1.3 inward land rates for the handling of all inward parcels except ECOMPRO parcels;

1.4 transit land rates for the handling and conveyance of parcels through an intermediary country;

1.5 sea rates for the conveyance of parcels by sea.

1.6 outward land rates for the provision of the merchandise return service for parcels.

2 Any revision made, in accordance with a methodology that ensures equitable remuneration for designated operators performing the services, must be based on reliable and representative economic and financial data. Any change decided upon shall enter into force at a date set by the Postal Operations Council.

Section VIII
Optional services

Article 37
EMS and integrated logistics

1 Member countries or designated operators may agree with each other to participate in the following services, which are described in the Regulations:

1.1 EMS, which is a postal express service for documents and merchandise, and shall whenever possible be the quickest postal service by physical means. This service may be provided on the basis of the EMS Standard Multilateral Agreement or by bilateral agreement;

1.2 integrated logistics, which is a service that responds fully to customers' logistical requirements and includes the phases before and after the physical transmission of goods and documents.

Article 38
Electronic postal services

1 Member countries or designated operators may agree with each other to participate in the following electronic postal services, which are described in the Regulations:

1.1 electronic postal mail, which is an electronic postal service involving the transmission of electronic messages and information by designated operators;

1.2 electronic postal registered mail, which is a secure electronic postal service that provides proof of sending and proof of delivery of an electronic message and a secure communication channel to the authenticated users;

1.3 electronic postal certification mark, which provides evidentiary proof of an electronic event, in a given form, at a given time, and involving one or more parties;

1.4 electronic postal mailbox, which enables the sending of electronic messages by an authenticated mailer and the delivery and storage of electronic messages and information for the authenticated addressee.

Section IX
Final provisions

Article 39
Conditions for approval of proposals concerning the Convention and the Regulations

1 To become effective, proposals submitted to Congress relating to this Convention must be approved by a majority of the member countries present and voting which have the right to vote. At least half of the member countries represented at Congress and having the right to vote shall be present at the time of voting.

2 To become effective, proposals relating to the Regulations must be approved by a majority of the members of the Postal Operations Council having the right to vote.

3 To become effective, proposals introduced between Congresses relating to this Convention and to its Final Protocol must obtain:

3.1 two thirds of the votes, at least one half of the member countries of the Union which have the right to vote having taken part in the vote, if they involve amendments;

3.2 a majority of the votes if they involve interpretation of the provisions.

4 Any member country may, no later than ninety days from the date of notification of an amendment adopted under 3.1, propose a reservation to that same amendment, subject by analogy to the same approval conditions as set out under 3.1 and the relevant provisions of article 40.

Article 40
Reservations at Congress

1 Any reservation which is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Union shall not be permitted.

2 As a general rule, any member country whose views are not shared by other member countries shall endeavour, as far as possible, to conform to the opinion of the majority. Reservations should be made only in cases of absolute necessity, and proper reasons given.

3 Reservations to any article of the present Convention shall be submitted to Congress as a Congress proposal written in one of the working languages of the International Bureau and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

4 To become effective, proposals concerning reservations must be approved by whatever majority is required for amendment of the article to which the reservation relates.

5 In principle, reservations shall be applied on a reciprocal basis between the reserving member country and the other member countries.

6 Reservations to the present Convention shall be inserted in the Final Protocol to the present Convention, on the basis of proposals approved by Congress.

Article 41
Entry into force and duration of the Convention

This Convention shall come into force on 1 July 2022 (with the exception of all the provisions contained in section VII, “Remuneration”, which shall come into force on 1 January 2022) and remain in force for an indefinite period.

In witness whereof the plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the member countries have signed this Convention in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each member country by the International Bureau of the Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

Final Protocol to the Universal Postal Convention

Article
I. Ownership of postal items. Withdrawal from the post. Alteration or correction of address
II. Postage stamps
III. Posting abroad of letter-post items
IV. Charges
V. Exception to the exemption of items for the blind from postal charges
VI. Basic services
VII. Advice of delivery
VIII. Prohibitions (letter post)
IX. Prohibitions (postal parcels)
X. Articles subject to customs duty
XI. Presentation-to-Customs charge
XII. Inquiries
XIII. Exceptional inward land rates
XIV. Basic rates and provisions concerning air conveyance dues
XV. Special tariffs
XVI. Authority of the Postal Operations Council to fix charges and rates

Final Protocol to the Universal Postal Convention

At the moment of proceeding to signature of the Universal Postal Convention (hereinafter the “Convention”) concluded this day, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union (hereinafter the “Union”) have agreed the following:

Article I
Ownership of postal items. Withdrawal from the post. Alteration or correction of address

1 The provisions in article 5.1 and 2 shall not apply to Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain (Kingdom), Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Hong Kong, China, Dominica, Egypt, Eswatini, Fiji, Gambia, Grenada, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Tanzania (United Rep.), Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Vanuatu and Zambia.

2 Nor shall article 5.1 and 2 apply to Austria, Denmark and Iran (Islamic Rep.), whose internal legislation does not allow withdrawal from the Post or alteration of the address of correspondence, at the request of the sender, from the time when the addressee has been informed of the arrival of an item addressed to him.

3 Article 5.1 shall not apply to Australia, Ghana and Zimbabwe.

4 Article 5.2 shall not apply to Bahamas, Belgium, the Dem. People’s Rep. of Korea, Iraq and Myanmar, whose legislation does not permit withdrawal from the post or alteration of address of letter-post items at the sender’s request.

5 Article 5.2 shall not apply to the United States of America.

6 Article 5.2 shall apply to Australia only in so far as that article is consistent with its domestic legislation.

7 Notwithstanding article 5.2, Dem. Rep. of the Congo, El Salvador, Panama (Rep.), Philippines and Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep.) shall be authorized not to return postal parcels after the addressee has requested their clearance by Customs, since this is incompatible with those countries’ customs legislation.

Article II
Postage stamps

Notwithstanding article 6.7, Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, will process letter-post items and postal parcels bearing postage stamps using new materials or technologies that are not compatible with their respective mail processing machines only upon prior agreement with the designated operator of origin concerned.

Article III
Posting abroad of letter-post items

1 Australia, Austria, Greece, New Zealand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America reserve the right to impose a charge, equivalent to the cost of the work it incurs, on any designated operator which, under the provisions of article 12.4, sends to it items for disposal which were not originally dispatched as postal items by their services.

2 Notwithstanding article 12.4, Canada reserves the right to collect from the designated operator of origin such amount as will ensure recovery of not less than the costs incurred by it in the handling of such items.

3 Article 12.4 allows the designated operator of destination to claim, from the designated operator of posting, appropriate remuneration for delivering letter-post items posted abroad in large quantities. Australia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reserve the right to limit any such payment to the appropriate domestic tariff for equivalent items in the country of destination.

4 Article 12.4 allows the designated operator of destination to claim, from the designated operator of posting, appropriate remuneration for delivering letter-post items posted abroad in large quantities. The following member countries reserve the right to limit any such payment to the limits authorized in the Regulations for bulk mail: Bahamas, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, China (People's Rep.), Grenada, Guyana, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, New Zealand, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and United States of America.

5 Notwithstanding the reservations under 4, the following member countries reserve the right to apply in full the provisions of article 12 of the Convention to mail received from Union member countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.), Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Iran (Islamic Rep.), Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mali, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Rep., Togo and Turkey.

6 In application of article 12.4, Germany reserves the right to request the mailing country to grant compensation of the amount it would receive from the country of which the sender is resident.

7 Notwithstanding the reservations made under article III, China (People's Rep.) reserves the right to limit any payment for delivering letter-post items posted abroad in large quantities to the limits authorized in the Convention and its Regulations for bulk mail.

8 Notwithstanding article 12.3, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reserve the right to claim from the sender or, failing that, from the designated operator of posting, the payment of the internal rates.

Article IV
Charges

1 Notwithstanding article 15, Australia, Belarus, Canada, Finland and New Zealand shall be authorized to collect postal charges other than those provided for in the Regulations, when such charges are consistent with the legislation of their countries.

2 Notwithstanding article 15, Brazil shall be authorized to collect an additional fee from the addressees of ordinary items containing merchandise that had to be converted to tracked items as a result of customs and security requirements.

Article V
Exception to the exemption of items for the blind from postal charges

1 Notwithstanding article 16, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Turkey, which do not concede exemption from postal charges to items for the blind in their internal service, may collect the postage and charges for special services which may not, however, exceed those in their internal service.

2 France shall apply the provisions of article 16 concerning items for the blind subject to its national regulations.

3 Notwithstanding article 16.3, and in accordance with its national legislation, Brazil reserves the right to consider as items for the blind only those items which are sent by or addressed to blind persons or organizations for the blind. Items not satisfying these conditions shall be subject to payment of postage.

4 Notwithstanding article 16, New Zealand will accept as items for the blind for delivery in New Zealand only those items that are exempted from postal charges in its domestic service.

5 Notwithstanding article 16, Finland, which does not provide exemption from postal charges for items for the blind in its domestic service according to the definitions in article 16 adopted by Congress, may collect the domestic charges for items for the blind destined for other countries.

6 Notwithstanding article 16, Canada, Denmark and Sweden allow exemption from postal charges for the blind only to the extent provided for in their internal legislation.

7 Notwithstanding article 16, Iceland accepts exemption from postal charges for the blind only to the extent provided for in its internal legislation.

8 Notwithstanding article 16, Australia will accept as items for the blind for delivery in Australia only those items that are exempted from postal charges in its domestic service.

9 Notwithstanding article 16, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America may collect the charges for special services which are applied items for the blind in their internal service.

Article VI
Basic services

1 Notwithstanding the provisions of article 17, Australia does not agree to the extension of basic services to include postal parcels.

2 The provisions of article 17.2.4 shall not apply to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, whose national legislation requires a lower weight limit. Health and safety legislation in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland limits the weight of mail bags to 20 kilogrammes.

3 Notwithstanding article 17.2.4, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan shall be authorized to limit to 20 kilogrammes the maximum weight of inward and outward M bags.

4 Notwithstanding article 17, Iceland accepts items for the blind only to the extent provided for in its internal legislation.

Article VII
Advice of delivery

1 Belgium, Canada and Sweden shall be authorized not to apply article 18.3.3, as regards parcels, given that they do not offer the advice of delivery service for parcels in their internal service.

2 Notwithstanding article 18.3.3, Denmark and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reserve the right not to admit inward advices of delivery, given that they do not offer advice of delivery in their internal service.

3 Notwithstanding article 18.3.3, Brazil shall be authorized to admit inward advices of delivery only when they can be returned electronically.

Article VIII
Prohibitions (letter post)

1 Exceptionally, Dem. People's Rep. of Korea and Lebanon shall not accept registered items containing coins, bank notes, securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles. They shall not be strictly bound by the provisions of the Regulations with regard to their liability in cases of theft or damage, or where items containing articles made of glass or fragile articles are concerned.

2 Exceptionally, Bolivia, China (People's Rep.), excluding Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Viet Nam shall not accept registered items containing coins, bank notes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles.

3 Myanmar reserves the right not to accept insured items containing the valuable articles listed in article 19.6, as this is contrary to its internal regulations.

4 Nepal does not accept registered items or insured items containing currency notes or coins, except by special agreement to that effect.

5 Uzbekistan does not accept registered or insured items containing coins, bank notes, cheques, postage stamps or foreign currency and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

6 Iran (Islamic Rep.) does not accept items containing articles contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion, and reserves the right not to accept letter-post items (ordinary, registered or insured) containing coins, bank notes, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss or damage to such items.

7 The Philippines reserves the right not to accept any kind of letter post (ordinary, registered or insured) containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles.

8 Australia does not accept postal items of any kind containing bullion or bank notes. In addition, it does not accept registered items for delivery in Australia, or items in transit à découvert, containing valuables such as jewellery, precious metals, precious or semi-precious stones, securities, coins or any form of negotiable financial instrument. It declines all liability for items posted which are not in compliance with this reservation.

9 China (People's Rep.), excluding Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, shall not accept insured items containing coins, bank notes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer and travellers' cheques in accordance with its internal regulations.

10 Latvia and Mongolia reserve the right not to accept, in accordance with their national legislation, ordinary, registered or insured mail containing coins, bank notes, securities payable to bearer and travellers' cheques.

11 Brazil reserves the right not to accept ordinary, registered or insured mail containing coins, bank notes in circulation or securities of any kind payable to bearer.

12 Viet Nam reserves the right not to accept letters containing articles or goods.

13 Indonesia does not accept registered or insured items containing coins, bank notes, cheques, postage stamps, foreign currency, or any kind of securities payable to bearer for delivery in Indonesia, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

14 Kyrgyzstan reserves the right not to accept letter-post items (ordinary, registered, insured, small packets) containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

15 Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan shall not accept registered or insured items containing coins, banknotes, credit notes or any securities payable to bearer, cheques, precious metals, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels and other valuable articles or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

16 Moldova and the Russian Federation do not accept registered or insured items containing bank notes in circulation, securities (cheques) of any kind payable to bearer or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

17 Notwithstanding article 19.3, France reserves the right not to accept items containing goods in cases where these items do not comply with its national regulations, or international regulations, or technical and packing instructions for air transport.

18 Cuba reserves the right not to accept, handle, convey or deliver letter-post items containing coins, banknotes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, cheques, precious metals and stones, jewels or other valuable articles, or any kind of document, goods or object in cases where these items do not comply with its national regulations, or international regulations, or technical and packing instructions for air transport, and shall accept no liability in cases of theft, loss or damage to such items. Cuba reserves the right not to accept letter-post items subject to customs duty containing goods that are imported to the country if their value does not comply with its national regulations.

Article IX
Prohibitions (postal parcels)

1 Myanmar and Zambia shall be authorized not to accept insured parcels containing the valuable articles covered in article 19.6.1.3.1, since this is contrary to their internal regulations.

2 Exceptionally, Lebanon and Sudan shall not accept parcels containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles, or containing liquids or easily liquefiable elements or articles made of glass or similar or fragile articles. They shall not be bound by the relevant provisions of the Regulations.

3 Brazil shall be authorized not to accept insured parcels containing coins and currency notes in circulation, as well as any securities payable to bearer, since this is contrary to its internal regulations.

4 Ghana shall be authorized not to accept insured parcels containing coins and currency notes in circulation, since this is contrary to its internal regulations.

5 In addition to the articles listed in article 19, Saudi Arabia shall be authorized not to accept parcels containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles. Nor does it accept parcels containing medicines of any kind unless they are accompanied by a medical prescription issued by a competent official authority, products designed for extinguishing fires, chemical liquids or articles contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion.

6 In addition to the articles referred to in article 19, Oman does not accept items containing:

6.1 medicines of any sort unless they are accompanied by a medical prescription issued by a competent official authority;

6.2 fire-extinguishing products or chemical liquids;

6.3 articles contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion.

7 In addition to the articles listed in article 19, Iran (Islamic Rep.) shall be authorized not to accept parcels containing articles contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion, and reserves the right not to accept ordinary or insured parcels containing coins, bank notes, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles; it shall accept no liability in cases of loss or damage to such items.

8 The Philippines shall be authorized not to accept any kind of parcel containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles, or containing liquids or easily liquefiable elements or articles made of glass or similar or fragile articles.

9 Australia does not accept postal items of any kind containing bullion or bank notes.

10 China (People's Rep.) shall not accept ordinary parcels containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles. Furthermore, with the exception of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, insured parcels containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer and travellers' cheques shall not be accepted.

11 Mongolia reserves the right not to accept, in accordance with its national legislation, parcels containing coins, bank notes, securities payable to bearer and travellers' cheques.

12 Latvia does not accept ordinary and insured parcels containing coins, bank notes, securities (cheques) of any kind payable to bearer or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

13 Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Uzbekistan do not accept ordinary or insured parcels containing bank notes in circulation, securities (cheques) of any kind payable to bearer or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

14 Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan do not accept ordinary or insured parcels containing coins, bank notes, credit notes or any securities payable to bearer, cheques, precious metals, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels and other valuable articles or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

15 Cuba reserves the right not to accept, handle, convey or deliver postal parcels containing coins, banknotes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, cheques, precious metals and stones, jewels or other valuable articles, or any kind of document, goods or object in cases where these items do not comply with its national regulations, or international regulations, or technical and packing instructions for air transport, and shall accept no liability in cases of theft, loss or damage to such items. Cuba reserves the right not to accept postal parcels subject to customs duty containing goods that are imported to the country if their value does not comply with its national regulations.

Article X
Articles subject to customs duty

1 With reference to article 19, Bangladesh and El Salvador do not accept insured items containing articles subject to customs duty.

2 With reference to article 19, Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dem. People's Rep. of Korea, El Salvador, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, Nepal, Peru, Russian Federation, San Marino, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep.) do not accept ordinary and registered letters containing articles subject to customs duty.

3 With reference to article 19, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.), Djibouti, Mali and Mauritania do not accept ordinary letters containing articles subject to customs duty.

4 Notwithstanding the provisions set out under 1 to 3, the sending of serums, vaccines and urgently required medicaments which are difficult to procure shall be permitted in all cases.

Article XI
Presentation-to-Customs charge

1 Gabon reserves the right to collect a presentation-to-Customs charge from customers.

2 Notwithstanding article 20.2, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, Romania, the Russian Federation and Spain reserve the right to collect a presentation-to-Customs charge from customers for any item submitted to customs control.

3 Notwithstanding article 20.2, Azerbaijan, Greece, Pakistan and Turkey reserve the right to collect from customers a presentation-to-Customs charge for all items presented to customs authorities.

4 Congo (Rep.) and Zambia reserve the right to collect a presentation-to-Customs charge from customers in respect of parcels.

Article XII
Inquiries

1 Notwithstanding article 21.2, Cape Verde, Chad, Dem. People's Rep. of Korea, Egypt, Gabon, Greece, Iran (Islamic Rep.), Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Rep., Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Uzbekistan and Zambia reserve the right to collect from customers charges on inquiries lodged in respect of letter-post items.

2 Notwithstanding article 21.2, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Canada, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Romania and Slovakia reserve the right to collect a special charge when, on completion of the investigation conducted in response to the inquiry, it emerges that the latter was unjustified.

3 Afghanistan, Cape Verde, Congo (Rep.), Egypt, Gabon, Iran (Islamic Rep.), Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Rep., Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Zambia reserve the right to collect an inquiry charge from customers in respect of parcels.

4 Notwithstanding article 21.2, Brazil, Panama (Rep.) and the United States of America reserve the right to collect a charge from customers for inquiries lodged in respect of letter-post items and parcels posted in countries which apply that type of charge in accordance with paragraphs 1 to 3 of this article.

Article XIII
Exceptional inward land rates

Notwithstanding article 33, Afghanistan reserves the right to collect an additional exceptional inward land rate of 7.50 SDR per parcel.

Article XIV
Basic rates and provisions concerning air conveyance dues

Notwithstanding the provisions of article 34, Australia reserves the right to apply air conveyance rates for outward parcels sent via the merchandise return service, either as laid down in the Regulations or by any other means, including bilateral agreements.

Article XV
Special tariffs

1 Belgium, Norway and United States of America may collect higher land rates for air parcels than for surface parcels.

2 Lebanon shall be authorized to collect for parcels up to 1 kilogramme the charge applicable to parcels over 1 and up to 3 kilogrammes.

3 Panama (Rep.) shall be authorized to collect 0.20 SDR per kilogramme for surface airlifted (S.A.L.) parcels in transit.

Article XVI
Authority of the Postal Operations Council to fix charges and rates

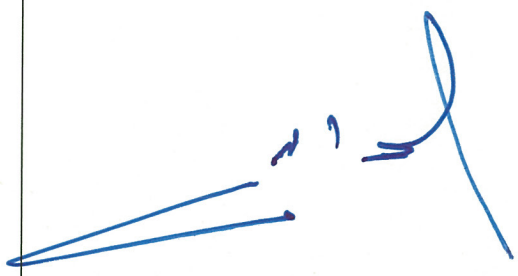
Notwithstanding article 36.1.6, Australia reserves the right to apply outward land rates for the provision of the merchandise return service for parcels, either as laid down in the Regulations or by any other means, including bilateral agreements.

In witness whereof, the plenipotentiaries have drawn up this Protocol which shall have the same force and the same validity as if its provisions were inserted in the text of the Convention itself, and they have signed it in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each member country by the International Bureau of the Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

POUR
L'ÉTAT ISLAMIQUE D'AFGHANISTAN:

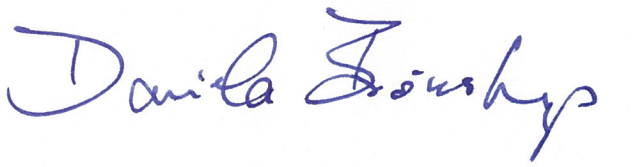
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ALGÉRIENNE
DÉMOCRATIQUE ET POPULAIRE:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'AFRIQUE DU SUD:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRALE
D'ALLEMAGNE:

subject to ratification

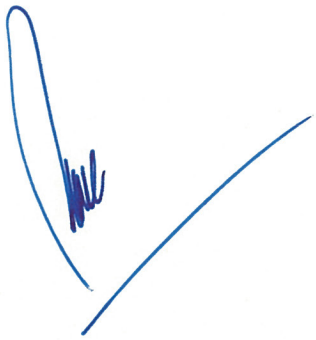


POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ALBANIE:

POUR
LES ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ANGOLA:

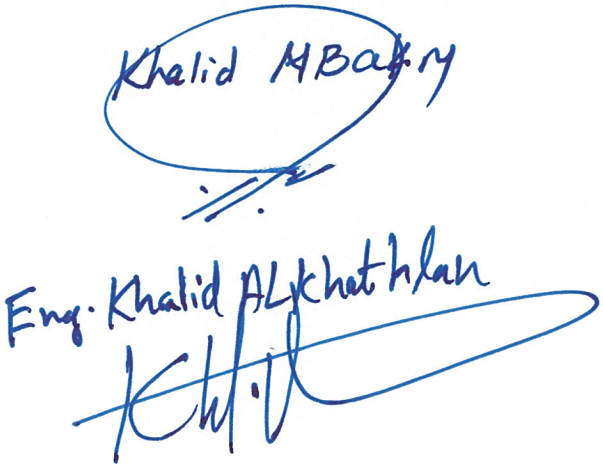
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ARGENTINE:



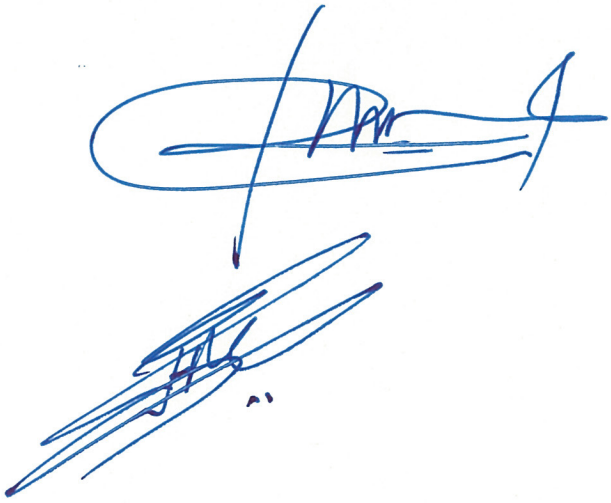
POUR
ANTIGUA-ET-BARBUDA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ARMÉNIE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DE L'ARABIE SAOUDITE:



Pour
ARUBA, CURAÇAO et S. MAARTEN:



POUR
L'AUSTRALIE:

POUR
LE COMMONWEALTH DES BAHAMAS:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'AUTRICHE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DE BAHRAIN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'AZERBAÏDJAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE POPULAIRE
DU BANGLADESH:

POUR
LA BARBADE:

POUR
LE BELIZE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉLARUS:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉNIN:

POUR
LA BELGIQUE:

Sous réserve de ratification

POUR
LE ROYAUME DE BHOUTAN:

POUR
L'ETAT PLURINATIONAL DE BOLIVIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRATIVE
DU BRÉSIL:

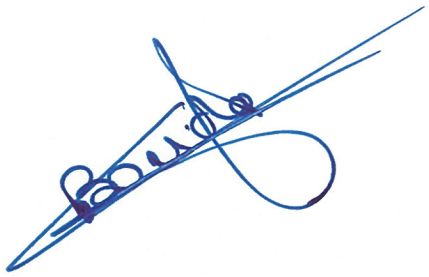
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE
DE BOSNIE ET HERZÉGOVINE:

POUR
LE BRUNEI DARUSSALAM:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU BOTSWANA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE BULGARIE:

POUR
LE BURKINA FASO:



Bouda Madina

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU BURUNDI:

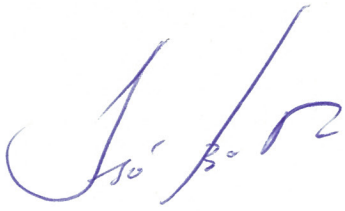
NGABIRE Léa

POUR
LE CANADA:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DU CAMBODGE:

AN. SOKKHOEURN

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAP-VERT:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE:

Marie-Yvette Kholoko
Cameroun p.o pour la RCA

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CHYPRE:

POUR
LE CHILI:

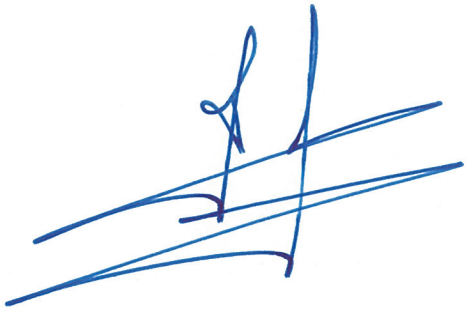
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE COLOMBIE:

Bajo reserva de Ratificación

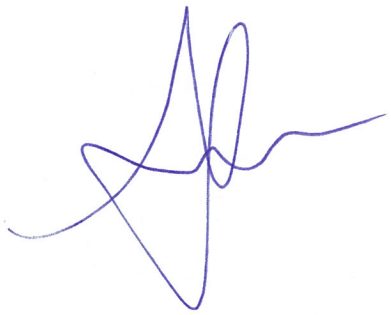
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE POPULAIRE DE CHINE:

POUR
L'UNION DES COMORES:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU CONGO:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CÔTE D'IVOIRE:

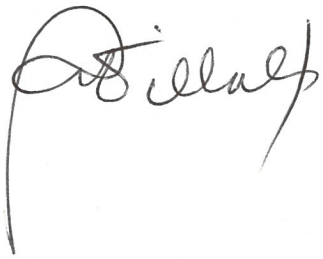


POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CROATIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE COSTA-RICA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CUBA:



POUR
LE ROYAUME DE DANEMARK:

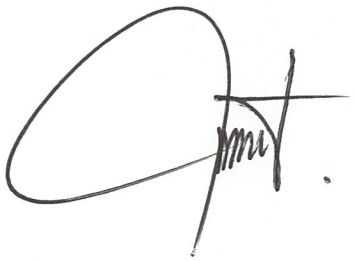
POUR
LE COMMONWEALTH
DE LA DOMINIQUE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE DJIBOUTI:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ARABE D'ÉGYPTE:

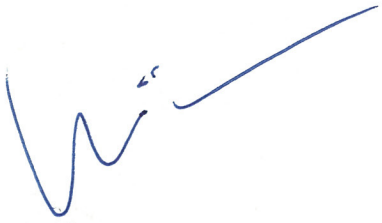
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DOMINICAINE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE EL SALVADOR:



POUR
LES ÉMIRATS ARABES UNIS:

POUR
L'ESPAGNE:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE L'ÉQUATEUR:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ESTONIE:

POUR
L'ÉRYTHRÉE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME D'ESWATINI:

POUR
L'ÉTHIOPIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE:

F. RIVASSEAU

POUR
LES FIDJI:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE GABONAISE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE FINLANDE:

POUR
LA GAMBIE:

POUR
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POUR
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POUR
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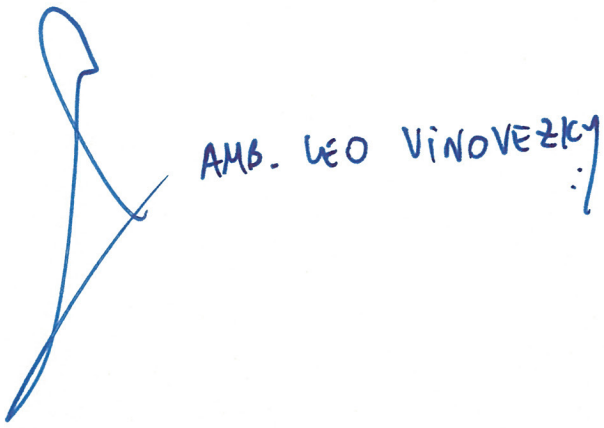

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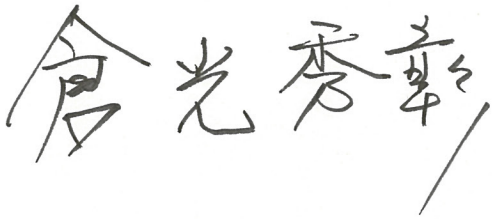

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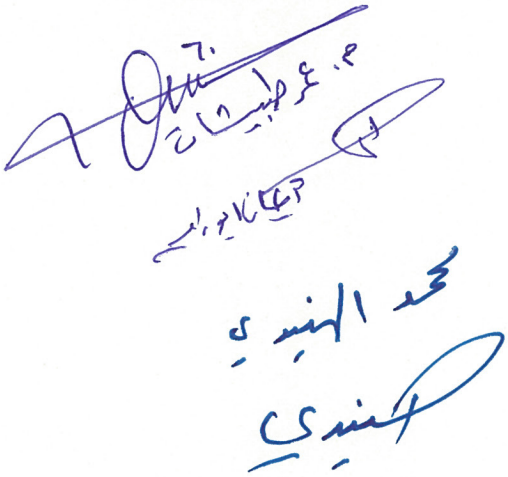

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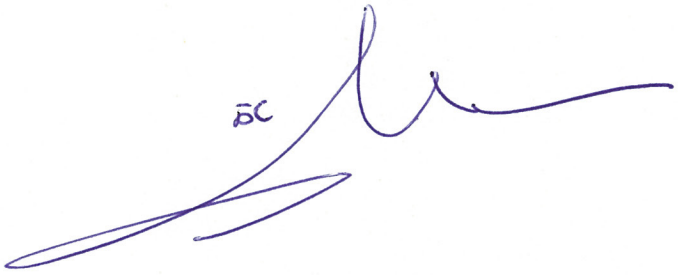

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POUR
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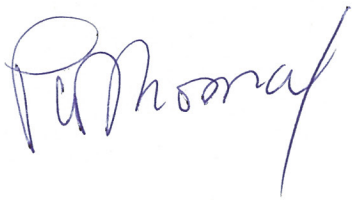

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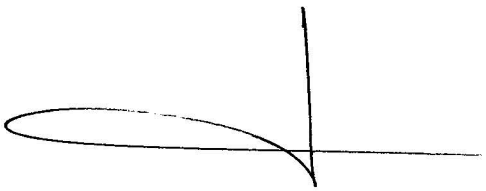

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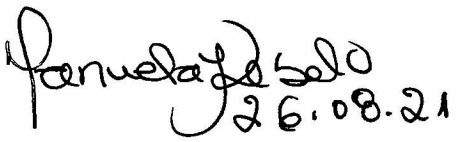

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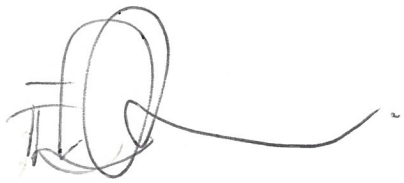

POUR
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POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE NAURU:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU NIGER:

Idrissa Kané

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRALE
DÉMOCRATIQUE DU NÉPAL:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRALE
DU NIGÉRIA:

Isa Ali Ibrahim
(Minister)

POUR
LA NORVÈGE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE L'OUGANDA:

POUR
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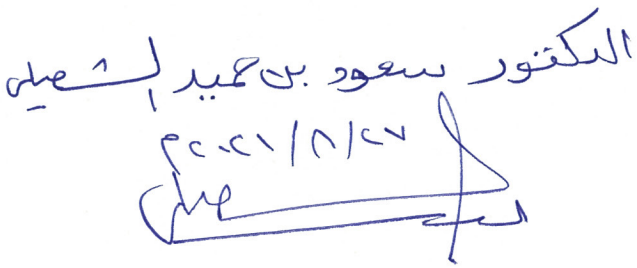

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POUR
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POUR
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(MUNICIPALITÉS DE BONAIRE, SABA
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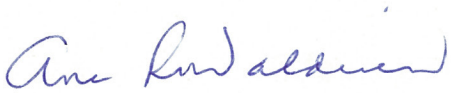

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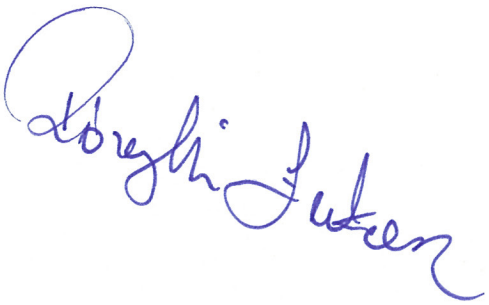

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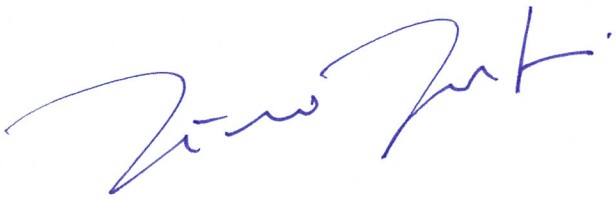

POUR
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POUR
L'ÉTAT DE QATAR:

POUR
LA ROUMANIE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME-UNI
DE GRANDE-BRETAGNE ET
D'IRLANDE DU NORD,
ÎLES DE LA MANCHE ET ÎLE DE MAN:

POUR
LES TERRITOIRES D'OUTRE-MER
DONT LES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES
SONT ASSURÉES PAR LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU ROYAUME-UNI
DE GRANDE-BRETAGNE
ET D'IRLANDE DU NORD:

POUR
LA FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU RWANDA:

POUR
SAINT-CHRISTOPHE
(SAINT-KITTS)-ET-NEVIS:

POUR
SAINTE-LUCIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SAINT-MARIN:

POUR
L'ÉTAT INDÉPENDANT DE SAMOA:

POUR
SAINT-VINCENT-ET-GRENADINES:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE
DE SAO TOMÉ-ET-PRINCIPE:

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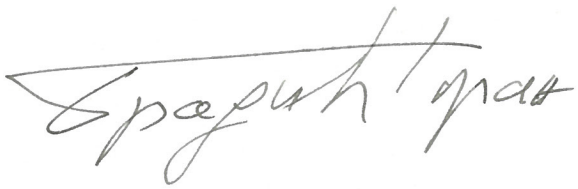

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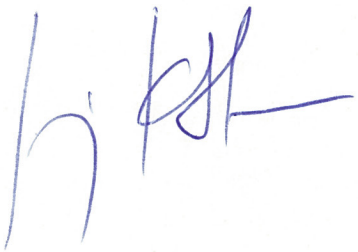

POUR
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LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SLOVÉNIE:

POUR
LE GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL DE
TRANSITION DE
LA RÉPUBLIQUE
DE SOMALIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE SOCIALISTE
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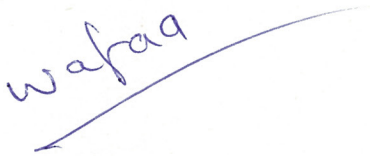

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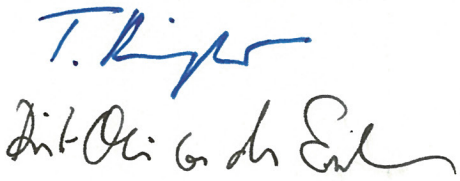

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU SURINAME:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE UNIE DE TANZANIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE:

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LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU TCHAD:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU TADJIKISTAN:

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LA RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE:

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DE TIMOR-LESTE:

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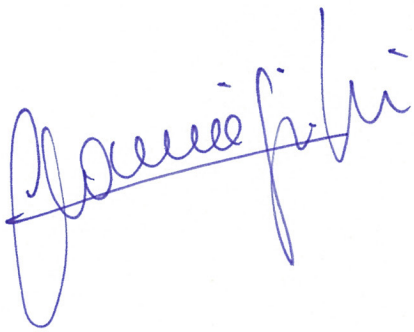

POUR
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POUR
L'ÉTAT DE LA CITÉ DU VATICAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU YÉMEN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE BOLIVARIENNE DU VENEZUELA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE ZAMBIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE SOCIALISTE DU VIET NAM:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU ZIMBABWE:

Postal Payment Services Agreement

Postal Payment Services Agreement
Final Protocol to the Postal Payment Services Agreement

Postal Payment Services Agreement

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[1] In accordance with article 24.2 of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses, the International Bureau renumbers the provisions contained in the consolidated versions of the Acts of the Union referred to in this document, with a view to correctly reflecting the order of these provisions in the aforementioned Acts.

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Postal Payment Services Agreement

The undersigned, plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union (hereinafter the "Union"), in provision with article 22.4 of the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have, by common consent and subject to article 25.4 of the Constitution, drawn up the following Agreement, which is in line with the principles of the Constitution, in particular in order to foster financial inclusion and implement a secure and accessible postal payment service adapted to the greatest number of users on the basis of systems enabling the interoperability of designated operators' networks.

Part I
Common principles applying to the postal payment services

Chapter I
General provisions

Article 1
Scope of the Agreement

1 Subject to the provisions under 2, each member country shall ensure on a best effort basis that the following postal payment services are offered or accepted by electronic means on its territory:

1.1 Money order in cash: the sender hands over funds at the service access point and asks for the full amount to be paid to the payee in cash, with no deductions.

1.2 Outpayment money order: the sender gives instructions for his account to be debited and asks for the payee to be paid the full amount in cash, with no deductions.

1.3 Inpayment money order: the sender hands over funds at the service access point and asks for them to be paid into the payee's account, with no deductions.

1.4 Account transfer: the sender gives instructions for his account to be debited and asks for the payee's account to be credited with the equivalent amount, with no deductions.

2 In the event that none of the electronic postal payment services outlined under § 1 are offered or accepted by a member country, that member country must offer or accept at least one of the aforementioned postal payment services by paper-based means.

3 The Regulations shall define the procedures for executing the present Agreement.

Article 2
Definitions

1 Competent authority – any national authority of a member country which, by virtue of the powers conferred on it by the law or regulations, supervises the activities of the designated operator or of the persons referred to in the present article. The competent authority may contact the administrative or legal authorities engaged in combating money laundering and terrorist financing, and in particular the national financial intelligence unit and the oversight authorities.

2 Instalment – partial advance payment made by the issuing designated operator to the paying designated operator to ease the cash situation of the paying designated operator's postal payment services.

3 Money laundering – the conversion or transfer of funds in the knowledge that these funds are derived from a criminal activity or participation in such activity, with the aim of hiding or disguising the illegal origins of the funds or of helping any person having participated in such activity to escape the legal consequences of his action; money laundering shall be considered as such when the activities producing funds to be laundered are liable to prosecution in the territory of another member country or a third country.

4 Ring-fencing – the compulsory separation of users' funds from those of the designated operator which prevents the use of users' funds for purposes other than the execution of postal payment service operations.

5 Clearing house – within the framework of multilateral exchanges, a clearing house handles mutual debts and claims arising from services provided by one operator to another. Its role is to put to account exchanges between operators that are settled through a settlement bank, and to take the necessary steps in the event of settlement irregularities.

6 Clearing – a system enabling the number of payments to be made to be kept to a minimum by drawing up a periodic debit and credit balance for the parties involved. Clearing involves two stages: determining the bilateral balances and, by adding these balances, calculating the overall position of each entity with regard to the entire community in order to carry out only one settlement based on the debtor or creditor position of the entity in question.

7 Concentration account – an aggregation of funds from various sources combined into one account.

8 Liaison account – giro account opened reciprocally by designated operators as part of bilateral relations, by means of which mutual debts and credits are settled.

9 Criminal activity – any type of participation in, or perpetration of, a crime or misdemeanour, as defined by the national legislation.

10 Security deposit – amount deposited, in the form of cash or securities, to guarantee payments between designated operators.

11 Payee – natural or legal person designated by the sender as the beneficiary of the money order or postal giro transfer.

12 Third currency – intermediate currency used in cases of non-convertibility between two currencies or for clearing/settlement of accounts.

13 Due diligence in relation to users – general obligation on the part of designated operators, comprising the following duties:

13.1 identifying users;

13.2 obtaining information on the purpose of the postal payment order;

13.3 monitoring postal payment orders;

13.4 checking that the information concerning users is up to date;

13.5 reporting suspicious transactions to the competent authorities.

14 Electronic data relating to postal payment orders – data transmitted by electronic means, from one designated operator to another, relating to the execution of postal payment orders, inquiries, alteration or correction of addresses or reimbursement; these data are either entered by designated operators, or generated automatically by their information system, and indicate a change in the status of the postal payment order or of the order request.

15 Personal data – personal information needed in order to identify the sender or the payee.

16 Postal data – data needed for the routeing and tracking of a postal payment order or for statistical purposes, as well as for the centralized clearing system.

17 Electronic data interchange (EDI) – computer-to-computer exchange of data concerning operations, by means of networks and standard formats compatible with the Union system.

18 Sender – natural or legal person that gives the designated operator the order to execute a postal payment service in accordance with the Acts of the Union.

19 Terrorist financing – covers the financing of acts of terrorism, of terrorists and of terrorist organizations.

20 Users' funds – sums delivered by the sender to the issuing designated operator in cash, or debited to the sender's account written up in the books of the issuing designated operator, or by any other secure method of electronic banking, placed at the disposal of the issuing designated operator or any other financial operator by the sender, to be paid to a payee specified by the sender in accordance with the present Agreement and its Regulations.

21 COD (cash-on-delivery) money order – operational term used to designate a postal payment order given in exchange for the delivery of a COD item, as defined in article 1 of the present Agreement.

22 Currency of issue – currency of the country of destination or third currency authorized by the destination country in which the postal payment order is issued.

23 Issuing designated operator – designated operator which transmits a postal payment order to the paying designated operator, in accordance with the Acts of the Union.

24 Paying designated operator – designated operator responsible for executing the postal payment order in the destination country, in accordance with the Acts of the Union.

25 Validity period – period of time during which the postal payment order may be executed or cancelled.

26 Service access point – physical or virtual place where the user may deposit or receive a postal payment order.

27 Remuneration – sum owed by the issuing designated operator to the paying designated operator for payment to the payee.

28 Revocability – the ability of the sender to recall his postal payment order (money order or transfer) up to the moment of payment, or at the end of the validity period if payment has not been made.

29 Counterparty risk – risk that one of the parties to a contract will default, leading to loss or liquidity risk.

30 Liquidity risk – risk that a settlement system participant or a counterpart is temporarily unable to fulfil an obligation in its entirety at the required time.

31 Reporting of suspicious transaction – obligation of the designated operator, based on the national legislation and Union resolutions, to provide its competent national authorities with information on suspicious transactions.

32 Track and trace – system that enables the progress of postal payment order to be monitored and its location and status to be identified at any time.

33 Price – amount paid by the sender to the issuing designated operator for a postal payment service.

34 Suspicious transaction – single or repeated postal payment order or request for reimbursement relating to a postal payment order linked to a money-laundering or terrorist financing offence.

35 User – natural or legal person, sender or payee, that uses the postal payment services in accordance with the present Agreement.

Article 3
Designation of the entity or entities responsible for fulfilling the obligations arising from adherence to this Agreement

1 Member countries shall notify the International Bureau, within six months of the end of Congress, of the name and address of the governmental body responsible for providing governmental regulation and oversight related to the provision of postal payment services.

2 Within six months of the end of Congress, member countries shall also provide the International Bureau with the name and address of the operator(s) officially designated to operate the postal payment services by means of its (their) network, by offering or accepting at least one postal payment service, and to fulfil the obligations arising from the Acts of the Union on their territories.

3 In the absence of such notification within the prescribed six-month period, the International Bureau shall send a reminder to the member country.

4 Between Congresses, changes concerning the governmental bodies and the officially designated operators shall be notified to the International Bureau as soon as possible.

5 Designated operators shall provide the postal payment services in accordance with the present Agreement.

Article 4
Functions of member countries

1 Member countries shall take the necessary steps towards ensuring the continuity of the postal payment services in the event of default by their designated operator(s), without prejudice to the liability of that (those) operator(s) towards other designated operators by virtue of the Acts of the Union.

2 In the event of the default of its designated operator(s), the member country shall inform, through the International Bureau, the other member countries party to the present Agreement:

2.1 of the suspension of its postal payment services, with effect from the date indicated and until further notice;

2.2 of the measures taken to re-establish its services under the responsibility of any new designated operator.

Article 5
Exceptional provision of postal payment services by authorized wider postal sector players

1 Without prejudice to the subcontracting possibility outlined in article 6.4, member countries: i) where the entire spectrum of postal payment services as defined in article 1 is not provided by their designated operator(s); or ii) facing the default situation referred to in article 4, shall have the possibility of authorizing the engagement, by designated operators, of wider postal sector players (hereinafter “WPSPs”) to participate in the interconnection and/or operation of postal payment services, with the aim of fostering financial inclusion and further enabling the interoperability of an international postal payment services network.

1.1 Member countries shall ensure that their authorizations for the operation of any postal payment services operated by WPSPs require WPSPs to comply with the relevant provisions of this Agreement relating to postal payment services and shall ensure that such authorizations require the WPSP to comply with any relevant Union requirement for licensing arrangements to operate under the PosTransfer collective brand.

1.2 The identification of WPSPs by member countries shall be in accordance with the parameters defined in paragraph 1 (subject to the detailed operational criteria defined by the relevant body established under the Postal Operations Council).

1.3 The International Bureau shall be responsible for preparing the list of member countries in which WPSPs may be authorized to operate, as well as the list of authorized WPSPs. This list shall be updated by the International Bureau on a regular basis and communicated by circular to all member countries.

2 The exercise of the possibility outlined in paragraph 1 shall be subject to the national legislation or policy of the member country in which the WPSP is established. In this regard, and without prejudice to the designation obligations contained in article 3, member countries shall guarantee the continued fulfilment of their obligations under the PPSA.

2.1 Subject to the criteria referred to above, any licensing application concerning a WPSP shall be addressed to the member country where the WPSP intends to perform activities related to the interconnection or operation of postal payment services. In this regard, a WPSP may operate in several member countries provided that it is eligible and has been authorized to do so by the governmental authority of the member country concerned.

2.2 Any authorization formally granted by a member country to a WPSP shall be limited in time and without prejudice to the possibility for the member country to revoke such an authorization should the conditions outlined in paragraph 1 no longer be met.

2.3 For the purposes of paragraph 1.3 above, a copy of the aforementioned member country authorization of a WPSP (and any relevant documentation associated therewith) shall be provided without delay to the International Bureau.

3 The requirement set forth in paragraph 2 shall equally apply to the destination member country for the acceptance of postal payment orders from WPSPs.

4 Member countries shall inform the International Bureau on their policies with regard to postal payment orders transmitted through and/or received from WPSPs. Such information shall be made available on the Union's website.

5 Nothing in this article shall be construed to imply that WPSPs are in the same situation as designated operators of the member country concerned under the Acts of the Union, nor impose a legal obligation on other member countries to recognize such WPSPs as designated operators for the purposes of this Agreement.

6 In order to ensure compliance with the provisions of this article, member countries shall agree to make any authorizations they provide to WPSPs to participate in the interconnection and/or operation of postal payment services conditional on a requirement that the WPSPs consent that their activities relevant to this Agreement may be subject to periodic audits to be conducted by the International Bureau, as per the relevant procedures defined in the Regulations.

Article 6
Operational functions

1 Member countries shall ensure that their designated operators and authorized WPSPs referred to in article 5 are responsible for the execution of postal payment services vis-à-vis other operators and users.

2 They shall be accountable for risks such as operational risks, liquidity risks, and counterparty risks, in accordance with the national legislation.

3 In order to implement the postal payment services whose provision is entrusted to the designated operators and authorized WPSPs referred to in § 1, member countries shall ensure that such entities conclude bilateral or multilateral agreements with other designated operators and authorized WPSPs of their choice.

4 Without prejudice to the foregoing obligations, a designated operator shall have the possibility of subcontracting, in part, the interconnection and operation of the postal payment services, defined herein as entrusted by its member country, to other entities contractually bound with that designated operator and in accordance with national legislation. In this regard, the designated operator shall guarantee the continued fulfilment of its obligations in accordance with the present Agreement and be fully responsible for all its relations with designated operators of other member countries and with the International Bureau.

Article 7
Ownership of postal payment services funds

1 Any sum of money, given in cash or debited to an account for the execution of a postal payment order, shall belong to the sender until such time as it is paid to the payee or credited to the payee's account, except in the case of COD money orders.

2 During the validity period of the postal payment order, the sender may recall this postal payment order until its payment to the payee or until it is credited to the payee's account, except in the case of COD money orders.

3 Any sum of money, given in cash or debited to an account for the execution of a COD money order, shall belong to the sender of the COD item once the order has been issued. The payment order shall then be irrevocable.

Article 8
Prevention of money laundering, terrorist financing and financial crime

1 Designated operators shall take all necessary steps to fulfil their obligations stemming from national and international legislation aimed at combating money laundering, terrorist financing and financial crime.

2 They should inform their country's competent authorities of suspicious transactions, in accordance with national laws and regulations.

3 The Regulations shall set out the detailed obligations of designated operators in respect of user identification, due diligence and the procedures for implementing regulations against money laundering, terrorist financing and financial crime.

Article 9
Confidentiality and use of personal data

1 Member countries and their designated operators shall ensure the confidentiality and security of personal data in accordance with national legislation and, where applicable, international obligations, and the Regulations.

2 Personal data may be employed only for the purposes for which it was gathered in accordance with applicable national legislation and international obligations.

3 Personal data shall be notified only to third parties authorized by applicable national legislation to access that data.

4 Designated operators shall inform their customers of the use that is made of their personal data, and of the purpose for which it has been gathered.

5 The data required to execute the postal payment order shall be confidential.

6 For statistical purposes, and possibly also for the purpose of quality of service measurement and centralized clearing, designated operators shall be required to provide the International Bureau of the Union with postal data at least once a year. The International Bureau shall treat all individual postal data in confidence.

Article 10
Technological neutrality

1 The exchange of data necessary for the provision of the services defined in this Agreement shall be governed by the principle of technological neutrality, which means that the provision of these services does not depend on the use of a particular technology.

2 The procedures for executing postal payment orders, including the conditions for depositing, entering, dispatching, paying and reimbursing orders and for processing inquiries, and the time limit for making the funds available to the payee, may vary according to the technology used for transmitting the order.

3 Postal payment services may be provided on the basis of a combination of different technologies.

Chapter II
General principles and quality of service

Article 11
General principles

1 Accessibility via the network and financial inclusion

1.1 The postal payment services shall be provided by the designated operators via their network(s) and/or via any other partner network in order to ensure accessibility to these services for the greatest number, and with a view to ensuring access to, and use of, a wide range of affordably priced postal payment services.

1.2 All users shall have access to postal payment services regardless of any contractual or commercial relationship existing with the designated operator.

2 Separation of funds

2.1 Users' funds shall be ring-fenced. These funds and the flows that they generate shall be separate from operators' other funds and flows, particularly their own funds.

2.2 Settlements relating to remuneration between designated operators are separate from settlements relating to users' funds.

3 Currency of issue and currency of payment in respect of postal payment orders

3.1 The amount of the postal payment order shall be expressed and paid in the currency of the destination country or in any other currency authorized by the destination country.

4 Non-repudiability

4.1 The transmission of postal payment orders by electronic means shall be subject to the principle of non-repudiability, in the sense that the issuing designated operator shall not question the existence of these orders and the paying designated operator shall not deny receipt of the orders, insofar as the message conforms to the applicable technical standards.

4.2 The non-repudiability of electronic postal payment orders shall be ensured by technological means, regardless of the system used by the designated operators.

5 Execution of postal payment orders

5.1 Postal payment orders transmitted between designated operators must be executed, subject to the provisions of the present Agreement and the national legislation.

5.2 In the designated operators' network, if both member countries use the same currency, the sum delivered to the issuing designated operator by the sender shall be the same as the sum paid to the payee by the paying designated operator. If the currency is not the same, the sum shall be converted on the basis of an established exchange rate upon issue and/or payment, as appropriate.

5.3 Payment in cash to the payee shall not be conditional on receipt by the paying designated operator of the corresponding funds from the sender. It shall be made subject to the fulfilment by the issuing designated operator of its obligations towards the paying designated operator regarding instalments, the regular settlement of accounts, the provision of a liaison account or settlement via the centralized clearing and settlement system.

5.4 Payment into the payee's account by the paying designated operator shall be conditional on receipt of the corresponding funds from the sender, to be made available by the issuing designated operator to the paying designated operator. These funds may come from the liaison account of the issuing designated operator or from a centralized clearing and settlement system.

6 Setting of rates

6.1 The issuing designated operator shall set the price of postal payment services.

6.2 Charges may be added to this price for any optional or supplementary service required by the sender.

7 Exemption from charges

7.1 The provisions of the Universal Postal Convention concerning exemption from postal charges on postal items intended for prisoners of war and civil internees shall apply to the postal payment service items for this category of payee.

8 Remuneration of the paying designated operator

8.1 The paying designated operator shall be remunerated by the issuing designated operator for the execution of postal payment orders.

9 Intervals for settlement between designated operators

9.1 The frequency of settlement between designated operators of sums paid or credited to a payee on behalf of a sender may be different from that in respect of the settlement of remuneration between designated operators. Sums paid or credited shall be settled at least once a month.

10 Obligation to inform users

10.1 Users shall be entitled to the following information, which shall be published and made available to all senders: conditions covering the provision of postal payment services, prices, charges, exchange rates and arrangements, conditions of implementation of liability, and the addresses of information and inquiry services.

10.2 Access to this information shall be provided free of charge.

Article 12
Quality of service

1 Designated operators may decide to identify postal payment services by means of a collective brand.

2 The Postal Operations Council shall define the quality of service objectives, elements and standards for postal payment orders transmitted electronically.

3 Designated operators must apply a minimum number of quality of service elements and standards for postal payment orders transmitted electronically.

Chapter III
Principles for electronic data interchange

Article 13
Interoperability

1 Networks

1.1 In order to exchange the data needed to execute postal payment services between all designated operators, and to monitor quality of service, designated operators shall use the Union's electronic data (EDI) exchange system or any other system ensuring the interoperability of the postal payment services in accordance with this Agreement.

Article 14
Ensuring the security of electronic exchanges

1 Designated operators shall be responsible for the proper functioning of their equipment.

2 The electronic transmission of data shall be made secure in order to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the data transmitted.

3 Designated operators shall make transactions secure, in accordance with international standards.

Article 15
Track and trace

The systems used by designated operators shall permit the monitoring of the processing of the order and its revocation by the sender, until such time as the corresponding amount is paid to the payee or credited to the payee's account, or, if appropriate, reimbursed to the sender.

Part II
Rules governing the postal payment services

Chapter I
Processing of postal payment orders

Article 16
Deposit, entry and transmission of postal payment orders

1 The conditions for depositing, entering and transmitting postal payment orders are set out in the Regulations.

2 The period of validity for postal payment orders may not be extended and is set in the Regulations.

Article 17
Checking and release of funds

1 After confirming the payee's identity in accordance with national legislation and the accuracy of the information he has provided, the designated operator shall make the payment in cash. For an inpayment order or a transfer, this payment shall be credited to the payee's account.

2 The time limits for release of the funds shall be established in the bilateral and multilateral agreements between designated operators.

Article 18
Maximum amount

Designated operators shall inform the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union of the maximum amounts for sending or receipt set according to their national legislation.

Article 19
Reimbursement

1 Extent of reimbursement

1.1 Reimbursement within the framework of the postal payment services shall cover the full amount of the postal payment order in the currency of the issuing country. The amount to be reimbursed shall be equal

to the amount paid by the sender or to the amount charged to his account. The price of the postal payment service shall be added to the amount reimbursed in the event of an error made by a designated operator.

1.2 There shall be no reimbursement of a COD money order.

Chapter II
Inquiries and liability

Article 20
Inquiries

1 Inquiries shall be entertained within a period of six months from the day after that on which the postal payment order was accepted.

2 Designated operators, subject to their national legislation, shall have the right to collect from customers charges on inquiries in regard to postal payment orders.

Article 21
Liability of designated operators with regard to users

1 Treatment of funds

1.1 Except in the case of COD money orders, the issuing designated operator shall be accountable to the sender for the sums handed over at the counter or debited to the sender's account until:

1.1.1 the postal payment order has been duly paid; or

1.1.2 the payee's account has been credited; or

1.1.3 the funds have been reimbursed to the sender in the form of cash or as a credit to his account.

1.2 For COD money orders, the issuing designated operator shall be accountable to the payee for the sums handed over at the counter or debited to the sender's account until the COD money order has been duly paid or the payee's account has been duly credited.

Article 22
Obligations and liability of designated operators to each other

1 Each designated operator shall be liable for its own errors.

2 The conditions and extent of liability are set out in the Regulations.

Article 23
Non-liability of designated operators

1 Designated operators shall not be liable:

1.1 in cases of delay in the execution of the service;

1.2 when they cannot account for the execution of a postal payment order owing to the destruction of postal payment service data by force majeure, unless proof of their liability is otherwise produced;

1.3 when the damage has been caused by the fault or negligence of the sender, particularly concerning his responsibility to provide correct information in support of his postal payment order, including the fact that the funds remitted are from a legitimate source and that the postal payment order is for a legitimate purpose;

1.4 if the funds remitted are seized;

1.5 in the case of prisoner-of-war or civilian internee funds;

1.6 when the user has made no inquiry within the period set in the present Agreement;

1.7 when the time allowed for recourse in respect of postal payment services in the issuing country has expired.

Article 24
Reservations regarding liability

No reservations may be made to the provisions regarding liability prescribed in articles 21 to 23, other than in case of a bilateral agreement.

Chapter III
Financial relations

Article 25
Accounting and financial rules

1 Accounting rules

1.1 Designated operators shall comply with the accounting rules defined in the Regulations.

2 Preparation of monthly and general accounts

2.1 The paying designated operator shall prepare for each issuing designated operator a monthly account showing the sums paid for postal payment orders. The monthly accounts shall be incorporated, at the same intervals, in a general offset account including instalments and giving rise to a balance.

3 Instalment

3.1 In case of an imbalance in exchanges between designated operators, an instalment shall be paid by the issuing designated operator to the paying designated operator, at least once a month, at the beginning of the settlement period. In cases where increasing the frequency of settlement of exchanges reduces the period to less than a week, operators can agree to waive this instalment.

4 Concentration account

4.1 In principle, each designated operator shall have one concentration account for users' funds. These funds shall be used solely for settling postal payments paid to the payees or for reimbursing non-executed postal payment orders to senders.

4.2 Any instalments paid by the issuing designated operator shall be credited to the concentration account for the paying designated operator. These instalments shall be used exclusively for payments to payees.

5 Security deposit

5.1 The payment of a security deposit may be required in accordance with the conditions provided for in the Regulations.

Article 26
Settlement and clearing

1 Centralized settlement

1.1 Settlements between designated operators may pass through a central clearing house, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Regulations and shall be carried out from the designated operators' concentration accounts.

2 Bilateral settlement

2.1 Billing on the basis of the general account balance

2.1.1 In general, designated operators that are not members of a centralized clearing system shall settle accounts on the basis of the balance of the general account.

2.2 Liaison account

2.2.1 Where designated operators have a giro institution, they may each open a liaison account by means of which shall be settled their mutual debts and claims resulting from postal payment services.

2.2.2 Where the paying designated operator does not have a giro system, the liaison account may be opened with another financial institution.

2.3 Currency of settlement

2.3.1 Settlements shall be carried out in the currency of the destination country or in a third currency agreed between the designated operators.

Part III
Transitional and final provisions

Article 27
Reservations at Congress

1 Any reservation which is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Union shall not be permitted.

2 As a general rule, any member country whose views are not shared by other member countries should endeavour, as far as possible, to conform to the opinion of the majority. Reservations shall be made only in cases of absolute necessity, and shall be duly justified.

3 Any reservation to an article of the present Agreement shall be submitted to Congress as a Congress proposal written in one of the working languages of the International Bureau and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

4 To become effective, any proposal concerning reservations must be approved by whatever majority is required for amendment of the article to which the reservation relates.

5 In principle, reservations shall be applied on a reciprocal basis between the reserving member country and the other member countries.

6 Reservations to the present Agreement shall be inserted in its Final Protocol on the basis of proposals approved by Congress.

Article 28
Final provisions

1 The Convention shall be applicable, where appropriate, by analogy, in all cases not expressly governed by this Agreement.

2 Article **5** of the Constitution shall not apply to this Agreement.

3 Conditions for approval of proposals concerning this Agreement and the Regulations

3.1 To become effective, proposals submitted to Congress relating to this Agreement must be approved by a majority of the member countries present and voting which are parties to the Agreement and which have the right to vote. At least half of these member countries represented at Congress and having the right to vote shall be present at the time of voting.

3.2 To become effective, proposals relating to the Regulations of the present Agreement must be approved by a majority of the members of the Postal Operations Council which are present and voting, which have the right to vote, and which are signatories or have acceded to the Agreement.

3.3 To become effective, proposals introduced between two Congresses relating to this Agreement must obtain:

3.3.1 two thirds of the votes, with at least one half of the member countries which are parties to the Agreement and have the right to vote having taken part in the vote, if they involve the addition of new provisions;

3.3.2 a majority of the votes, with at least one half of the member countries which are parties to the Agreement and have the right to vote having taken part in the vote, if they involve amendments to the provisions of this Agreement;

3.3.3 a majority of the votes, if they involve interpretation of the provisions of this Agreement.

3.4 Notwithstanding the provisions under 3.3.1, any member country whose national legislation is as yet incompatible with the proposed addition may, within 90 days from the date of notification of the latter, make a written declaration to the Director General of the International Bureau stating that it is unable to accept this addition.

Article 29
Entry into force and duration of the Postal Payment Services Agreement

This Agreement shall come into force on 1 July 2022 and shall remain in force for an indefinite period.

In witness whereof, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries have signed this Agreement in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each party by the International Bureau of the Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

Final Protocol to the Postal Payment Services Agreement

At the moment of proceeding to signature of the Postal Payment Services Agreement concluded this day, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries have agreed the following:

Article I
Scope of the Agreement

Notwithstanding article 1, Viet Nam reserves the right to provide the COD money order service on its territory.

Article II
Operational functions

1 With reference to article 6.4 and in application of articles 3 and 4 of the Postal Payment Services Agreement, any operator designated by France shall open postal payment services only with operators of member countries that are signatories to the Agreement.

2 In cases where one of these operators is not a designated operator, it shall only be able to pay orders received from the French designated operator. To conclude an exchange contract with a French designated operator, this operator shall first provide a copy of the declaration of its participation in the exclusive execution of postal payment service orders, made to the competent authorities of the member country concerned, which may, at its discretion, combine it with an authorization.

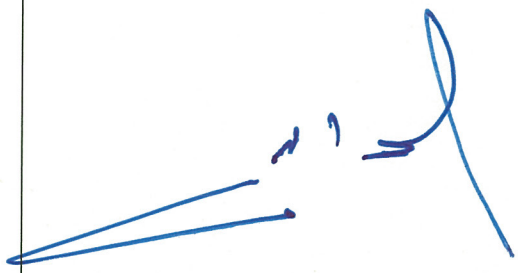
3 These same provisions shall apply reciprocally on the national territory of France to any operator in France wishing to enter into a partnership exclusively with designated operators of other member countries that are signatories to the Postal Payment Services Agreement.

In witness whereof, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries have drawn up this Protocol which shall have the same force and the same validity as if its provisions were inserted in the text of the Postal Payment Services Agreement itself, and they have signed it in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each member country by the International Bureau of the Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

POUR
L'ÉTAT ISLAMIQUE D'AFGHANISTAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ALGÉRIENNE
DÉMOCRATIQUE ET POPULAIRE:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'AFRIQUE DU SUD:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRALE
D'ALLEMAGNE:

subject to ratification

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ALBANIE:

POUR
LES ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ANGOLA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ARGENTINE:

POUR
ANTIGUA-ET-BARBUDA:

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POUR
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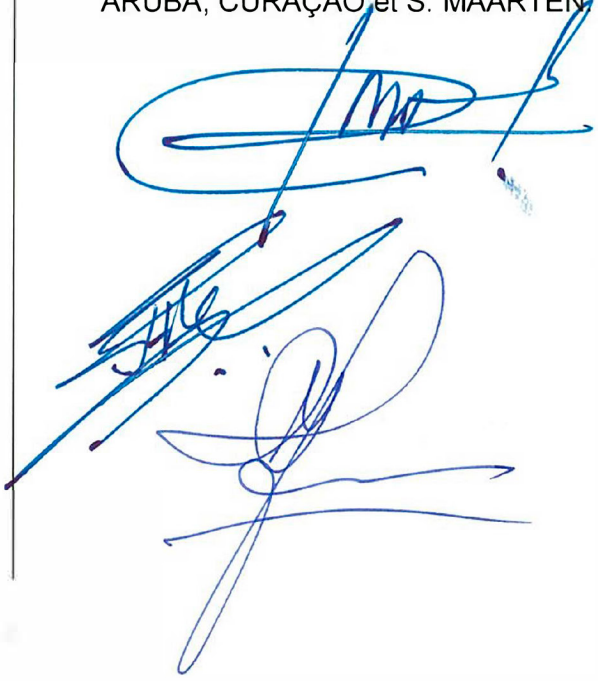
Pour
ARUBA, CURAÇAO et S. MAARTEN:



POUR
L'AUSTRALIE:

POUR
LE COMMONWEALTH DES BAHAMAS:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'AUTRICHE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DE BAHRAIN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'AZERBAÏDJAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE POPULAIRE
DU BANGLADESH:

POUR
LA BARBADE:

POUR
LE BELIZE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉLARUS:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU BÉNIN:

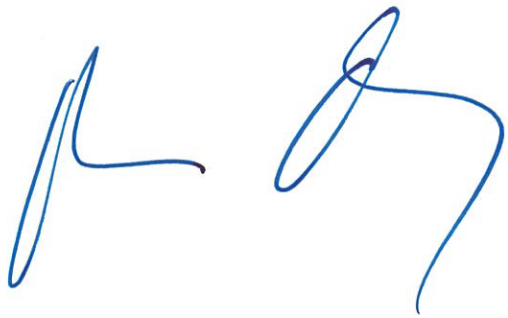
POUR
LA BELGIQUE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DE BHOUTAN:

POUR
L'ETAT PLURINATIONAL DE BOLIVIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRATIVE
DU BRÉSIL:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE
DE BOSNIE ET HERZÉGOVINE:



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POUR
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POUR
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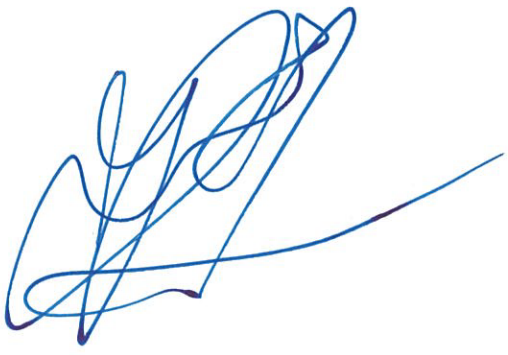

POUR
LE BURKINA FASO:

Bouda Nadina

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN:

Rosine-Yvette Kotoko

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU BURUNDI:

NGABIRE Léa

POUR
LE CANADA:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DU CAMBODGE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU CAP-VERT:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CHYPRE:

POUR
LE CHILI:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE COLOMBIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE POPULAIRE DE CHINE:

POUR
L'UNION DES COMORES:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU CONGO:

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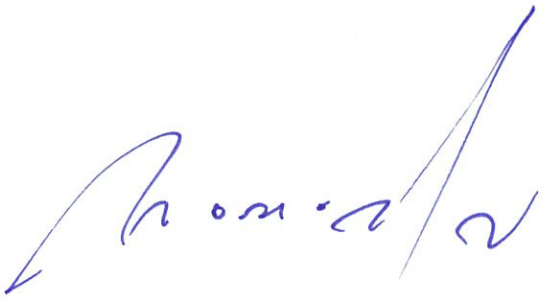
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CÔTE D'IVOIRE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE:



POUR
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POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE COSTA-RICA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CUBA:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DE DANEMARK:

POUR
LE COMMONWEALTH
DE LA DOMINIQUE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE DJIBOUTI:

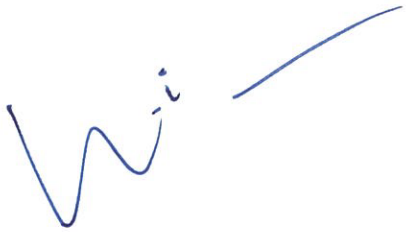
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ARABE D'ÉGYPTE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DOMINICAINE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE EL SALVADOR:

POUR
LES ÉMIRATS ARABES UNIS:

POUR
L'ESPAGNE:



POUR
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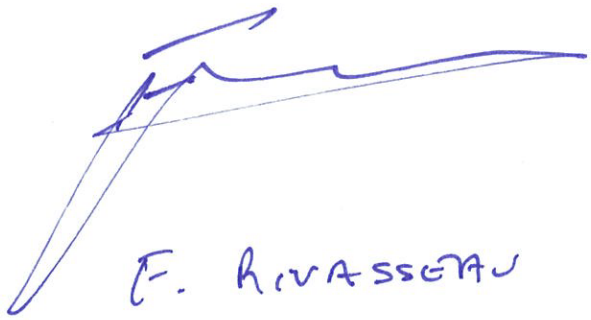
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ESTONIE:

POUR
L'ÉRYTHRÉE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME D'ESWATINI:

POUR
L'ÉTHIOPIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE:



POUR
LES FIDJI:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE GABONAISE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE FINLANDE:

POUR
LA GAMBIE:

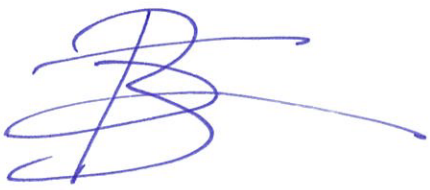
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE GÉORGIE:

POUR
LA GRENADE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU GHANA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU GUATÉMALA:

POUR
LA GRÈCE:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE GUINÉE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE GUINÉE-BISSAU:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'HAÏTI:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE
DE GUINÉE ÉQUATORIALE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU HONDURAS:

POUR
LA GUYANE:

POUR
LA HONGRIE:

POUR
L'INDE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'IRAQ:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'INDONÉSIE:

POUR
L'IRLANDE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE D'IRAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'ISLANDE:

POUR
L'ISRAËL:

AMB. LEO VINOVEZKY

POUR
LE JAPON:

POUR
L'ITALIE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME HACHÉMITE
DE JORDANIE:

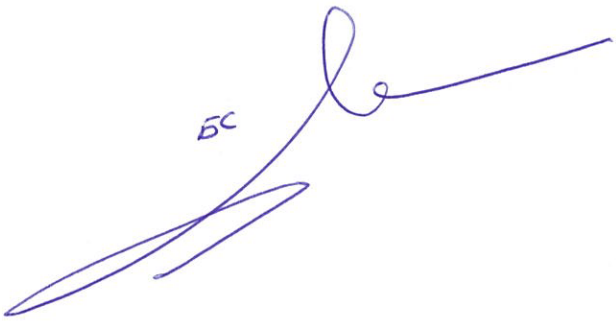
POUR
LA JAMAÏQUE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU KAZAKHSTAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE KENYA:

POUR
LE KUWAIT:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU KIRGHIZISTAN:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE
POPULAIRE LAO:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE KIRIBATI:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DU LESOTHO:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE LETTONIE:

POUR
L'ÉTAT DE LIBYE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE LIBANAISE:

POUR
LA PRINCIPAUTÉ DE LIECHTENSTEIN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE LIBÉRIA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE LITUANIE:

POUR
LE LUXEMBOURG:

POUR
LA MALAISIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE
MACÉDOINE DU NORD:

POUR
LE MALAWI:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE MADAGASCAR:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DES MALDIVES:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU MALI:

POUR
MAURICE:

POUR
MALTE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE
DE MAURITANIE:

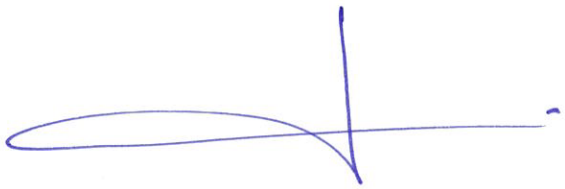
POUR
LE ROYAUME DU MAROC:

POUR
LES ÉTATS-UNIS DU MEXIQUE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE MOLDOVA:

POUR
LE MONTÉNÉGRO:

POUR
LA PRINCIPAUTÉ DE MONACO:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE
DU MOZAMBIQUE:

POUR
LA MONGOLIE:

POUR
L'UNION DE MYANMAR:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE NAMIBIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE NAURU:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRALE
DÉMOCRATIQUE DU NÉPAL:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU NICARAGUA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU NIGER:

Idrissa Kané

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE FÉDÉRALE
DU NIGÉRIA:

POUR
LA NORVÈGE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE L'OUGANDA:

POUR
LA NOUVELLE-ZÉLANDE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE D'OUZBÉKISTAN:

POUR
LE SULTANAT D'OMAN:

Dr. SAOUD H. AL-SHOAILI

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE
DU PAKISTAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE PANAMA:

POUR
LES PAYS-BAS
- CARAÏBES NÉERLANDAISES
(MUNICIPALITÉS DE BONAIRE, SABA
ET S. EUSTATIUS):

POUR
LA PAPOUASIE – NOUVELLE-GUINÉE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU PÉROU:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE PARAGUAY:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DES PHILIPPINES:

POUR
LA POLOGNE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE
DU CONGO:

POUR
LE PORTUGAL:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE POPULAIRE
DÉMOCRATIQUE DE CORÉE:

POUR
L'ÉTAT DE QATAR:

POUR
LA ROUMANIE:

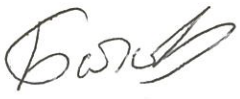
POUR
LE ROYAUME-UNI
DE GRANDE-BRETAGNE ET
D'IRLANDE DU NORD,
ÎLES DE LA MANCHE ET ÎLE DE MAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU RWANDA:

POUR
LES TERRITOIRES D'OUTRE-MER
DONT LES RELATIONS INTERNATIONALES
SONT ASSURÉES PAR LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU ROYAUME-UNI
DE GRANDE-BRETAGNE
ET D'IRLANDE DU NORD:

POUR
SAINT-CHRISTOPHE
(SAINT-KITTS)-ET-NEVIS:

POUR
LA FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE:



POUR
SAINTE-LUCIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SAINT-MARIN:

POUR
L'ÉTAT INDÉPENDANT DE SAMOA:

POUR
SAINT-VINCENT-ET-GRENADINES:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE
DE SAO TOMÉ-ET-PRINCIPE:

POUR
LES ÎLES SALOMON:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU SÉNÉGAL:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SERBIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SINGAPOUR:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DES SEYCHELLES:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE SLOVAQUE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SIERRA LEONE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE SLOVÉNIE:

POUR
LE GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL DE
TRANSITION DE
LA RÉPUBLIQUE
DE SOMALIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE SOCIALISTE
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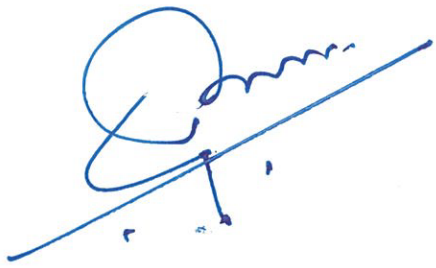


Pour
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU SOUDAN:

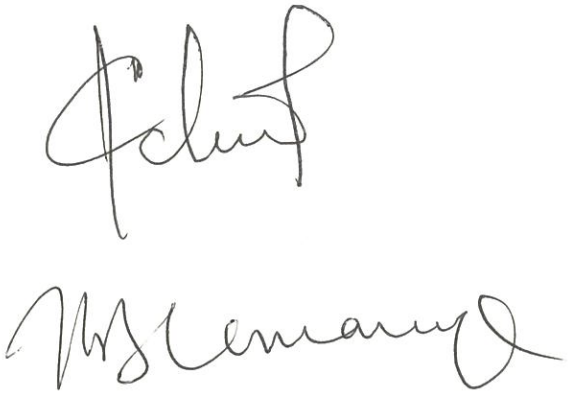
POUR
LA SUÈDE:

POUR
LE SOUDAN DU SUD:

POUR
LA CONFÉDÉRATION SUISSE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU SURINAME:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE UNIE DE TANZANIE:



POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU TCHAD:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU TADJIKISTAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE:

POUR
LA THAÏLANDE:

POUR
LE ROYAUME DES TONGA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE
DE TIMOR-LESTE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE
DE TRINITÉ-ET-TOBAGO:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE TOGOLAISE:

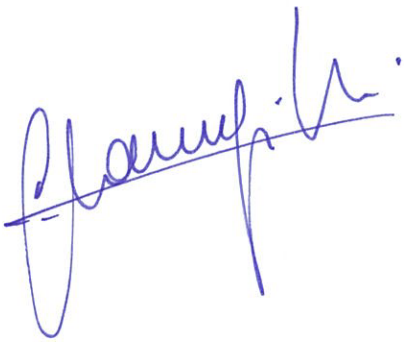
POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE TUNISIENNE:

POUR
LE TURKMÉNISTAN:

POUR
L'UKRAINE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE TURQUIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE ORIENTALE
DE L'URUGUAY:



POUR
TUVALU:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE VANUATU:

POUR
L'ÉTAT DE LA CITÉ DU VATICAN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DU YÉMEN:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE BOLIVARIENNE DU
VENEZUELA:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE ZAMBIE:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE SOCIALISTE
DU VIET NAM:

POUR
LA RÉPUBLIQUE DE ZIMBABWE:

Declarations made on signature of the Acts

Declarations made on signature of the Acts

I. On behalf of the Republic of Turkey

The delegation of the Republic of Turkey makes the following statement in connection with the participation of the delegation of the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus in the 27th Congress of the Universal Postal Union purportedly on behalf of “the Republic of Cyprus”.

There is no single authority, in law or in fact, that is competent to represent jointly the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots and, consequently, Cyprus as a whole. Turkey regards the Greek Cypriot authorities as exercising authority, control and jurisdiction only in the territory south of the buffer zone, as is currently the case, and as not representing the Turkish Cypriot people, and will treat the acts performed by them accordingly.

In view of the above, Turkey declares that its presence and participation in the work of the Universal Postal Union, its signature of the Final Acts, and its approval of the Abidjan Postal Strategy does not amount to any form of recognition of the Greek Cypriot Administration’s pretention to represent the so-called “Republic of Cyprus”, nor does it imply any obligations on the part of Turkey to enter into any dealings with the so-called “Republic of Cyprus” within the framework of Universal Postal Union activities.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 1)

II. On behalf of Australia

Australia will apply the Acts and other decisions adopted by the Congress only insofar as they are consistent with its other international rights and obligations and, in particular, with the World Trade Organization’s General Agreement on Trade in Services.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 2)

III. On behalf of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

The delegation of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam declares that:

– Viet Nam reserves the right to take any action or measures necessary to safeguard its national rights and interests should any other UPU member countries in any way fail to comply with the provisions of the UPU Congress Acts or should declarations or reservations by other UPU member countries jeopardize the sovereignty, rights, interests and postal services of Viet Nam;

– Viet Nam reserves the right to make reservations, if necessary, upon ratification/approval of the Acts at the 27th UPU Congress;

– On signing the Final Acts of the 27th UPU Congress, Viet Nam declares that it will apply the Acts and other decisions adopted by this Congress in a manner consistent with all applicable laws and those international agreements to which it is a signatory party.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 3)

IV. On behalf of Georgia

At the 27th Universal Postal Congress (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.), 2021), the delegation of Georgia makes the following statement:

Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia, represent inseparable parts of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders. The territorial integrity of Georgia has been supported and acknowledged by resolutions of the UN Security Council. Any action for any reason in the postal sector in these Georgian regions, illegally occupied by the Russian Federation, can be carried out only in accordance with the Constitution and legislation of Georgia, the Acts of the Universal Postal Union, and international law. All other cases represent illegal action and infringement of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

Georgia reserves the right, for protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, to take any legal action considered appropriate should any Universal Postal Union member country fail to comply with the obligations derived from the Acts of the Universal Postal Union, and by its statements and actions directly or indirectly endanger the normal functioning of the postal sector throughout the territory of Georgia and undermine its national interests and sovereignty.

Georgia reserves the right in case of necessity to make additional statements regarding the Acts adopted at this Congress of the Universal Postal Union if any provision will directly or indirectly contravene international law, as well as the Constitution and the laws of Georgia.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 4)

V. On behalf of the Republic of Austria, the Kingdom of Belgium, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Finland, the French Republic, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Ireland, the Italian Republic, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Republic of Malta, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Poland, the Portuguese Republic, Romania, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Slovenia, the Kingdom of Spain and the Kingdom of Sweden.

The delegations of the Member States of the European Union declare that their countries will apply the Acts adopted by this Congress in accordance with their obligations pursuant to the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and the General Agreement on Trade in Services of the World Trade Organization.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 5)

VI. On behalf of the Republic of Indonesia

Indonesia consents to be bound, through its signature of the present document, by the UPU Acts, comprising the Constitution, General Regulations, Universal Postal Convention and associated regulations, agreements and final protocols (Abidjan, 2021), and the delegation of the Republic of Indonesia has taken note of the said Acts signed at the end of the Congress.

The delegation of the Republic of Indonesia to the 27th UPU Congress (Abidjan, 2021):

– reserves the right for its Government to take any action and preservation measures it deems necessary to safeguard its national interests should any provision of the Constitution, General Regulations, Universal Postal Convention and associated regulations, agreements and final protocols, as well as any decision of the 27th Congress of the UPU (Abidjan, 2021), directly or indirectly affect its sovereignty or be in contravention to the Constitution, laws and regulations of the Republic of Indonesia, as well as the existing rights acquired by the Republic of Indonesia as a party to other treaties and conventions, and any principles of international law;
– further reserves the right for its Government to take any action and preservation measures it deems necessary to safeguard its national interests should any member countries in any way fail to comply

with the provisions of the Constitution, General Regulations, Universal Postal Convention and associated regulations, agreements and final protocols of the UPU (Abidjan, 2021), or should the consequences of reservations by any member countries jeopardize its postal services or result in an unacceptable increase of its contributory share towards defraying expenses of the Union.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 6)

VII. On behalf of the Republic of Cyprus

The delegation of the Republic of Cyprus has examined the declaration deposited on behalf of the Republic of Turkey on 17 August 2021 during the 27th Congress of the Universal Postal Union in Abidjan and notes with regret that such a declaration is inconsistent with international law and the values of the Universal Postal Union, while it also flagrantly contradicts the binding UN Security Council resolutions on Cyprus.

It should be recalled that the UN Security Council, in numerous resolutions, including resolutions 541(1983) and 550(1984), has called upon all states to respect the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of the Republic of Cyprus. Moreover, it has condemned the purported secession of part of the Republic of Cyprus, regarded its “unilateral declaration of independence” as “legally invalid” and called for its withdrawal. It has also called on all states not to recognize any Cypriot state other than the Republic of Cyprus and not to facilitate or in any way assist the secessionist entity in the occupied part of Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus has been a member state of the United Nations since its independence in 1960, and a member of the Universal Postal Union since November 1961 and, in this capacity, participates in all of the organization’s activities. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus is the internationally recognized government in Cyprus, with the competence and authority to represent the Republic of Cyprus, notwithstanding the de facto division of the island as a result of the 1974 Turkish invasion and subsequent military occupation. Since 1 May 2004, the Republic of Cyprus has been a full member of the European Union, underscoring the fact that there is only one state in Cyprus.

It is the firm position of the Republic of Cyprus that Turkey, by repeatedly attempting to undermine the legitimacy of the Republic of Cyprus and to promote the illegal secessionist entity in the occupied part of the Republic of Cyprus, including through declarations as the present one, is in defiance of international law and the international legal order.

In view of the above, it is evident that the declaration made by the Republic of Turkey contravenes both the letter and spirit of the Universal Postal Union’s Constitution, Convention and Agreements. The delegation of the Republic of Cyprus therefore considers that any such declaration or reservation contravenes international law and is null and void. The delegation of the Republic of Cyprus reserves all its rights accordingly

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 7)

VIII. On behalf of New Zealand

New Zealand will apply the Acts and other decisions adopted by this Congress only insofar as they are consistent with its other international rights and obligations and, in particular, with the General Agreement on Trade in Services of the World Trade Organization.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 8)

IX. On behalf of Malaysia

The delegation of Malaysia declares that Malaysia will apply the Acts of the Universal Postal Union and other decisions adopted by the 27th Congress of the Universal Postal Union in accordance with the Federal Constitution and national legislation of Malaysia and pursuant to its obligations under other treaties, conventions, and the principles of international law, subject to ratification of the final Acts. Malaysia also reserves the right of its government to make reservations, if necessary, upon ratification of the Acts of the Universal Postal Union.

The delegation of Malaysia reserves the right of its government to take any action or actions or measures it deems necessary to safeguard its national interests should any member or members, in any way, fail to comply with the Acts of the Universal Postal Union, or should the consequences of reservations by any member or members negatively impact upon its postal services.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 9)

X. On behalf of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

The delegation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria declares that it reserves the right of its country to apply the Acts adopted by the 27th Congress only insofar as they are consistent with the national legislation and regulations of Algeria and the foreign policy of the Algerian government.

Moreover, it declares that the signature of the aforementioned Acts shall not be considered a waiver of any of the rights that the country holds and might claim by virtue of the conventions and treaties to which it is party.

The delegation of Algeria also reserves the right of its government to issue, if necessary, other declarations concerning ratification of the Acts of the UPU Congress.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 10)

XI. On behalf of the Republic of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway

The delegations of the Republic of Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway declare that their countries will apply the Acts adopted by this Congress in accordance with obligations pursuant to the agreement establishing the European Economic Area and the General Agreement on Trade in Services of the World Trade Organization.

(Congress–Doc 32.Add 11)

Rules of Procedure of Congresses

Rules of Procedure of Congresses

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Rules of Procedure of Congresses[1]

Article 1
General provisions

The present Rules of Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the "Rules") have been drawn up pursuant to the Acts of the Union and are subordinate to them. In the event of a discrepancy between one of their provisions and a provision of the Acts, the latter shall prevail.

Article 2
Delegations

1 The term "delegation" shall denote the person or body of persons designated by a member country to take part in a Congress. The delegation shall consist **of heads** of delegation and, if appropriate, **their deputies**, one or more delegates and, possibly, one or more attached officials (including experts, secretaries, etc.).

2 Heads of delegation, their deputies, and delegates shall be representatives of member countries within the meaning of article **15.2** of the Constitution if in possession of credentials which comply with the conditions laid down in article 3 of these Rules.

Article 3
Delegates' credentials

1 Delegates' credentials shall be drawn up in due and proper form and signed by the Head of State, the Head of Government or the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the country concerned, or by any other government official duly authorized in writing by one of those authorities to sign the credentials. A copy of such authorization shall be presented together with the credentials. Credentials shall **preferably** be **provided in** one of the working languages of the International Bureau. Credentials provided in a language other than one of the working languages of the International Bureau (and for which no Union translation service exists) shall be accompanied by an English or French translation, as well as a statement confirming that the translation correctly reflects the content of the original document. The credentials of delegates entitled to sign the Acts (plenipotentiaries) shall specify the scope of such signature (signature subject to ratification or approval, signature ad referendum, definitive signature). In the absence of such specific information, the signature shall be regarded as being subject to ratification or approval. Credentials authorizing the holder to sign the Acts shall implicitly include the right to speak and to vote. Delegates on whom the relevant authorities have conferred full powers without specifying their scope shall be authorized to speak, to vote and to sign the Acts unless the wording of the credentials is explicitly to the contrary. Credentials authorizing the holder to participate on behalf of the country concerned or represent the latter shall implicitly include the right to speak and to vote only.

2 For the purposes of this article and without having to produce specific credentials or full powers, the Heads of State, Heads of Government and Ministers for Foreign Affairs of member countries shall also be considered as representing their respective member country for the purpose of performing any act relating to the conclusion of the Acts of the Union.

[1] In line with Abidjan Congress–Doc 39, various changes have been made to the English version of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses to introduce gender-neutral language. As these editorial amendments do not affect the official French text, they are not marked as changes in this volume.

3 Credentials shall be deposited**, through the intermediary of the Congress Secretariat (hereinafter the "Secretariat"),** with the authority designated for that purpose.

4 **Member countries whose delegates are** not in possession of credentials or **which** have not deposited their credentials may, provided **the** names **of such delegates** have been communicated by their Government to the International Bureau, take part in the debates **but shall not have the right to** vote until such time as **their respective credentials, in due and proper form, are deposited with the authority referred to in paragraph 3**. **The International Bureau shall assess the adequacy of delegates' credentials and, in case of doubt, refer the matter to the authority referred to in paragraph 3 for consideration.**

5 The credentials of a member country which arranges for the delegation of another member country to represent it at Congress (proxy) shall be in the same form as those mentioned in paragraph 1.

6 Credentials and proxies sent by **secure electronic means (as well as replies to requests for information associated therewith) shall be** admissible **provided that compliance with the requirements set forth in paragraph 1 is confirmed by the authority referred to in paragraph 3. For the purposes of this paragraph, "secure electronic means" refers to any electronic means used for the processing, storage and transmission of data that ensure that completeness, integrity and confidentiality of such data are maintained during the submission of the aforementioned credentials and proxies by a member country.**

7 A delegation which, after it has deposited its credentials, is prevented from attending one or more meetings, may arrange to be represented by the delegation of another member country, provided that notice in writing is given to the Chair of the meeting concerned. However, a delegation may represent only a single country other than its own.

8 The delegates of member countries which are not parties to an Agreement may take part in the debates of Congress concerning that Agreement, without the right to vote.

Article 4
Order of seating

1 At Congress and Committee meetings, delegations shall be seated in the French alphabetical order of the member countries represented.

2 The Chair of the Council of Administration shall draw lots, in due course, for the name of the country to be placed foremost before the rostrum at Congress and Committee meetings.

Article 5
Observers and ad hoc observers

1 The observers and ad hoc observers shall not be entitled to vote, but may take the floor with the permission of the Chair of the meeting.

2 In exceptional circumstances, the right of observers and ad hoc observers to participate in certain meetings, or parts of meetings, may be restricted if the confidentiality of the subject dealt with so requires. They shall be so informed as quickly as possible. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chair. Such decisions shall be reviewed by the Bureau of Congress, which shall have the authority to confirm or reverse such decisions by a simple majority vote.

Article 6
Chairmanships and vice-chairmanships of **Congress**

1 At its first plenary meeting, Congress shall elect, on the proposal of the host member country of the Congress, the Chair of Congress and then approve, on the proposal of the Council of Administration, the

appointment of the member countries which are to assume the vice-chairmanships of Congress and the chairmanships and vice-chairmanships of the Committees. These posts will be assigned taking as much account as possible of the equitable geographical distribution of the member countries.

2 The Chairs shall open and close the meetings over which they preside, direct the debates, give speakers the floor, put proposals to the vote and announce what majority is required for their adoption, announce decisions and, subject to the approval of Congress, interpret such decisions if necessary.

3 The Chairs shall see that the present Rules are observed and that order is maintained at meetings.

4 Any delegation may appeal to **the Plenary** or the Committee against a decision taken by the Chair on the basis of a provision or interpretation of the Rules. The Chair's decision shall nevertheless hold good unless rescinded by a majority of the members present and voting.

5 Should the member country appointed to the chairmanship be no longer able to exercise this function, one of the Vice-Chairs shall be appointed by **the Plenary** or the Committee to replace it.

Article 7
Bureau of Congress

1 The Bureau shall be the central body responsible for directing the work of Congress. It shall consist of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of Congress and the Chairs of the Committees. It shall meet periodically to review the progress of the work of **Congress and** to make recommendations designed to facilitate such progress. It shall assist the Chair in drawing up the agenda of each plenary meeting and in coordinating the work of the Committees. It shall make recommendations relating to the closing of Congress.

2 The Secretary General of Congress and the Assistant Secretary General, mentioned in article 10.1, shall attend the meetings of the Bureau.

Article 8
Membership of Committees

1 The member countries represented in Congress shall, as of right, be members of the Committees responsible for studying proposals relating to the Constitution, the General Regulations and the Convention.

2 Member countries represented in Congress which are parties to one or more of the optional Agreements shall, as of right, be members of the Committee and/or Committees responsible for the revision of these Agreements. The right to vote of members of the Committee or Committees shall be confined to the Agreement or Agreements to which they are parties.

3 **Member countries** which are not members of Committees dealing with the Agreements may attend meetings of those Committees and take part in the debates without the right to vote.

Article 9
Working parties

Congress and each Committee may set up working parties to study special questions.

Article 10
Secretariat of **Congress**

1 The Secretariat shall be provided by the International Bureau with the assistance of the host member country.

2 The Director General and the Deputy Director General of the International Bureau shall act as Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General of Congress, respectively.

3 The Secretary General and the Assistant Secretary General shall attend the meetings of Congress and of the Bureau of Congress and take part in the debates without the right to vote. They may also attend, under the same conditions, Committee meetings or be represented thereat by a senior official of the International Bureau.

4 **Officials** of the International Bureau shall act as Secretaries **of the Plenary**, of the Bureau of Congress and of the Committees. They shall assist the Chair during meetings and shall be responsible for writing the reports.

5 The Secretaries **of the Plenary** and of the Committees shall be assisted by Assistant Secretaries.

Article 11
Languages of debates

1 Subject to paragraph 2, French, English, Spanish and Russian may be used for debates, by means of a system of simultaneous or consecutive interpretation.

2 The debates of the Drafting Committee shall be held in French.

3 Other languages may also be used for the debates mentioned in paragraph 1. The language of the host country shall have priority in this connection. Delegations using other languages shall arrange for simultaneous interpretation into one of the languages mentioned in paragraph 1, either by means of the simultaneous interpretation system, when the necessary technical alterations can be made, or by special interpreters.

4 The cost of the interpretation services shall be divided among the member countries using the same language in proportion to their contributions to the expenses of the Union.

Article 12
Languages used for drafting Congress documents

1 Documents prepared during Congress including draft decisions submitted to Congress for approval shall be published in French by the **Secretariat**.

2 To this end, documents produced by delegations of member countries shall be submitted in French, either direct or through the intermediary of the **Secretariat's** translation **services.**

3 The above services, organized at their own expense by the language groups set up in accordance with the relevant provisions of the General Regulations, may also translate Congress documents into their respective languages.

Article 13
Proposals

1 All questions brought before Congress shall be the subject of proposals.

2 All proposals published by the International Bureau before Congress shall be regarded as being submitted to Congress.

3 Two months before Congress opens, no proposal shall be considered except those amending earlier proposals.

4 The following shall be regarded as amendments: any proposal which, without altering the substance of the original proposal, involves a deletion from, addition to or revision of a part of the original proposal. No proposed change shall be regarded as an amendment if it is inconsistent with the meaning or intent of the original proposal. In case of doubt, Congress or the Committee shall decide the matter.

5 Amendments submitted at Congress to proposals already made shall be **communicated** to the Secretariat in writing, in French, before noon on the day but one before the day on which they will be discussed, so that they can be distributed to delegates the same day. This time limit shall not apply to amendments arising directly from the debates in **the Plenary** or in a Committee. In the latter case, if so requested, the author of the amendment shall submit a written version in French **or in** any other language used for debates. The Chair concerned shall read it out**,** have it read out**, or visually present it for delegates**.

6 The procedure laid down in paragraph 5 shall also apply to the submission of proposals that are not designed to amend the text of the Acts (draft resolutions, draft recommendations, draft formal opinions, etc.) where these proposals result from the work of Congress.

7 Any proposal or amendment shall give the final form of the text which is to be inserted in the Acts of the Union, subject, of course to revision by the Drafting Committee.

Article 14
Consideration of proposals in **Plenary** and in Committees

1 Drafting proposals (the number of which shall be followed by the letter R) shall be assigned to the Drafting Committee either direct, if the **Secretariat** has no doubt as to their nature (a list of such proposals shall be drawn up for the Drafting Committee by the **Secretariat**), or, if the **Secretariat** is in doubt as to their nature, after the other Committees have confirmed that they are purely of a drafting nature (a list of such proposals shall likewise be drawn up for the Committees concerned). If, however, such proposals are linked with other proposals of substance to be considered by **the Plenary** or by other Committees, the Drafting Committee shall postpone consideration of them until after **the Plenary** or the other Committees have taken a decision on the corresponding proposals of substance. Proposals whose numbers are not followed by the letter R but which, in the opinion of the **Secretariat**, are of a drafting nature, shall be referred direct to the Committees concerned with the corresponding proposals of substance. When these Committees begin work, they shall decide which of the proposals shall be assigned direct to the Drafting Committee. A list of these proposals shall be drawn up by the **Secretariat** for the Committees concerned.

2 If the same question is the subject of several proposals, the Chair shall decide the order in which they are to be discussed, starting as a rule with the proposal which departs most from the basic text and entails the most significant change in relation to the status quo.

3 If a proposal can be subdivided into several parts, each part may, if the originator of the proposal or the assembly so agrees, be considered and voted upon separately. **The same possibility shall apply for the simultaneous consideration of several related proposals.**

4 Any proposal withdrawn in **Plenary** or in Committee by its originator may be resubmitted by the delegation of another member country. Similarly, if an amendment to a proposal is accepted by the originator of the proposal, another delegation may resubmit the original, unamended proposal.

5 Any amendment to a proposal which is accepted by the delegation submitting the proposal shall be immediately included in the text thereof. If the originator of the original proposal does not accept an amendment, the Chair shall decide whether the amendment or the proposal shall be voted upon first, starting with whichever departs furthest from the meaning or intent of the basic text and entails the most significant change in relation to the status quo.

6 The procedure described in paragraph 5 shall also apply where more than one amendment to a proposal is submitted.

7 The Chair of Congress and the Chairs of Committees shall arrange for the text of the proposals, amendments or decisions adopted to be passed to the Drafting Committee, in writing, after each meeting.

Article 15
Debates

1 Delegates may not take the floor until they have been given permission to do so by the Chair of the meeting. They shall be urged to speak slowly and distinctly. The Chair shall afford delegates the possibility of freely and fully expressing their views on the subject discussed, so long as that is compatible with the normal course of the debate.

2 Unless a majority of the members present and voting decides otherwise, speeches shall not exceed five minutes. The Chair shall be authorized to interrupt any speaker who exceeds the said authorized time. The Chair may also ask the delegate not to depart from the subject.

3 During a debate, the Chair may, with the agreement of the majority of the members present and voting, declare the list of speakers closed after reading it out. When the list is exhausted, the Chair shall declare the debate closed, although even after the closing of the list the Chair may grant the originator of the proposal under discussion the right to reply to any of the speeches delivered.

4 The Chair may also, with the agreement of the majority of the members present and voting, limit the number of speeches by any one delegation on a proposal or a certain group of proposals; but the originator of the proposal shall be given the opportunity of introducing it and speaking subsequently if it asks to do so in order to make new points in reply to the speeches of other delegations, so that it may, if so wished, be the last speaker.

5 With the agreement of the majority of the members present and voting, the Chair may limit the number of speeches on a proposal or a certain group of proposals; but this limit may not be less than five for and five against the proposal under discussion.

Article 16
Motions on points of order and procedural motions

1 During the discussion of any question and even, where appropriate, after the closure of the debate, a delegation may submit a motion on a point of order for the purpose of requesting:

1.1 clarification on the conduct of the debates;

1.2 observance of the Rules of Procedure;

1.3 a change in the order of discussion of proposals suggested by the Chair.

The motion on a point of order shall take precedence over all questions, including the procedural motions set forth in paragraph 3.

2 The Chair shall immediately give the desired clarifications or take the decision which it considers advisable on the subject of the motion on a point of order. In the event of an objection, the Chair’s decision shall be put to the vote forthwith.

3 In addition, during discussion of a question, a delegation may introduce a procedural motion with a view to proposing:

3.1 the suspension of the meeting;

3.2 the closure of the meeting;

3.3 the adjournment of the debate on the question under discussion;

3.4 the closure of the debate on the question under discussion.

Procedural motions shall take precedence, in the order set out above, over all other proposals except the motions on points of order referred to in paragraph 1.

4 Motions for the suspension or closure of the meeting shall not be discussed, but shall be put to the vote immediately.

5 When a delegation proposes adjournment or closure of the debate on a question under discussion, only two speakers against the adjournment or the closure of the debate may speak, after which the motion shall be put to the vote.

6 The delegation which submits a motion on a point of order or a procedural motion may not, in its submission, deal with the substance of the question under discussion. The proposer of a procedural motion may withdraw it before it has been put to the vote, and any motion of this kind, whether amended or not, which is withdrawn may be reintroduced by another delegation.

Article 17
Quorum

1 Subject to paragraphs 2 and 3, the quorum necessary for the opening of the meetings and for voting shall be half the member countries represented in Congress and having the right to vote.

2 For votes on amending the Constitution and the General Regulations, the quorum required shall be two thirds of the Union member countries having the right to vote.

3 In the case of the Agreements, the quorum required for the opening of the meetings and for voting shall be half the member countries represented at Congress which are parties to the Agreement concerned and have the right to vote.

4 Delegations which are present but do not take part in a given vote, or which state that they do not wish to take part therein, shall not be considered absent for the purpose of establishing the quorums required under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3.

Article 18
Voting principle and procedure

1 Questions which cannot be settled by common consent shall be decided by vote.

2 Votes shall be taken by the traditional system or by the electronic voting system. They shall normally be taken by the electronic system when that system is available to the assembly. However, in the case of a secret ballot, the traditional system may be used if one delegation, supported by a majority of the delegations present and voting, so requests.

3 For the traditional system, the methods of voting shall be as follows:

3.1 by show of hands. If there is doubt about the result of such a vote, the Chair, if it so wishes or if a delegation so requests, may arrange for an immediate roll-call vote on the same question;

3.2 by roll-call, at the request of a delegation or if so decided by the Chair; the roll shall be called according to the French alphabetical order of the countries represented, beginning with the country whose name is drawn by lot by the Chair; the result of the vote, together with a list of the countries grouped according to the way they voted, shall be included in the report of the meeting;

3.3 by secret ballot, using ballot papers, if requested by two delegations; in this case, the Chair of the meeting shall appoint three tellers, having regard to equitable geographical representation and the level of economic development of the member countries, and make the necessary arrangements for the holding of a secret ballot.

4 For the electronic system, the methods of voting shall be as follows:

4.1 non-recorded vote: it replaces a vote by show of hands;

4.2 recorded vote: it replaces a roll-call vote; however, the names of the countries shall not be called unless one delegation, supported by a majority of the delegations present and voting, so requests;

4.3 secret ballot: it replaces the secret ballot by ballot papers.

5 Regardless of the system of voting used, the secret ballot shall take precedence over any other voting procedure.

6 Once the voting has begun, no delegation may interrupt it, except to raise a point of order relating to the way in which the vote is being taken.

7 After the vote, the Chair may permit delegates to explain why they voted as they did.

Article 19
Conditions of approval of proposals

1 To be adopted, proposals involving amendments to the Acts must:

1.1 in the case of the Constitution, be approved by at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union having the right to vote;

1.2 in the case of the General Regulations, be approved by a majority of the member countries represented in Congress and having the right to vote;

1.3 in the case of the Convention, be approved by a majority of the member countries present and voting which have the right to vote;

1.4 in the case of the Agreements, be approved by a majority of the member countries present and voting which are parties to the Agreements and have the right to vote.

2 Procedural matters which cannot be settled by common consent shall be decided by a majority of the member countries present and voting which have the right to vote. The same shall apply to decisions not concerning changes in the Acts, unless Congress decides otherwise by a majority of the member countries present and voting which have the right to vote.

3 Subject to paragraph 5, “member countries present and voting” shall mean member countries which have the right to vote voting “for” or “against”, abstentions being disregarded in counting the votes required to constitute a majority, and similarly blank or null and void ballot papers in the case of a secret ballot.

4 In the event of a tie, a proposal shall be regarded as rejected.

5 When the number of abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers exceeds half the number of votes cast (for, against and abstentions), consideration of the matter shall be deferred until a subsequent meeting, at which abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers shall be disregarded.

Article 20
Election of the members of the Council of Administration or the Postal Operations Council

In order to decide between countries which have obtained the same number of votes in elections of members of the Council of Administration or the Postal Operations Council, the Chair shall draw lots.

Article 21
Election of the Director General and the Deputy Director General of the International Bureau

1 The elections of the Director General of the International Bureau and of the Deputy Director General shall take place by secret ballot successively at one or more meetings held on the same day. The candidate who obtains a majority of the votes cast by the member countries present and voting shall be elected. As many ballots shall be held as are necessary for a candidate to obtain this majority.

2 “Member countries present and voting” shall mean member countries voting for one of the candidates whose applications have been announced in due and proper form, abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers being ignored in counting the votes required to constitute a majority.

3 If the number of abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers exceeds half the number of votes cast in accordance with paragraph 2, the election shall be deferred to a later meeting, at which abstentions and blank or null and void ballot papers shall no longer be taken into account.

4 The candidate who obtains the least number of votes in any one ballot shall be eliminated.

5 In the event of a tie, an additional ballot, and if necessary a second additional ballot, shall be held in an attempt to decide between the tying candidates, the vote relating only to these candidates. If the result is inconclusive, the election shall be decided by drawing lots. The lots shall be drawn by the Chair.

6 The candidates for Director General and Deputy Director General of the International Bureau may, at their request, be represented at the counting of the votes.

Article 22
Reports

1 The reports **of plenary meetings shall** record the course of the meetings, briefly summarize speeches, and mention proposals and the outcome of the debates.

2 The debates of Committee meetings shall be the subject of reports to **the Plenary**. As a general rule, Working Parties shall prepare a report for the body that set them up.

3 Delegates, however, shall be entitled to ask for any statement made by them to be included in the reports either verbatim or in summary form, provided the French or English text is handed to the Secretariat not later than two hours after the end of the meeting.

4 Delegates shall be allowed a period of twenty-four hours, from the moment when the draft reports are distributed, in which to make their comments to the Secretariat, which, if necessary, shall act as an intermediary between the party concerned and the Chair of the meeting in question.

5 As a general rule and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, at the beginning of each **plenary meeting, the** Chair shall submit the report of a previous meeting for approval. The same shall apply in regard to Committee reports. The reports of the last meetings which it has not been possible to approve in **Plenary** or in a Committee shall be approved by the respective Chairs of the meetings. The International Bureau shall also take account of any comments received from delegates of member countries within forty days of the dispatch of the reports to them.

6 The International Bureau shall be authorized to correct in the reports of meetings of **the Plenary** and Committees any clerical errors **or drafting issues** which were not brought to light when the minutes were approved in accordance with paragraph 5.

Article 23
Appeal against decisions taken by the Committees and by **the Plenary**

1 Any delegation may appeal against a decision concerning proposals (Acts, resolutions, etc.) which have been approved or rejected in Committee. Notice of the appeal must be given to the Chair of Congress, in writing, within 48 hours from the adjournment of the Committee meeting at which the proposal was approved or rejected. The appeal shall be considered during the next plenary meeting.

2 When a proposal has been adopted or rejected by **the Plenary**, it can be reconsidered by the same **Plenary** only if the appeal has been supported by at least 10 delegations. Such an appeal must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting which have the right to vote. This possibility shall be limited to proposals submitted direct to **the Plenary, it** being understood that a single question cannot give rise to more than one appeal.

Article 24
Approval by Congress of draft decisions (Acts, resolutions, etc.)

1 As a general rule, each draft Act submitted by the Drafting Committee shall be studied article by article. The Chair may, with the agreement of the majority, use a faster procedure, for instance chapter by chapter. **In the absence of consensus,** each Act can only be regarded as adopted after an overall favourable vote**;** article 19.1 shall apply to such a vote.

2 The International Bureau shall be authorized to correct in the final Acts any clerical errors **or drafting issues** which have not come to light during the study of the draft Acts, **including, without limitation,** the numbering of articles and paragraphs and references.

3 The drafts of decisions other than those amending the Acts, submitted by the Drafting Committee, shall as a general rule be considered en bloc. The provisions of paragraph 2 shall also apply to the drafts of these decisions.

Article 25
Assignment of studies to the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council

On the recommendation of its Bureau, Congress shall assign studies to the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, in accordance with the respective compositions and responsibilities of these two bodies as they are set forth in articles 106, 107, 112 and 113 of the General Regulations.

Article 26
Reservations to Acts

1 Reservations must be submitted in the form of a proposal to the Secretariat in writing in one of the working languages of the International Bureau (proposals concerning the Final Protocol) as soon as possible after adoption of the proposal concerning the article to which the reservation refers.

2 To enable it to distribute proposals concerning reservations to all member countries before adoption of the Final Protocol by Congress, the **Secretariat** shall set a deadline for the submission of reservations and notify member countries of it.

3 Reservations to the Acts of the Union submitted after the deadline set by the Secretariat shall not be considered by the Secretariat or by Congress.

Article 27
Signature of Acts

Subject to article 24.2, the Acts finally approved by Congress shall be submitted to the plenipotentiaries for signature. **Except as otherwise decided by Congress, such Acts shall remain open for signature to all member countries at the headquarters of the Union for 30 days following their adoption by Congress, and thereafter remain open to accession.**

Article 28
Amendment of the Rules

1 Each Congress may amend the Rules of Procedure. In order to be accepted for discussion, proposals to amend the present Rules, unless submitted by a UPU body empowered to put forward proposals, shall be supported in Congress by at least 10 delegations.

2 To be adopted, proposals for amendments to the present Rules must be approved by at least two thirds of the member countries represented in Congress and having the right to vote.

Decisions of the 2021 Abidjan Congress other than those amending the Acts (resolutions, decisions, recommendations, formal opinions, etc.)

Decisions of the 2021 Abidjan Congress other than those amending the Acts (resolutions, decisions, recommendations, formal opinions, etc.)

Classification key

1 General affairs of the Union
1.1 Political questions
1.2 Postal strategy

2 Acts of the Union
2.1 General
2.2 Constitution
2.3 General Regulations
2.4 Convention
2.4.1 Common questions applicable to the international postal service
2.4.1.1 Accounts
2.4.1.2 Environment
2.4.1.3 Security
2.4.1.4 Forms
2.4.1.5 Markets and customer relations
2.4.1.6 Postage stamps and philately
2.4.2 Matters applicable to letter post and postal parcels
2.4.2.1 Airmail
2.4.2.2 Customs control
2.4.2.3 Inquiries, liability and indemnity
2.4.2.4 Remuneration
2.4.2.5 Quality of service
2.4.2.6 EMS
2.4.3 Matters specific to letter post
2.4.4 Matters specific to postal parcels
2.5 Postal financial services

3 Union bodies
3.1 General
3.2 Congress
3.3 Executive Council (EC)/Council of Administration (CA)
3.4 Consultative Council for Postal Studies (CCPS)/Postal Operations Council (POC)
3.5 Consultative Committee
3.6 International Bureau
3.6.1 Staff
3.6.2 Documentation and publications

4 Finance

5 Development cooperation

6 External relations
6.1 Restricted unions
6.2 United Nations (UN)
6.3 Specialized agencies
6.4 Other organizations
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		Further reform and opening of the Union to wider postal sector players	Resolution C 11	211
1.1	Political questions	Implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/295 on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965	Resolution C 15	224
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Classification key		*Title and references*	*Type and number of the decision*	*Page*
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Decisions of the 2021 Abidjan Congress other than those amending the Acts (resolutions, decisions, recommendations, formal opinions, etc.)

Decision C 1/2021

Designation of member countries prepared to serve as vice-chairs of Congress, as chairs and vice-chairs of Congress committees, and as members of the restricted committees

Congress,

Decides

to approve the following list of member countries, designated by the Council of Administration, which are prepared to serve as vice-chairs of Congress, as chairs and vice-chairs of Congress committees, and as members of the two restricted committees:

a Vice-chairs of Congress (and geographical group)

– Costa Rica (1)

– Romania (2)

– Denmark (3)

– United Arab Emirates (4)

b Chairs and vice-chairs of Congress committees (and geographical group[1])

	Chair	*Vice-Chair*
C 1 (Credentials)[2]	Italy (3)	Algeria (5)
C 2 (Finance)	Morocco (5)	Pakistan (4)
C 3 (General Policy and Management of the Work of the Union)	United States of America (1)	United Arab Emirates (4)
C 4 (Convention)	Kenya (5)	Uruguay (1)
C 5 (Postal Financial Services)	Tunisia (5)	Bulgaria (Rep.) (2)
C 6 (Cooperation and Development)	Costa Rica (1)	Austria (3)
C 7 (Drafting)[2]	Senegal (5)	Canada (1)

c Members of restricted committees (and geographical group)

Name of committee	*Members*
Committee 1 (Credentials)	Brazil (1), Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.) (5), United States of America (1)
Committee 7 (Drafting)	Algeria (5), Burkina Faso (5), Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.) (5), France (3), Tunisia (5)

(Proposal 03.Rev 1, first plenary meeting)

[1] Group 1 = 4 member countries.
Group 2 = 1 member country.
Group 3 = 2 member countries.
Group 4 = 2 member countries.
Group 5 = 5 member countries.
[2] Restricted committee.

Resolution C 2/2021

Report on the consolidated accounts of the Universal Postal Union for the 2016–2019 period

Congress,

Having examined:

a the report on the finances of the Union (Congress–Doc 25);

b the report of its Finance Committee (Congress–Doc 28),

Notes

the consolidated accounts of the Universal Postal Union for the 2016–2019 period, and gives final discharge to the bodies responsible.

(Congress–Doc 25.Annex 1, Committee 2, first meeting)

Resolution C 3/2021

Assistance provided by the Government of the Swiss Confederation in the field of the Union's finances

Congress,

Having examined
the report on the finances of the Union (Congress–Doc 25),

Expresses

its gratitude to the Government of the Swiss Confederation for:

i the generous assistance it provides to the Union in the field of finance by supervising the keeping of the International Bureau accounts and by acting as external auditor of the Union's accounts;

ii its willingness to cover temporary financing shortfalls by making the necessary short-term advances, on conditions which are to be fixed by mutual agreement.

(Congress–Doc 25.Annex 2, Committee 2, first meeting)

Recommendation C 4/2021

Initiatives for measures in the fields of disaster risk management, sustainable development, and network utilization for social and commercial services and new business through use of cutting-edge technologies

Congress,

Recalling
the recommendations and resolutions that have been adopted so far, namely, recommendation C 15/1999 entitled "Environment – Adoption, in the context of the Post, of a policy on sustainable development" and resolution C 16/1999 entitled "Beijing declaration on environmental protection" at the 22nd UPU Congress in Beijing in 1999; resolution C 64/2004 entitled "Work relating to the environment" and resolution C 67/2004 entitled "The role of Posts in environmental matters" at the 23rd UPU Congress in Bucharest in 2004; recommendation C 27/2008 entitled "Initiatives for the sustainable reduction of the negative environmental impact of the postal sector" and resolution C 34/2008 entitled "Work on sustainable development" at the 24th UPU Congress – 2008; recommendation C 64/2012 entitled "Initiatives for the study of sustainable development and development cooperation measures to make postal organizations more resistant to major disasters" and resolution C 66/2012 entitled "Work on sustainable development" adopted at the 25th UPU Congress in Doha in 2012,

Also recalling in particular
recommendation C 14/2016 entitled “Promotion of disaster risk management measures in the field of development cooperation”, adopted at the 26th UPU Congress in Istanbul in 2016,

Recognizing
the positive outcomes of studies and analyses conducted by the Council of Administration in the areas of awareness raising and evaluation and mitigation of the harmful impacts of postal activities on the environment, including inventories of greenhouse gas emissions and the organization of regional sustainable development seminars,

Desiring
to increase awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction in the postal sector and to cultivate common awareness concerning the specific measures to be potentially adopted by UPU member countries and their designated operators,

Taking into account
the fact that specific programmes to reduce disaster risks in the postal sector and render the sector more resilient to disasters, if duly implemented by UPU member countries and their designated operators, are more likely to have a broad positive impact,

Also recognizing
changes in the socio-economic environment surrounding the postal sector,

Further recalling
resolution C 5/2016 entitled “Future strategy of the Telematics Cooperative and financing of its activities”, resolution C 6/2016 entitled “E-commerce services as key to a vibrant and effective postal service” and resolution C 17/2016 entitled “Strengthening information technology security”, adopted at the 26th UPU Congress in Istanbul in 2016,

Aware
of the outcomes of the UPU Ministerial Strategy Conference on the theme “Gearing up the postal sector to drive socio-economic development”, held during the 2018 Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa,

Further recognizing
the importance of enhancing the UPU’s initiatives to make the postal sector more resilient to disasters while alleviating the negative environmental impact of postal activities, and also enhancing the role of the postal network as a hub for public and new business initiatives, making use of cutting-edge technologies to add new value to postal services,

Recommends

that the relevant bodies of the UPU undertake the following:

– Initiatives to reinforce disaster risk reduction and management and emergency assistance activities at UPU level, and initiatives to mitigate the harmful impacts of postal activities on the environment;

– Broader initiatives that support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (initiatives that will further enhance the value and role of the postal network);

– Initiatives that utilize the postal network to develop solutions to new social and public challenges, and to develop opportunities to support new business and respond to new demands in the digital age, for example:

  - Checking in on elderly/housebound citizens;
  - Providing a one-stop shop of daily public services at post offices for local residents;
  - Supporting new business through a synergy of cutting-edge technologies and the postal network;
  - Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, ranging from individuals and families to multiple-employee businesses, which are reliant on the postal network to access major urban and rural markets;

- Offering e-commerce services to support local artisans and entrepreneurs, in order to leverage the postal sector's vast physical network and its proximity to underserved areas in rural and remote communities;
- Addressing the need for timely delivery of postal items and trade facilitation to support e-commerce development in developing countries;

– Initiatives to help designated operators introduce cutting-edge and wide-ranging services, including artificial intelligence, drones, robotics, blockchain, big data, the Internet of Things and sensors, so as to add new value to postal services;

– Initiatives to support the introduction of postal financial services in order to promote financial inclusion in each member country;

– Initiatives to provide technical assistance to member countries to enable continuous provision of last-mile delivery and fulfilment of the universal service obligation,

Also recommends

that the International Bureau, in coordination with the restricted unions, support and contribute to the smooth and concrete implementation of the above.

(Proposal 08, Committee 6, second meeting)

Resolution C 5/2021

Implementation of updated Integrated Product Plan

Congress,

Taking note
of the work carried out by the POC since 2016 to develop the updated Integrated Product Plan (IPP),

Fully supporting
the implementation of all of the recommendations contained in the IPP presented in Istanbul Congress–Doc 39.Rev 1, Extraordinary Congress–Doc 8.Rev 1 and Abidjan Congress–Doc 35.Rev 1,

Considering
that designated operators are best placed to exploit the potential of e-commerce, but that they must deliver reliably and continue to innovate in order to keep pace with the changing needs of consumers and e-sellers and to be able to successfully compete in the market,

Noting
that competition in the postal market, especially for e-commerce delivery, is fierce and rapidly evolving,

Convinced
of the growth opportunities for designated operators in business generated through e-commerce,

Recognizing
that growth and growth opportunities are applicable worldwide,

Also recognizing, however,
that the ongoing development and growth of alternative networks is a clear signal that the UPU network is not meeting needs, and that if the UPU does not adapt there will be a continuing increase in the number of designated operators moving traffic outside the UPU network,

Acknowledging
that one of the challenges faced by the UPU in relation to customer needs and product features is how to satisfy market requirements by rationalizing, modernizing and integrating the existing framework of products,

Instructs

the Postal Operations Council to ensure that the UPU keeps pace with change by modernizing letter post, parcel post and EMS using an integrated approach (both to product development and to remuneration systems), and ensuring speedier decision making in response to market needs through implementation of all the recommendations contained in the IPP for 2022–2025 presented in Congress–Doc 35.Rev 1 (and repeated in Annex 1 of the present resolution), in order to ensure that implementation of the IPP for 2022–2025 is in line with the wishes of UPU member countries,

Decides

to initiate a request for a QSF Common Fund project to assist member countries (classified in group IV for terminal dues purposes) that do not have the necessary infrastructure for tracked delivery, if the service becomes mandatory,

Also instructs

the Postal Operations Council to continue:

– developing and implementing POC activities (including remuneration, quality measurement, standards, accounting and operations) that are driven by product definition and development, while at the same time recognizing customer, market and supply chain needs;

– ensuring close coordination between the UPU body responsible for providing the roadmap for the implementation of electronic advance data and the body responsible for the implementation of the IPP;

– ensuring the ongoing review of the IPP with the aim of submitting an updated version to the 28th Congress in 2025,

And further instructs

the Council of Administration to ensure that questions relating to governmental policies and regulatory issues are properly addressed, discussed and decided in the further development and implementation of the IPP,

Invites

member countries and their designated operators to:

– take measures enabling designated operators to provide quality physical products as part of the universal service, to stimulate the economy and reinforce social cohesion;

– acknowledge the role of UPU physical product development activities in enhancing the quality of the services for citizens and businesses, particularly small and medium-sized ones;

– take steps to ensure that designated operators better manage relationships with their customers in order to become commercial, competitive and efficient;

– ensure that designated operators focus not only on the challenges facing the development of international physical products, but also on the strategies needed to meet those challenges;

– participate actively in the UPU physical product development process;

– undertake activities aimed at increasing business by exploiting e-commerce opportunities,

Also invites

the restricted unions to lend their support to the development of e-commerce within their regions.

(Proposal 04.Rev 1, Committee 4, second meeting)

Annex 1

Complete set of recommendations contained in Congress–Doc 35.Rev 1

Recommendation 1 In early 2019, POC Committee 2 reviewed a number of supplementary services and felt that they were relevant for the current market. It is therefore recommended that the features of the six services (advice of delivery, cash-on-delivery (COD), registration, delivery to the addressee in person, cumbersome parcels, and delivery free of charges services) be further developed and modernized in the next Congress cycle (2022–2025) in keeping with the principles of the IPP, including those relating to simplicity, the menu approach and network sustainability.
Recommendation 2 The second Extraordinary Congress mandated the POC with submitting to the 27th Congress a recommendation to make the tracked delivery service mandatory, with an implementation date of 2023, if approved. **Note. –** Proposals 20.18.1 and 20.18.2 are linked to this recommendation 2 and recommendation 12. Only one of these recommendations can be approved. Remuneration response: See Congress–Doc 36, paragraphs 36, 40 and 41.
Recommendation 3 It is recommended that the IPP for 2022–2025 include activities that focus on identifying ways of increasing Posts' share in the "over 2 kg" market while at the same time supporting the Posts' position as a major player in the "under 2 kg" market segment.
Recommendation 4 It is recommended that, in a fast-changing market, the IPP for 2022–2025 should be flexible enough to facilitate new technological needs (such as mobile devices, software modifications, IT infrastructure, cloud-based infrastructure, etc.), and that it should include provisions for a common data framework enabling communication among Posts and between Posts and other stakeholders. Frictionless inter-actions across the supply chain are necessary to satisfy customer demands and to optimize operations.
Recommendation 5 It is recommended that the IPP for 2022–2025 develop a framework to enable delivery duty paid (DDP) and "pre-registration" transactions for postal traffic.
Recommendation 6 It is recommended that the IPP for 2022–2025 look at improving the current UPU processes for the merchandise returns service, with the aim of making the service more user-friendly, efficient and attractive for customers, e-tailers and supply chain stakeholders alike.
Recommendation 7 While taking into account customer expectations for end-to-end visibility (tracking), and considering the capabilities of all member countries, it is recommended that the menu of services provided in the IPP for 2022–2025 should also clearly define visibility (tracking) standards and expectations as appropriate for each level of service, while bearing in mind the "menu approach" principle. **Note. –** See recommendation 13, which is closely linked with this recommendation.
Recommendation 8 It is recommended that the IPP for 2022–2025 include the implementation of activities aimed at improving delivery reliability through optimization of current processes and operations. These activities should include reviewing and developing solutions to improve label design, address presentation, packaging, and item sizes and dimensions, and increase compliance with UPU regulations. In addition, it is recommended that work be done to facilitate processes that enable flexible delivery choice.
Recommendation 9 It is recommended that activities be included in the IPP for 2022–2025, with the aim of developing, maintaining and improving factors such as speed of delivery, customer inquiry service, and easy customs clearance, to ensure they meet customer requirements.

Recommendation 10

It is recommended that the development of the e-commerce product market should be included in the IPP for 2022–2025 for both inbound and outbound mail, and that it should continue to be a priority for the next cycle. Development of the traditional letter-post markets should also continue.

Recommendation 11

It is recommended that activities relating to the development of parcel, small packet and EMS services be included in the IPP for 2022–2025, to ensure that they align with customer and market requirements for reliability, tracking, network coverage and the other factors referred to in recommendation 9. It is also recommended that the development of the above-mentioned services in the IPP for 2022–2025 be in alignment with the principles of the IPP, with particular emphasis on the “menu approach” and “simplicity”.

Recommendation 12

Given the lack of a strong majority in favour of either option and following decisions taken by the 2019.2 and 2020.1 POC sessions, it is recommended that a proposal on two options be submitted to the 27th Congress, namely:

– Option 1: See proposal 20.18.1 – the tracked delivery service is made mandatory for inbound letter-post items (documents and goods) and remains optional for outbound letter-post items (documents and goods);

– Option 2: See proposal 20.18.2 – the tracked delivery service is made mandatory for inbound letter-post items containing goods only and remains optional for outbound letter-post items containing goods and for inbound and outbound letter-post items containing documents.

Recommendation 13

It is recommended that tracking as a service feature continue to be allowed for registered and insured items. However, in order to align product development with the IPP “simplicity”, and the “menu approach”, it is recommended that activities relating to the development of a more logical positioning of service features (such as tracking) and supplementary services (tracked, registered, insured, advice of delivery, etc.) be included as part of a clear and understandable “menu approach” in the IPP for the 2022–2025 cycle.

Recommendation 14

It is recommended that, if Congress adopts regulations making the tracked delivery service mandatory, it should also assess whether there is a need to offer a short “transitional” deferred implementation period (i.e. an additional six months) to member countries classified in group IV for terminal dues purposes that are unable to meet the effective date of 1 January 2023. As new technology has already been developed that enables product visibility, it is also recommended to initiate a request for a QSF Common Fund project to assist member countries that do not have the necessary infrastructure for tracked delivery, if the service becomes mandatory.

Recommendation 15

It is recommended that activities to achieve the principles defined in the IPP be included therein and that work continue during the next cycle, with particular emphasis on the need to address customer and market needs.

Recommendation 16

It is recommended that the IPP for 2022–2025 include activities to assess how the portfolio could better reflect business customers’ needs and to improve, develop and implement products and service features to meet these needs as appropriate. It is also recommended to analyze where DOs see the overlaps and to take steps to further reduce them.

Recommendation 17

It is recommended that the 2022–2025 IPP should include, as a priority, activities to address the issue of countries being unsure about when they will be able to exchange ITMATT messages.

Recommendation 18

With the above in mind, it is recommended to:

i continue product development to facilitate efficient compliance with the EAD roadmap implementation;

ii continue coordinating EAD issues between POC bodies in relation to e-commerce and IPP outreach communications and capacity building;

iii continue to develop UPU regulations and standards to support compliance with EAD requirements;

iv develop and implement plans for assessing quality of service and the level of compliance regarding the sending of UPU EDI messaging standard M33 (ITMATT V1); and

v develop and implement plans in collaboration with the QSF Common Fund to help member countries implement EAD, and especially to help designated operators build bridges for electronic data inter-change with national customs authorities and airlines.

Resolution C 6/2021

Sustainability of the Provident Scheme of the Universal Postal Union

Congress,

Noting
the work carried out by the Council of Administration since 2017 on the sustainability of the UPU Provident Scheme, notably within the framework of Congress resolutions C 31/2016 and C 7/2018,

Taking into account

– the significant costs that would be incurred should the Union opt to join the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) with immediate effect; and

– the commitment made by the United States of America (through its designated operator) to pay 24 million CHF over a period of five years to fund the long-term liabilities of the Union, subject to the early implementation of certain terminal dues provisions adopted at the third Extraordinary Congress in Geneva, as well as the recent decision, by the Council of Administration, to allocate an additional amount of up to 10% of the annual expenditure ceiling of the Union, with a view to meeting the Union guarantees to the Provident Scheme,

Having examined
the content of Congress–Doc 27 and the related recommendations,

Convinced
that the stable and sustainable funding of the UPU Provident Scheme is

– essential in order to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the Union in the long term; and

– a prerequisite for the continued regulatory supervision of the Provident Scheme by the Berne Supervisory Authority for Foundations and Provident Institutions, bearing in mind that the Provident Scheme will remain a Swiss foundation until such time as the Union decides otherwise or joins the UNJSPF,

Aware
that the long-term goal of participating in the UNJSPF remains relevant regardless of the chosen transitional scenario,

Decides

to fully recapitalize the UPU Provident Scheme over a period of 25 years in two consecutive stages:

– up to a coverage rate of 85% by the end of the Abidjan Congress cycle (2025); and

– up to a coverage rate of 100%, subject to a re-assessment of the Union’s financial position and, as the case may be, the recapitalization timeline, by 2045 at the latest,

Instructs

the Council of Administration, with the support of the International Bureau, to:

– allocate annual budgetary resources equivalent to 10% of the annual expenditure ceiling of the Union (as set by Congress), until a coverage rate of 100% is achieved;

– maintain the option of joining the UNJSPF once the Provident Scheme is fully recapitalized or as otherwise deemed feasible by the Council of Administration;

– monitor the proper execution of the recapitalization plan referred to above,

Further instructs

the Director General to facilitate admission to the UNJSPF by hiring new staff members under UNJSPF-equivalent conditions, subject to the relevant decisions taken by the Management Board of the Provident Scheme.

(Proposal 15, Committee 2, third meeting)

Resolution C 7/2021

Abidjan Postal Strategy and Business Plan 2021–2025

Congress,

Noting
that the draft Abidjan Postal Strategy and Business Plan for the period 2021–2025 (Congress–Doc 13), as documents which have been collaboratively prepared by the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the International Bureau, represent the culmination of an extensive and inclusive process which has seen a wide array of stakeholders from Union member countries actively take part in various rounds of data analysis, consultation, outreach, discussion and drafting,

Also noting
that, in accordance with article 107.1.3 of the General Regulations, the Council of Administration examines the draft quadrennial UPU business plan approved by Congress, and finalizes it by bringing the activities set out in the draft plan for the four-year period into line with the actual resources available,

Recognizing
that the high-level document entitled “Abidjan Postal Strategy and Business Plan 2021–2025” (Congress–Doc 13) is further supported by the detailed work proposals presented through the document entitled “Work proposals of the Abidjan Business Plan 2021–2025” (Congress–Doc 14),

Also recognizing
that the finalized version of the work proposals document will form the basis for the preparation of the annual UPU Programme and Budget, as well as the annual operating plans to be drawn up and implemented by the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council,

Further recognizing
that the Abidjan Congress was postponed from August 2020 to August 2021 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, thus extending the period of applicability of the strategy until 2025, i.e. the year of the subsequent Congress,

Approves

the Abidjan Postal Strategy and the draft Business Plan for the period 2021–2025, as well as the associated work proposals of the Abidjan Business Plan for the period 2021–2025,

Urges

Union member countries to integrate the relevant elements of the “Postal Vision 2030” contained in the Abidjan Postal Strategy and Business Plan into their respective priorities and action programmes,

Instructs

the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the International Bureau, in accordance with their respective attributions set out in the General Regulations, to implement the Abidjan Postal Strategy and Business Plan for the period 2021–2025,

Also instructs

the Council of Administration to carry out, as appropriate, regular updates to the Abidjan Business Plan for the period 2021–2025, in line with the decisions taken by Congress,

Charges

the International Bureau with:

– regularly examining the state of implementation of the Abidjan Postal Strategy and Business Plan through active and ongoing measurement and evaluation;
– preparing a report, for approval by the Council of Administration and subsequent submission to the next Congress, on the results achieved and the experiences recorded;
– engaging in a consultative process with Union member countries to prepare and present, for the Council of Administration and on the basis of the directives issued by both councils, the draft Union strategy and business plan for the 2026–2029 period, with a view to submitting it for approval by the 2025 Congress.

(Proposal 10, Committee 3, second meeting)

Resolution C 8/2021

Quality of Service Fund

Congress,

Having examined
the report submitted by the Postal Operations Council on the future of the Quality of Service Fund (Congress–Doc 38),

Noting
that in its over 19 years of activity, the QSF has launched more than 850 projects, which have had a substantial impact in terms of improving the quality of the mail service in over 175 beneficiary designated operators,

Observing
that, through the volume of financial resources released, the Fund has become a vital component in the Union’s development cooperation system,

Mindful
that the impact of QSF contributions to individual beneficiary countries has benefited from the expansion of scope introduced under the 26th Congress and therefore the QSF continues to be a very important element in enhancing the quality of service of the global postal network,

Aware
that the structures and operating rules of the new stream of funding – the Common Fund – created under the new model to strengthen the global postal network and supply chain infrastructure and focus on the implementation of transversal projects to accelerate designated operators’ transition into the e-commerce ecosystem have already borne their first fruit with the approval and implementation of the first Common Fund project,

Concerned
that, despite the adoption of the new QSF model and the changes in the method of calculating QSF contributions introduced by the 2016 Istanbul Congress, the revenues generated do not appear to adequately address the service quality investment costs of the least developed countries (LDCs) and certain countries in a special situation,

Bearing in mind
the need to continue to rationalize and expedite the use of all the resources available, and the ongoing concern to ensure the overall coherence of the Union's activities, more specifically in the area of development of service quality for international mail and with a focus on performance measurement and evaluation and enhancement of network operations,

Persuaded
that the efforts made by the QSF Board and the Postal Operations Council, with the support of the International Bureau, to optimize the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of both individually funded and Common Fund QSF projects must continue,

Confident
that strengthening the sustainability and effectiveness of the QSF model in the areas of contribution modalities, support to LDCs, and prioritization methodology would be fully in line with strategic pillar 2 of the Abidjan Postal Strategy and would allow the Fund to continue to be a major source of capital for activities related to the fields described in article 1.1 of the QSF Rules of Procedure,

Decides

– that the date for dissolving the Quality of Service Fund shall be maintained at 31 December 2028;
– that the QSF work on improving the quality of the international postal services and strengthening the postal infrastructure in beneficiary designated operators shall continue during the 2021–2025 period;
– that QSF projects shall continue to focus on improvements in the quality of service, including the strengthening of postal infrastructure, of beneficiary designated operators, and shall exclude commercial venture projects;
– that the existing contribution mechanisms and modalities regarding contributions to individual group IV countries shall be maintained, as per article 31 of the Convention;
– that the new QSF model shall continue to be developed, refined and strengthened using insights and experience gained during the implementation of Common Fund projects;
– that the Common Fund project prioritization methodology shall be further strengthened;
– that developments and benefits financed by the Common Fund shall be accessible to all country groups;
– that least developed countries shall be additionally supported through the creation of a dedicated LDC Special Account within the existing Common Fund, to ensure the implementation of projects that are geared to their specific needs,

Instructs

the Postal Operations Council (subject to further approval of the Council of Administration for any matter within its purview) to:

– work in synergy with the product integration, quality of service and supply chain integration groups to put forward a coherent proposal for the future sustainability of the QSF to the 2025 Congress;
– produce updates to the QSF Rules of Procedure, the Project Management Manual and the Financial Management Manual, bearing in mind the need to:
    - take account of relevant Congress decisions, in particular those concerning the level and method of calculating QSF contributions to the Common Fund and the LDC Special Account;
    - analyze and adapt, as necessary, any other existing QSF provisions, including changes to the QSF billing system;

- strengthen the methodology for the prioritization of projects by establishing a prioritization review committee;
- approve the prioritization of Common Fund projects for the 2021–2025 cycle,

Further instructs

the International Bureau to:

– in view of the experience gained in the Istanbul cycle, continue to carry out evaluation missions for completed projects funded by the QSF;

– in view of the Abidjan Postal Strategy and its implementation, coordinate and seek synergies by aligning QSF projects with other relevant programmes for capacity-building projects on quality of service improvement and regional training workshops using innovative approaches;

– provide the leadership and management necessary for the successful implementation of Common Fund projects, including the launching of such projects for LDCs;

– implement the impact measurement system and produce regular reports to the Postal Operations Council.

(Proposal 05, Committee 6, third meeting)

Resolution C 9/2021

Improving the efficiency of Congress

Congress,

Noting that:

– Congress is the supreme body of the Union and consists of the representatives of member countries;

– Congress is responsible for taking relevant decisions for the four-year cycle, and elects the Director General and Deputy Director General of the International Bureau, as well as the members of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council;

– the Ministerial Conference is a major Congress event which provides relevant guidelines for the work of the Union,

Also noting
the work undertaken by the CA C 1 Reform of the Union Project Group, whose aim was to contribute to better functioning and greater effectiveness of the UPU bodies, as well as the previous Congress proposals geared towards better organization of meetings or document management,

Further noting
that the duration of past Congresses has been three weeks,

Noting in addition
that the objective of this proposal is to optimize time and economic resources, by improving the preparation of the different topics in advance in order to make more effective use of time during the Congress itself,

Considering:

– the high financial cost for UPU member countries of sending their delegations for the whole period of Congress;

– the high cost for the International Bureau, and especially for the host country, of holding and organizing a three-week-long meeting;

– the cost for the representatives of member countries and designated operators of leaving their national tasks during that period,

Also considering
that the use of new technologies and the recent reform of the bodies of the Union in terms of procedure and ways of functioning may facilitate more efficient advance preparation of the documents and proposals to be discussed during the Congress,

Further considering
that the International Bureau has the experience and knowledge to organize the Congress's work in a more efficient way, as shown during the third Extraordinary Congress in Geneva,

Instructs

the International Bureau to:

– improve the advance preparation of the different documents and proposals that the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council or the UPU member countries submit to Congress;

– improve the efficiency of the work planned for Congress;

– retain the Ministerial Conference as a major event during Congress; and

– propose a schedule and organization of the work of Congress that would shorten its duration to a maximum of two weeks.

(Proposal 06, Committee 3, fourth meeting)

Resolution C 10/2021

Gender equality and the empowerment of women at the UPU and in the postal sector

Congress,

Noting
that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, which includes Sustainable Development Goal 5, "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls",

Noting also

– that the Council of Administration and its predecessor approved resolutions concerning equality in hiring practices, specifically resolutions CE 1/1976 (formal opinion concerning the employment of women at the International Bureau) and CA 4/1995 (employment of women at the International Bureau); and

– that the Doha Congress approved resolution C 74/2012, "Management of staff of the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union", with the goal of achieving the widest possible gender balance and equitable geographic distribution in staffing at the International Bureau,

Stressing

– that society as a whole benefits from equal participation of women and men in policy-making and decision-making and from equal access to communication services for both women and men;

– that gender equality and the empowerment of women makes good business sense; and

– that women's economic participation helps to drive growth at a national level and reduce poverty within communities and households,

Considering
the results of the work in the 2016–2020 cycle of CA Committee 3, which consulted on and developed the Abidjan Postal Strategy, which reflects a strong commitment to the SDGs in the Union,

Recalling

– the memorandum presented to the Council of Administration (CA 2020.1–Doc 22.Rev 1), which noted the broad social and economic benefits of gender equality and the empowerment of women;

– the UN context of gender equality;
– that there is no Union-wide policy on gender equality; and
– that the Union can take a proactive role with regard to gender equality and empowerment,

Instructs

the Council of Administration to strongly encourage the Director General to consider the appointment of a focal point within the International Bureau to oversee the development and implementation of the policy, liaise with other relevant bodies, present an annual progress report to the Council of Administration and participate in UN SWAP 2.0,

Also instructs

the International Bureau to:

– develop and implement a policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women during the Abidjan cycle;
– develop the policy by benchmarking against other UN agencies, requesting guidance from UN Women, and consulting interested Union member countries;
– review all Acts of the Union (and other Union documentation) in order to:
  – i propose, as necessary, the formal adoption of gender-neutral language in the official language of the Union;
  – ii directly apply gender-neutral language insofar as unofficial language versions of those Acts and Union documentation are concerned (for which no formal amendment of the official French version thereof is required); and
  – iii insert, wherever appropriate, gender language disclaimers in line with the latest practices of the UN system,
– report annually to the Council of Administration on progress of the policy development and its implementation.

(Proposal 09.Rev 1, Committee 3, fourth meeting)

Resolution C 11/2021

Further reform and opening of the Union to wider postal sector players

Congress,

Recalling
That the Union’s mission is to stimulate the lasting development of efficient and accessible universal postal services of quality in order to facilitate communication between the inhabitants of the world,

Recalling also
that the Union is an intergovernmental organization and a specialized agency of the United Nations whose aim is to secure the organization and improvement of the postal services and to promote in this sphere the development of international collaboration,

Recognizing
that increased access of wider postal sector players to the Union’s products and services will help to advance the mission of the organization,

Acknowledging
that wider postal sector stakeholders include a wide range of entities,

Further recalling
the mandates respectively outlined in Doha Congress resolutions C 6/2012 and C 7/2012, as well as in Istanbul Congress resolution C 10/2016, aimed at potentially allowing access to specific Union products and services to external stakeholders in the wider postal sector, and developing the governing rules and principles related thereto,

Taking into consideration
the results of the extensive work undertaken by the Council of Administration during the Istanbul cycle, and in particular the CA's recommendations to continue working towards the presentation of proposals on areas such as institutional change, further opening up of products and services, and implementation timelines,

Bearing in mind
that a number of additional details still require careful analysis by the relevant bodies of the Union,

Stressing
the need to keep the Union as an intergovernmental organization, while also acknowledging the need to secure its long-term funding and strengthen its relevance,

Recognizing also
that a number of details still require careful analysis with regard to further opening up of the Union, in particular in areas such as future structural changes, wider postal sector participation methodology, and the corresponding financial contribution model,

Instructs

the Council of Administration to:

i continue examining the opening up of the Union to wider postal sector players, in due observance of the access policy set forth in Congress resolution C 10/2016, and also including, for implementation in the Abidjan cycle, the following Union services or solutions (subject to any relevant conditions defined by the CA):

Union activity, service or solution	*Condition for opening up*
Access to address and contact lists as well as other Union documents and publications maintained by the International Bureau	Careful consideration and study by the CA
Access to International Bureau (secretariat) support (including dispute settlement, legal, logistics, executive office, etc., in dealings with other stakeholders that are operating in the Union's framework), with the exception of ad hoc or value-added secretariat services (to be paid for on a separate basis)	Careful consideration and study by the CA
Any other Union event or meeting organized on the premises of the organization or under the responsibility of the latter which is not part of the Union's ordinary schedule (including the provision of infrastructure for anything not directly related to UPU activities)	Careful consideration and study by the CA
Ability to benefit from capacity-building projects funded by the UPU	Careful consideration and study by the CA; subject to confirmation of necessity
Ability to contribute to technical cooperation projects and other capacity-building funds	Careful consideration and study by the CA; limited to the possibility of financially supporting those projects and funds
On-demand Union-managed consulting and capacity building services	Careful consideration and study by the CA

Union activity, service or solution	*Condition for opening up*
Access to the .POST domain	Careful consideration and study by the CA; subject to any applicable .POST policies
Access to Union solutions related to focused analysis, research and insights on market trends	Careful consideration and study by the CA; nevertheless, access to these solutions shall be subject to data sharing reciprocity conditions
On-demand Union-provided analytical services	Careful consideration and study by the CA; nevertheless, access to these solutions shall be subject to data sharing reciprocity conditions

ii further study, advise upon and prepare any relevant proposals on the aforementioned topics for further consideration by an Extraordinary Congress (if so decided by member countries), with such proposals to include, as appropriate, an impact assessment and demand analysis;

iii study, advise upon and prepare Congress proposals on further opening up of the UPU to wider postal sector players, including the potential consideration of other solutions not already opened up or mentioned above (such as labelling standards, data protection and data storage), by conducting an impact assessment before submitting any proposals and prioritizing such studies according to demand;

iv ensure, in accordance with the relevant rules, the widest possible participation of CA members and observers in this work,

Also instructs

the International Bureau to make all relevant information on this work available on the Union website.

(Proposal 13, Committee 3, fifth meeting)

Resolution C 12/2021

Organization of an Extraordinary Congress in 2023

Congress,

Recognizing
the need for the Union to cope with rapidly changing needs in the postal environment,

Considering
that, over the last few decades, the postal sector has changed dramatically, while the Union has adopted an approach of incremental change,

Considering also
that a more inclusive and open Union would constitute an essential vehicle to make the postal sector more vibrant and globally integrated, while fostering growth opportunities for member countries and improving services to citizens around the world,

Decides

to hold an Extraordinary Congress[3] in 2023, particularly in order to address the examination of proposals associated with the further opening up of the Union to wider postal sector players, as well as other urgent postal sector issues,

[3] Pursuant to UPU Constitution article 15, the decision to convene an Extraordinary Congress must be approved by at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union.

Instructs

the Council of Administration, with the support of the International Bureau, to take all the necessary measures to organize the aforementioned Extraordinary Congress in strict accordance with the relevant provisions of article 101 of the General Regulations (including proposed agenda and timetable and, as applicable, host country designation).

(Proposal 14, Committee 3, fifth meeting)

Resolution C 13/2021

Integrated Remuneration Plan (2022–2025)

Congress,

Taking note
of Congress resolution C 7/2016, which approved the classification of countries and territories for terminal dues and Quality of Service Fund (QSF) purposes for the 2018–2021 period,

Considering
the Integrated Remuneration Plan (IRP) for 2019–2020 in resolution C 6/2018 adopted by the second Extraordinary Congress, which identified concrete areas in which better alignment, integration and rationalization of the remuneration systems can be achieved,

Recalling
that the Istanbul work cycle was the first in which an IRP has been devised and on which basis important progress has been made to modernize, integrate and align the UPU remuneration systems,

Recognizing
the need to minimize or eliminate the effects of potential distortions created by the current systems and to ensure that proposals, for submission to the 28th Congress, are developed for an Integrated Remuneration System (IRS) in which the UPU remuneration systems are modernized and harmonized, and which responds to further developments to the UPU portfolio of physical products (letters, parcels and EMS) brought about by the Integrated Product Plan (IPP),

Emphasizing
that the updated IRP for 2022–2025 provides the strategic direction, goals and roadmap to deliver proposals for an integrated, modern and forward-looking remuneration system – the IRS 2026–2030,

Emphasizing also
the importance of the modernization, rationalization and integration of the UPU remuneration systems in unlocking the growth potential of UPU services in the e-commerce market,

Encouraged
by the significant progress made in modernizing, integrating and rationalizing the UPU remuneration systems since the 26th Congress, in particular in terms of the decisions taken by the second and third Extraordinary Congresses,

Convinced
that the implementation of the IRP for 2022–2025 will result in proposals to the 28th Congress that are beneficial to achieving the objective of an integrated, modern and forward-looking remuneration system,

Decides

– to adopt the IRP for 2022–2025, to enable the continuation of work and studies with a view to developing a proposal for an IRS to be proposed to the 28th Congress;

– to adopt the integrated remuneration system principles contained in Annex 1 to this resolution to guide the above-mentioned work and studies;

– to approve the classification of countries and territories in the groups shown in Annex 2 for terminal dues and QSF purposes in the 2022–2025 period, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Acts,

Instructs

– the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council to ensure that work on the modernization, rationalization and integration of the UPU remuneration systems continues at an accelerated pace and is concluded by 2025 by:

  - approving at each session the latest version of the IRP (2022–2025) implementation progress report in which the most important conclusions from the different studies and the most up-to-date status and direction of draft conclusions and proposals for an IRS (2026–2030) are presented;
  - implementing all of the activities contained in the work proposals on remuneration in the Abidjan Postal Strategy and Business Plan to ensure that the implementation of the IRP (2022–2025) will result in proposals for an IRS to be submitted to the 28th Congress;
  - developing work proposals for the 28th Congress for a mandate to continue the work on the further development of the IRP and the IRS through modernization, rationalization and integration;

– the Council of Administration to:

  - monitor the work of and provide feedback to the POC on the implementation of the IRP (2022–2025) and the development of proposals for an IRS (2026–2030) and ensure that, in accordance with the attributions of the CA as contained in article 107 of the General Regulations, the associated proposals for the 28th Congress are in accordance with the integrated remuneration principles in Annex 1 to this resolution;
  - review and propose updated integrated remuneration principles to be proposed to the 28th Congress to guide the work on the further development of the IRS in the next Congress work cycle (2026–2029);
  - review the classification of countries and territories for terminal dues and QSF purposes for the 2022–2025 period and submit to the 28th Congress proposals to simplify the classification system by reducing the number of groups;
  - study the possibility of establishing new criteria for such a simplified country classification system, for example by taking into account the total annual inbound letter-post volume received by each destination country in combination with existing criteria that reflect the level of postal economic development;
  - assess the market and regulatory impacts of the UPU remuneration systems on the wider postal sector stakeholders and the financial and operational impacts of the decisions by the third Extraordinary Congress and the 27th Congress on remuneration;

– the Postal Operations Council to:

  - develop proposals for an IRS 2026–2030, including associated proposals to amend the Convention and its Regulations, to be proposed to the 28th Congress;
  - develop such proposals in accordance with the key aspects and objectives outlined in paragraph 63 and take full account of the relevant information from the studies defined in paragraph 64 of Congress–Doc 36.Rev 2;
  - review the remuneration of basic services for items containing documents and develop proposals for the period of validity of the next Congress Acts (2026–2029);
  - review the remuneration of basic services for items containing goods and develop proposals for the period of validity of the next Congress Acts (2026–2029) with particular focus on:
    – reviewing the methodology to determine the country-specific ILR ceiling base rates that are consistent with the methodology used to determine the country-specific ceiling rates for E format items;

  - reviewing the methodology that determines the country-specific ceiling rates of E format items for mail flows subject to the payment of self-declared E format rates, including a review on the so-called business rules such as the number and selection of domestic tariff references and the relative weighting that is allocated to each of these reference rates;
  - reviewing the methodology that determines the E format rates for those flows that are not subject to the payment of self-declared rates for E format or for the payment of rates that are partially determined on the basis of self-declared rates;
  - determining the combined rate per kilogramme for mail flows below the relevant volume thresholds from the new worldwide average composition of mail, on the basis of the item-per-kilogramme study to be carried out in the year 2023;
  - ensuring that the proposals concerning the remuneration of items containing goods will result in better alignment between and rationalization of the two remuneration systems in the next Congress cycle (2026–2029);
  - exploring options that will lead to a more equitable, competitive and cost-based model, in particular within the lightweight item segment below 2 kilogrammes;
- undertake a comprehensive review of the remuneration of supplementary services (tracked, registered and insured services) on the basis of the product specifications associated with the product portfolio, and develop proposals for appropriate remuneration for the 2026–2030 period;
- develop proposals in accordance with the product portfolio and on the basis of the product specifications for all basic and supplementary services, as well as for the services that can be added on to the basic services or supplementary services (add-ons);
- develop, subject to the outcomes of a review, proposals to the 28th Congress to revise the provisions in relation to the remuneration of undeliverable letter-post items;
- review the amounts and system of payments defined in the Convention concerning the payment of remuneration by the designated operator of origin in case of non-compliance with the S10 barcode standards on its outbound mail and develop proposals to the 28th Congress amending those payments to ensure that they better reflect the costs of handling such items and incentivize the designated operator to comply with the mandatory requirements as defined in the Acts;
- develop, subject to the outcomes of a review, proposals to introduce remuneration, such as bonus payments or penalties, with a view of encouraging designated operators of origin to obtain and exchange ITMATT data;
- continue the work on the transition of countries classified in group IV for terminal dues and QSF purposes, including the development of a proposal to mitigate negative impacts on group IV countries;
- propose a timetable and transition arrangements to ensure the full integration of all countries into a single terminal dues target system through harmonization of provisions, while recognizing the particular needs of least developed countries and small volume landlocked and island states;
- review the provisions governing the link between terminal dues and performance evaluation and quality of service with respect to bonuses and penalties, as well as applicable standards and targets;
- examine and develop proposals to continue improving or establishing the governance of the link between the remuneration of items containing goods and the performance evaluation in relation to quality of service with respect to bonuses and penalties, as well as applicable standards and targets;
- implement, in the Abidjan work cycle, a system in which the country-specific measurement of quality of service is linked with inward land rate bonus payments;
- submit to the POC and CA for approval in each session the IRP (2022–2025) implementation progress report based on a two-phased approach in which phase I concerns the drafting of the strategic direction and roadmap towards developing IRS 2026–2030 proposals (S1 to S3), and phase II with detailed progress reporting on the conclusions of the different studies and the development of draft IRS 2026–2030 proposals in accordance with the principles in this resolution and the direction as identified in phase I (S4 to S7);

- develop proposals that simplify and rationalize the provisions in the Acts concerning remuneration where possible;
- revise all operational, statistical and accounting procedures relevant to the proposed modifications to the UPU remuneration systems;
- develop a mandate to implement all proposals for an IRS (2026–2030) in the next work cycle, including the application of the methodology, the calculation of the effective rates and maintenance of guides, manuals and accounting procedures,

Further instructs

the International Bureau to:

– implement the Congress decision concerning the country classification in Annex 2 to this resolution;

– implement the IRP (2022–2025);

– implement Congress, CA and POC decisions on UPU remuneration systems, and manage those systems and deal with issues that arise from their implementation, including the provision of clarifications to UPU member countries on the interpretation of the relevant provisions, verification, validation, calculation and publication of rates according to the UPU Convention and Regulations;

– carry out the studies provided for in the work assigned to the CA and POC;

– support the work assigned to the CA and POC;

– undertake, in coordination with the restricted unions, the organization of regional round tables to familiarize all countries and/or regions with the proposals for an IRS (2026–2030),

Invites

member countries to:

– support the implementation of the IRP (2022–2025), in particular by responding to studies in support of proposals on a modern, forward-looking integrated remuneration system, and provide accurate information in a timely manner;

– take an active part in the development of proposals for an IRS (2026–2030);

– take active steps to invest in a modernized, rationalized and integrated remuneration system,

Also invites

the restricted unions to lend their support within their respective regions to the important work associated with the implementation of the IRP (2022–2025) and the development of proposals for an IRS (2026–2030).

(Proposal 01.Rev 1, Committee 4, fourth meeting)

Annex 1

Integrated remuneration system principles for the 2022–2025 Congress work cycle:

– Ensuring the provision of an affordable and viable universal postal service through sustainable remuneration to delivery designated operators;

– Supporting the efficient and economically viable provision of modern international postal services in line with regulatory requirements and with the flexibility to respond to rapidly changing market conditions and customer needs;

– Differentiating the various UPU-regulated postal products based on service specifications and market needs;

– While recognizing the need to differentiate UPU-regulated postal services, simplifying and harmonizing these across formats as much as possible;

– Supporting the interoperability, sustainability and development of the global postal network under the least market-distortive terms by:
    - being transparent, straightforward and mindful of the different resource and implementation constraints among UPU members as to support aid programmes for the postal development of transitional countries;
    - incentivizing improved service performance through linking quality of service measurements to remuneration;
    - ensuring non-discriminatory access to destination markets according to country-specific, cost-coverage remuneration rates, while:
        – respecting, in particular, the right to affordable access to international postal services for the least developed member countries with limited international mail volumes;
        – preventing the abusive practice of remailing;
        – respecting the need for higher remuneration for the processing and delivery of inbound international mail in cases where domestic rates are set below cost owing to social or similar policies.

Annex 2

Classification of countries and territories for terminal dues and Quality of Service Fund (QSF) purposes

Group I – List of countries and territories that were in the target system prior to 2010 and shall apply the target system during the period from 2022 to 2025, and that contribute to the QSF as provided for in article 28 of the Convention

Countries and territories
Australia
– Norfolk Island
Austria
Belgium
Canada
Denmark
– Faroe Islands
– Greenland
Finland (including the Åland Islands)
France
French Overseas Territories coming within the Union's jurisdiction by virtue of article 23 of the Constitution:
– French Polynesia (including Clipperton Island)
– New Caledonia
– Wallis and Futuna Islands
Germany
Greece
Iceland
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Japan
Liechtenstein
Luxembourg
Monaco

Countries and territories
Netherlands
New Zealand (including the Ross Dependency)
Norway
Portugal
San Marino
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
– Guernsey
– Isle of Man
– Jersey
Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland):
– Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
– Gibraltar
– Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands
– Tristan da Cunha
United States of America
Vatican

Group II – List of countries and territories that joined the target system in 2010 and 2012 and shall apply the target terminal dues system during the period from 2022 to 2025, and that contribute to the QSF as provided for in article 28 of the Convention

Countries and territories
Antigua and Barbuda
Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten
Bahamas
Bahrain (Kingdom)
Barbados
Brunei Darussalam
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Rep.
Dominica
Estonia
Grenada
Hong Kong, China
Hungary
Korea (Rep.)
Kuwait
Latvia
Macao, China
Malta
Territory under the Netherlands:
– Dutch Caribbean (Bonaire, Saba and Sint Eustatius)

Countries and territories
Territory under New Zealand: – Cook Islands
Poland
Qatar
Saint Christopher (St. Kitts) and Nevis
Saudi Arabia
Singapore
Slovakia
Slovenia
Trinidad and Tobago
Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): – Anguilla – Bermuda – British Virgin Islands – Cayman Islands – Montserrat – Turks and Caicos Islands

Group III – List of countries and territories that joined the target system in 2016 and shall apply the target system during the period from 2022 to 2025, and that contribute to the QSF as provided for in article 28 of the Convention

Countries and territories
Argentina
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Botswana
Brazil
Bulgaria (Rep.)
Chile
China (People’s Rep.)
Costa Rica
Cuba
Fiji
Gabon
Jamaica
Kazakhstan
Lebanon
Lithuania
Malaysia
Mauritius
Mexico
Montenegro
Nauru
Territory under New Zealand: – Niue
North Macedonia

Countries and territories
Oman
Panama (Rep.)
Romania
Russian Federation
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Serbia
Seychelles
South Africa
Suriname
Thailand
Turkey
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates (UAE)
Uruguay
Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep.)

Group IV – List of countries and territories that apply the transition terminal dues system during the period from 2022 to 2025 and that benefit from the QSF as provided for in article 28 of the Convention

Countries and territories
Afghanistan[4]
Albania
Algeria
Angola[4]
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Bangladesh[4]
Belize
Benin[4]
Bhutan[4]
Bolivia
Burkina Faso[4]
Burundi[4]
Cambodia[4]
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Rep.[4]
Chad
Colombia
Comoros[4]
Congo (Rep.)
Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.)
Dem People's Rep. of Korea

[4] LDCs classified in former group 5 as of the date of adoption of Congress resolution C 77/2012 shall continue to benefit from higher QSF contributions than those received by other countries and territories classified in the new group IV.

Countries and territories
Dem. Rep. of the Congo[5]
Djibouti[5]
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Equatorial Guinea[5]
Eritrea[5]
Eswatini
Ethiopia[5]
Gambia[5]
Georgia
Ghana
Guatemala
Guinea[5]
Guinea-Bissau[5]
Guyana
Haiti[5]
Honduras (Rep.)
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Rep.)
Iraq
Jordan
Kenya
Kiribati[5]
Kyrgyzstan
Lao People’s Dem. Rep.[5]
Lesotho[5]
Liberia[5]
Madagascar[5]
Malawi[5]
Maldives
Mali[5]
Mauritania[5]
Moldova
Mongolia
Morocco
Mozambique[5]
Myanmar[5]
Namibia
Nepal[5]

[5] LDCs classified in former group 5 as of the date of adoption of Congress resolution C 77/2012 shall continue to benefit from higher QSF contributions than those received by other countries and territories classified in the new group IV.

Countries and territories
Territory under New Zealand:
– Tokelau
Nicaragua
Niger[6]
Nigeria
Pakistan
Palestine[6]
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Rwanda[6]
Samoa[6]
Sao Tome and Principe[6]
Senegal[6]
Sierra Leone[6]
Solomon Islands[6]
Somalia[6]
South Sudan[6]
Sri Lanka
State of Libya
Sudan[6]
Syrian Arab Rep.
Tajikistan
Tanzania (United Rep.)[6]
Timor-Leste (Dem. Rep.)[6]
Togo[6]
Tonga (including Niuafo'ou)
Tunisia
Turkmenistan
Tuvalu[6]
Uganda[6]
Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland):
– Ascension
Uzbekistan
Territory under the United States of America:
– Samoa
Vanuatu[6]
Viet Nam
Yemen[6]
Zambia[6]
Zimbabwe

[6] LDCs classified in former group 5 as of the date of adoption of Congress resolution C 77/2012 shall continue to benefit from higher QSF contributions than those received by other countries and territories classified in the new group IV.

Decision C 14/2021

Venue of the 28th Universal Postal Congress

Congress,

Decides

to accept the invitation of the Government of the United Arab Emirates to host the 28th Congress in that country in 2025.

(Congress–Doc 30.Rev 1, second plenary meeting)

Resolution C 15/2021

Implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/295 on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965

Congress,

Considering
the Union's status as an intergovernmental organization and specialized agency of the United Nations, whose mission is to facilitate communication by guaranteeing the free circulation of postal items over a single postal territory composed of interconnected networks, and by encouraging the adoption of fair common standards and the use of technology, thus ensuring cooperation and interaction among stakeholders and the satisfaction of customers' changing needs,

Recognizing
that the General Assembly of the United Nations is the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations, mandated, among other things, to make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among countries,

Recognizing also
that the International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations whose role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by states and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies,

Taking note of
the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 25 February 2019, which found that: i) the process of decolonization of Mauritius was not lawfully completed when the country became independent in 1968, following the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius; ii) the United Kingdom is under an obligation to bring to an end its administration of the Chagos Archipelago as rapidly as possible; iii) all United Nations member states are under an obligation to cooperate with the United Nations to complete the decolonization of Mauritius; and iv) the resettlement on the Chagos Archipelago of Mauritian nationals, including those of Chagossian origin, is a human rights issue which should be addressed by the General Assembly during the completion of the decolonization process,

Recalling
that the General Assembly, by its resolution 73/295 of 22 May 2019, affirmed that the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius and that the United Kingdom is under an obligation to bring to an end its administration of the Chagos Archipelago as rapidly as possible, and called on the United Nations and all of its specialized agencies to recognize Mauritius' sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, to support the decolonization of Mauritius as rapidly as possible, and to refrain from impeding that process by recognizing, or giving effect to any measure taken by or on behalf of, the "British Indian Ocean Territory",

Further recognizing
that, in accordance with articles IV and VI of the Agreement between the United Nations and the Universal Postal Union (which entered into force on 1 July 1948), the Union is required to: i) “arrange for the submission, as soon as possible, for appropriate action, to its Congresses or its Administrative Conferences or Commissions, or to its members, in conformity with the provisions of the Universal Postal Convention, of all formal recommendations which the United Nations may make to it”; ii) “enter into consultation with the United Nations upon request with respect to such recommendations, and in due course to report to the United Nations on the actions taken by the Union or by its members to give effect to such recommendations, or on the other results of their consideration”; and iii) “cooperate with and to give assistance to the United Nations, its principal and subsidiary organs”,

Also taking note of
Congress–Doc 41 concerning the implementation by the Union of General Assembly resolution 73/295,

Convinced
of the importance of effective coordination of the activities of the United Nations and the Union,

Decides

– in accordance with the aforementioned Agreement between the United Nations and the Universal Postal Union, to approve the implementation, by the Union, of General Assembly resolution 73/295 of 22 May 2019;
– in the light of the above, to formally acknowledge henceforth that, for the purposes of the activities of the Union, the Chagos Archipelago forms an integral part of the territory of Mauritius,

Instructs

– the International Bureau:
– to request that Mauritius keep the Union, through the International Bureau, regularly informed of any decisions regarding international postal operations on the territory of the Chagos Archipelago (including any authorizations to maintain the operation of international mail processing centres by foreign entities on that territory);
– in compliance with article 6 of the Universal Postal Convention, to cease the registration, distribution and forwarding of any and all postage stamps issued by the territory formerly known as the “British Indian Ocean Territory”;
– to ensure that the use of any associated terminology in UPU documentation is consistent with the aforementioned decision, including the removal of any references to the “British Indian Ocean Territory”, or to the Chagos Archipelago as part of the member country known as the “Overseas Territories of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland”, and
– to take any other measures deemed necessary to ensure due implementation of this Congress resolution.

(Proposal 11, third plenary meeting)

Resolution C 16/2021

Period covered by the financial decisions taken by the 27th Congress

Congress,

Having examined
the draft Abidjan Postal Strategy (APS) for 2021–2025 (Congress–Doc 13), and Congress–Doc 29,

In view of the fact
that the Union’s financial resources need to be allocated on the basis of the Programme and Budget stemming from the APS covering the period from 2021 to 2025, as well as Congress resolution C 7/2018,

Noting
that, in strict accordance with the solidarity rule contained in article 21.3 of the UPU Constitution (and taking into account both the ceiling of expenditure determined by Congress and the finalized version of the APS), the amount of the contributory unit will be calculated solely on the basis of the annual Programme and Budget approved by the Council of Administration, as well as the number of contributory units announced at the time when the CA Administration approves the aforementioned Programme and Budget,

Also noting
that, consistent with the above, under no circumstances may the amount of the contributory unit be subject to any freezing measure during the entire period covered by the Abidjan Congress cycle (from 2022 to 2025), as well as all future Congress cycles,

Decides

that the annual ceiling of expenditure approved by Congress shall apply for each year of the Abidjan Congress cycle (2022–2025), with the possibility of being revised at the Extraordinary Congress in 2023, the ceiling for 2021 having been covered by the ceiling defined by the Istanbul Congress owing to the postponement of the Abidjan Congress.

(Proposal 18, fifth plenary meeting)

Resolution C 17/2021

Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the postal sector

Congress,

Aware
that climate change, anthropogenic interference with the climate system, and their effects on every country on this planet constitute a major challenge faced by our generation and of paramount importance to the generations to follow,

Noting
that the United Nations General Assembly, adopted, in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes five goals relating to climate protection, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and environmental sustainability, which makes this policy area imperative for the Union as a specialized agency of the United Nations,

Noting also
that the designated operators of Union member countries, along with other postal sector entities, operate over half a million vehicles, utilize thousands of buildings, and employ a workforce of more than 5.3 million; and that therefore the postal sector, through its cross-border transportation network, universal reach to the remotest areas and transport-intensive daily last-mile delivery, is a significant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, making reduction efforts in this sector particularly relevant;

Considering
that the Union, through its Online Solution for Carbon Analysis and Reporting (OSCAR) programme, is already active in the field of carbon reporting, but that nonetheless, there is a vital need for identifying further opportunities for reducing emissions and verifying the success of such initiatives,

Further considering
that many designated operators and other postal sector entities of Union member countries already have a comprehensive strategy in place to measure and reduce their own carbon footprint,

Bearing in mind
the various postal sector initiatives under way to address these issues, and the need for knowledge and best practice sharing as well as policy coherence,

Aware
that any action to be carried out must take into consideration policy, operational and financial requirements, and acknowledge the heterogeneity of Union member countries and their respective postal markets,

Noting
that many customers, especially in the fast growing area of e-commerce, increasingly demand postal delivery services with full transparency of their carbon footprint and mitigation measures,

Instructs

– the Council of Administration to:

  - evaluate, report and make recommendations to the next Congress or Extraordinary Congress, if convened, on the feasibility of the postal sector adopting voluntary targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its operations over a defined period of time, taking into account nationally determined contributions and climate change goals under the Paris Agreement on climate change;
  - consider and report to the next Congress or Extraordinary Congress, if convened, on ways in which Union member countries can ensure knowledge sharing among designated operators and other postal sector entities on emission reduction strategies, climate finance and climate adaptation measures, particularly within the context of postal technical assistance and associated international technical cooperation initiatives,

– the Postal Operations Council to:

  - make recommendations to the Council of Administration in respect of the aforementioned voluntary targets based on appropriate study and analysis of greenhouse gas emissions by the postal sector as well as effective mitigation and adaptation measures;
  - consider how carbon neutral cross-border international postal services can be developed as part of the Union's portfolio of optional services between operators that choose to implement them, drawing on the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions caused by receiving, sorting, transporting and delivering postal shipments per item in Union member countries where such reporting is already available for domestic or international services.

(Proposal 17.Rev 1, fifth plenary meeting)

Part II – Acts of the Union amended by the 2021 Abidjan Congress (consolidated versions)

Constitution of the Universal Postal Union

General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

Universal Postal Convention and Final Protocol to the Universal Postal Convention

Postal Payment Services Agreement and Final Protocol to the Postal Payment Services Agreement

Constitution of the Universal Postal Union

Constitution of the Universal Postal Union

(amended by the 1969 Tokyo, 1974 Lausanne, 1984 Hamburg, 1989 Washington, 1994 Seoul, 1999 Beijing, 2004 Bucharest, 24th Congress – 2008, 2016 Istanbul, 2018 Addis Ababa and 2021 Abidjan Additional Protocols[1])

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[1] For the 1969 Tokyo Additional Protocol, see the documents of that Congress, volume III, pages 9 to 12.
For the Second Additional Protocol (Lausanne 1974), see the documents of that Congress, volume III, pages 23 to 25.
For the Third Additional Protocol (Hamburg 1984), see the documents of that Congress, volume III, pages 25 to 28.
For the Fourth Additional Protocol (Washington 1989), see the documents of that Congress, volume III/1, pages 27 to 32.
For the Fifth Additional Protocol (Seoul 1994), see the documents of that Congress, volume III, pages 25 to 29.
For the Sixth Additional Protocol (Beijing 1999), see pages A 3 to A 6 of the brochure published in Berne in 1999.
For the Seventh Additional Protocol (Bucharest 2004), see pages 3 to 7 of the brochure published in Berne in 2004.
For the Eighth Additional Protocol (24th Congress – 2008), see pages 3 to 7 of the brochure published in Berne in 2008.
For the Ninth Additional Protocol (Istanbul 2016), see pages 7 to 13 of the brochure published in Berne in 2016.
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Constitution of the Universal Postal Union[2]

(amended by the 1969 Tokyo, 1974 Lausanne, 1984 Hamburg, 1989 Washington, 1994 Seoul, 1999 Beijing, 2004 Bucharest, 24th Congress – 2008, 2016 Istanbul, 2018 Addis Ababa and 2021 Abidjan Additional Protocols)

Preamble

With a view to developing communications between peoples by the efficient operation of the postal services, and to contributing to the attainment of the noble aims of international collaboration in the cultural, social and economic fields, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the contracting countries have, subject to ratification, **acceptance or approval,** adopted this Constitution.

The mission of the **Universal Postal** Union **(hereinafter the "Union")** is to stimulate the lasting development of efficient and accessible universal postal services of quality in order to facilitate communication between the inhabitants of the world by:

– guaranteeing the free circulation of postal items over a single postal territory composed of interconnected networks;

– encouraging the adoption of fair common standards and the use of technology;

– ensuring cooperation and interaction among stakeholders;

– promoting effective technical cooperation;

– ensuring the satisfaction of customers' changing needs.

[2] In line with Abidjan Congress–Doc 39, various changes have been made to the English version of the Constitution to introduce gender-neutral language. As these editorial amendments do not affect the official French text, they are not marked as changes in this volume.

Section I
Organic provisions

Chapter I
General

Article 1
Scope and objectives of the Union

1 The countries adopting this Constitution shall form, under the intergovernmental organization entitled the Universal Postal Union, a single postal territory for the reciprocal exchange of postal items. Freedom of transit shall be guaranteed throughout the entire territory of the Union, subject to the conditions specified in the Acts of the Union **and any additional protocols thereto (hereinafter collectively "Acts of the Union")**.

2 The aim of the Union shall be to secure the organization and improvement of the postal services and to promote in this sphere the development of international collaboration.

3 The Union shall take part, as far as possible, in postal technical assistance sought by its member countries.

Article **2**
Definitions

1 For the purpose of the Acts of **the Union**, the following terms shall have the meanings defined below:

1.1 Postal service: all international postal services, whose scope is determined and regulated by the Acts of the Union. The main obligations of postal services are to satisfy certain social and economic objectives of member countries, by ensuring the collection, processing, transmission and delivery of postal items.

1.2 Member country: a country that fulfils the conditions of article **3** of the Constitution.

1.3 Single postal territory (one and the same postal territory): the obligation upon the contracting parties to the Acts of the Union to provide for the reciprocal exchange of postal items, including freedom of transit, and to treat postal items in transit from other countries like their own postal items, without discrimination, subject to the conditions specified in the Acts of the Union.

1.4 Freedom of transit: obligation for an intermediate member country to ensure the transport of postal items passed on to it in transit for another member country, providing similar treatment to that given to domestic items, subject to the conditions specified in the Acts of the Union.

1.5 Postal item: generic term referring to anything dispatched by the designated operator of a member country (letter post, parcel post, money orders, etc.), as described in the Universal Postal Convention **(hereinafter "Convention")**, the **Agreements of the Union (as referred to in article 21 of the Constitution)** and their respective Regulations.

1.6 Designated operator: any governmental or non-governmental entity officially designated by the member country to operate postal services and to fulfil the related obligations arising out of the Acts of the Union on its territory.

1.7 Reservation: an exemption clause whereby a member country purports to exclude or to modify the legal effect of a clause of an Act, other than the Constitution and the General Regulations, in its application to that member country. Any reservation shall be compatible with the object and purpose of Union as defined in the preamble and article 1 of the Constitution. It must be duly justified and approved by the majority required for approval of the Act concerned, and inserted in the Final Protocol thereto.

Article **3**
Members of the Union

1 Member countries of the Union shall be:

1.1 countries which have membership status at the date on which the Constitution comes into force;

1.2 countries admitted to membership in accordance with article **12**.

Article **4**
Jurisdiction of the Union

1 The Union shall have within its jurisdiction:

1.1 the territories of member countries;

1.2 post offices set up by member countries in territories not included in the Union;

1.3 territories which, without being members of the Union, are included in it because from the postal point of view they are dependent on member countries.

Article **5**
Exceptional relations

Member countries whose designated operators provide **postal** service**s on behalf of** territories not included in the Union are bound to act as intermediaries for other member countries. The provisions of the Convention and its Regulations shall be applicable to such exceptional relations.

Article **6**
Seat of the Union

The seat of the Union and of its permanent organs shall be at Berne.

Article **7**
Official language of the Union

The official language of the Union shall be French.

Article **8**
Monetary unit

The monetary unit used in the Acts of the Union shall be the accounting unit of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Article **9**
Restricted Unions. Special Agreements

1 Member countries, or their designated operators if the legislation of those member countries so permits, may establish Restricted Unions and make Special Agreements concerning **the postal** service, provided always that they do not introduce provisions less favourable to the public than those provided for by the Acts to which the member countries concerned are parties.

2 Restricted Unions may send observers to Congresses, to the Council of Administration, to the Postal Operations Council, and to other conferences and meetings organized by the Union.

3 The Union may send observers to Congresses, conferences and meetings of Restricted Unions.

Article **10**
Relations with the United Nations

The relations between the Union and the United Nations shall be governed by the **agreements** whose texts are annexed to this Constitution.

Article **11**
Relations with international organizations

In order to secure close cooperation in the international postal sphere, the Union may collaborate with international organizations having related interests and activities.

Chapter II
Accession or admission to the Union. Withdrawal from the Union

Article **12**
Accession or admission to the Union. Procedure

1 Any member of the United Nations may accede to the Union.

2 Any sovereign country which is not a member of the United Nations may apply for admission as a member country of the Union.

3 Accession or application for admission to the Union must entail a formal declaration of accession to the Constitution and to the obligatory Acts of the Union. It shall be addressed by the government of the country concerned to the Director General of the International Bureau, who shall notify the accession or consult the member countries on the application for admission, as the case may be.

4 A country which is not a member of the United Nations shall be deemed to be admitted as a member country if its application is approved by at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union. Member countries **whose replies have not been received by the International Bureau** within a period of four months counting from the date of the consultation shall be considered as having abstained. **The aforementioned replies, to be submitted by physical or secure electronic means to the International Bureau, shall be signed by a duly authorized representative of the governmental authority of the member country concerned. For the purposes of this paragraph, "secure electronic means" shall refer to any electronic means used for the processing, storage and transmission of data that ensure that completeness, integrity and confidentiality of such data are maintained during the submission of the aforementioned replies by a member country.**

5 Accession or admission to membership shall be notified by the Director General of the International Bureau to the governments of member countries. It shall take effect from the date of such notification.

Article **13**
Withdrawal from the Union. Procedure

1 Each member country may withdraw from the Union by notice of denunciation of the Constitution given by the government of the country concerned to the Director General of the International Bureau, such notice to then be communicated by the Director General of the International Bureau to the governments of member countries.

2 Withdrawal from the Union shall become effective one year after **receipt of** the notice of denunciation provided for in paragraph **1 by** the Director General of the International Bureau.

Chapter III
Organization of the Union

Article **14**
Bodies of the Union

1 The Union's bodies shall be Congress, the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the International Bureau.

2 The Union's permanent bodies shall be the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the International Bureau.

Article **15**
Congress

1 Congress shall be the supreme body of the Union.

2 Congress shall consist of the representatives of member countries.

Article **16**
Extraordinary Congresses

An Extraordinary Congress may be convened at the request or with the consent of at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union.

Article 17
Council of Administration

1 Between Congresses the Council of Administration (CA) shall ensure the continuity of the work of the Union in accordance with the provisions of the Acts of the Union.

2 Members of the Council of Administration shall carry out their functions in the name and in the interests of the Union.

Article 18
Postal Operations Council

1 The Postal Operations Council (POC) shall be responsible for operational, commercial, technical and economic questions concerning the postal service.

2 Members of the Postal Operations Council shall carry out their functions in the name and in the interests of the Union.

Article **19**
International Bureau

A central office operating at the seat of the Union under the title of the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union, directed by a Director General and placed under the control of the Council of Administration, shall serve as an organ of execution, support, liaison, information and consultation.

Chapter IV
Finances of the Union

Article **20**
Expenditure of the Union. Contributions of member countries

1 Each Congress shall fix the maximum amount which:

1.1 the expenditure of the Union may reach annually;

1.2 the expenditure relating to the organization of the next Congress may reach.

2 The maximum amount for expenditure referred to in paragraph 1 may be exceeded if circumstances so require, provided that the relevant provisions of the General Regulations are observed.

3 The expenses of the Union, including where applicable the expenditure envisaged in paragraph 2, shall be jointly borne by the member countries of the Union. For this purpose, each member country shall choose the contribution class in which it intends to be included**, subject to the relevant provisions** laid down in the General Regulations.

4 In the case of accession or admission to the Union under article **12**, the country concerned **shall choose** the contribution class into which it wishes to be placed for the purpose of apportioning the expenses of the Union**, equally subject to the relevant provisions laid down in the General Regulations**.

Section II
Acts of the Union

Chapter I
General

Article **21**
Acts of the Union

1 The Constitution shall be the basic Act of the Union. It shall contain the organic rules of the Union and shall not be subject to reservations.

2 The General Regulations shall embody those provisions which ensure the application of the Constitution and the working of the Union. They shall be binding on all member countries and shall not be subject to reservations.

3 **The Convention** and its Regulations shall embody the rules applicable throughout the **postal service**. **These** Acts shall be binding on all member countries. Member countries shall ensure that their designated operators fulfil the obligations arising from the Convention and its Regulations.

4 The Agreements of the Union, and their Regulations, shall **respectively define and** regulate the services other than those **defined and regulated in the Convention and its Regulations** between those member countries which are parties to them. They shall be binding on those member countries only. Signatory member countries shall ensure that their designated operators fulfil the obligations arising from the Agreements **of the Union** and their Regulations.

5 The Regulations, which shall contain the rules of application necessary for the implementation of the Convention and of the Agreements **of the Union**, shall be drawn up by the Postal Operations Council, bearing in mind the decisions taken by Congress.

6 The Final Protocols annexed to the Acts of the Union referred to in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 shall contain the reservations to those Acts.

Article **22**
Application of the Acts of the Union to territories for whose international relations a member country is responsible

1 Any country may declare at any time that its acceptance of the Acts of the Union includes all the territories for whose international relations it is responsible, or certain of them only.

2 The declaration provided for in paragraph 1 must be addressed to the Director General of the International Bureau.

3 Any member country may at any time address to the Director General of the International Bureau a notification of its intention to denounce the application of those Acts of the Union in respect of which it has made the declaration provided for in paragraph 1. Such notification shall take effect one year after the date of its receipt by the Director General of the International Bureau.

4 The declarations and notifications provided for in paragraphs 1 and 3 shall be communicated to member countries by the Director General of the International Bureau.

5 Paragraphs 1 to 4 shall not apply to territories having the status of a member of the Union and for whose international relations a member country is responsible.

Article **23**
National legislation

The provisions of the Acts of the Union shall not derogate from the legislation of any member country in respect of anything which is not expressly provided for by those Acts.

Chapter II
Acceptance and denunciation of the Acts of the Union

Article **24**
Signature, authentication, ratification**, acceptance,** approval of **and accession to** the Acts of the Union

1 The Acts of the Union arising from the Congress shall be signed by the plenipotentiaries of the member countries.

2 The Regulations shall be authenticated by the Chair and the Secretary General of the Postal Operations Council.

3 The **Acts of the Union** shall be ratified**, accepted or approved** as soon as possible by the signatory member countries**, in accordance with their respective constitutional regulations**.

4 When a member country does not ratify**, accept or approve the Acts of the Union** which it has **signed, those** Acts shall be no less valid for the other member countries that have ratified**, accepted** or approved them.

5 Member countries may, at any time, accede to the Acts of the Union which they did not sign, in accordance with the relevant procedures set forth in the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

6 Accession of member countries to the Acts of the Union shall be notified in accordance with article 25.

Article **25**
Notification of ratification**, acceptance,** approval of **and accession to** the Acts of the Union

The instruments of ratification**, acceptance, approval of and accession to the Acts** of the Union shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Director General of the International Bureau, who shall notify the governments of the member countries of their deposit.

Article **26**
Denunciation **of Agreements of the Union**

Each member country may cease being a party to one or more of the Agreements **of the Union, subject by analogy to the** conditions laid down in article **13**.

Chapter III
Amendment of the Acts of the Union

Article **27**
Presentation of proposals

1 A member country shall have the right to present, either to Congress or between Congresses, proposals concerning the Acts of the Union to which it is a party.

2 However, proposals concerning the Constitution and the General Regulations may be submitted only to Congress.

3 Moreover, proposals concerning the Regulations shall be **submitted to** the Postal Operations Council **through the intermediary of** the International **Bureau**.

Article **28**
Amendment of the Constitution

1 To be adopted, proposals submitted to Congress and relating to this Constitution must be approved by at least two thirds of the member countries of the Union having the right to vote.

2 Amendments **to the Constitution** adopted by a Congress shall form the subject of an additional protocol **and enter** into force **on the date specified therein as decided by** the same Congress. **Without prejudice to the binding character of the Constitution as provided for in article 21.1, the said amendments** shall be ratified**, approved, accepted or acceded to** as soon as possible by member **countries. The** instruments of such ratification**, approval, acceptance or accession** shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedure laid down in article **25**.

Article **29**
Amendment of the General Regulations, the Convention and the Agreements **of the Union**

1 The General Regulations, the Convention and the Agreements **of the Union** shall define the conditions to be fulfilled for the approval of proposals which concern them.

2 **Amendments to the General Regulations, the Convention and** the Agreements **of the Union** shall **form the subject of an additional protocol and** enter into **force on the date specified therein as decided by Congress. Without prejudice to the binding character of the aforementioned Acts of the Union as provided for in article 21, the said amendments shall be ratified, approved, accepted or acceded to as soon as possible by member countries. The instruments of such ratification, approval, acceptance or accession shall be dealt with in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 25. This provision shall also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to any amendments to the Convention and the Agreements of the Union adopted between Congresses.**

Chapter IV
Settlement of disputes

Article **30**
Arbitration

In the event of a dispute between two or more member countries concerning the interpretation of the Acts of the Union or the responsibility imposed on a member country by the application of those Acts, the question at issue shall be settled by arbitration.

Section III
Final provisions

Article **31**
Coming into operation and duration of the Constitution

This Constitution shall come into operation on 1 January 1966 and shall remain in force for an indefinite period.

In witness whereof, the plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the contracting countries have signed this Constitution in a single original which shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the country in which the seat of the Union is situated. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each **member country** by the International Bureau of the **Union**.

Done at Vienna, 10 July 1964

General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

(amended by the 2016 Istanbul, 2018 Addis Ababa and **2021 Abidjan** Additional Protocols[1])

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[1] For the 2016 Istanbul Additional Protocol, see pages 33 to 43 of the brochure published in Berne in 2016.
For the Second Additional Protocol (Addis Ababa Extraordinary Congress 2018), see pages 9 to 25 of the brochure published in Berne in 2018.
For the Third Additional Protocol (Abidjan 2021), see pages 19 to 39 of the present brochure.

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General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union[2]

(amended by the 2016 Istanbul and 2018 Addis Ababa and 2021 Abidjan Additional Protocols)

The undersigned plenipotentiaries of the Governments of member countries of the **Universal Postal** Union **(hereinafter the "Union")**, having regard to article **21.2** of the Constitution of **the Union**, concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have, by common consent, and subject to article **24.3 and 5** of the Constitution, drawn up in these General Regulations the following provisions securing the application of the Constitution and the functioning of the Union.

Chapter I
Organization, functions and operation of Congresses, the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the Consultative Committee

Section 1
Congress

Article 101
Organization and convening of Congresses and Extraordinary Congresses

1 The representatives of member countries shall meet in Congress not later than four years after the end of the year during which the preceding Congress took place.

2 Each member country shall arrange for its representation at Congress by one or more plenipotentiaries furnished by their Government with the necessary powers. It may, if need be, arrange to be represented by the delegation of another member country. Nevertheless it shall be understood that a delegation may represent only one member country other than its own.

3 In principle, each Congress shall designate the country in which the next Congress will be held. If that designation proves inapplicable, the Council of Administration shall be authorized to designate the country where Congress is to meet, after consultation with the latter country.

4 After consultation with the International Bureau, the host Government shall fix the definitive date and the precise locality of Congress. In principle one year before that date, the host Government shall send an invitation to the Government of each member country of the Union. This invitation may be sent direct or through the intermediary of another Government or through the Director General of the International Bureau.

5 When a Congress has to be convened without a host Government, the International Bureau, with the agreement of the Council of Administration and after consultation with the Government of the Swiss Confederation, shall take the necessary steps to convene and organize the Congress in the country in which the seat of the Union is situated. In this event, the International Bureau shall perform the functions of the host government.

6 The meeting place of an Extraordinary Congress shall be fixed, after consultation with the International Bureau, by the member countries which have initiated that Congress.

[2] In line with Abidjan Congress–Doc 39, various changes have been made to the English version of the General Regulations to introduce gender-neutral language. As these editorial amendments do not affect the official French text, they are not marked as changes in this volume.

7 Paragraphs 2 to 5 and article 102 shall be applicable by analogy to Extraordinary Congresses.

Article 102
Right to vote at Congress

Each member country shall be entitled to one vote, subject to the sanctions provided for in article **150**.

Article 103
Functions of Congress

1 On the basis of proposals by member countries, the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, Congress shall:

1.1 determine the general principles for achieving the object and purpose of the Union set out in the Preamble and article 1 of the Constitution;

1.2 consider and adopt, where appropriate, proposals for amendments to the Constitution, General Regulations, **Universal Postal** Convention **(hereinafter the "Convention")** and Agreements submitted by member countries and the Councils, in accordance with article **27** of the Constitution and article **139** of the General Regulations;

1.3 set the date for the entry into force of the Acts;

1.4 adopt its Rules of Procedure and the amendments to those Rules;

1.5 consider the comprehensive reports on the work of the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the Consultative Committee, covering the period from the previous Congress, presented by these respective bodies in accordance with articles 111, 117 and **126** of the General Regulations;

1.6 adopt the Union's strategy;

1.7 approve the draft quadrennial **Union** business plan;

1.8 fix the maximum amount of the Union's expenditure, in accordance with article **20** of the Constitution;

1.9 elect the member countries to sit on the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, in accordance with, inter alia, the electoral procedures laid down in the Congress resolutions pertaining to this matter;

1.10 elect the Director General and Deputy Director General;

1.11 set in a Congress resolution the ceiling of the costs to be borne by the Union for the production of documents in Chinese, German, Portuguese and Russian.

2 Congress, as the supreme body of the Union, shall deal with such other questions concerning postal services.

Article 104
Rules of Procedure of Congresses

1 For the organization of its work and the conduct of its debates, Congress shall apply its Rules of Procedure.

2 Each Congress may amend its Rules of Procedure under the conditions laid down in those Rules of Procedure.

3 Paragraphs 1 and 2 shall also be applicable by analogy to Extraordinary Congresses.

Article 105
Observers to the Union's bodies

1 The following entities shall be invited to participate in the plenary sessions and committee meetings of Congress, the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council as observers:

1.1 the United Nations;

1.2 Restricted Unions;

1.3 members of the Consultative Committee;

1.4 entities authorized to attend Union meetings as observers by virtue of a resolution or decision of Congress.

2 The following entities, if duly designated by the Council of Administration in accordance with article 107.1.12 shall be invited to attend specific meetings of Congress as ad hoc observers:

2.1 specialized agencies of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations;

2.2 any international body, any association or enterprise, or any qualified person.

3 In addition to the observers defined in paragraph 1 of this article, the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council may designate ad hoc observers to attend their meetings in accordance with their Rules of Procedure, when this is in the interests of the Union and its bodies.

Section 2
Council of Administration (CA)

Article 106
Composition and functioning of the CA

1 The Council of Administration shall consist of forty-one members who shall exercise their functions during the period between two successive Congresses.

2 The role of Chair shall devolve by right on the host member country of Congress. If that member country waives this right, it shall become a de jure member and, as a result, the geographical group to which it belongs shall have at its disposal an additional seat, to which the restrictive provisions of paragraph 3 shall not apply. In that case, the Council of Administration shall elect as Chair one of the members belonging to the geographical group of the host member country.

3 The forty other members of the Council of Administration shall be elected by Congress on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution. At least a half of the membership is renewed at each Congress; no member country may be chosen by three successive Congresses. **Without prejudice to the foregoing, one seat in the geographical group to which member countries defined as Pacific Island countries and territories (as per the relevant list established by the United Nations) belong shall be reserved for those member countries.**

4 Each member of the Council of Administration shall appoint its representative(s). The members of the Council of Administration shall take an active part in its work.

5 The office of member of the Council of Administration shall be unpaid. The operational expenses of this Council shall be borne by the Union.

6 The CA shall define, formalize and/or set up the standing groups and task forces or other bodies to be established within its structure, with due regard being paid to the Union's strategy and business plan adopted by Congress.

Article 107
Functions of the CA

1 The Council of Administration shall have the following functions:

1.1 Supervises all the activities of the Union between Congresses, ensuring compliance with the decisions of Congress, studying questions with respect to governmental policies on postal issues, and taking account of international regulatory developments such as those relating to trade in services and to competition.

1.2 Promotes, coordinates and supervises all forms of postal technical assistance within the framework of international technical cooperation.

1.3 Examines the draft quadrennial **Union** business plan approved by Congress, and finalizes it by bringing the activities set out in the draft plan for the four-year period into line with the actual resources available. The plan should also, if appropriate, be in line with the results of the prioritization process carried out by Congress. The finalized version of the quadrennial **Union** business plan, completed and approved by the CA, will then form the basis for the preparation of the annual Programme and Budget as well as for the annual operating plans to be drawn up and implemented by the CA and POC.

1.4 Considers and approves the annual programme and budget and the accounts of the Union, while taking into account the final version of the **Union** Business Plan, as described in article 107.1.3.

1.5 Authorizes the ceiling of expenditure to be exceeded, if circumstances so require, in accordance with article **146**.3 to 5.

1.6 Authorizes election of a lower contribution class, if it is so requested, in accordance with the conditions set out in article **151.5**.

1.7 Authorizes a change of geographical group if it is so requested by a member country, taking into account the views expressed by the member countries which are members of the geographical groups concerned.

1.8 Creates or abolishes International Bureau posts financed by the regular budget, taking into account the restrictions imposed by the expenditure ceiling fixed.

1.9 Decides on the contacts to be established with member countries in order to carry out its functions.

1.10 After consulting the Postal Operations Council, decides on the relations to be established with the organizations which are not observers within the meaning of article 105.1 and 105.2.1.

1.11 Considers the reports by the International Bureau on UPU relations with other international bodies and takes the decisions which it considers appropriate on the conduct of such relations and the action to be taken on them.

1.12 Designates in due course, after consulting the Postal Operations Council and the Secretary General, the specialized agencies of the United Nations, international organizations, associations, enterprises and qualified persons to be invited as ad hoc observers to specific meetings of Congress and its Committees when this is in the interest of the Union or the work of the Congress and instructs the Director General of the International Bureau to issue the necessary invitations.

1.13 Designates the member country where the next Congress is to be held in the case provided for in article 101.3.

1.14 Determines in due course and after consulting the Postal Operations Council the number of Committees required to carry out the work of Congress, and specifies their functions.

1.15 Designates, after consulting the Postal Operations Council and subject to the approval of Congress, the member countries prepared:

1.15.1 to assume the positions of Vice-Chairs of Congress and Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Committees, taking as much account as possible of the equitable geographical distribution of the member countries; and

1.15.2 to sit on the Restricted Committees of the Congress.

1.16 Designates those of its members that will serve as members of the Consultative Committee.

1.17 Considers and approves, within the framework of its competence, any action considered necessary to safeguard and enhance the quality of and to modernize the international postal service.

1.18 Studies, at the request of Congress, the Postal Operations Council or member countries, administrative, legislative and legal problems concerning the Union or the international postal service; it shall be for the Council of Administration to decide, in the above-mentioned fields, whether it is expedient to undertake the studies requested by member countries between Congresses.

1.19 Formulates proposals which shall be submitted for the approval either of Congress or of member countries in accordance with article **142**.

1.20 Submits subjects for study to the Postal Operations Council for examination in accordance with article 113.1.6.

1.21 Reviews and approves, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council, the draft Strategy for presentation to Congress.

1.22 Receives and discusses reports and recommendations from the Consultative Committee and considers recommendations from the Consultative Committee for submission to Congress.

1.23 Provides control over the activities of the International Bureau.

1.24 Approves the annual report on the work of the Union and the annual Financial Operating Reports prepared by the International Bureau and, where appropriate, furnishes observations on them.

1.25 Establishes principles, as may be considered necessary, for the Postal Operations Council to take into account in its study of questions with major financial repercussions (charges, terminal dues, transit charges, basic airmail conveyance rates and the posting abroad of letter-post items), follows closely the study of these questions, and reviews and approves, for conformity with the aforementioned principles, Postal Operations Council proposals relating to these questions.

1.26 Approves, within the framework of its competence, the recommendations of the Postal Operations Council for the adoption, if necessary, of regulations or of a new procedure until such time as Congress takes a decision in the matter.

1.27 Considers the annual report prepared by the Postal Operations Council and any proposals submitted by the Council.

1.28 Approves the four-yearly report prepared by the International Bureau in consultation with the Postal Operations Council, on the performance of member countries in respect of the execution of the Union Strategy approved by the preceding Congress, for submission to the following Congress.

1.29 Establishes the framework for the organization of the Consultative Committee and concurs in the organization of the Consultative Committee, in accordance with the provisions of article **123**.

1.30 Establishes criteria for membership of the Consultative Committee and **revokes membership in accordance with those criteria, as further detailed in the relevant rules of procedure referred to in article 123**.

1.31 Lays down the Financial Regulations of the Union.

1.32 Lays down the rules governing the Reserve Fund.

1.33 Lays down the rules governing the Special Fund.

1.34 Lays down the rules governing the Special Activities Fund.

1.35 Lays down the rules governing the Voluntary Fund.

1.36 Lays down the Staff Regulations and the conditions of service of the elected officials.

1.37 Lays down the Regulations of the Social Fund.

1.38 Exercises, within the context of article **153**, overall supervision of the creation and activities of user-funded subsidiary bodies.

1.39 Adopts its Rules of Procedure and the amendments to those Rules.

Article 108
Organization of CA sessions

1 At its constituent meeting, which shall be convened and opened by the Chair of Congress, the Council of Administration shall elect four Vice-Chairs from among its **members**. The Chair and four Vice-Chairs shall be member countries from each of the five geographical groups of the Union.

2 The Council of Administration shall meet twice a year, or additionally on an exceptional basis, at Union headquarters, in accordance with the relevant procedures set forth in its Rules of Procedure.

3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, of the Council of Administration shall form the Management Committee. This Committee shall prepare and direct the work of each session of the Council of Administration. It shall approve, on behalf of the Council of Administration, the annual report prepared by the International Bureau on the work of the Union and it shall take on any other task which the Council of Administration decides to assign to it or the need for which arises in the course of the strategic planning process.

4 The Chair of the Postal Operations Council shall represent that body at meetings of the Council of Administration when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Postal Operations Council.

5 The Chair of the Consultative Committee shall represent that organization at meetings of the Council of Administration when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Consultative Committee.

Article 109
Observers

1 Observers

1.1 To ensure effective liaison between the work of the two bodies, the Postal Operations Council may designate representatives to attend Council of Administration meetings as observers.

1.2 Member countries of the Union which are not members of the Council, as well as the observers and ad hoc observers referred to in article 105, may participate in the plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Council of Administration, without the right to vote.

2 Principles

2.1 For logistical reasons, the Council of Administration may limit the number of attendees per observer and ad hoc observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.

2.2 Observers and ad hoc observers may, at their request, be allowed to cooperate in the studies undertaken, subject to such conditions as the Council may establish to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its work. They may also be invited to chair standing groups and task forces when their experience or expertise justifies it. The participation of observers and ad hoc observers shall be carried out without additional expense for the Union.

2.3 In exceptional circumstances, members of the Consultative Committee and ad hoc observers may be excluded from a meeting or a portion of a meeting or may have their right to receive documents restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chair. The case-by-case situations shall be reported to the Council of Administration and to the Postal Operations Council when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are concerned. If it considers this necessary, the Council of Administration may subsequently review restrictions, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council where appropriate.

Article 110
Reimbursement of travel expenses

The travel expenses **of representatives of members** of the Council of Administration participating in its meetings shall be borne by **their** member country. However, one representative of each of the member countries classified as developing or least developed countries according to the lists established, respectively, by the Council of Administration and the United Nations shall, except for meetings which take place during Congress, be entitled to reimbursement of the price of an economy class return air ticket **and/**or first class return rail ticket, or expenses incurred for travel by any other means, **in the latter case** subject to the condition that the amount does not exceed the price of the economy class return air ticket. The same entitlement shall be granted to each member of its Committees or other bodies when these meet outside Congress and the sessions of the Council.

Article 111
Information on the activities of the CA

1 After each session, the Council of Administration shall inform the member countries and their designated operators, the Restricted Unions and the members of the Consultative Committee about its activities by sending them, inter alia, a summary record and its resolutions and decisions.

2 The Council of Administration shall make to Congress a comprehensive report on its work and send it to the member countries of the Union, their designated operators and the members of the Consultative Committee at least two months before the opening of Congress.

Section 3
Postal Operations Council (POC)

Article 112
Composition and functioning of the POC

1 The Postal Operations Council shall consist of forty-eight members who shall exercise their functions during the period between successive Congresses.

2 The members of the Postal Operations Council shall be elected by Congress on the basis of qualified geographical distribution. At least one third of the members of each geographical group shall be renewed at each Congress. **Without prejudice to the foregoing, one seat in the geographical group to which member countries defined as Pacific Island countries and territories (as per the relevant list established by the United Nations) belong shall be reserved for those member countries.**

3 Each member of the Postal Operations Council shall appoint its representative(s). The members of the Postal Operations Council shall take an active part in its work.

4 The operational expenses of the Postal Operations Council shall be borne by the Union. Its members shall not receive any payment.

5 The Postal Operations Council shall define, formalize and/or set up the standing groups, task forces, user-funded subsidiary bodies or other bodies to be established within its structure, with due regard being paid to the Union’s strategy and business plan adopted by Congress.

Article 113
Functions of the POC

1 The Postal Operations Council shall have the following functions:

1.1 Coordinates practical measures for the development and improvement of international postal services.

1.2 Takes, subject to Council of Administration approval within the framework of the latter's competence, any action considered necessary to safeguard and enhance the quality of and to modernize the international postal service.

1.3 Decides on the contacts to be established with member countries and their designated operators in order to carry out its functions.

1.4 Takes the necessary steps to study and publicize the experiments and progress made by certain member countries and their designated operators in the technical, operational, economic and vocational training fields of interest to other member countries and their designated operators.

1.5 Takes, in consultation with the Council of Administration, appropriate steps in the sphere of technical cooperation with all member countries of the Union and their designated operators and in particular with the new and developing countries and their designated operators.

1.6 Examines any other questions submitted to it by a member of the Postal Operations Council, by the Council of Administration or by any member country or designated operator.

1.7 Receives and discusses reports as well as recommendations from the Consultative Committee and, when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are involved, to examines and comments on recommendations from the Consultative Committee for submission to Congress.

1.8 Designates those of its members that will serve as members of the Consultative Committee.

1.9 Conducts the study of the most important operational, commercial, technical, economic and technical cooperation problems which are of interest to all member countries or their designated operators, including questions with major financial repercussions (charges, terminal dues, transit charges, airmail conveyance rates, parcel-post rates, and the posting abroad of letter-post items), and prepares information, opinions and recommendations for action on them.

1.10 Provides input to the Council of Administration for the development of the draft Union Strategy and draft quadrennial **Union** business plan to be submitted to Congress.

1.11 Studies teaching and vocational training problems of interest to member countries and their designated operators, as well as to the new and developing countries.

1.12 Studies the present position and needs of the new and developing countries and prepares appropriate recommendations on ways and means of improving their postal services.

1.13 Revises the Regulations of the **Union; in this regard**, the Postal Operations Council shall be subject to Council of Administration guidance on matters of fundamental policy and principle.

1.14 Formulates proposals which shall be submitted for the approval either of Congress or of member countries in accordance with article **142**; the approval of the Council of Administration is required when these proposals concern questions within the latter's competence.

1.15 Examines, at the request of a member country, any proposal which that member country forwards to the International Bureau under article **141**, prepares observations on it and instructs the International Bureau to annex these observations to the proposal before submitting it for approval to the member countries.

1.16 Recommends, if necessary, and where appropriate after approval by the Council of Administration and consultation of all the member countries, the adoption of regulations or of a new procedure until such time as Congress takes a decision in the matter.

1.17 Prepares and issues, in the form of recommendations to member countries and their designated operators (or as binding provisions if the Acts of the Union so provide), standards for technological, operational and other processes within its competence where uniformity of practice is essential; it shall similarly issue, as required, amendments to standards it has already set.

1.18 Establishes the framework for the organization of user-funded subsidiary bodies and concurs in the organization of these bodies in accordance with the provisions of article **153**.

1.19 Receives and discusses reports from the user-funded subsidiary bodies on an annual basis.

1.20 Adopts its Rules of Procedure and the amendments to those Rules.

Article 114
Organization of POC sessions

1 At its first meeting, which shall be convened and opened by the Chair of Congress, the Postal Operations Council shall choose from among its members a Chair and four Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs/**Co-Chairs. The** Chair and four Vice-Chairs shall be member countries from each of the five geographical groups of the Union.

2 The Postal Operations Council shall meet twice a year, or additionally on an exceptional basis, at Union headquarters, in accordance with the relevant procedures set forth in its Rules of Procedure.

3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, of the Postal Operations Council shall form the Management Committee. This Committee shall prepare and direct the work of each meeting of the Postal Operations Council and take on all the tasks which the latter decides to assign to it or the need for which arises in the course of the strategic planning process.

4 On the basis of the Union Strategy adopted by Congress and, in particular, the part relating to the strategies of the permanent bodies of the Union, the Postal Operations Council shall, at its session following Congress, prepare a basic work programme containing a number of tactics aimed at implementing the strategies. This basic work programme, which shall include a limited number of projects on topical subjects of common interest, shall be revised annually in the light of new realities and priorities.

5 The Chair of the Consultative Committee shall represent that organization at meetings of the Postal Operations Council when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Consultative Committee.

Article 115
Observers

1 Observers

1.1 In order to ensure effective liaison between the work of the two bodies, the Council of Administration may designate representatives to attend Postal Operations Council meetings as observers.

1.2 Member countries of the Union which are not members of the Council, as well as the observers and ad hoc observers referred to in article 105, may participate in the plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Postal Operations Council, without the right to vote.

2 Principles

2.1 For logistical reasons, the Postal Operations Council may limit the number of attendees per observer and ad hoc observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.

2.2 Observers and ad hoc observers may, at their request, be allowed to cooperate in the studies undertaken, subject to such conditions as the Council may establish to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its work. They may also be invited to chair standing groups and task forces when their experience or expertise justifies it. The participation of observers and ad hoc observers shall be carried out without additional expense for the Union.

2.3 In exceptional circumstances, members of the Consultative Committee and ad hoc observers may be excluded from a meeting or a portion of a meeting or may have their right to receive documents restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chair. The case-by-case situations shall be reported to the Council of Administration and to the Postal Operations Council when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are concerned. If it considers this necessary, the Council of Administration may subsequently review restrictions, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council where appropriate.

Article 116
Reimbursement of travel expenses

The travel expenses of representatives of **members of** the Postal Operations Council **participating in its meetings** shall be borne by **their** member **country**. However, one representative of each of the member countries **classified as** least developed countries according to the list established by the United Nations shall, except for meetings which take place during Congress, be entitled to reimbursement of the price of an economy class return air ticket **and/**or first class return rail ticket, or expenses incurred for travel by any other means, **in the latter case** subject to the condition that the amount does not exceed the price of the economy class return air ticket.

Article 117
Information on the activities of the POC

1 After each session, the Postal Operations Council shall inform the member countries and their designated operators, the Restricted Unions and the members of the Consultative Committee about its activities by sending them, inter alia, a summary record and its resolutions and decisions.

2 The Postal Operations Council shall prepare for the Council of Administration an annual report on its work.

3 The Postal Operations Council shall make to Congress a comprehensive report on its work, including reports on user-funded subsidiary bodies as provided for in article **153**, and send it to member countries of the Union, their designated operators and members of the Consultative Committee at least two months before the opening of Congress.

Article **118**
Coordination Committee for the Permanent Bodies of the Union

1 The Chair of the CA, the Chair of the POC and the Director General of the International Bureau shall form the Coordination Committee for the Permanent Bodies of the Union (CCoord).

2 The CCoord shall have the following attributions and functions:

2.1 Contribute to the coordination of the work of the permanent bodies of the Union;

2.2 Meet, when needed, in order to discuss important questions relating to the Union and the postal service and provide the Union’s bodies with an evaluation of such questions;

2.3 Ensure proper implementation of the strategic planning process so that all decisions on the Union’s activities are taken by the appropriate bodies in accordance with their respective responsibilities as specified in the Acts of the Union.

3 On convocation by the Chair of the CA, the CCoord shall meet twice a year, at Union headquarters. The date and place of the meetings shall be fixed by the Chair of the CA in agreement with the Chair of the POC and the Director General of the International Bureau

Section 4
Consultative Committee (CC)

Article **119**
Aim of the CC

The aim of the Consultative Committee is to represent the interests of the wider international postal sector, and to provide a framework for effective dialogue between stakeholders.

Article **120**
Composition of the CC

1 The Consultative Committee shall consist of:

1.1 non-governmental organizations **(including organizations** representing customers, delivery service providers, **postal employees or postal employers); philanthropic entities; standardization, financial and development organizations;** suppliers of goods and services to the postal services sector**; transportation entities and other private sector entities;** and like organizations of individuals and companies which have an interest in supporting the mission and objectives of the Union;

1.2 high-level figures from the postal sector recommended by member countries or the bodies of the Union concerned, including the Consultative Committee.

2 All members of the Consultative Committee shall be **established (and, if so required by the member country concerned, duly** registered**) or, in the case of the high-level figures referred to in 1.2, have permanent residence,** in a Union member country.

3 The operational costs of the Consultative Committee shall be shared **by members** of the **Consultative** Committee**, except** as **otherwise** determined by the Council of Administration. **In this regard, and as further outlined in the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Committee, different membership fees may apply depending on the specific legal nature and financial capability of members of the Consultative Committee.**

4 The members of the Consultative Committee shall not receive remuneration or any other compensation.

Article **121**
Membership of the CC

1 **Membership** of the Consultative Committee shall be determined through a process of application and acceptance established by the Council of Administration **and** carried out in accordance with article 107.1.30.

2 Any requests for membership of the Consultative Committee as submitted by the entities or high-level figures referred to in article 120 shall be accompanied by the prior written authorization or recommendation of the corresponding Union member country, in accordance with article 120.2.

3 Each member of the Consultative Committee shall appoint its own representative**(s)**.

Article **122**
Functions of the CC

1 The Consultative Committee shall have the following functions:

1.1 Examines documents and reports of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council. In exceptional circumstances, the right to receive certain texts and documents may be restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires**, in accordance with articles 109.2.3 and 115.2.3.**

1.2 Conducts and contributes to studies of issues of importance to the Consultative Committee's members.

1.3 Considers issues affecting the postal services sector and issues reports on such issues.

1.4 Provides input to the work of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, including submitting reports and recommendations and giving **opinions to** the two Councils.

1.5 Makes recommendations to Congress, subject to the approval of the Council of Administration and, when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are involved, subject to examination and comment by the Postal Operations Council.

Article **123**
Organization of the CC

1 The Consultative Committee shall reorganize itself after each Congress in accordance with the framework established by the Council of Administration. The Chair of the Council of Administration shall preside at the organizational meeting of the Consultative Committee, which shall elect its Chair at that meeting.

2 The Consultative Committee shall determine its internal organization and shall draw up its own rules of procedure, taking into account the general principles of the Union and subject to the concurrence of the Council of Administration after having consulted the Postal Operations Council.

3 The Consultative Committee shall meet once a year. In principle, the meetings will be held at Union headquarters at the same time as meetings of the Postal Operations Council. The date and location of each meeting shall be fixed by the Chair of the Consultative Committee, in agreement with the Chairs of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council and the Director General of the International Bureau.

Article **124**
Representatives of the Consultative Committee at the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and Congress

1 In order to ensure effective liaison with the bodies of the Union, the Consultative Committee may designate representatives to attend meetings of Congress, the Council of Administration, and the Postal Operations Council, and their respective Committees, as observers without the right to vote.

2 Members of the Consultative Committee are invited to plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council in accordance with article 105. They may also participate in the work of standing groups and task forces under terms established in articles 109.2.2 and 115.2.2.

3 The Chair of the Council of Administration and the Chair of the Postal Operations Council shall represent those bodies at meetings of the Consultative Committee when the agenda of such meetings contains questions of interest to those bodies.

Article **125**
CC observers

1 **Member** countries of the Union and the observers and ad hoc observers referred to in article 105 may participate in the sessions of the Consultative Committee, without the right to vote.

2 For logistical reasons, the Consultative Committee may limit the number of attendees per observer and ad hoc observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.

3 In exceptional circumstances, observers and ad hoc observers may be excluded from a meeting or a portion of a meeting or may have their right to receive documents restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chair. The case-by-case situations shall be reported to the Council of Administration and to the Postal Operations Council when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are concerned. If it considers this necessary, the Council of Administration may subsequently review restrictions, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council where appropriate.

Article **126**
Information on the activities of the CC

1 After each session, the Consultative Committee shall inform the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council of its activities by sending to the Chairs of those bodies, inter alia, a summary record of its meetings and its recommendations and views.

2 The Consultative Committee shall make to the Council of Administration an annual activity report, with a copy to the Postal Operations Council. This report shall be included in the documentation of the Council of Administration provided to member countries of the Union, to their designated operators and to the Restricted Unions, in accordance with article 111.

3 The Consultative Committee shall make to Congress a comprehensive report on its work and send it to the member countries and their designated operators at least two months before the opening of Congress.

Chapter II
International Bureau

Section 1
Election and duties of the Director General and Deputy Director General of the International Bureau

Article **127**
Election of the Director General and Deputy Director General of the International Bureau

1 The Director General and the Deputy Director General of the International Bureau shall be elected by Congress for the period between two successive Congresses, the minimum duration of their term of office being four years. Their term of office shall be renewable once only. Unless Congress decides otherwise, the date on which they take up their duties shall be fixed at 1 January of the year following that in which Congress is held.

2 At least seven months before the opening of Congress, the Director General of the International Bureau shall send a memorandum to the Governments of member countries inviting them to submit their applications, if any, for the posts of Director General and Deputy Director General and indicating at the same time whether the Director General and Deputy Director General in office are interested in a renewal of their initial term of office. The applications, accompanied by a curriculum vitae, must reach the International Bureau at least two months before the opening of Congress. The candidates must be nationals of the member countries which put them forward. The International Bureau shall prepare the election documents for Congress. The election of the Director General and that of the Deputy Director General shall take place by secret ballot, the first election being for the post of Director General.

3 If the post of Director General falls vacant, the Deputy Director General shall take over the functions of Director General until the expiry of the latter’s term of office; the Deputy Director General shall be eligible for election to that post and shall automatically be accepted as a candidate, provided that the initial term of office as Deputy Director General has not already been renewed once by the preceding Congress and that the Deputy Director General declares interest in being considered as a candidate for the post of Director General.

4 If the posts of Director General and Deputy Director General fall vacant at the same time, the Council of Administration shall elect, on the basis of the applications received following notification of the vacancies, a Deputy Director General for the period extending up to the next Congress. With regard to the submission of applications, paragraph 2 shall apply by analogy.

5 If the post of Deputy Director General falls vacant, the Council of Administration shall, on the proposal of the Director General, instruct one of the grade D 2 Directors at the International Bureau to take over the functions of Deputy Director General until the following Congress.

Article **128**
Duties of the Director General

1 The Director General shall be the legal representative of the Union.

2 The Director General shall organize, administer and direct the International Bureau.

3 Regarding the classification of posts, appointments and promotions:

3.1 the Director General shall be empowered to classify posts in grades G 1 to D 2 and to appoint and promote officials in those grades.

3.2 for appointments in grades P 1 to D 2, the Director General shall consider the professional qualifications of the candidates **who** are nationals **of a member country** or **who** exercise their professional activities **in a member country**, taking into account equitable geographical **and language** distribution**, and gender balance**. D 2 posts shall as far as possible be filled by candidates from different regions and from regions other than those from which the Director General and Deputy Director General originate, bearing in mind the paramount consideration of the efficiency of the International **Bureau;**

3.3 the Director General shall also consider, for the appointment of a new official, that, in principle, persons occupying grade D 2, D 1 and P 5 posts must be nationals of different member countries of the Union;

3.4 for the promotion of an official of the International Bureau to grades D 2, D 1 and P 5, the Director General shall not be bound to apply the same principle as under **3.3**;

3.5 the requirements of equitable geographical and language distribution **and gender balance** shall rank behind merit in the recruitment process;

3.6 the Director General shall inform the Council of Administration once a year of appointments and promotions in grades P 4 to D 2.

4 Furthermore, the Director General shall have the following duties:

4.1 acts as depositary of the Acts of the Union and as intermediary in the procedure of accession and admission to and withdrawal from the Union;

4.2 notifies the decisions taken by Congress to all the Governments of member countries;

4.3 notifies all member countries and their designated operators of the Regulations drawn up or revised by the Postal Operations Council;

4.4 prepares the draft annual budget of the Union at the lowest possible level consistent with the requirements of the Union and submits it in due course to the Council of Administration for consideration; communicates the budget to the member countries of the Union after approval by the Council of Administration and executes it;

4.5 executes the specific activities requested by the bodies of the Union and those assigned to the Director General by the Acts;

4.6 takes action to achieve the objectives set by the bodies of the Union, within the framework of the established policy and the funds available;

4.7 submits suggestions and proposals to the Council of Administration or to the Postal Operations Council;

4.8 following the close of Congress, submits proposals to the Postal Operations Council concerning changes to the Regulations required as a result of Congress decisions, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Postal Operations Council;

4.9 prepares, for the Council of Administration and on the basis of directives issued by the Councils, the draft Union Strategy and draft quadrennial UPU business plan to be submitted to Congress;

4.10 prepares, for approval by the Council of Administration, a four-yearly report on the member countries' performance in respect of the Union Strategy approved by the preceding Congress, which will be submitted to the following Congress;

4.11 acts as an intermediary in relations between:

4.11.1 the Union and the Restricted Unions;

4.11.2 the Union and the United Nations;

4.11.3 the Union and the international organizations whose activities are of interest to the Union;

4.11.4 the Union and the international organizations or the associations or enterprises that the bodies of the Union wish to consult or associate with their work;

4.12 assumes the duties of Secretary General of the bodies of the Union and supervises in this capacity, taking into account the special provisions of these General Regulations, in particular:

4.12.1 the preparation and organization of the work of the Union's bodies;

4.12.2 the preparation, production and distribution of documents, reports and minutes;

4.12.3 the functioning of the secretariat at meetings of the Union's bodies;

4.13 attends the meetings of the bodies of the Union and takes part in the discussions without the right to vote, with the possibility of being represented.

Article **129**
Duties of the Deputy Director General

1 The Deputy Director General shall assist the Director General and shall be responsible to the latter.

2 If the Director General is absent or prevented from discharging his or her duties, the Deputy Director General shall exercise those functions. The same shall apply in the case of a vacancy in the post of Director General as mentioned in article **127.3**.

Section 2
Secretariat of the Union bodies and the Consultative Committee

Article **130**
General remarks

The secretariat of the Union's bodies and the Consultative Committee shall be provided by the International Bureau under the responsibility of the Director General.

Article **131**
Preparation and distribution of documents of the Union bodies

1 The International Bureau shall prepare and make available through the Union website all the documents published, in the language versions specified in article **156**, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council. The International Bureau shall also indicate, to the representatives of member countries in particular, new e-document publications on the Union website by means of an efficient web-signalling system.

2 Furthermore, the International Bureau shall physically distribute Union publications, such as International Bureau circulars and CA and POC Summary Records, only at the request of an individual member country.

Article **132**
List of member countries

The International Bureau shall prepare and keep up to date the list of member countries of the Union showing therein their contribution class, their geographical group and their position with respect to the Acts of the Union.

Article **133**
Information. Opinions. Requests for explanation and amendment of the Acts. Inquiries. Role in the settlement of accounts

1 The International Bureau shall be at all times at the disposal of the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and member countries and their designated operators for the purpose of supplying them with any necessary information on questions relating to the service.

2 In particular it shall collect, collate, publish and distribute all kinds of information of interest to **the postal** service**;** give an opinion **or provide dispute settlement services (in the latter case on a paid basis and in accordance with the relevant procedures adopted by the Council of Administration)**, at the request of the parties involved, on questions in dispute; act on requests for explanation and amendment of the Acts of the Union; and, in general, carry out such studies and editorial or documentary work as are assigned to it by those Acts or as may be referred to it in the interest of the Union.

3 It shall also conduct inquiries requested by member countries and their designated operators to obtain the views of other member countries and designated operators on a particular question. The result of an inquiry shall not have the status of a vote and shall not be formally binding.

4 It may act as a clearing house in the settlement of accounts of all kinds relating to the postal service.

5 The International Bureau shall ensure the confidentiality and security of commercial data provided by member countries and/or their designated operators for the performance of its duties arising from the Acts or decisions of the Union.

Article **134**
Technical cooperation

The International Bureau shall develop postal technical assistance in all its forms within the framework of international technical cooperation.

Article **135**
Forms supplied by the International Bureau

The International Bureau shall be responsible for arranging the manufacture of international reply coupons and for supplying them, at cost, to member countries or their designated operators ordering them.

Article **136**
Acts of Restricted Unions and Special Agreements

1 Two copies of the Acts of Restricted Unions and of Special Agreements concluded under article **9** of the Constitution shall be sent to the International Bureau by the offices of such Unions, or failing that, by one of the contracting parties.

2 The International Bureau shall see that the Acts of Restricted Unions and Special Agreements do not include conditions less favourable to the public than those which are provided for in the Acts of the Union. It shall notify the Council of Administration of any irregularity discovered through applying this provision.

3 The International Bureau shall inform member countries and their designated operators of the existence of the Restricted Unions and the Special Agreements mentioned above.

Article **137**
Union periodical

The International Bureau shall publish, with the aid of the documents made available to it, a periodical in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

Article **138**
Annual report on the work of the Union

The International Bureau shall make an annual report on the work of the Union, which shall be sent, after approval by the Management Committee of the Council of Administration, to member countries and/or designated operators, the Restricted Unions and the United Nations.

Chapter III
Submission, consideration of proposals, notification of decisions adopted and entry into force of the Regulations and other decisions adopted

Article **139**
Procedure for submitting proposals to Congress

1 Subject to the exceptions provided for in paragraphs 2 and 5, the following procedures shall govern the submission of proposals of all kinds to Congress by member countries:

1.1 proposals which reach the International Bureau at least **four** months before the date fixed for Congress shall be accepted;

1.2 no drafting proposal shall be accepted during the period of **four** months preceding the date fixed for Congress;

1.3 proposals of substance which reach the International Bureau in the interval between **four** and **three** months before the date fixed for Congress shall not be accepted unless they are supported by at least two member countries;

1.4 proposals of substance which reach the International Bureau in the interval between **three** and two months before the date fixed for Congress shall not be accepted unless they are supported by at least eight member countries; proposals which arrive after that time shall no longer be accepted;

1.5 declarations of support must reach the International Bureau within the same period of time as the proposal to which they refer.

2 Proposals concerning the Constitution or the General Regulations shall reach the International Bureau not later than **four** months before the opening of Congress; any received after that date but before the opening of Congress shall not be considered unless Congress so decides by a majority of two thirds of the member countries represented at Congress and unless the conditions laid down in paragraph 1 are fulfilled.

3 Every proposal must, as a rule, have only one aim and contain only the changes justified by that aim. Similarly, each proposal liable to lead to significant costs for the Union shall be accompanied by an indication of its financial impact, prepared by the member country submitting the proposal, in consultation with the International Bureau, so that the financial resources needed for its implementation can be determined.

4 Drafting proposals shall be headed “Drafting proposal” by the member countries which submit them and shall be published by the International Bureau under a number followed by the letter R. Proposals which do not bear this indication but which, in the opinion of the International Bureau, deal only with drafting points shall be published with an appropriate annotation; the International Bureau shall draw up a list of these proposals for Congress.

5 The procedure prescribed in paragraphs 1 and 4 shall apply neither to proposals concerning the Rules of Procedure of Congresses, nor to proposals submitted by the Council of Administration or the Postal Operations Council.

Article **140**
Procedure for amending proposals submitted in accordance with article **139**

Amendments to proposals already made, **including** those submitted by the Council of Administration or the Postal Operations Council, **may be** presented to the International Bureau in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

Article **141**
Procedure for submitting proposals amending the Convention or the Agreements between Congresses

1 To be eligible for consideration, every proposal concerning the Convention or the Agreements submitted by a member country between Congresses shall be supported by at least two other member countries. Such proposals shall lapse if the International Bureau does not receive, at the same time, the necessary number of declarations of support.

2 These proposals shall be sent to other member countries through the intermediary of the International Bureau.

Article **142**
Consideration of proposals amending the Convention or the Agreements between Congresses

1 Every proposal concerning the Convention, the Agreements and their Final Protocols shall be subject to the following procedure: where a member country has sent a proposal to the International Bureau, the latter shall forward it to all member countries for examination. They shall be allowed a period of 45 days in which to examine the proposal and forward any observations to the International Bureau. Amendments shall not be admissible. Once these 45 days have elapsed, the International Bureau shall forward to member countries all the observations it has received and invite each member country to vote for or against the proposal. Member countries **whose votes have not been received by the International Bureau** within a period of 45 days shall be considered **as having** abstained. The aforementioned periods shall be reckoned from the dates of the International Bureau circulars. **Any documentation and observations arising from the aforementioned procedure shall be submitted by physical or secure electronic means and, in the case of member country submissions to the International Bureau, be signed by a duly authorized representative of the governmental authority of the member country concerned. For the purposes of this paragraph, "secure electronic means" shall refer to any electronic means used for the processing, storage and transmission of data that ensure that the completeness, integrity and confidentiality of the data are maintained during the submission of the aforementioned documentation and observations by the International Bureau or a member country.**

2 If the proposal relates to an Agreement **of the Union** or its Final Protocol, only the member countries which are parties to that Agreement may take part in the procedure described in paragraph 1.

Article **143**
Amendment of the Regulations by the Postal Operations Council

1 Proposals for amending the Regulations shall be dealt with by the Postal Operations Council.

2 The support of at least one member country shall be required for submitting any proposal to amend the Regulations.

Article **144**
Notification of decisions adopted between Congresses

1 Amendments made to the Convention, the Agreements and the Final Protocols to those Acts shall be sanctioned by notification thereof to the Governments of member countries by the Director General of the International Bureau.

2 Amendments made to the Regulations and their Final Protocols by the Postal Operations Council shall be communicated to member countries and their designated operators by the International Bureau. The same shall apply to the interpretations referred to in article **39**.3.2 of the Convention and in the corresponding provisions of the Agreements.

Article **145**
Entry into force of the Regulations and of the other decisions adopted between Congresses

1 The Regulations **and any amendments thereto** shall **enter** into force on **the date specified therein as decided by the Postal Operations Council**, and shall **remain in force for an indefinite period**.

2 Subject to the provisions of paragraph 1, decisions on amending the Acts of the Union which are adopted between Congresses shall not take effect until at least three months after their notification**.**

Chapter IV
Finance

Article **146**
Fixing of the expenditure of the Union

1 Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 2 to 6, the annual expenditure relating to the activities of bodies of the Union may not exceed **38,890,030** Swiss francs for the years **2022 to 2025**. In the event that the Congress planned for **2025** is postponed, the same ceilings shall also apply to the post-**2025** period.

2 The expenditure relating to the convening of the next Congress (travelling expenses of the secretariat, transport charges, cost of installing simultaneous interpretation equipment, cost of reproducing documents during the Congress, etc.) shall not exceed the limit of 2,900,000 Swiss francs.

3 The Council of Administration shall be authorized to exceed the limits laid down in paragraphs 1 and 2 to take account of increases in salary scales, pension contributions or allowances, including post adjustments, approved by the United Nations for application to its staff working in Geneva.

4 The Council of Administration shall also be authorized to adjust, each year, the amount of expenditure other than that relating to staff on the basis of the Swiss consumer price index.

5 Notwithstanding paragraph 1, the Council of Administration, or in case of extreme urgency, the Director General, may authorize the prescribed limits to be exceeded to meet the cost of major and unforeseen repairs to the International Bureau building, provided however that the amount of the increase does not exceed 125,000 Swiss francs per annum.

6 If the credits authorized in paragraphs 1 and 2 prove inadequate to ensure the smooth running of the Union, these limits may only be exceeded with the approval of the majority of the member countries of the Union. Any consultation shall include a complete description of the facts justifying such a request.

Article **147**
Regulation of member countries' contributions

1 Countries which accede to the Union or are admitted to the status of members of the Union as well as those which leave the Union shall pay their contributions for the whole of the year during which their admission or withdrawal becomes effective.

2 Member countries shall pay their contributions to the Union's annual expenditure in advance on the basis of the budget laid down by the Council of Administration. These contributions shall be paid not later than the first day of the financial year to which the budget refers. After that date, the sums due shall be chargeable with interest in favour of the Union at the rate of 5% per annum from the fourth month.

3 Where the arrears of mandatory contributions, not including interest, owed to the Union by a member country are equal to or more than the amount of the contributions of that member country for the preceding two financial years, such member country may irrevocably assign to the Union all or part of the credits owed it by other member countries, in accordance with the arrangements laid down by the Council of Administration. The conditions of this assignment of credit shall be determined by agreement reached between the member country, its debtors/creditors and the Union.

4 A member country which, for legal or other reasons, cannot make such an assignment must undertake to conclude a schedule for the amortization of its arrears.

5 Other than in exceptional circumstances **as decided by Congress or the Council of Administration**, recovery of arrears of mandatory contributions owed to the Union may not extend over more than ten years. **In cases where Congress or the Council of Administration approves a payment agreement longer than twenty years, the minimum amount of the annual arrears contribution should be at least equal to the annual contribution of the member country signatory to the agreement.**

6 **Also in** exceptional circumstances, **as decided by Congress or** the Council of Administration**, either body** may release a member country from all or part of the interest owed if that country has paid the full **principal** amount of its debts in arrears.

7 In similarly exceptional circumstances, Congress or the Council of Administration may, upon written request of the member country concerned, decide to release that member country from its debts in arrears and immediately lift the automatic sanctions imposed against it, subject to payment of an amount at least equivalent to one half of the total amount of debts in arrears (excluding any interest incurred thereon) owed by that member country.

8 Congress or the Council of Administration may also, upon written request of a member country with long-standing debts in arrears, decide to exceptionally release that member country from its debts in arrears and immediately lift the automatic sanctions imposed against it, provided the member country concerned pays its last five years of mandatory contributions to the Union's annual expenditure (including the current financial year and excluding any interest incurred thereon).

8.1 For the purposes of paragraph 8, "long-standing debts in arrears" shall be defined as any amounts in arrears (including interest) pertaining to mandatory contributions to the Union's annual expenditure incurred over a period longer than the last five financial years.

8.2 Equally for the purposes of paragraph 8 and specifically in the case of least developed countries and small island developing states as defined in article 151.1, Congress or the Council of Administration may exceptionally determine that the "last five years of mandatory contributions" of the member country concerned shall be calculated on the basis of the current contribution class to which that member country belongs, in which case the relevant current contribution class amount shall be multiplied five times.

9 In the case of least developed countries and small island developing states, as defined in article 151.1, that are authorized to benefit from either of the exceptional payment arrangements outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of this article, at least 50% of the amounts paid by the member country concerned shall be earmarked for Union-led postal technical assistance projects aimed at benefiting that same member country.

10 Any principal or interest amounts released in the framework of the exceptional payment arrangements outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of this article shall not be cancelled, but set aside and provisioned by the Union in accordance with its relevant financial rules. In the event the member country concerned subsequently falls under automatic sanctions, the aforementioned amounts shall once more be registered by the Union, with immediate effect, as debts in arrears for the member country in question.

11 A member country may also be released, within the framework of an amortization schedule approved by the Council of Administration for its accounts in arrears, from all or part of the interest accumulated or to accrue; such release shall, however, be subject to the full and punctual execution of the amortization schedule within an agreed period of ten years at most.

12 The provisions under paragraphs 3 to **11** apply by analogy to the translation costs billed by the International Bureau to member countries belonging to the language groups.

13 The International Bureau shall send bills to member countries at least three months before their due date. The original bills shall be sent to the correct address provided by the member country concerned. Electronic copies of the bills shall be sent via e-mail as pre-advice or alerts.

14 Furthermore, the International Bureau shall provide member countries with clear information each time it charges them interest on overdue payment of particular bills, so that member countries can easily verify to which bills the interest corresponds.

Article **148**
Shortfalls in financing

1 A Reserve Fund shall be established with the Union to cover shortfalls in financing. Its amount shall be fixed by the Council of Administration. The Fund shall be maintained primarily from budget surpluses, and may also be used to balance the budget or reduce the amount of member countries' contributions.

2 In case of temporary shortfalls in Union financing, the Government of the Swiss Confederation shall make the necessary short-term advances to the Union, on conditions fixed by mutual agreement.

Article **149**
Supervision of book-keeping and accounting

The Government of the Swiss Confederation shall supervise, without charge, the book-keeping and accounting of the International Bureau within the limits of the credits fixed by Congress.

Article **150**
Automatic sanctions

1 Any member country unable to make the assignment provided for in article **147.3** and which does not agree to submit to an amortization schedule proposed by the International Bureau in accordance with article **147.4**, or which does not comply with such a schedule shall automatically lose its right to vote at Congress and at meetings of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council and shall no longer be eligible for membership of these two Councils.

2 Automatic sanctions shall be lifted as a matter of course and with immediate effect as soon as the member country concerned has paid its arrears of mandatory contributions owed to the Union, in capital and interest, or has agreed with the Union to submit to a schedule for the amortization of the arrears.

Article **151**
Contribution classes

1 Member countries shall contribute to defraying Union expenses according to the contribution class to which they belong. **The structure of the contribution classes shall commence at one unit and rise in incremental one-unit steps to a level defined with reference to the most recent scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. Member countries shall choose their contribution class on the basis of their economic capacity while considering the aforementioned scale of assessments. The member countries listed by the United Nations as the least developed countries shall pay half a contribution unit. Small island developing states with a population of less than 200,000 (as listed by the United Nations) shall pay one tenth of a contribution unit.**

2 Notwithstanding the contribution classes listed in paragraph 1, any member country may elect to contribute a higher number of **units, for** a minimum term equivalent to the period between Congresses. The announcement of a change shall be made at the latest at Congress. At the end of the period between Congresses, the member country shall return automatically to its original number of contribution units unless it decides to maintain its contribution of a higher number of units. The payment of additional contributions will increase the expenditure accordingly.

3 Member countries shall **choose their number of units** upon their admission or accession to the Union, **while considering the most recent scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations,** in accordance with the procedure laid down in article **20.4** of the Constitution.

4 Member **countries paying above the economic capacities assessed through reference to the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations shall have the right to reduce their number of units by up to a maximum of two units per Congress cycle, provided that this does not result in a lower contribution than they would pay under the current scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. The cost of any such reduction shall be borne in solidarity by all member countries in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 20.3 of the Constitution.** Member **countries paying at a level below their economic capacity, as assessed through reference to the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations, shall be invited to increase their number of units by at least two per Congress cycle until they have reached the level of the current scale of assessments referred to above. Those** member **countries that fail to do so shall not benefit from the reduction in the value of the contribution unit resulting from the increase in the overall number of contribution units.**

5 Nevertheless, in exceptional circumstances such as natural disasters necessitating international aid programmes, the Council of Administration may authorize a temporary reduction in contribution class once between two Congresses when so requested by a member country if the said member establishes that it can no longer maintain its contribution at the class originally **chosen.**

6 The temporary reduction in contribution class in application of paragraph **5** may be authorized by the Council of Administration for a maximum period of two years or up to the next Congress, whichever is earlier. On expiry of the specified period, the country concerned shall automatically revert to its original contribution class.

7 **Changes** to a higher class shall not be subject to any restriction.

Article **152**
Payment for supplies from the International Bureau

Supplies provided by the International Bureau to member countries and their designated operators against payment shall be paid for in the shortest possible time and at the latest within six months from the first day of the month following that in which the account is sent by the Bureau. After that period the sums due shall be chargeable with interest in favour of the Union at the rate of 5% per annum reckoned from the date of expiry of that period.

Article **153**
Organization of user-funded subsidiary bodies

1 Subject to the approval of the Council of Administration, the POC may establish a number of user-funded subsidiary bodies, funded by voluntary means, in order to organize operational, commercial, technical and economic activities which fall within its competence under article 18 of the Constitution, but which may not be financed by the regular budget.

2 Upon the creation of such a body under the POC, the POC shall decide on the basic framework of the rules of procedure of the body, taking due consideration of the fundamental rules and principles of the Union as an intergovernmental organization, and shall submit it to the CA for approval. The basic framework shall include the following elements:

2.1 the mandate;

2.2 the constituency, including the categories of members participating;

2.3 decision-making rules, including its internal structure and its relationship with other Union bodies;

2.4 voting and representation principles;

2.5 financing (subscription, usage fees, etc.);

2.6 composition of secretariat and management structure.

3 Each user-funded subsidiary body shall organize its activities in an autonomous manner within the basic framework decided by the POC and approved by the CA, and shall prepare an annual report on its activities for consideration by the POC.

4 The Council of Administration shall establish the rules concerning support costs that user-funded subsidiary bodies should contribute to the regular budget, and shall publish them in the UPU Financial Regulations.

5 The Director General of the International Bureau shall administer the secretariat of the user-funded subsidiary bodies in accordance with the relevant Staff Regulations and Rules, as applicable to the staff recruited for the user-funded subsidiary bodies. The secretariat of the subsidiary bodies shall be an integral part of the International Bureau.

6 Information concerning user-funded subsidiary bodies established in accordance with this article shall be reported to Congress following their establishment.

Chapter V
Arbitration

Article **154**
Arbitration procedure

1 If a dispute has to be settled by arbitration between member countries, each member country must advise the other party in writing of the subject of the dispute and inform it, by means of a notice to initiate arbitration, that it wishes to initiate arbitration.

2 If the dispute concerns questions of an operational or technical nature, each member country may ask its designated operator to act in accordance with the procedure provided for in the following paragraphs and delegate such power to its operator. The member country concerned shall be informed of the progress of the proceedings and of the result. The respective member countries or designated operators shall hereafter be referred to as “parties to the arbitration”.

3 The parties to the arbitration shall appoint either one or three arbitrators.

4 Where the parties to the arbitration choose to appoint three arbitrators, each party shall, in accordance with paragraph 2, select a member country or designated operator not directly involved in the dispute, to act as an arbitrator. When several member countries and/or designated operators make common cause, they shall count only as a single party for the purposes of these provisions.

5 Where the parties agree to the appointment of three arbitrators, the third arbitrator shall be jointly agreed upon by the parties and shall not need to be from a member country or designated operator.

6 If the dispute concerns one of the Agreements, the arbitrators may be appointed only from among the member countries that are parties to that Agreement.

7 The parties to the arbitration may jointly agree to appoint a single arbitrator, who shall not need to be from a member country or designated operator.

8 If one or both parties to the arbitration do not, within a period of three months from the date of the notice to initiate arbitration, appoint an arbitrator or arbitrators the International Bureau shall, if so requested, itself call upon the defaulting member country to appoint an arbitrator, or shall itself appoint one automatically. The International Bureau **shall** not be involved in the deliberations **or act as arbitrator** unless otherwise mutually requested by the parties. **In the latter case, the International Bureau shall serve as an arbitrator on a paid basis and in accordance with the relevant dispute settlement procedures adopted by the Council of Administration.**

9 The parties to the arbitration may mutually agree to reconcile the dispute at any time before a ruling is delivered by the arbitrator or arbitrators. Notice of any withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the International Bureau within 10 days of the parties reaching such agreement. Where the parties agree to withdraw from the arbitration process, the arbitrator or arbitrators shall lose their authority to decide the matter.

10 The arbitrator or arbitrators shall be required to make a decision on the dispute based on the facts and evidence before them. All information regarding the dispute must be notified to both parties and the arbitrator or arbitrators.

11 The decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators shall be taken by a majority of votes, and notified to the International Bureau and the parties within six months of the date of the notice to initiate arbitration.

12 The arbitration proceedings shall be confidential, and only a brief description of the dispute and the decision shall be advised in writing to the International Bureau within 10 days of the decision being delivered to the parties.

13 The decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators shall be final and binding on the parties and not subject to appeal.

14 The parties to the arbitration shall implement the decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators without delay. Where a designated operator is delegated power by its member country to initiate and adhere to the arbitration procedure, the member country shall be responsible for ensuring that the designated operator implements the decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators.

Chapter VI
Use of languages within the Union

Article **155**
Working languages of the International Bureau

The working languages of the International Bureau shall be French and English.

Article **156**
Languages used for documentation, for debates and for official correspondence

1 In the documentation published by the Union, the French, English, Arabic and Spanish languages shall be used. The Chinese, German, Portuguese and Russian languages shall also be used, provided that only the most important basic documentation is produced in these languages. Other languages may also be used on condition that the member countries which have made the request bear all of the costs involved.

2 The member country or countries which have requested the use of a language other than the official language constitute a language group.

3 Documentation shall be published by the International Bureau in the official language and in the languages of the other duly constituted language groups, either directly or through the intermediary of the regional offices of those groups in conformity with the procedures agreed with the International Bureau. Publication in the different languages shall be effected in accordance with a common standard.

4 Documentation published directly by the International Bureau shall, as far as possible, be distributed simultaneously in the different languages requested.

5 Correspondence between the member countries or their designated operators of member countries and the International Bureau and between the latter and outside entities may be exchanged in any language for which the International Bureau has available a translation service.

6 The costs of translation into any language, including those resulting from the application of paragraph 5 **and article 137**, shall be borne by the language group which has asked for that language. The member countries using the official language shall pay, in respect of the translation of non-official documents, a lump-sum contribution, the amount of which per contribution unit shall be the same as that borne by the member countries using the other International Bureau working language. All other costs involved in the supply of documents shall be borne by the Union. The ceiling of the costs to be borne by the Union for the production of documents in Chinese, German, Portuguese and Russian shall be fixed by a Congress resolution.

7 The costs to be borne by a language group shall be divided among the members of that group in proportion to their contributions to the expenses of the Union. These costs may be divided among the members of the language group according to another system, provided that the member countries concerned agree to it and inform the International Bureau of their decision through the intermediary of the spokesman of the group.

8 The International Bureau shall give effect to any change in the choice of language requested by a member country after a period which shall not exceed two years.

9 For the discussions at meetings of the Union's bodies, the French, English, Spanish, Russian and Arabic languages shall be admissible, by means of a system of interpretation – with or without electronic equipment – the choice being left to the judgment of the organizers of the meeting after consultation with the Director General of the International Bureau and the member countries concerned.

10 Other languages shall likewise be admissible for the discussions and meetings mentioned in paragraph 9.

11 Delegations using other languages shall arrange for simultaneous interpretation into one of the languages mentioned in paragraph 9, either by the system indicated in the same paragraph, when the necessary technical modifications can be made, or by individual interpreters.

12 The costs of the interpretation services shall be shared among the member countries using the same language in proportion to their contributions to the expenses of the Union. However, the costs of installing and maintaining the technical equipment shall be borne by the Union.

13 Member countries and/or their designated operators may come to an understanding about the language to be used for official correspondence in their relations with one another. In the absence of such an understanding, the language to be used shall be French.

Chapter VII
Final provisions

Article **157**
Conditions for approval of proposals concerning the General Regulations

To become effective, proposals submitted to Congress relating to these General Regulations shall be approved by a majority of the member countries represented at Congress and having the right to vote. At least two thirds of the member countries of the Union having the right to vote shall be present at the time of voting.

Article **158**
Proposals concerning the Agreements with the United Nations

The conditions of approval referred to in article **157** shall apply equally to proposals designed to amend the Agreements concluded between the Universal Postal Union and the United Nations, in so far as those Agreements do not lay down conditions for the amendment of the provisions they contain.

Article **159**
Entry into force and duration of the General Regulations

These General Regulations shall come into force on 1 January 2014 and shall remain in force for an indefinite period.

In witness whereof the plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the member countries have signed these General Regulations in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each **member country** by the International Bureau of the **Union**.

Done at Doha, 11 October 2012

Universal Postal Convention

Universal Postal Convention
Final Protocol to the Universal Postal Convention

Universal Postal Convention

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Universal Postal Convention

The undersigned, plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union (hereinafter the “Union”), having regard to article 21.3 of the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have by common consent and subject to article 24.3 and 5 of the Constitution drawn up in this Universal Postal Convention (hereinafter the “Convention”) the rules applicable throughout the international postal service.

Section I
Rules applicable in common throughout the international postal service

Article 1
Definitions

1 For the purposes of the Convention, the following terms shall have the meanings defined below:

1.1 letter-post item: item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Convention and Regulations;

1.2 parcel-post item: item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Convention and Regulations;

1.3 EMS item: item described in and conveyed under the conditions of the Convention, Regulations and associated EMS instruments;

1.4 documents: a letter-post, parcel-post or EMS item consisting of any piece of written, drawn, printed or digital information, excluding objects of merchandise, whose physical specifications lie within the limits specified in the Regulations;

1.5 goods: a letter-post, parcel-post or EMS item consisting of any tangible and movable object other than money, including objects of merchandise, which does not fall under the definition of “documents” as provided in paragraph 1.4 above and whose physical specifications lie within the limits specified in the Regulations;

1.6 closed mail: labelled receptacle(s) sealed with or without lead, containing postal items;

1.7 misrouted mails: receptacles received at an office of exchange other than the one mentioned on the (receptacle) label;

1.8 personal data: information needed to identify a postal service user;

1.9 missent items: items received at an office of exchange meant for an office of exchange in another member country;

1.10 transit charges: remuneration for services rendered by a carrier in the country crossed (designated operator, other service or combination of the two) in respect of the land, sea and/or air transit of letter-post items;

1.11 terminal dues: remuneration owed to the designated operator of the country of destination by the designated operator of the dispatching country in compensation for the costs incurred in the country of destination for letter-post items received;

1.12 designated operator: any governmental or non-governmental entity officially designated by the member country to operate postal services and to fulfil the related obligations arising out of the Acts of the Union on its territory;

1.13 small packet: item conveyed under the conditions of the Convention and the Regulations;

1.14 inward land rate: remuneration owed to the designated operator of the country of destination by the designated operator of the dispatching country in compensation for the costs incurred in the country of destination for parcels received;

1.15 transit land rate: remuneration owed for services rendered by a carrier in the country crossed (designated operator, other service or combination of the two) in respect of the land and/or air transit of parcels through its territory;

1.16 sea rate: remuneration owed for services rendered by a carrier (designated operator, other service or a combination of the two) participating in the sea conveyance of parcels;

1.17 inquiry: a complaint or query relating to the use of a postal service submitted in accordance with the conditions of the Convention and its Regulations;

1.18 universal postal service: the permanent provision of quality basic postal services at all points in a member country's territory, for all customers, at affordable prices;

1.19 transit à découvert: open transit through an intermediate country, of items whose number or weight does not justify the make-up of closed mails for the destination country.

Article 2
Designation of the entity or entities responsible for fulfilling the obligations arising from adherence to the Convention

1 Member countries shall notify the International Bureau, within six months of the end of Congress, of the name and address of the governmental body responsible for overseeing postal affairs. Within six months of the end of Congress, member countries shall also provide the International Bureau with the name and address of the operator or operators officially designated to operate postal services and to fulfil the obligations arising from the Acts of the Union on their territory. Between Congresses, member countries shall notify the International Bureau of any changes in the governmental bodies as soon as possible. Any changes with regard to the officially designated operators shall also be notified to the International Bureau as soon as possible, and preferably at least three months prior to the entry into force of the change.

2 When a member country officially designates a new operator, it shall indicate the scope of the postal services that the latter will provide under the Acts of the Union, as well as the operator's geographical coverage on its territory.

Article 3
Universal postal service

1 In order to support the concept of the single postal territory of the Union, member countries shall ensure that all users/customers enjoy the right to a universal postal service involving the permanent provision of quality basic postal services at all points in their territory, at affordable prices.

2 With this aim in view, member countries shall set forth, within the framework of their national postal legislation or by other customary means, the scope of the postal services offered and the requirement for quality and affordable prices, taking into account both the needs of the population and their national conditions.

3 Member countries shall ensure that the offers of postal services and quality standards will be achieved by the operators responsible for providing the universal postal service.

4 Member countries shall ensure that the universal postal service is provided on a viable basis, thus guaranteeing its sustainability.

Article 4
Freedom of transit

1 The principle of the freedom of transit is set forth in article 1 of the Constitution. It shall carry with it the obligation for each member country to ensure that its designated operators forward, always by the quickest routes and the most secure means which they use for their own items, closed mails and à découvert letter-post items which are passed to them by another designated operator. This principle shall also apply to missent items and misrouted mails.

2 Member countries which do not participate in the exchange of postal items containing infectious substances or radioactive substances shall have the option of not admitting these items in transit à découvert through their territory. The same shall also apply to printed papers, periodicals, magazines, small packets and M bags the content of which does not satisfy the legal requirements governing the conditions of their publication or circulation in the country crossed.

3 Freedom of transit for parcels shall be guaranteed throughout the territory of the Union.

4 If a member country fails to observe the provisions regarding freedom of transit, other member countries may discontinue their provision of postal services with that member country.

Article 5
Ownership of postal items. Withdrawal from the post. Alteration or correction of address and/or name of the addressee (name of the legal person, or family name, given name or patronymic (if any)). Redirection. Return to sender of undeliverable items

1 A postal item shall remain the property of the sender until it is delivered to the rightful owner, except when the item has been seized in pursuance of the national legislation of the country of origin or destination and, in case of application of article 19.2.1.1 or 19.3, in accordance with the national legislation of the country of transit.

2 The sender of a postal item may have it withdrawn from the post or have its address and/or the name of the addressee (name of the legal person, or family name, given name or patronymic (if any)) altered or corrected. The charges and other conditions are laid down in the Regulations.

3 Member countries shall ensure that their designated operators redirect postal items if an addressee has changed his address, and return undeliverable items to the sender. The charges and other conditions are laid down in the Regulations.

Article 6
Postage stamps

1 The term “postage stamp” shall be protected under the present Convention and shall be reserved exclusively for stamps which comply with the conditions of this article and of the Regulations.

2 Postage stamps:

2.1 shall be issued and put into circulation solely under the authority of the member country or territory, in conformity with the Acts of the Union;

2.2 are a manifestation of sovereignty and constitute proof of prepayment of the postage corresponding to their intrinsic value when affixed to postal items, in conformity with the Acts of the Union;

2.3 must be in circulation, for postal prepayment or for philatelic purposes, in the member country or territory of issue, according to its national legislation;

2.4 must be accessible to all citizens within the member country or territory of issue.

3 Postage stamps comprise:

3.1 the name of the member country or territory of issue, in roman letters, or, if the International Bureau of the Union is so requested by the member country or territory of issue, the abbreviation or initials officially representing the member country or territory of issue, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Regulations;[1]

3.2 the face value, expressed:

3.2.1 in principle, in the official currency of the country or territory of issue, or as a letter or symbol;

3.2.2 through other identifying characteristics.

4 Emblems of state, official control marks and logos of intergovernmental organizations featuring on postage stamps shall be protected within the meaning of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

5 The subjects and designs of postage stamps shall:

5.1 be in keeping with the spirit of the Preamble to the Constitution and with decisions taken by the Union's bodies;

5.2 be closely linked to the cultural identity of the member country or territory, or contribute to the dissemination of culture or to maintaining peace;

5.3 have, when commemorating leading figures or events not native to the member country or territory, a close bearing on the country or territory in question;

5.4 be devoid of political character or of any topic of an offensive nature in respect of a person or a country;

5.5 be of major significance to the member country or territory.

6 Postal prepayment impressions, franking machine impressions and impressions made by a printing press or another printing or stamping process in accordance with the Acts of the Union may be used only with the authorization of the member country or territory.

7 Prior to issuing postage stamps using new materials or technologies, member countries shall provide the International Bureau with the necessary information concerning their compatibility with mail processing machines. The International Bureau shall inform the other member countries and their designated operators accordingly.

Article 7
Sustainable development

Member countries and/or their designated operators shall adopt and implement a proactive sustainable development strategy focusing on environmental, social and economic action at all levels of postal operations and promote sustainable development awareness.

Article 8
Postal security

1 Member countries and their designated operators shall observe the security requirements defined in the Universal Postal Union's security standards and shall adopt and implement a proactive security strategy at all levels of postal operations to maintain and enhance the confidence of the general public in the postal services provided by designated operators, in the interests of all officials involved. This strategy shall include the objectives defined in the Regulations, as well as the principle of complying with requirements for providing electronic advance data on postal items identified in implementing provisions (including the type of, and criteria for, postal items) adopted by the Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council, in accordance with the Union's technical messaging standards. The strategy shall also include the exchange of information on

[1] An exception shall be granted to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the country which invented the postage stamp.

maintaining the safe and secure transport and transit of mails between member countries and their designated operators.

2 Any security measures applied in the international postal transport chain must be commensurate with the risks or threats that they seek to address, and must be implemented without hampering worldwide mail flows or trade by taking into consideration the specificities of the mail network. Security measures that have a potential global impact on postal operations must be implemented in an internationally coordinated and balanced manner, with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders.

Article 9
Violations

1 Postal items

1.1 Member countries shall undertake to adopt the necessary measures to prevent, prosecute and punish any person found guilty of the following:

1.1.1 the insertion in postal items of narcotics and psychotropic substances, as well as dangerous goods, where their insertion has not been expressly authorized by the Convention and Regulations;

1.1.2 the insertion in postal items of objects of a paedophilic nature or of a pornographic nature using children.

2 Means of postal prepayment and postal payment itself

2.1 Member countries shall undertake to adopt the necessary measures to prevent, prosecute and punish any violations concerning the means of postal prepayment set out in this Convention, such as:

2.1.1 postage stamps, in circulation or withdrawn from circulation;

2.1.2 prepayment impressions;

2.1.3 impressions of franking machines or printing presses;

2.1.4 international reply coupons.

2.2 In this Convention, violations concerning means of postal prepayment refer to any of the acts outlined below committed by any persons with the intention of obtaining illegitimate gain for oneself or for a third party. The following acts shall be punished:

2.2.1 any act of falsifying, imitating or counterfeiting any means of postal prepayment, or any illegal or unlawful act linked to the unauthorized manufacturing of such items;

2.2.2 manufacture, use, release for circulation, commercialization, distribution, dissemination, transportation, exhibition or display (also in the form of catalogues and for advertising purposes) of any means of postal prepayment which has been falsified, imitated or counterfeited;

2.2.3 any act of using or circulating, for postal purposes, any means of postal prepayment which has already been used;

2.2.4 any attempt to commit any of these violations.

3 Reciprocity

3.1 As regards sanctions, no distinction shall be made between the acts outlined in 2, irrespective of whether national or foreign means of postal prepayment are involved; this provision shall not be subject to any legal or conventional condition of reciprocity.

Article 10
Processing of personal data

1 Personal data on users may be employed only for the purposes for which they were gathered in accordance with applicable national legislation.

2 Personal data on users shall be disclosed only to third parties authorized by applicable national legislation to access them.

3 Member countries and their designated operators shall ensure the confidentiality and security of personal data on users, in accordance with their national legislation.

4 Designated operators shall inform their customers of the use that is made of their personal data, and of the purpose for which they have been gathered.

5 Without prejudice to the foregoing, designated operators may transfer electronically personal data to the designated operators of destination or transit countries that need these data in order to fulfil the service.

Article 11
Exchange of closed mails with military units

1 Closed letter-post mails may be exchanged through the intermediary of the land, sea or air services of other countries:

1.1 between the post offices of any member country and the commanding officers of military units placed at the disposal of the United Nations;

1.2 between the commanding officers of such military units;

1.3 between the post offices of any member country and the commanding officers of naval, air or army units, warships or military aircraft of the same country stationed abroad;

1.4 between the commanding officers of naval, air or army units, warships or military aircraft of the same country.

2 Letter-post items enclosed in the mails referred to under 1 shall be confined to items addressed to or sent by members of military units or the officers and crews of the ships or aircraft to or from which the mails are forwarded. The rates and conditions of dispatch applicable to them shall be fixed, according to its regulations, by the designated operator of the member country which has made the military unit available or to which the ships or aircraft belong.

3 In the absence of special agreement, the designated operator of the member country which has made the military unit available or to which the warships or military aircraft belong shall be liable to the designated operators concerned for the transit charges for the mails, the terminal dues and the air conveyance dues.

Article 12
Posting abroad of letter-post items

1 A designated operator shall not be bound to forward or deliver to the addressee letter-post items which senders residing in the territory of its member country post or cause to be posted in a foreign country with the object of profiting by the more favourable rate conditions there.

2 The provisions set out under 1 shall be applied without distinction both to letter-post items made up in the sender’s country of residence and then carried across the frontier and to letter-post items made up in a foreign country.

3 The designated operator of destination may claim from the designated operator of posting, payment of the internal rates. If the designated operator of posting does not agree to pay these rates within a time limit set by the designated operator of destination, the latter may either return the items to the designated operator of posting and shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of the redirection costs, or handle them in accordance with its national legislation.

4 A designated operator shall not be bound to forward or deliver to the addressees letter-post items which senders post or cause to be posted in large quantities in a country other than the country where they reside if the amount of terminal dues to be received is lower than the sum that would have been received if the mail had been posted in the country where the senders reside. The designated operator of destination may claim from the designated operator of posting payment commensurate with the costs incurred and which may not exceed the higher of the following two amounts: either 80% of the domestic tariff for equivalent items, or the

rates applicable pursuant to articles 29, 30.5 to 30.11, 30.12 and 30.13, or 31.17, as appropriate. If the designated operator of posting does not agree to pay the amount claimed within a time limit set by the designated operator of destination, the designated operator of destination may either return the items to the designated operator of posting and shall be entitled to claim reimbursement of the redirection costs, or handle them in accordance with its national legislation.

Article 13
Use of the Union's forms

1 Unless otherwise provided by the Acts of the Union, only designated operators shall use the Union's forms and documentation for the operation of postal services and exchange of postal items in accordance with the Acts of the Union.

2 Designated operators may use the Union's forms and documentation for the operation of extraterritorial offices of exchange (ETOEs), as well as international mail processing centres (IMPCs) established by designated operators outside their respective national territory, as further defined in paragraph 6, in order to facilitate the operation of the aforementioned postal services and exchange of postal items.

3 The exercise of the possibility outlined in paragraph 2 shall be subject to the national legislation or policy of the member country or territory in which the ETOE or IMPC is established. In this regard, and without prejudice to the designation obligations contained in article 2, designated operators shall guarantee the continued fulfilment of their obligations under the Convention and be fully responsible for all their relations with other designated operators and with the International Bureau.

4 The requirement set forth in paragraph 3 shall equally apply to the destination member country for the acceptance of postal items from such ETOEs and IMPCs.

5 Member countries shall inform the International Bureau on their policies with regard to postal items transmitted and/or received from ETOEs or IMPCs. Such information shall be made available on the Union's website.

6 Strictly for the purposes of this article, ETOEs shall be defined as offices or facilities established for commercial purposes and operated by designated operators or under the responsibility of designated operators on the territory of a member country or territory other than their own, with the objective of drawing business in markets outside their respective national territory. IMPCs shall be defined as international mail processing facilities for the processing of international mail exchanged either in order to generate or receive mail dispatches, or to act as transit centres for international mail exchanged between other designated operators.

7 Nothing in this article shall be construed to imply that ETOEs or IMPCs (including the designated operators responsible for their establishment and operation outside their respective national territory) are in the same situation under the Acts of the Union as designated operators of the host country, nor impose a legal obligation on other member countries to recognize such ETOEs or IMPCs as designated operators on the territory where they are established and operated.

Section II
Quality of service standards and targets

Article 14
Quality of service standards and targets

1 Member countries or their designated operators shall establish, publish and update delivery standards and targets for their inward letter-post items and parcel-post items in the relevant compendia as specified in the Regulations.

2 These standards and targets, increased by the time normally required for customs clearance, shall be no less favourable than those applied to comparable items in their domestic service.

3 Member countries or their designated operators of origin shall also establish and publish end-to-end standards for priority and airmail letter-post items as well as for parcels and economy/surface parcels.

4 Member countries or their designated operators shall measure the application of quality of service standards.

Section III
Charges, surcharges and exemption from postal charges

Article 15
Charges

1 The charges for the various postal services defined in the Convention shall be set by the member countries or their designated operators, depending on national legislation, in accordance with the principles set out in the Convention and its Regulations. They shall in principle be related to the costs of providing these services.

2 The member country of origin or its designated operator, depending on national legislation, shall fix the postage charges for the conveyance of letter- and parcel-post items. The postage charges shall cover delivery of the items to the place of address provided that this delivery service is operated in the country of destination for the items in question.

3 The charges collected, including those laid down for guideline purposes in the Acts, shall be at least equal to those collected on internal service items presenting the same characteristics (category, quantity, handling time, etc.).

4 Member countries or their designated operators, depending on national legislation, shall be authorized to exceed any guideline charges appearing in the Acts.

5 Above the minimum level of charges laid down in 3, member countries or their designated operators may allow reduced charges based on their national legislation for letter-post items and parcels posted in the territory of the member country. They may, for instance, give preferential rates to major users of the Post.

6 No postal charge of any kind may be collected from customers other than those provided for in the Acts.

7 Except where otherwise provided in the Acts, each designated operator shall retain the charges which it has collected.

Article 16
Exemption from postal charges

1 Principle

1.1 Cases of exemption from postal charges, as meaning exemption from postal prepayment, shall be expressly laid down by the Convention. Nonetheless, the Regulations may provide for exemption from postal prepayment, transit charges, terminal dues and inward rates for letter-post items and postal parcels sent by member countries, designated operators and Restricted Unions and relating to the postal services. Furthermore, letter-post items and postal parcels sent by the International Bureau of the Union to Restricted Unions, member countries and designated operators shall be exempted from all postal charges. However, the member country of origin or its designated operator shall have the option of collecting air surcharges on the latter items.

2 Prisoners of war and civilian internees

2.1 Letter-post items, postal parcels and postal payment services items addressed to or sent by prisoners of war, either direct or through the offices mentioned in the Regulations of the Convention and of the Postal Payment Services Agreement, shall be exempt from all postal charges, with the exception of air surcharges. Belligerents apprehended and interned in a neutral country shall be classed with prisoners of war proper so far as the application of the foregoing provisions is concerned.

2.2 The provisions set out under 2.1 shall also apply to letter-post items, postal parcels and postal payment services items originating in other countries and addressed to or sent by civilian internees as defined by the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war, either direct or through the offices mentioned in the Regulations of the Convention and of the Postal Payment Services Agreement.

2.3 The offices mentioned in the Regulations of the Convention and of the Postal Payment Services Agreement shall also enjoy exemption from postal charges in respect of letter-post items, postal parcels and postal payment services items which concern the persons referred to under 2.1 and 2.2, which they send or receive, either direct or as intermediaries.

2.4 Parcels shall be admitted free of postage up to a weight of 5 kilogrammes. The weight limit shall be increased to 10 kilogrammes in the case of parcels the contents of which cannot be split up and of parcels addressed to a camp or the prisoners' representatives there ("hommes de confiance") for distribution to the prisoners.

2.5 In the accounting between designated operators, rates shall not be allocated for service parcels and for prisoner-of-war and civilian internee parcels, apart from the air conveyance dues applicable to air parcels.

3 Items for the blind

3.1 Any item for the blind sent to or by an organization for the blind or sent to or by a blind person shall be exempt from all postal charges, with the exception of air surcharges, to the extent that these items are admissible as such in the internal service of the sending designated operator.

3.2 In this article:

3.2.1 a blind person means a person who is registered as blind or partially sighted in his or her country or who meets the World Health Organization's definition of a blind person or a person with low vision;

3.2.2 an organization for the blind means an institution or association serving or officially representing blind persons;

3.2.3 items for the blind shall include correspondence, literature in whatever format including sound recordings, and equipment or materials of any kind made or adapted to assist blind persons in overcoming the problems of blindness, as specified in the Regulations.

Section IV
Basic and supplementary services

Article 17
Basic services

1 Member countries shall ensure that their designated operators accept, handle, convey and deliver letter-post items.

2 Letter-post items containing only documents are:

2.1 priority items and non-priority items, up to 2 kilogrammes;

2.2 letters, postcards and printed papers, up to 2 kilogrammes;

2.3 items for the blind, up to 7 kilogrammes;

2.4 special bags containing newspapers, periodicals, books and similar printed documentation for the same addressee at the same address called "M bags", up to 30 kilogrammes.

3 Letter-post items containing goods are:

3.1 priority and non-priority small packets, up to 2 kilogrammes;

3.2 items for the blind, up to 7 kilogrammes, as specified in the Regulations;

3.3 special bags containing newspapers, periodicals, books and similar printed documentation for the same addressee at the same address called "M bags", up to 30 kilogrammes, as specified in the Regulations.

4 Letter-post items shall be classified on the basis of both the speed of treatment of the items and the contents of the items in accordance with the Regulations.

5 Within the classification systems referred to in 4, letter-post items may also be classified on the basis of their format as small letters (P), large letters (G), bulky letters (E) or small packets (E). The size and weight limits are specified in the Regulations.

6 Higher weight limits than those indicated in paragraphs 2 and 3 apply optionally for certain letter-post item categories under the conditions specified in the Regulations.

7 Member countries shall also ensure that their designated operators accept, handle, convey and deliver parcel-post items up to 20 kilogrammes.

8 Weight limits higher than 20 kilogrammes apply optionally for certain parcel-post items under the conditions specified in the Regulations.

Article 18
Supplementary services

1 Member countries shall ensure the provision of the following mandatory supplementary services:

1.1 registration service for outbound priority and airmail letter-post items;

1.2 registration service for all inbound registered letter-post items.

2 Member countries may ensure the provision of the following optional supplementary services in relations between those designated operators which agreed to provide the service:

2.1 insurance for letter-post items and parcels;

2.2 cash-on-delivery service for letter-post items and parcels;

2.3 tracked delivery service for letter-post items;

2.4 delivery to the addressee in person of registered or insured letter-post items;

2.5 free of charges and fees delivery service for letter-post items and parcels;

2.6 cumbersome parcels services;

2.7 consignment service for collective items from one consignor sent abroad;

2.8 merchandise return service, which involves the return of merchandise by the addressee to the original seller, with the latter’s authorization.

3 The following three supplementary services have both mandatory and optional parts:

3.1 international business reply service (IBRS), which is basically optional. All member countries or their designated operators shall, however, be obliged to operate the IBRS “return” service;

3.2 international reply coupons, which shall be exchangeable in any member country. The sale of international reply coupons is, however, optional;

3.3 advice of delivery for registered letter-post items, parcels and insured items. All member countries or their designated operators shall admit incoming advices of delivery. The provision of an outward advice of delivery service is, however, optional.

4 The description of these services and their charges are set out in the Regulations.

5 Where the service features below are subject to special charges in the domestic service, designated operators shall be authorized to collect the same charges for international items, under the conditions described in the Regulations:

5.1 delivery for small packets weighing over 500 grammes;

5.2 letter-post items posted after the latest time of posting;

5.3 items posted outside normal counter opening hours;

5.4 collection at sender's address;

5.5 withdrawal of a letter-post item outside normal counter opening hours;

5.6 poste restante;

5.7 storage for letter-post items weighing over 500 grammes (with the exception of items for the blind), and for parcels;

5.8 delivery of parcels, in response to the advice of arrival;

5.9 cover against risks of force majeure;

5.10 delivery of letter-post items outside normal counter opening hours.

Section V
Prohibitions and customs matters

Article 19
Items not admitted. Prohibitions

1 General

1.1 Items not fulfilling the conditions laid down in the Convention and the Regulations shall not be admitted. Items sent in furtherance of a fraudulent act or with the intention of avoiding full payment of the appropriate charges shall not be admitted.

1.2 Exceptions to the prohibitions contained in this article are set out in the Regulations.

1.3 All member countries or their designated operators shall have the option of extending the prohibitions contained in this article, which may be applied immediately upon their inclusion in the relevant compendium. Any member country or its designated operator wishing to extend or amend the list of articles that it prohibits, or admits conditionally, as imports (or in transit) shall inform the International Bureau, which shall then update the relevant compendium accordingly.

2 Prohibitions in all categories of items

2.1 The insertion of the articles referred to below shall be prohibited in all categories of items:

2.1.1 narcotics and psychotropic substances, as defined by the International Narcotics Control Board, or other illicit drugs which are prohibited in the country of destination;

2.1.2 obscene or immoral articles;

2.1.3 counterfeit and pirated articles;

2.1.4 other articles the importation or circulation of which is prohibited in the country of destination;

2.1.5 articles which, by their nature or their packing, may expose officials or the general public to danger, or soil or damage other items, postal equipment or third-party property;

2.1.6 documents having the character of current and personal correspondence exchanged between persons other than the sender and the addressee or persons living with them;

3 Dangerous goods

3.1 The insertion of dangerous goods as described in the Convention and Regulations shall be prohibited in all categories of items.

3.2 The insertion of replica and inert explosive devices and military ordnance, including replica and inert grenades, inert shells and the like, shall be prohibited in all categories of items.

3.3 Exceptionally, dangerous goods may be admitted in relations between member countries that have declared their willingness to admit them either reciprocally or in one direction, provided that they are in compliance with national and international transport rules and regulations.

4 Live animals

4.1 Live animals shall be prohibited in all categories of items.

4.2 Exceptionally, the following shall be admitted in letter-post items other than insured items:

4.2.1 bees, leeches and silk-worms;

4.2.2 parasites and destroyers of noxious insects intended for the control of those insects and exchanged between officially recognized institutions;

4.2.3 flies of the family Drosophilidae for biomedical research exchanged between officially recognized institutions.

4.3 Exceptionally, the following shall be admitted in parcels:

4.3.1 live animals whose conveyance by post is authorized by the postal regulations and/or national legislation of the countries concerned.

5 Insertion of correspondence in parcels

5.1 The insertion of the articles mentioned below shall be prohibited in postal parcels:

5.1.1 correspondence, with the exception of archived materials, exchanged between persons other than the sender and the addressee or persons living with them.

6 Coins, bank notes and other valuable articles

6.1 It shall be prohibited to insert coins, bank notes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles:

6.1.1 in uninsured letter-post items;

6.1.1.1 however, if the national legislation of the countries of origin and destination permits this, such articles may be sent in a closed envelope as registered items;

6.1.2 in uninsured parcels; except where permitted by the national legislation of the countries of origin and destination;

6.1.3 in uninsured parcels exchanged between two countries which admit insured parcels;

6.1.3.1 in addition, any member country or designated operator may prohibit the enclosure of gold bullion in insured or uninsured parcels originating from or addressed to its territory or sent in transit à découvert across its territory; it may limit the actual value of these items.

7 Printed papers and items for the blind:

7.1 shall not bear any inscription or contain any item of correspondence;

7.2 shall not contain any postage stamp or form of prepayment, whether cancelled or not, or any paper representing a monetary value, except in cases where the item contains as an enclosure a card, envelope or wrapper bearing the printed address of the sender of the item or his agent in the country of posting or destination of the original item, which is prepaid for return.

8 Treatment of items wrongly admitted

8.1 The treatment of items wrongly admitted is set out in the Regulations. However, items containing articles mentioned in 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 3.1 and 3.2 shall in no circumstances be forwarded to their destination, delivered to the addressees or returned to origin. In the case of articles mentioned in 2.1.1 discovered while in transit, such items shall be handled in accordance with the national legislation of the country of transit. In the case of articles mentioned in 3.1 and 3.2 discovered during transport, the relevant designated operator shall be entitled to remove the article from the item and dispose of it. The designated operator may then forward the remainder of the item to its destination, together with information about the disposal of the inadmissible article.

Article 20
Customs control. Customs duty and other fees

1 The designated operators of the countries of origin and destination shall be authorized to submit items to customs control, according to the legislation of those countries.

2 Items submitted to customs control may be subjected to a presentation-to-Customs charge, the guideline amount of which is set in the Regulations. This charge shall only be collected for the submission to Customs and customs clearance of items which have attracted customs charges or any other similar charge.

3 Designated operators which are authorized to clear items through the Customs on behalf of customers, whether in the name of the customer or of the designated operator of the destination country, may charge customers a customs clearance fee based on the actual costs. This fee may be charged for all items declared at Customs according to national legislation, including those exempt from customs duty. Customers shall be clearly informed in advance about the required fee.

4 Designated operators shall be authorized to collect from the senders or addressees of items, as the case may be, the customs duty and all other fees which may be due.

Section VI
Liability

Article 21
Inquiries

1 Each designated operator shall be bound to accept inquiries relating to parcels or registered or insured items posted in its own service or that of any other designated operator, provided that the inquiries are presented by customers within a period of six months from the day after that on which the item was posted. The transmission and processing of inquiries between designated operators shall be made under the conditions laid down in the Regulations. The period of six months shall concern relations between claimants and designated operators and shall not include the transmission of inquiries between designated operators.

2 Inquiries shall be free of charge. However, additional costs caused by a request for transmission by EMS shall, in principle, be borne by the person making the request.

Article 22
Liability of designated operators. Indemnities

1 General

1.1 Except for the cases provided for in article 23, designated operators shall be liable for:

1.1.1 the loss of, theft from or damage to registered items, ordinary parcels (with the exception of parcels in the e-commerce delivery category (“ECOMPRO parcels”), whose specifications are further defined in the Regulations) and insured items;

1.1.2 the return of registered items, insured items and ordinary parcels on which the reason for non-delivery is not given.

1.2 Designated operators shall not be liable for items other than those mentioned in 1.1.1 and 1.1.2, nor for ECOMPRO parcels.

1.3 In any other case not provided for in this Convention, designated operators shall not be liable.

1.4 When the loss of or total damage to registered items, ordinary parcels and insured items is due to a case of force majeure for which indemnity is not payable, the sender shall be entitled to repayment of the charges paid for posting the item, with the exception of the insurance charge.

1.5 The amounts of indemnity to be paid shall not exceed the amounts mentioned in the Regulations.

1.6 In cases of liability, consequential losses, loss of profits or moral damage shall not be taken into account in the indemnity to be paid.

1.7 All provisions regarding liability of designated operators shall be strict, binding and complete. Designated operators shall in no case, even in case of severe fault, be liable above the limits provided for in the Convention and the Regulations.

2 Registered items

2.1 If a registered item is lost, totally rifled or totally damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity set in the Regulations. If the sender has claimed an amount less than the amount set in the Regulations, designated operators may pay that lower amount and shall receive reimbursement on this basis from any other designated operators involved.

2.2 If a registered item is partially rifled or partially damaged, the sender is entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the actual value of the theft or damage.

3 Ordinary parcels

3.1 If a parcel is lost, totally rifled or totally damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity of an amount set in the Regulations. If the sender has claimed an amount less than the amount set in the Regulations, designated operators may pay that lower amount and shall receive reimbursement on this basis from any other designated operators involved.

3.2 If a parcel is partially rifled or partially damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the actual value of the theft or damage.

3.3 Designated operators may agree to apply, in their reciprocal relations, the amount per parcel set in the Regulations, regardless of the weight.

4 Insured items

4.1 If an insured item is lost, totally rifled or totally damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the insured value in SDRs.

4.2 If an insured item is partially rifled or partially damaged, the sender shall be entitled to an indemnity corresponding, in principle, to the actual value of the theft or damage. It may, however, in no case exceed the amount of the insured value in SDRs.

5 If a registered or insured letter-post item is returned and the reason for non-delivery is not given, the sender shall be entitled to a refund of the charges paid for posting the item only.

6 If a parcel is returned and the reason for non-delivery is not given, the sender shall be entitled to a refund of the charges paid by the sender for posting the parcel in the country of origin and the expenses occasioned by the return of the parcel from the country of destination.

7 In the cases mentioned in 2, 3 and 4, the indemnity shall be calculated according to the current price, converted into SDRs, of articles or goods of the same kind at the place and time at which the item was accepted for conveyance. Failing a current price, the indemnity shall be calculated according to the ordinary value of articles or goods whose value is assessed on the same basis.

8 When an indemnity is due for the loss of, total theft from or total damage to a registered item, ordinary parcel or insured item, the sender, or the addressee, as the case may be, shall also be entitled to repayment of the charges and fees paid for posting the item with the exception of the registration or insurance charge. The same shall apply to registered items, ordinary parcels or insured items refused by the addressee because of their bad condition if that is attributable to the designated operator and involves its liability.

9 Notwithstanding the provisions set out under 2, 3 and 4, the addressee shall be entitled to the indemnity for a rifled, damaged or lost registered item, ordinary parcel or insured item if the sender waives his rights in writing in favour of the addressee. This waiver shall not be necessary in cases where the sender and the addressee are the same.

10 The designated operator of origin shall have the option of paying senders in its country the indemnities prescribed by its national legislation for registered items and uninsured parcels, provided that they are not lower than those laid down in 2.1 and 3.1. The same shall apply to the designated operator of destination when the indemnity is paid to the addressee. However, the amounts laid down in 2.1 and 3.1 shall remain applicable:

10.1 in the event of recourse against the designated operator liable; or

10.2 if the sender waives his rights in favour of the addressee.

11 Reservations concerning the exceeding of deadlines for inquiries and payment of indemnity to designated operators, including the periods and conditions fixed in the Regulations, shall not be made, except in the event of bilateral agreement.

Article 23
Non-liability of member countries and designated operators

1 Designated operators shall cease to be liable for registered items, parcels and insured items which they have delivered according to the conditions laid down in their regulations for items of the same kind. Liability shall, however, be maintained:

1.1 when theft or damage is discovered either prior to or at the time of delivery of the item;

1.2 when, national regulations permitting, the addressee, or the sender if it is returned to origin, makes reservations on taking delivery of a rifled or damaged item;

1.3 when, national regulations permitting, the registered item was delivered to a private mail-box and the addressee declares that he did not receive the item;

1.4 when the addressee or, in the case of return to origin, the sender of a parcel or of an insured item, although having given a proper discharge, notifies the designated operator that delivered the item without delay that he has found theft or damage. He shall furnish proof that such theft or damage did not occur after delivery. The term “without delay” shall be interpreted according to national law.

2 Member countries and designated operators shall not be liable:

2.1 in cases of force majeure, subject to article 18.5.9;

2.2 when they cannot account for items owing to the destruction of official records by force majeure, provided that proof of their liability has not been otherwise produced;

2.3 when such loss or damage has been caused by the fault or negligence of the sender or arises from the nature of the contents;

2.4 in the case of items that fall within the prohibitions specified in article 19;

2.5 when the items have been seized under the national legislation of the country of destination, as notified by the member country or designated operator of that country;

2.6 in the case of insured items which have been fraudulently insured for a sum greater than the actual value of the contents;

2.7 when the sender has made no inquiry within six months from the day after that on which the item was posted;

2.8 in the case of prisoner-of-war or civilian internee parcels;

2.9 when the sender’s actions may be suspected of fraudulent intent, aimed at receiving compensation.

3 Member countries and designated operators shall accept no liability for customs declarations in whatever form these are made or for decisions taken by the Customs on examination of items submitted to customs control.

Article 24
Sender's liability

1 The sender of an item shall be liable for injuries caused to postal officials and for any damage caused to other postal items and postal equipment, as a result of the dispatch of articles not acceptable for conveyance or the non-observance of the conditions of acceptance.

2 In the case of damage to other postal items, the sender shall be liable for each item damaged within the same limits as designated operators.

3 The sender shall remain liable even if the office of posting accepts such an item.

4 However, where the conditions of acceptance have been observed by the sender, the sender shall not be liable, in so far as there has been fault or negligence in handling the item on the part of designated operators or carriers, after acceptance.

Article 25
Payment of indemnity

1 Subject to the right of recourse against the designated operator which is liable, the obligation to pay the indemnity and to refund the charges and fees shall rest either with the designated operator of origin or with the designated operator of destination.

2 The sender may waive his rights to the indemnity in favour of the addressee. The sender, or the addressee in the case of a waiver, may authorize a third party to receive the indemnity if national legislation allows this.

Article 26
Possible recovery of the indemnity from the sender or the addressee

1 If, after payment of the indemnity, a registered item, a parcel or an insured item or part of the contents previously considered as lost is found, the sender or the addressee, as the case may be, shall be advised that the item is being held at his disposal for a period of three months on repayment of the amount of the indemnity paid. At the same time he shall be asked to whom the item is to be delivered. In the event of refusal or failure to reply within the prescribed period, the same approach shall be made to the addressee or the sender as the case may be, granting that person the same period to reply.

2 If the sender and the addressee refuse to take delivery of the item or do not reply within the period provided for in paragraph 1, it shall become the property of the designated operator or, where appropriate, designated operators which bore the loss.

3 In the case of subsequent discovery of an insured item the contents of which are found to be of less value than the amount of the indemnity paid, the sender or the addressee, as the case may be, shall repay the amount of this indemnity against return of the item, without prejudice to the consequences of fraudulent insurance.

Section VII
Remuneration

A. Transit charges

Article 27
Transit charges

Closed mails and à découvert transit items exchanged between two designated operators or between two offices of the same member country by means of the services of one or more other designated operators (third party services) shall be subject to the payment of transit charges. The latter shall constitute remuneration for the services rendered in respect of land transit, sea transit and air transit. This principle shall also apply to missent items and misrouted mails.

B. Terminal dues

Article 28
Terminal dues. General provisions

1 Subject to exemptions provided in the Regulations, each designated operator which receives letter-post items from another designated operator shall have the right to collect from the dispatching designated operator a payment for the costs incurred for the international mail received.

2 For the application of the provisions concerning the payment of terminal dues by their designated operators, countries and territories shall be classified in accordance with the lists drawn up for this purpose by Congress in its resolution C 7/2016, as follows:

2.1 countries and territories in the target system prior to 2010 (group I);

2.2 countries and territories in the target system as of 2010 and 2012 (group II);

2.3 countries and territories in the target system as from 2016 (group III);

2.4 countries and territories in the transitional system (group IV).

3 The provisions of the present Convention concerning the payment of terminal dues are transitional arrangements, moving towards a country-specific payment system at the end of the transition period.

4 Access to domestic services. Direct access

4.1 In principle, each designated operator of a country that was in the target system prior to 2010 shall make available to the other designated operators all the rates, terms and conditions offered in its domestic service on conditions identical to those proposed to its national customers. It shall be up to the designated operator of destination to decide whether the terms and conditions of direct access have been met by the designated operator of origin.

4.2 Designated operators of countries in the target system prior to 2010 shall make available to other designated operators of countries that were in the target system prior to 2010 the rates, terms and conditions offered in their domestic service, on conditions identical to those proposed to their national customers.

4.3 Designated operators of countries that joined the target system from 2010 may opt to make available to a limited number of designated operators the application of domestic conditions, on a reciprocal basis, for a trial period of two years. After that period, they must choose either to cease making available the application of domestic conditions or to continue to make their own domestic conditions available to all designated operators. However, if designated operators of countries that joined the target system from 2010 ask designated operators of countries that were in the target system prior to 2010 for the application of domestic conditions, they must make available to all designated operators the rates, terms and conditions offered in their domestic service on conditions identical to those proposed to their national customers.

4.4 Designated operators of countries in the transitional system may opt not to make available to other designated operators the application of domestic conditions. They may, however, opt to make available to a limited number of designated operators the application of domestic conditions, on a reciprocal basis, for a trial period of two years. After that period, they must choose either to cease making available the application of domestic conditions or to continue to make their own domestic conditions available to all designated operators.

5 Terminal dues remuneration shall be based on quality of service performance in the country of destination. The Postal Operations Council shall therefore be authorized to supplement the remuneration in articles 29, 30 and 31 to encourage participation in monitoring systems and to reward designated operators for reaching their quality targets. The Postal Operations Council may also fix penalties in case of insufficient quality, but the remuneration shall not be less than the minimum remuneration according to articles 30 and 31.

6 Any designated operator may waive wholly or in part the payment provided for under 1.

7 M bags weighing less than 5 kilogrammes shall be considered as weighing 5 kilogrammes for terminal dues payment purposes. The terminal dues rates to be applied for M bags shall be:

7.1 for the year 2022, 1.016 SDR per kilogramme;

7.2 for the year 2023, 1.044 SDR per kilogramme;

7.3 for the year 2024, 1.073 SDR per kilogramme;

7.4 for the year 2025, 1.103 SDR per kilogramme.

8 For registered items there shall be an additional payment of 1.463 SDR per item for 2022, 1.529 SDR per item for 2023, 1.598 SDR per item for 2024 and 1.670 SDR for 2025. For insured items, there shall be an additional payment of 1.777 SDR per item for 2022, 1.857 SDR per item for 2023, 1.941 SDR per item for 2024 and 2.028 SDR for 2025. The Postal Operations Council shall be authorized to supplement remuneration for these and other supplementary services where the services provided contain additional features to be specified in the Regulations.

9 For tracked delivery service items there shall be an additional payment of 0.400 SDR per item in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations. The Postal Operations Council shall be authorized to supplement remuneration for tracked delivery service items on the basis of performance in the electronic transmission of information, as specified in the Regulations.

10 For small packets, registered and insured and tracked delivery service items not carrying a barcoded identifier or carrying a barcoded identifier that is not compliant with the Union’s Technical Standard S10, there shall be a further additional payment of 0.5 SDR per item unless otherwise bilaterally agreed.

11 The Postal Operations Council shall be authorized to supplement remuneration and/or fix penalties in relation to designated operators’ compliance with the requirements for providing electronic advance data on letter-post items containing goods.

12 The remuneration for returned undeliverable letter-post items shall be specified in the Regulations.

13 For terminal dues payment purposes, letter-post items posted in bulk in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations shall be referred to as “bulk mail”. The payment for bulk mail shall be established as provided for in articles 29, 30 and 31, as appropriate.

14 Any designated operator may, by bilateral or multilateral agreement, apply other payment systems for the settlement of terminal dues accounts.

15 Designated operators may exchange non-priority mail on an optional basis by applying a 10% discount to the priority terminal dues rate.

16 The provisions applicable between designated operators of countries in the target system shall apply to any designated operator of a country in the transitional system which declares that it wishes to join the target system. The Postal Operations Council may set transitional measures in the Regulations. The full provisions of the target system may apply to any new target designated operator that declares that it wishes to apply such full provisions without transitional measures.

Article 29
Terminal dues. Self-declaration of rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items

1 Beginning with rates in effect for the year 2021 onwards and notwithstanding articles 30 and 31, designated operators may notify the International Bureau by 1 June of the year preceding the year in which the self-declared rates would apply of a self-declared rate per item and a self-declared rate per kilogramme, expressed in local currency or SDR, that shall apply for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items in the following calendar year. The International Bureau shall annually convert the self-declared rates provided in local currency into values expressed in SDR. To calculate the rates in SDR, the International Bureau shall use the average monthly exchange rate of the five-month period ending 31 March of the year preceding the year for which the self-declared rates would be applicable. The resultant rates shall be notified by means of an International Bureau circular no later than 1 July of the year preceding the year in which the self-declared rates would apply. The self-declared rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items shall be substituted as appropriate in any reference or rate calculation pertaining to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items elsewhere in the Convention or the Regulations. Additionally, each designated operator shall provide the International Bureau with its domestic rates for equivalent services in order to calculate the relevant ceiling rates.

1.1 Subject to 1.2 and 1.3, the self-declared rates shall:

1.1.1 at the average E format weight of 0.158 kilogrammes, not be higher than the country-specific ceiling rates calculated in accordance with paragraph 1.2;

1.1.2 be based on 70%, or the applicable percentage in paragraph 8, of the domestic single-piece charge for items equivalent to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items offered by the designated operator in its domestic service and in effect on 1 June of the year preceding the year for which the self-declared rates would be applicable;

1.1.3 be based on the domestic single-piece charge in force for items within the designated operator's domestic service having the specified maximum size and shape dimensions of bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items;

1.1.4 be made available to all designated operators;

1.1.5 be applied only to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items;

1.1.6 be applied to all bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post flows other than bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post flows from countries in the transitional system to countries in the target system, and between countries in the transitional system, if mail flows do not exceed 100 tonnes per year;

1.1.7 be applied to all bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post flows except for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post flows between countries in the target system as from 2010, 2012 and 2016, and from those countries to countries in the target system prior to 2010, if mail flows do not exceed 25 tonnes per year.

1.2 The self-declared rates per item and per kilogramme for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items shall not be higher than the country-specific ceiling rates determined by a linear regression of 11 points corresponding to 70%, or the applicable percentage in paragraph 8, of the priority single-piece tariffs of equivalent domestic services for 20-gramme, 35-gramme, 75-gramme, 175-gramme, 250-gramme, 375-gramme, 500-gramme, 750-gramme, 1,000-gramme, 1,500-gramme and 2,000-gramme bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items, exclusive of any taxes.

1.2.1 The determination of whether the self-declared rates exceed the ceiling rates shall be tested at the average revenue using the most current worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail in which an E format item weighs 0.158 kilogrammes. In instances in which the self-declared rates exceed the ceiling rates at the average E format weight of 0.158 kilogrammes, the ceiling per-item and per-kilogramme rates shall apply; alternatively, the designated operator in question may choose to reduce its self-declared rates to a level that conforms with paragraph 1.2.

1.2.2 When multiple packet rates are available based on thickness, the lesser domestic tariff shall be used for items up to 250 grammes, and the higher domestic tariff shall be used for items above 250 grammes.

1.2.3 Where zonal rates apply in the equivalent domestic service, the mid-point rate as specified in the Regulations shall be used, and domestic tariffs for non-contiguous zones shall be excluded for determination of the mid-point rate. Alternatively, the determination of the zonal tariff to be used may be based on the actual weighted average distance of inbound bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items (for the most recent calendar year).

1.2.4 Where the equivalent domestic service and tariff include additional features that are not part of the basic service, i.e. tracking, signature and insurance services, and such features are extended across all the weight increments listed in paragraph 1.2, the lesser of the corresponding domestic supplemental rate, the supplemental rate, or the suggested guideline charge in the Acts of the Union shall be deducted from the domestic tariff. The total deduction for all additional features may not exceed 25% of the domestic tariff.

1.3 Where the country-specific ceiling rates calculated in accordance with paragraph 1.2 result in a revenue calculated for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes that is lower than the revenue calculated for the same item at the same weight on the basis of the rates specified below, the self-declared rates shall not be higher than the following rates:

1.3.1 for the year 2020, 0.614 SDR per item and 1.381 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.2 for the year 2021, 0.645 SDR per item and 1.450 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.3 for the year 2022, 0.677 SDR per item and 1.523 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.4 for the year 2023, 0.711 SDR per item and 1.599 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.5 for the year 2024, 0.747 SDR per item and 1.679 SDR per kilogramme;

1.3.6 for the year 2025, 0.784 SDR per item and 1.763 SDR per kilogramme.

1.4 Any additional conditions and procedures for the self-declaration of rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items shall be laid down in the Regulations. All other provisions of the Regulations pertaining to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items shall apply to self-declared rates, unless they are inconsistent with this article.

1.5 Designated operators of countries in the transitional system may apply self-declared rates on the basis of sampling of their inbound flows.

2 In addition to the ceiling rates provided for in 1.2, the notified self-declared rates shall not be higher than the maximum revenues defined for the years 2021 to 2025, as follows:

2.1 2021: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2020 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 15%;

2.2 2022: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2021 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 15%;

2.3 2023: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2022 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 16%;

2.4 2024: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2023 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 16%;

2.5 2025: the revenue calculated on the basis of the self-declared rates shall be set at the lowest between the country-specific ceiling rates and the revenue in 2024 for an E format item at 0.158 kilogrammes increased by 17%.

3 For rates in effect in 2021 and subsequent years, the ratio between the self-declared item rate and kilogramme rate shall not change by more than five percentage points upwards or downwards compared with the ratio of the previous year. For designated operators that self-declare rates under paragraph 7 or apply self-declared rates on a reciprocal basis under paragraph 9, the ratio in effect in 2020 shall be based on the self-declared per-item rate and per-kilogramme rate established as of 1 July 2020.

4 Designated operators that opt not to self-declare their rates in accordance with this article shall fully apply the provisions contained in articles 30 and 31.

5 For designated operators that have elected to self-declare their rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items in a prior calendar year and that do not communicate different self-declared rates for the subsequent year, the existing self-declared rates shall continue to apply unless they do not satisfy the conditions laid out in this article.

6 The International Bureau shall be informed by the designated operator concerned of any reduction in the domestic charge referred to in this article.

7 With effect from 1 July 2020, and notwithstanding paragraphs 1 and 2, a designated operator of a member country that received total annual inbound letter-post volumes in 2018 in excess of 75,000 tonnes (as per the relevant official information provided to the International Bureau or any other officially available information assessed by the International Bureau) may self-declare rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items, other than for the letter-post flows referred to in paragraphs 1.1.6 and 1.1.7. The said designated operator shall also have the right not to apply the revenue increase limits set out in paragraph 2 for mail flows to, from and between its country and any other country.

8 If a competent authority with oversight for the designated operator which exercises the aforementioned option in paragraph 7 determines that, in order to cover all costs for handling and delivery of bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items, the designated operator's self-declared rate any year after 2020 must be based on a cost-to-tariff ratio that exceeds 70% of the domestic single-piece charge, then the cost-to-tariff ratio for that designated operator may exceed 70%, subject to a limitation that the cost-to-tariff ratio to be used shall not exceed one percentage point above the higher of 70% or the cost-to-tariff ratio used in the calculation of the self-declared rates currently in effect, not to exceed 80%, and provided that the designated operator in question furnishes all such supporting information with its notification to the International Bureau under paragraph 1. If any such designated operator increases its cost-to-tariff ratio based on such a determination of a competent authority, then it shall notify the International Bureau of that ratio for publication by 1 May of the year preceding the year in which the ratio shall apply. Further specifications related to the costs and revenues to be used for the calculation of the specific cost-to-tariff ratio shall be provided in the Regulations.

9 Where a designated operator of a member country invokes paragraph 7, all other corresponding designated operators (including those whose exempted outbound flows are referred to in paragraphs 1.1.6 and 1.1.7) may do likewise and self-declare rates for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items with respect to the aforementioned designated operator without being subject to the maximum revenue increase limits set out in paragraph 2. Paragraph 8 of this article shall also apply to all such corresponding designated operators. With respect to any such corresponding designated operators that elect to apply self-declared rates under this paragraph 9 (including those whose outbound flows are optionally eligible for exemption under paragraphs 1.1.6 and 1.1.7), the self-declared rates of the designated operator that invoked paragraph 7 shall reciprocally apply.

10 Any designated operator that invokes the possibility outlined in paragraph 7 shall, in the calendar year of the entry into force of the initial rates, be required to pay a charge to the Union, for five consecutive years (beginning with the calendar year of application of the option referred to above under 7), in the amount of 8 million CHF per annum, for a total of 40 million CHF. No further payment shall be expected for self-declaration of rates in accordance with this paragraph after the conclusion of the five-year period.

10.1 The charge referred to above shall be exclusively allocated in accordance with the following methodology: 16 million CHF shall be allocated to a tied fund of the Union for the implementation of projects aimed at electronic advance data and postal security under the terms of a letter of agreement executed between the said designated operator and the Union; and 24 million CHF shall be allocated to a tied fund for the purposes of funding long-term liabilities of the Union, as further defined by the

Council of Administration, under the terms of a letter of agreement executed between the said designated operator and the Union.

10.2 The charge set forth in this paragraph shall not apply to those designated operators of member countries that apply self-declared rates reciprocally under paragraph 9 as a consequence of another designated operator exercising the option to self-declare rates in accordance with paragraph 7.

10.3 The designated operator paying the charge shall inform the International Bureau each year how the sum of 8 million CHF per annum is to be allocated, provided that the five annual allocations are distributed as set out above, pursuant to the said letter of agreement. A designated operator that exercises the option to self-declare rates in accordance with paragraph 7 shall be provided with due reporting of the expenditures related to the charge remitted, pursuant to this paragraph, under the terms of a letter of agreement executed between the said designated operator and the Union.

11 If a designated operator exercises the option to self-declare rates in accordance with paragraph 7, or if a designated operator reciprocally applies a self-declared rate under paragraph 9, then simultaneously with the introduction of self-declared rates, the said designated operator should consider making available to sending designated operators of Union member countries, on a non-discriminatory basis, proportionately adjusted charges for volume and distance, to the extent practicable and available in the receiving country's published domestic service for similar services under a mutually agreeable bilateral commercial agreement, within the framework of the rules of the national regulatory authority.

12 No reservations may be made to this article.

Article 30
Terminal dues. Provisions applicable to mail flows between designated operators of countries in the target system

1 Payment for letter-post items, including bulk mail but excluding M bags and IBRS items, shall be established on the basis of the application of the rates per item and per kilogramme reflecting the handling costs in the country of destination. Charges corresponding to priority items in the domestic service which are part of the universal service provision will be used as a basis for the calculation of terminal dues rates.

2 The terminal dues rates in the target system shall be calculated taking into account, where applicable in the domestic service, the classification of items based on their format, as provided for in article 17.5 of the Convention.

3 Designated operators in the target system shall exchange format-separated mails in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations.

4 Payment for IBRS items shall be as described in the Regulations.

5 The rates per item and per kilogramme are separated for small (P) and large (G) letter-post items and bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items. They shall be calculated on the basis of 70% of the charges for a 20-gramme small (P) letter-post item and for a 175-gramme large (G) letter-post item, exclusive of VAT or other taxes. For bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items, they shall be calculated from the P/G format line at 375 grammes, exclusive of VAT or other taxes.

6 The Postal Operations Council shall define the conditions for the calculation of the rates as well as the necessary operational, statistical and accounting procedures for the exchange of format-separated mails.

7 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system in a given year shall not lead to an increase of more than 13% in the terminal dues revenue for a letter-post item in the P/G format of 37.6 grammes and in the E format of 375 grammes, compared to the previous year.

8 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system prior to 2010 for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be higher than:

8.1 for the year 2022, 0.380 SDR per item and 2.966 SDR per kilogramme;

8.2 for the year 2023, 0.399 SDR per item and 3.114 SDR per kilogramme;

8.3 for the year 2024, 0.419 SDR per item and 3.270 SDR per kilogramme;

8.4 for the year 2025, 0.440 SDR per item and 3.434 SDR per kilogramme.

9 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items may not be higher than:

9.1 for the year 2022, 0.864 SDR per item and 1.942 SDR per kilogramme;

9.2 for the year 2023, 0.950 SDR per item and 2.136 SDR per kilogramme;

9.3 for the year 2024, 1.045 SDR per item and 2.350 SDR per kilogramme;

9.4 for the year 2025, 1.150 SDR per item and 2.585 SDR per kilogramme.

10 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be lower than:

10.1 for the year 2022, 0.272 SDR per item and 2.121 SDR per kilogramme;

10.2 for the year 2023, 0.292 SDR per item and 2.280 SDR per kilogramme;

10.3 for the year 2024, 0.314 SDR per item and 2.451 SDR per kilogramme;

10.4 for the year 2025, 0.330 SDR per item and 2.574 SDR per kilogramme.

11 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items may not be lower than:

11.1 for the year 2022, 0.677 SDR per item and 1.523 SDR per kilogramme;

11.2 for the year 2023, 0.711 SDR per item and 1.599 SDR per kilogramme;

11.3 for the year 2024, 0.747 SDR per item and 1.679 SDR per kilogramme;

11.4 for the year 2025, 0.784 SDR per item and 1.763 SDR per kilogramme.

12 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system as from 2010 and 2012 as well as between these countries and countries in the target system prior to 2010 for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be higher than:

12.1 for the year 2022, 0.342 SDR per item and 2.672 SDR per kilogramme;

12.2 for the year 2023, 0.372 SDR per item and 2.905 SDR per kilogramme;

12.3 for the year 2024, 0.404 SDR per item and 3.158 SDR per kilogramme;

12.4 for the year 2025, 0.440 SDR per item and 3.434 SDR per kilogramme.

13 The rates applied for flows between countries in the target system as from 2016 as well as between these countries and countries in the target system prior to 2010 or as from 2010 and 2012 for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be higher than:

13.1 for the year 2022, 0.313 SDR per item and 2.443 SDR per kilogramme;

13.2 for the year 2023, 0.351 SDR per item and 2.738 SDR per kilogramme;

13.3 for the year 2024, 0.393 SDR per item and 3.068 SDR per kilogramme;

13.4 for the year 2025, 0.440 SDR per item and 3.434 SDR per kilogramme.

14 For flows below 50 tonnes a year between countries that joined the target system in 2010, 2012 and 2016, as well as between these countries and countries that were in the target system prior to 2010, the per-kilogramme and per-item components shall be converted into a total rate per kilogramme on the basis of a worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail in which P and G format items account for 3.97 items weighing 0.14 kilogrammes and E format items account for 5.45 items weighing 0.86 kilogrammes.

15 The terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 shall substitute the rates pertaining to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items in this article; consequently, the provisions laid down in paragraphs 7, 9 and 11 shall not apply.

16 The payment for bulk mail sent to countries in the target system prior to 2010 shall be established by applying the rates per item and per kilogramme provided for in paragraphs 5 to 11 or article 29, as appropriate.

17 The payment for bulk mail sent to countries in the target system as from 2010, 2012 and 2016 shall be established by applying the rates per item and per kilogramme provided for in paragraphs 5 and 10 to 13 or article 29, as appropriate.

18 No reservations may be made to this article.

Article 31
Terminal dues. Provisions applicable to mail flows to, from and between designated operators of countries in the transitional system

1 In preparation for the entry into the target system of the designated operators of countries in the terminal dues transitional system, payment for letter-post items, including bulk mail but excluding M bags and IBRS items, shall be established on the basis of a rate per item and a rate per kilogramme.

2 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29, the provisions of article 30, paragraphs 1 to 3, 5 and 6, shall apply for the calculation of rates per item and per kilogramme applicable to small (P), large (G), bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items.

3 The rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system in a given year shall not lead to an increase of more than 15.5% in the terminal dues revenue for a letter-post item in the P/G format of 37.6 grammes, and more than 13% in the terminal dues revenue for a letter-post item in the E format of 375 grammes, compared to the previous year.

4 Payment for IBRS items shall be as described in the Regulations.

5 The rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be higher than:

5.1 for the year 2022, 0.285 SDR per item and 2.227 SDR per kilogramme;

5.2 for the year 2023, 0.329 SDR per item and 2.573 SDR per kilogramme;

5.3 for the year 2024, 0.380 SDR per item and 2.973 SDR per kilogramme;

5.4 for the year 2025, 0.440 SDR per item and 3.434 SDR per kilogramme.

6 The rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system for small (P) and for large (G) letter-post items may not be lower than:

6.1 for the year 2022, 0.272 SDR per item and 2.121 SDR per kilogramme;

6.2 for the year 2023, 0.292 SDR per item and 2.280 SDR per kilogramme;

6.3 for the year 2024, 0.314 SDR per item and 2.451 SDR per kilogramme;

6.4 for the year 2025, 0.330 SDR per item and 2.574 SDR per kilogramme.

7 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 and in accordance with 2 above, the rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items may not be higher than:

7.1 for the year 2022, 0.864 SDR per item and 1.942 SDR per kilogramme;

7.2 for the year 2023, 0.950 SDR per item and 2.136 SDR per kilogramme;

7.3 for the year 2024, 1.045 SDR per item and 2.350 SDR per kilogramme;

7.4 for the year 2025, 1.150 SDR per item and 2.585 SDR per kilogramme.

8 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 and in accordance with 2 above, the rates applied for flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system for bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items may not be lower than:

8.1 for the year 2022, 0.677 SDR per item and 1.523 SDR per kilogramme;

8.2 for the year 2023, 0.711 SDR per item and 1.599 SDR per kilogramme;

8.3 for the year 2024, 0.747 SDR per item and 1.679 SDR per kilogramme;

8.4 for the year 2025, 0.784 SDR per item and 1.763 SDR per kilogramme.

9 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29, the per-kilogramme and per-item components shall be converted into a total rate per kilogramme on the basis of a worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail as follows:

9.1 for the year 2022, not lower than 6.376 SDR per kilogramme and not higher than 7.822 SDR per kilogramme;

9.2 for the year 2023, not lower than 6.729 SDR per kilogramme and not higher than 8.681 SDR per kilogramme;

9.3 for the year 2024, not lower than 7.105 SDR per kilogramme and not higher than 9.641 SDR per kilogramme;

9.4 for the year 2025, not lower than 7.459 SDR per kilogramme and not higher than 10.718 SDR per kilogramme.

10 Other than for the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29, the flat rate per kilogramme shall be applied if neither the designated operator of origin nor the designated operator of destination requests the revision mechanism in order to revise the rate on the basis of the actual number of items per kilogramme, rather than the worldwide average. The sampling for the revision mechanism shall be applied in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations.

11 For mail flows from and between countries in the transitional system below 100 tonnes a year, the total rate per kilogramme shall be as follows:

11.1 for the year 2022, 6.376 SDR per kilogramme;

11.2 for the year 2023, 6.729 SDR per kilogramme;

11.3 for the year 2024, 7.105 SDR per kilogramme;

11.4 for the year 2025, 7.459 SDR per kilogramme.

12 For mail flows from countries in the target system to countries in the transitional system below 100 tonnes a year where terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items have been self-declared pursuant to article 29, the per-kilogramme and per-item components shall be converted into a total rate per kilogramme on the basis of a worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail, as referred to in article 30.14, except for the flows in 29.1.5 of 50 tonnes and above where the country in the transitional system samples its inbound flow.

13 For mail flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system above 100 tonnes a year where terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 and where the country of destination decides not to sample the inbound mail, the per-kilogramme and per-item components shall be converted into a total rate per kilogramme on the basis of a worldwide average composition of one kilogramme of mail, as referred to in article 30.14.

14 Except for the mail flows described in paragraph 11, the terminal dues rates applicable to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items that have been self-declared pursuant to article 29 shall substitute the rates pertaining to bulky (E) and small packet (E) letter-post items in this article; consequently, the provisions laid down in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 shall not apply.

15 The downward revision of the total rate in paragraph 10 may not be invoked by a country in the target system against a country in the transitional system unless the latter asks for a revision in the opposite direction.

16 For mail flows to, from and between countries in the transitional system that are below 100 tonnes per year, designated operators may send and receive format-separated mail on an optional basis, in accordance with the conditions specified in the Regulations. In the case of format-separated exchanges the rates in paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8 above shall apply if the designated operator of destination opts not to self-declare rates pursuant to article 29.

17 The payment for bulk mail to designated operators of countries in the target system shall be established by applying the rates per item and per kilogramme provided for in article 29 or 30. For bulk mail received, designated operators in the transitional system may request payment according to paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8 above and article 29, as appropriate.

18 No reservations may be made to this article.

Article 32
Quality of Service Fund

1 Terminal dues payable by all countries and territories to the countries classified as least developed countries and included in group IV for terminal dues and Quality of Service Fund (QSF) purposes, except for M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, shall be increased by 20% of the rates provided for in article 29 or 31 for payment into the QSF for improving the quality of service in those countries. There shall be no such payment from one group IV country to another group IV country.

2 Terminal dues, except for M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, payable by countries and territories classified as group I countries to the countries classified as group IV countries, other than the least developed countries referred to in paragraph 1 of this article, shall be increased by 10% of the rates provided for in article 29 or 31, for payment into the QSF for improving the quality of service in those countries.

3 Terminal dues, except for M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, payable by countries and territories classified as group II countries to the countries classified as group IV countries, other than the least developed countries referred to in paragraph 1 of this article, shall be increased by 10% of the rates provided for in article 29 or 31, for payment into the QSF for improving the quality of service in those countries.

4 Terminal dues, except in respect of M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, payable by countries and territories classified as group III countries to the countries classified as group IV countries, other than the least developed countries referred to in paragraph 1 of this article, shall be increased by 5% of the rates provided for in article 29 or 31, for payment into the QSF for improving the quality of service in those countries.

5 An increase of 1%, calculated on the basis of terminal dues payable by countries and territories classified as group I, II and III countries to the countries classified as group III countries, except in respect of M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, shall be paid into a common fund to be established for improving the quality of service in countries classified in groups II, III and IV and managed in accordance with the relevant procedures set by the Postal Operations Council.

6 An increase of 0.5%, calculated on the basis of terminal dues payable by countries and territories classified as group I, II and III countries to the countries classified as group III countries, except in respect of M bags, IBRS items and bulk mail items, shall be paid into a special account to be established as part of the common fund referred to in paragraph 5, specifically for improving the quality of service in group IV countries classified by the United Nations as least developed countries and managed in accordance with the relevant procedures set by the Postal Operations Council.

7 Subject to the relevant procedures set by the Postal Operations Council, any unused amounts contributed under paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this article and accumulated over the four preceding QSF reference years (with 2018 as the earliest reference year) shall also be transferred to the common fund referred to in paragraph 5 of this article. For the purposes of this paragraph, only funds that have not been used in QSF-approved quality of service projects within two years following receipt of the last payment of contributed

amounts for any given four-year period as defined above shall be transferred to the aforementioned common fund.

8 The combined terminal dues payable into the QSF for improving the quality of service of countries in group IV shall be subject to a minimum of 20,000 SDR per annum for each beneficiary country. The additional funds needed for reaching this minimum amount shall be invoiced, in proportion to the volumes exchanged, to the countries in groups I, II and III.

9 The Postal Operations Council shall adopt or update, by December 2021 at the latest, procedures for financing QSF projects.

C. Rates for parcel post

Article 33
Parcel post land and sea rates

1 With the exception of ECOMPRO parcels, parcels exchanged between two designated operators shall be subject to inward land rates calculated by combining the base rate per parcel and base rate per kilogramme laid down in the Regulations.

1.1 Bearing in mind the above base rates, designated operators may, in addition, be authorized to claim supplementary rates per parcel and per kilogramme in accordance with provisions laid down in the Regulations.

1.2 The rates mentioned in 1 and 1.1 shall be payable by the designated operator of the country of origin, unless the Regulations provide for exceptions to this principle.

1.3 The inward land rates shall be uniform for the whole of the territory of each country.

2 Parcels exchanged between two designated operators or between two offices of the same country by means of the land services of one or more other designated operators shall be subject to the transit land rates, payable to the designated operators which take part in the routeing on land, laid down in the Regulations, according to the distance step applicable.

2.1 For parcels in transit à découvert, intermediate designated operators shall be authorized to claim the single rate per item laid down in the Regulations.

2.2 Transit land rates shall be payable by the designated operator of the country of origin unless the Regulations provide for exceptions to this principle.

3 Any designated operator which participates in the sea conveyance of parcels shall be authorized to claim sea rates. These rates shall be payable by the designated operator of the country of origin, unless the Regulations provide for exceptions to this principle.

3.1 For each sea conveyance used, the sea rate shall be laid down in the Regulations according to the distance step applicable.

3.2 Designated operators may increase by 50% at most the sea rate calculated in accordance with 3.1. On the other hand, they may reduce it as they wish.

D. Air conveyance dues

Article 34
Basic rates and provisions concerning air conveyance dues

1 The basic rate applicable to the settlement of accounts between designated operators in respect of air conveyance shall be approved by the Postal Operations Council and shall be calculated by the International Bureau according to the formula specified in the Regulations. The rates applying to the air conveyance of parcels sent via the merchandise return service shall be calculated according to the provisions defined in the Regulations.

2 The calculation of air conveyance dues on closed dispatches, priority items, airmail items and air parcels sent in transit à découvert, missent items and misrouted mails, as well as the relevant methods of accounting, are described in the Regulations.

3 The air conveyance dues for the whole distance flown shall be borne:

3.1 in the case of closed mails, by the designated operator of the country of origin of the mails, including when these mails transit via one or more intermediate designated operators;

3.2 in the case of priority items and airmail items in transit à découvert, including missent items, by the designated operator which forwards the items to another designated operator.

4 These same regulations shall be applicable to items exempted from land and sea transit charges if they are conveyed by air.

5 Each designated operator of destination which provides air conveyance of international mail within its country shall be entitled to reimbursement of the additional costs incurred for such conveyance provided that the weighted average distance of the sectors flown exceeds 300 kilometres. The Postal Operations Council may replace the weighted average distance by other relevant criteria. Unless agreement has been reached that no charge should be made, the dues shall be uniform for all priority mails and airmails originating abroad whether or not this mail is reforwarded by air.

6 However, where the terminal dues levied by the designated operator of destination are based specifically on costs, domestic rates or self-declared rates set under article 29, no additional reimbursement for internal air conveyance shall be made.

7 The designated operator of destination shall exclude, for the purpose of calculating the weighted average distance, the weight of all mails for which the terminal dues calculation has been based specifically on costs, domestic rates or self-declared rates set under article 29 of the designated operator of destination.

E. Settlement of accounts

Article 35
Provisions specific to the settlement of accounts and payments for international postal exchanges

1 Settlements and payments in respect of operations carried out in accordance with the present Convention (including settlements and payments for the transport (forwarding) of postal items, settlements and payments for the treatment of postal items in the country of destination and settlements and payments in compensation for any loss, theft or damage relating to postal items) shall be based on and made in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and other Acts of the Union, and shall not require the preparation of any documents by a designated operator except in cases provided for in the Acts of the Union.

2 In order to ensure the provision of the universal postal service, as set forth in article 3, and the integrity of the international postal network, designated operators shall make payments for operations carried out in accordance with the Convention.

F. Fixing of charges and rates

Article 36
Authority of the Postal Operations Council to fix charges and rates

1 The Postal Operations Council shall have the authority to fix the following rates and charges, which are payable by designated operators in accordance with the conditions shown in the Regulations:

1.1 transit charges for the handling and conveyance of letter mails through one or more intermediary countries;

1.2 basic rates and air conveyance dues for the carriage of mail by air;

1.3 inward land rates for the handling of all inward parcels except ECOMPRO parcels;

1.4 transit land rates for the handling and conveyance of parcels through an intermediary country;

1.5 sea rates for the conveyance of parcels by sea.

1.6 outward land rates for the provision of the merchandise return service for parcels.

2 Any revision made, in accordance with a methodology that ensures equitable remuneration for designated operators performing the services, must be based on reliable and representative economic and financial data. Any change decided upon shall enter into force at a date set by the Postal Operations Council.

Section VIII
Optional services

Article 37
EMS and integrated logistics

1 Member countries or designated operators may agree with each other to participate in the following services, which are described in the Regulations:

1.1 EMS, which is a postal express service for documents and merchandise, and shall whenever possible be the quickest postal service by physical means. This service may be provided on the basis of the EMS Standard Multilateral Agreement or by bilateral agreement;

1.2 integrated logistics, which is a service that responds fully to customers' logistical requirements and includes the phases before and after the physical transmission of goods and documents.

Article 38
Electronic postal services

1 Member countries or designated operators may agree with each other to participate in the following electronic postal services, which are described in the Regulations:

1.1 electronic postal mail, which is an electronic postal service involving the transmission of electronic messages and information by designated operators;

1.2 electronic postal registered mail, which is a secure electronic postal service that provides proof of sending and proof of delivery of an electronic message and a secure communication channel to the authenticated users;

1.3 electronic postal certification mark, which provides evidentiary proof of an electronic event, in a given form, at a given time, and involving one or more parties;

1.4 electronic postal mailbox, which enables the sending of electronic messages by an authenticated mailer and the delivery and storage of electronic messages and information for the authenticated addressee.

Section IX
Final provisions

Article 39
Conditions for approval of proposals concerning the Convention and the Regulations

1 To become effective, proposals submitted to Congress relating to this Convention must be approved by a majority of the member countries present and voting which have the right to vote. At least half of the member countries represented at Congress and having the right to vote shall be present at the time of voting.

2 To become effective, proposals relating to the Regulations must be approved by a majority of the members of the Postal Operations Council having the right to vote.

3 To become effective, proposals introduced between Congresses relating to this Convention and to its Final Protocol must obtain:

3.1 two thirds of the votes, at least one half of the member countries of the Union which have the right to vote having taken part in the vote, if they involve amendments;

3.2 a majority of the votes if they involve interpretation of the provisions.

4 Any member country may, no later than ninety days from the date of notification of an amendment adopted under 3.1, propose a reservation to that same amendment, subject by analogy to the same approval conditions as set out under 3.1 and the relevant provisions of article 40.

Article 40
Reservations at Congress

1 Any reservation which is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Union shall not be permitted.

2 As a general rule, any member country whose views are not shared by other member countries shall endeavour, as far as possible, to conform to the opinion of the majority. Reservations should be made only in cases of absolute necessity, and proper reasons given.

3 Reservations to any article of the present Convention shall be submitted to Congress as a Congress proposal written in one of the working languages of the International Bureau and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

4 To become effective, proposals concerning reservations must be approved by whatever majority is required for amendment of the article to which the reservation relates.

5 In principle, reservations shall be applied on a reciprocal basis between the reserving member country and the other member countries.

6 Reservations to the present Convention shall be inserted in the Final Protocol to the present Convention, on the basis of proposals approved by Congress.

Article 41
Entry into force and duration of the Convention

This Convention shall come into force on 1 July 2022 (with the exception of all the provisions contained in section VII, “Remuneration”, which shall come into force on 1 January 2022) and remain in force for an indefinite period.

In witness whereof the plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the member countries have signed this Convention in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each member country by the International Bureau of the Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

Final Protocol to the Universal Postal Convention

Article

I. Ownership of postal items. Withdrawal from the post. Alteration or correction of address
II. Postage stamps
III. Posting abroad of letter-post items
IV. Charges
V. Exception to the exemption of items for the blind from postal charges
VI. Basic services
VII. Advice of delivery
VIII. Prohibitions (letter post)
IX. Prohibitions (postal parcels)
X. Articles subject to customs duty
XI. Presentation-to-Customs charge
XII. Inquiries
XIII. Exceptional inward land rates
XIV. Basic rates and provisions concerning air conveyance dues
XV. Special tariffs
XVI. Authority of the Postal Operations Council to fix charges and rates

Final Protocol to the Universal Postal Convention

At the moment of proceeding to signature of the Universal Postal Convention (hereinafter the “Convention”) concluded this day, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union (hereinafter the “Union”) have agreed the following:

Article I
Ownership of postal items. Withdrawal from the post. Alteration or correction of address

1 The provisions in article 5.1 and 2 shall not apply to Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain (Kingdom), Barbados, Belize, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Hong Kong, China, Dominica, Egypt, Eswatini, Fiji, Gambia, Grenada, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Tanzania (United Rep.), Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Vanuatu and Zambia.

2 Nor shall article 5.1 and 2 apply to Austria, Denmark and Iran (Islamic Rep.), whose internal legislation does not allow withdrawal from the Post or alteration of the address of correspondence, at the request of the sender, from the time when the addressee has been informed of the arrival of an item addressed to him.

3 Article 5.1 shall not apply to Australia, Ghana and Zimbabwe.

4 Article 5.2 shall not apply to Bahamas, Belgium, the Dem. People’s Rep. of Korea, Iraq and Myanmar, whose legislation does not permit withdrawal from the post or alteration of address of letter-post items at the sender’s request.

5 Article 5.2 shall not apply to the United States of America.

6 Article 5.2 shall apply to Australia only in so far as that article is consistent with its domestic legislation.

7 Notwithstanding article 5.2, Dem. Rep. of the Congo, El Salvador, Panama (Rep.), Philippines and Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep.) shall be authorized not to return postal parcels after the addressee has requested their clearance by Customs, since this is incompatible with those countries’ customs legislation.

Article II
Postage stamps

Notwithstanding article 6.7, Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, will process letter-post items and postal parcels bearing postage stamps using new materials or technologies that are not compatible with their respective mail processing machines only upon prior agreement with the designated operator of origin concerned.

Article III
Posting abroad of letter-post items

1 Australia, Austria, Greece, New Zealand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America reserve the right to impose a charge, equivalent to the cost of the work it incurs, on any designated operator which, under the provisions of article 12.4, sends to it items for disposal which were not originally dispatched as postal items by their services.

2 Notwithstanding article 12.4, Canada reserves the right to collect from the designated operator of origin such amount as will ensure recovery of not less than the costs incurred by it in the handling of such items.

3 Article 12.4 allows the designated operator of destination to claim, from the designated operator of posting, appropriate remuneration for delivering letter-post items posted abroad in large quantities. Australia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reserve the right to limit any such payment to the appropriate domestic tariff for equivalent items in the country of destination.

4 Article 12.4 allows the designated operator of destination to claim, from the designated operator of posting, appropriate remuneration for delivering letter-post items posted abroad in large quantities. The following member countries reserve the right to limit any such payment to the limits authorized in the Regulations for bulk mail: Bahamas, Barbados, Brunei Darussalam, China (People's Rep.), Grenada, Guyana, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, New Zealand, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Thailand, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and United States of America.

5 Notwithstanding the reservations under 4, the following member countries reserve the right to apply in full the provisions of article 12 of the Convention to mail received from Union member countries: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.), Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Guinea, Iran (Islamic Rep.), Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mali, Mauritania, Monaco, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Rep., Togo and Turkey.

6 In application of article 12.4, Germany reserves the right to request the mailing country to grant compensation of the amount it would receive from the country of which the sender is resident.

7 Notwithstanding the reservations made under article III, China (People's Rep.) reserves the right to limit any payment for delivering letter-post items posted abroad in large quantities to the limits authorized in the Convention and its Regulations for bulk mail.

8 Notwithstanding article 12.3, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reserve the right to claim from the sender or, failing that, from the designated operator of posting, the payment of the internal rates.

Article IV
Charges

1 Notwithstanding article 15, Australia, Belarus, Canada, Finland and New Zealand shall be authorized to collect postal charges other than those provided for in the Regulations, when such charges are consistent with the legislation of their countries.

2 Notwithstanding article 15, Brazil shall be authorized to collect an additional fee from the addressees of ordinary items containing merchandise that had to be converted to tracked items as a result of customs and security requirements.

Article V
Exception to the exemption of items for the blind from postal charges

1 Notwithstanding article 16, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Turkey, which do not concede exemption from postal charges to items for the blind in their internal service, may collect the postage and charges for special services which may not, however, exceed those in their internal service.

2 France shall apply the provisions of article 16 concerning items for the blind subject to its national regulations.

3 Notwithstanding article 16.3, and in accordance with its national legislation, Brazil reserves the right to consider as items for the blind only those items which are sent by or addressed to blind persons or organizations for the blind. Items not satisfying these conditions shall be subject to payment of postage.

4 Notwithstanding article 16, New Zealand will accept as items for the blind for delivery in New Zealand only those items that are exempted from postal charges in its domestic service.

5 Notwithstanding article 16, Finland, which does not provide exemption from postal charges for items for the blind in its domestic service according to the definitions in article 16 adopted by Congress, may collect the domestic charges for items for the blind destined for other countries.

6 Notwithstanding article 16, Canada, Denmark and Sweden allow exemption from postal charges for the blind only to the extent provided for in their internal legislation.

7 Notwithstanding article 16, Iceland accepts exemption from postal charges for the blind only to the extent provided for in its internal legislation.

8 Notwithstanding article 16, Australia will accept as items for the blind for delivery in Australia only those items that are exempted from postal charges in its domestic service.

9 Notwithstanding article 16, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America may collect the charges for special services which are applied items for the blind in their internal service.

Article VI
Basic services

1 Notwithstanding the provisions of article 17, Australia does not agree to the extension of basic services to include postal parcels.

2 The provisions of article 17.2.4 shall not apply to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, whose national legislation requires a lower weight limit. Health and safety legislation in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland limits the weight of mail bags to 20 kilogrammes.

3 Notwithstanding article 17.2.4, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan shall be authorized to limit to 20 kilogrammes the maximum weight of inward and outward M bags.

4 Notwithstanding article 17, Iceland accepts items for the blind only to the extent provided for in its internal legislation.

Article VII
Advice of delivery

1 Belgium, Canada and Sweden shall be authorized not to apply article 18.3.3, as regards parcels, given that they do not offer the advice of delivery service for parcels in their internal service.

2 Notwithstanding article 18.3.3, Denmark and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland reserve the right not to admit inward advices of delivery, given that they do not offer advice of delivery in their internal service.

3 Notwithstanding article 18.3.3, Brazil shall be authorized to admit inward advices of delivery only when they can be returned electronically.

Article VIII
Prohibitions (letter post)

1 Exceptionally, Dem. People's Rep. of Korea and Lebanon shall not accept registered items containing coins, bank notes, securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles. They shall not be strictly bound by the provisions of the Regulations with regard to their liability in cases of theft or damage, or where items containing articles made of glass or fragile articles are concerned.

2 Exceptionally, Bolivia, China (People's Rep.), excluding Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Iraq, Nepal, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Viet Nam shall not accept registered items containing coins, bank notes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles.

3 Myanmar reserves the right not to accept insured items containing the valuable articles listed in article 19.6, as this is contrary to its internal regulations.

4 Nepal does not accept registered items or insured items containing currency notes or coins, except by special agreement to that effect.

5 Uzbekistan does not accept registered or insured items containing coins, bank notes, cheques, postage stamps or foreign currency and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

6 Iran (Islamic Rep.) does not accept items containing articles contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion, and reserves the right not to accept letter-post items (ordinary, registered or insured) containing coins, bank notes, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss or damage to such items.

7 The Philippines reserves the right not to accept any kind of letter post (ordinary, registered or insured) containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles.

8 Australia does not accept postal items of any kind containing bullion or bank notes. In addition, it does not accept registered items for delivery in Australia, or items in transit à découvert, containing valuables such as jewellery, precious metals, precious or semi-precious stones, securities, coins or any form of negotiable financial instrument. It declines all liability for items posted which are not in compliance with this reservation.

9 China (People's Rep.), excluding Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, shall not accept insured items containing coins, bank notes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer and travellers' cheques in accordance with its internal regulations.

10 Latvia and Mongolia reserve the right not to accept, in accordance with their national legislation, ordinary, registered or insured mail containing coins, bank notes, securities payable to bearer and travellers' cheques.

11 Brazil reserves the right not to accept ordinary, registered or insured mail containing coins, bank notes in circulation or securities of any kind payable to bearer.

12 Viet Nam reserves the right not to accept letters containing articles or goods.

13 Indonesia does not accept registered or insured items containing coins, bank notes, cheques, postage stamps, foreign currency, or any kind of securities payable to bearer for delivery in Indonesia, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

14 Kyrgyzstan reserves the right not to accept letter-post items (ordinary, registered, insured, small packets) containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

15 Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan shall not accept registered or insured items containing coins, banknotes, credit notes or any securities payable to bearer, cheques, precious metals, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels and other valuable articles or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

16 Moldova and the Russian Federation do not accept registered or insured items containing bank notes in circulation, securities (cheques) of any kind payable to bearer or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

17 Notwithstanding article 19.3, France reserves the right not to accept items containing goods in cases where these items do not comply with its national regulations, or international regulations, or technical and packing instructions for air transport.

18 Cuba reserves the right not to accept, handle, convey or deliver letter-post items containing coins, banknotes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, cheques, precious metals and stones, jewels or other valuable articles, or any kind of document, goods or object in cases where these items do not comply with its national regulations, or international regulations, or technical and packing instructions for air transport, and shall accept no liability in cases of theft, loss or damage to such items. Cuba reserves the right not to accept letter-post items subject to customs duty containing goods that are imported to the country if their value does not comply with its national regulations.

Article IX
Prohibitions (postal parcels)

1 Myanmar and Zambia shall be authorized not to accept insured parcels containing the valuable articles covered in article 19.6.1.3.1, since this is contrary to their internal regulations.

2 Exceptionally, Lebanon and Sudan shall not accept parcels containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles, or containing liquids or easily liquefiable elements or articles made of glass or similar or fragile articles. They shall not be bound by the relevant provisions of the Regulations.

3 Brazil shall be authorized not to accept insured parcels containing coins and currency notes in circulation, as well as any securities payable to bearer, since this is contrary to its internal regulations.

4 Ghana shall be authorized not to accept insured parcels containing coins and currency notes in circulation, since this is contrary to its internal regulations.

5 In addition to the articles listed in article 19, Saudi Arabia shall be authorized not to accept parcels containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles. Nor does it accept parcels containing medicines of any kind unless they are accompanied by a medical prescription issued by a competent official authority, products designed for extinguishing fires, chemical liquids or articles contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion.

6 In addition to the articles referred to in article 19, Oman does not accept items containing:

6.1 medicines of any sort unless they are accompanied by a medical prescription issued by a competent official authority;

6.2 fire-extinguishing products or chemical liquids;

6.3 articles contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion.

7 In addition to the articles listed in article 19, Iran (Islamic Rep.) shall be authorized not to accept parcels containing articles contrary to the principles of the Islamic religion, and reserves the right not to accept ordinary or insured parcels containing coins, bank notes, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels or other valuable articles; it shall accept no liability in cases of loss or damage to such items.

8 The Philippines shall be authorized not to accept any kind of parcel containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles, or containing liquids or easily liquefiable elements or articles made of glass or similar or fragile articles.

9 Australia does not accept postal items of any kind containing bullion or bank notes.

10 China (People's Rep.) shall not accept ordinary parcels containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, travellers' cheques, platinum, gold or silver, whether manufactured or not, precious stones or other valuable articles. Furthermore, with the exception of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, insured parcels containing coins, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer and travellers' cheques shall not be accepted.

11 Mongolia reserves the right not to accept, in accordance with its national legislation, parcels containing coins, bank notes, securities payable to bearer and travellers' cheques.

12 Latvia does not accept ordinary and insured parcels containing coins, bank notes, securities (cheques) of any kind payable to bearer or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

13 Moldova, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Uzbekistan do not accept ordinary or insured parcels containing bank notes in circulation, securities (cheques) of any kind payable to bearer or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

14 Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan do not accept ordinary or insured parcels containing coins, bank notes, credit notes or any securities payable to bearer, cheques, precious metals, whether manufactured or not, precious stones, jewels and other valuable articles or foreign currency, and shall accept no liability in cases of loss of or damage to such items.

15 Cuba reserves the right not to accept, handle, convey or deliver postal parcels containing coins, banknotes, currency notes or securities of any kind payable to bearer, cheques, precious metals and stones, jewels or other valuable articles, or any kind of document, goods or object in cases where these items do not comply with its national regulations, or international regulations, or technical and packing instructions for air transport, and shall accept no liability in cases of theft, loss or damage to such items. Cuba reserves the right not to accept postal parcels subject to customs duty containing goods that are imported to the country if their value does not comply with its national regulations.

Article X
Articles subject to customs duty

1 With reference to article 19, Bangladesh and El Salvador do not accept insured items containing articles subject to customs duty.

2 With reference to article 19, Afghanistan, Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cambodia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dem. People's Rep. of Korea, El Salvador, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, Nepal, Peru, Russian Federation, San Marino, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep.) do not accept ordinary and registered letters containing articles subject to customs duty.

3 With reference to article 19, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.), Djibouti, Mali and Mauritania do not accept ordinary letters containing articles subject to customs duty.

4 Notwithstanding the provisions set out under 1 to 3, the sending of serums, vaccines and urgently required medicaments which are difficult to procure shall be permitted in all cases.

Article XI
Presentation-to-Customs charge

1 Gabon reserves the right to collect a presentation-to-Customs charge from customers.

2 Notwithstanding article 20.2, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Cyprus, Finland, Romania, the Russian Federation and Spain reserve the right to collect a presentation-to-Customs charge from customers for any item submitted to customs control.

3 Notwithstanding article 20.2, Azerbaijan, Greece, Pakistan and Turkey reserve the right to collect from customers a presentation-to-Customs charge for all items presented to customs authorities.

4 Congo (Rep.) and Zambia reserve the right to collect a presentation-to-Customs charge from customers in respect of parcels.

Article XII
Inquiries

1 Notwithstanding article 21.2, Cape Verde, Chad, Dem. People's Rep. of Korea, Egypt, Gabon, Greece, Iran (Islamic Rep.), Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Rep., Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Overseas Territories (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Uzbekistan and Zambia reserve the right to collect from customers charges on inquiries lodged in respect of letter-post items.

2 Notwithstanding article 21.2, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Canada, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Romania and Slovakia reserve the right to collect a special charge when, on completion of the investigation conducted in response to the inquiry, it emerges that the latter was unjustified.

3 Afghanistan, Cape Verde, Congo (Rep.), Egypt, Gabon, Iran (Islamic Rep.), Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Rep., Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Zambia reserve the right to collect an inquiry charge from customers in respect of parcels.

4 Notwithstanding article 21.2, Brazil, Panama (Rep.) and the United States of America reserve the right to collect a charge from customers for inquiries lodged in respect of letter-post items and parcels posted in countries which apply that type of charge in accordance with paragraphs 1 to 3 of this article.

Article XIII
Exceptional inward land rates

Notwithstanding article 33, Afghanistan reserves the right to collect an additional exceptional inward land rate of 7.50 SDR per parcel.

Article XIV
Basic rates and provisions concerning air conveyance dues

Notwithstanding the provisions of article 34, Australia reserves the right to apply air conveyance rates for outward parcels sent via the merchandise return service, either as laid down in the Regulations or by any other means, including bilateral agreements.

Article XV
Special tariffs

1 Belgium, Norway and United States of America may collect higher land rates for air parcels than for surface parcels.

2 Lebanon shall be authorized to collect for parcels up to 1 kilogramme the charge applicable to parcels over 1 and up to 3 kilogrammes.

3 Panama (Rep.) shall be authorized to collect 0.20 SDR per kilogramme for surface airlifted (S.A.L.) parcels in transit.

Article XVI
Authority of the Postal Operations Council to fix charges and rates

Notwithstanding article 36.1.6, Australia reserves the right to apply outward land rates for the provision of the merchandise return service for parcels, either as laid down in the Regulations or by any other means, including bilateral agreements.

In witness whereof, the plenipotentiaries have drawn up this Protocol which shall have the same force and the same validity as if its provisions were inserted in the text of the Convention itself, and they have signed it in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each member country by the International Bureau of the Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

Postal Payment Services Agreement

Postal Payment Services Agreement
Final Protocol to the Postal Payment Services Agreement

Postal Payment Services Agreement

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Postal Payment Services Agreement

The undersigned, plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the member countries of the Universal Postal Union (hereinafter the “Union”), in provision with article 21.4 of the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have, by common consent and subject to article 24.3 and 5 of the Constitution, drawn up the following Agreement, which is in line with the principles of the Constitution, in particular in order to foster financial inclusion and implement a secure and accessible postal payment service adapted to the greatest number of users on the basis of systems enabling the interoperability of designated operators’ networks.

Part I
Common principles applying to the postal payment services

Chapter I
General provisions

Article 1
Scope of the Agreement

1 Subject to the provisions under 2, each member country shall ensure on a best effort basis that the following postal payment services are offered or accepted by electronic means on its territory:

1.1 Money order in cash: the sender hands over funds at the service access point and asks for the full amount to be paid to the payee in cash, with no deductions.

1.2 Outpayment money order: the sender gives instructions for his account to be debited and asks for the payee to be paid the full amount in cash, with no deductions.

1.3 Inpayment money order: the sender hands over funds at the service access point and asks for them to be paid into the payee’s account, with no deductions.

1.4 Account transfer: the sender gives instructions for his account to be debited and asks for the payee’s account to be credited with the equivalent amount, with no deductions.

2 In the event that none of the electronic postal payment services outlined under § 1 are offered or accepted by a member country, that member country must offer or accept at least one of the aforementioned postal payment services by paper-based means.

3 The Regulations shall define the procedures for executing the present Agreement.

Article 2
Definitions

1 Competent authority – any national authority of a member country which, by virtue of the powers conferred on it by the law or regulations, supervises the activities of the designated operator or of the persons referred to in the present article. The competent authority may contact the administrative or legal authorities

engaged in combating money laundering and terrorist financing, and in particular the national financial intelligence unit and the oversight authorities.

2 Instalment – partial advance payment made by the issuing designated operator to the paying designated operator to ease the cash situation of the paying designated operator's postal payment services.

3 Money laundering – the conversion or transfer of funds in the knowledge that these funds are derived from a criminal activity or participation in such activity, with the aim of hiding or disguising the illegal origins of the funds or of helping any person having participated in such activity to escape the legal consequences of his action; money laundering shall be considered as such when the activities producing funds to be laundered are liable to prosecution in the territory of another member country or a third country.

4 Ring-fencing – the compulsory separation of users' funds from those of the designated operator which prevents the use of users' funds for purposes other than the execution of postal payment service operations.

5 Clearing house – within the framework of multilateral exchanges, a clearing house handles mutual debts and claims arising from services provided by one operator to another. Its role is to put to account exchanges between operators that are settled through a settlement bank, and to take the necessary steps in the event of settlement irregularities.

6 Clearing – a system enabling the number of payments to be made to be kept to a minimum by drawing up a periodic debit and credit balance for the parties involved. Clearing involves two stages: determining the bilateral balances and, by adding these balances, calculating the overall position of each entity with regard to the entire community in order to carry out only one settlement based on the debtor or creditor position of the entity in question.

7 Concentration account – an aggregation of funds from various sources combined into one account.

8 Liaison account – giro account opened reciprocally by designated operators as part of bilateral relations, by means of which mutual debts and credits are settled.

9 Criminal activity – any type of participation in, or perpetration of, a crime or misdemeanour, as defined by the national legislation.

10 Security deposit – amount deposited, in the form of cash or securities, to guarantee payments between designated operators.

11 Payee – natural or legal person designated by the sender as the beneficiary of the money order or postal giro transfer.

12 Third currency – intermediate currency used in cases of non-convertibility between two currencies or for clearing/settlement of accounts.

13 Due diligence in relation to users – general obligation on the part of designated operators, comprising the following duties:

13.1 identifying users;

13.2 obtaining information on the purpose of the postal payment order;

13.3 monitoring postal payment orders;

13.4 checking that the information concerning users is up to date;

13.5 reporting suspicious transactions to the competent authorities.

14 Electronic data relating to postal payment orders – data transmitted by electronic means, from one designated operator to another, relating to the execution of postal payment orders, inquiries, alteration or correction of addresses or reimbursement; these data are either entered by designated operators, or generated automatically by their information system, and indicate a change in the status of the postal payment order or of the order request.

15 Personal data – personal information needed in order to identify the sender or the payee.

16 Postal data – data needed for the routeing and tracking of a postal payment order or for statistical purposes, as well as for the centralized clearing system.

17 Electronic data interchange (EDI) – computer-to-computer exchange of data concerning operations, by means of networks and standard formats compatible with the Union system.

18 Sender – natural or legal person that gives the designated operator the order to execute a postal payment service in accordance with the Acts of the Union.

19 Terrorist financing – covers the financing of acts of terrorism, of terrorists and of terrorist organizations.

20 Users' funds – sums delivered by the sender to the issuing designated operator in cash, or debited to the sender's account written up in the books of the issuing designated operator, or by any other secure method of electronic banking, placed at the disposal of the issuing designated operator or any other financial operator by the sender, to be paid to a payee specified by the sender in accordance with the present Agreement and its Regulations.

21 COD (cash-on-delivery) money order – operational term used to designate a postal payment order given in exchange for the delivery of a COD item, as defined in article 1 of the present Agreement.

22 Currency of issue – currency of the country of destination or third currency authorized by the destination country in which the postal payment order is issued.

23 Issuing designated operator – designated operator which transmits a postal payment order to the paying designated operator, in accordance with the Acts of the Union.

24 Paying designated operator – designated operator responsible for executing the postal payment order in the destination country, in accordance with the Acts of the Union.

25 Validity period – period of time during which the postal payment order may be executed or cancelled.

26 Service access point – physical or virtual place where the user may deposit or receive a postal payment order.

27 Remuneration – sum owed by the issuing designated operator to the paying designated operator for payment to the payee.

28 Revocability – the ability of the sender to recall his postal payment order (money order or transfer) up to the moment of payment, or at the end of the validity period if payment has not been made.

29 Counterparty risk – risk that one of the parties to a contract will default, leading to loss or liquidity risk.

30 Liquidity risk – risk that a settlement system participant or a counterpart is temporarily unable to fulfil an obligation in its entirety at the required time.

31 Reporting of suspicious transaction – obligation of the designated operator, based on the national legislation and Union resolutions, to provide its competent national authorities with information on suspicious transactions.

32 Track and trace – system that enables the progress of postal payment order to be monitored and its location and status to be identified at any time.

33 Price – amount paid by the sender to the issuing designated operator for a postal payment service.

34 Suspicious transaction – single or repeated postal payment order or request for reimbursement relating to a postal payment order linked to a money-laundering or terrorist financing offence.

35 User – natural or legal person, sender or payee, that uses the postal payment services in accordance with the present Agreement.

Article 3
Designation of the entity or entities responsible for fulfilling the obligations arising from adherence to this Agreement

1 Member countries shall notify the International Bureau, within six months of the end of Congress, of the name and address of the governmental body responsible for providing governmental regulation and oversight related to the provision of postal payment services.

2 Within six months of the end of Congress, member countries shall also provide the International Bureau with the name and address of the operator(s) officially designated to operate the postal payment services by means of its (their) network, by offering or accepting at least one postal payment service, and to fulfil the obligations arising from the Acts of the Union on their territories.

3 In the absence of such notification within the prescribed six-month period, the International Bureau shall send a reminder to the member country.

4 Between Congresses, changes concerning the governmental bodies and the officially designated operators shall be notified to the International Bureau as soon as possible.

5 Designated operators shall provide the postal payment services in accordance with the present Agreement.

Article 4
Functions of member countries

1 Member countries shall take the necessary steps towards ensuring the continuity of the postal payment services in the event of default by their designated operator(s), without prejudice to the liability of that (those) operator(s) towards other designated operators by virtue of the Acts of the Union.

2 In the event of the default of its designated operator(s), the member country shall inform, through the International Bureau, the other member countries party to the present Agreement:

2.1 of the suspension of its postal payment services, with effect from the date indicated and until further notice;

2.2 of the measures taken to re-establish its services under the responsibility of any new designated operator.

Article 5
Exceptional provision of postal payment services by authorized wider postal sector players

1 Without prejudice to the subcontracting possibility outlined in article 6.4, member countries: i) where the entire spectrum of postal payment services as defined in article 1 is not provided by their designated operator(s); or ii) facing the default situation referred to in article 4, shall have the possibility of authorizing the engagement, by designated operators, of wider postal sector players (hereinafter “WPSPs”) to participate in the interconnection and/or operation of postal payment services, with the aim of fostering financial inclusion and further enabling the interoperability of an international postal payment services network.

1.1 Member countries shall ensure that their authorizations for the operation of any postal payment services operated by WPSPs require WPSPs to comply with the relevant provisions of this Agreement relating to postal payment services and shall ensure that such authorizations require the WPSP to comply with any relevant Union requirement for licensing arrangements to operate under the PosTransfer collective brand.

1.2 The identification of WPSPs by member countries shall be in accordance with the parameters defined in paragraph 1 (subject to the detailed operational criteria defined by the relevant body established under the Postal Operations Council).

1.3 The International Bureau shall be responsible for preparing the list of member countries in which WPSPs may be authorized to operate, as well as the list of authorized WPSPs. This list shall be updated by the International Bureau on a regular basis and communicated by circular to all member countries.

2 The exercise of the possibility outlined in paragraph 1 shall be subject to the national legislation or policy of the member country in which the WPSP is established. In this regard, and without prejudice to the designation obligations contained in article 3, member countries shall guarantee the continued fulfilment of their obligations under the PPSA.

2.1 Subject to the criteria referred to above, any licensing application concerning a WPSP shall be addressed to the member country where the WPSP intends to perform activities related to the interconnection or operation of postal payment services. In this regard, a WPSP may operate in several member countries provided that it is eligible and has been authorized to do so by the governmental authority of the member country concerned.

2.2 Any authorization formally granted by a member country to a WPSP shall be limited in time and without prejudice to the possibility for the member country to revoke such an authorization should the conditions outlined in paragraph 1 no longer be met.

2.3 For the purposes of paragraph 1.3 above, a copy of the aforementioned member country authorization of a WPSP (and any relevant documentation associated therewith) shall be provided without delay to the International Bureau.

3 The requirement set forth in paragraph 2 shall equally apply to the destination member country for the acceptance of postal payment orders from WPSPs.

4 Member countries shall inform the International Bureau on their policies with regard to postal payment orders transmitted through and/or received from WPSPs. Such information shall be made available on the Union’s website.

5 Nothing in this article shall be construed to imply that WPSPs are in the same situation as designated operators of the member country concerned under the Acts of the Union, nor impose a legal obligation on other member countries to recognize such WPSPs as designated operators for the purposes of this Agreement.

6 In order to ensure compliance with the provisions of this article, member countries shall agree to make any authorizations they provide to WPSPs to participate in the interconnection and/or operation of postal payment services conditional on a requirement that the WPSPs consent that their activities relevant to this Agreement may be subject to periodic audits to be conducted by the International Bureau, as per the relevant procedures defined in the Regulations.

Article 6
Operational functions

1 Member countries shall ensure that their designated operators and authorized WPSPs referred to in article 5 are responsible for the execution of postal payment services vis-à-vis other operators and users.

2 They shall be accountable for risks such as operational risks, liquidity risks, and counterparty risks, in accordance with the national legislation.

3 In order to implement the postal payment services whose provision is entrusted to the designated operators and authorized WPSPs referred to in § 1, member countries shall ensure that such entities conclude bilateral or multilateral agreements with other designated operators and authorized WPSPs of their choice.

4 Without prejudice to the foregoing obligations, a designated operator shall have the possibility of subcontracting, in part, the interconnection and operation of the postal payment services, defined herein as entrusted by its member country, to other entities contractually bound with that designated operator and in accordance with national legislation. In this regard, the designated operator shall guarantee the continued fulfilment of its obligations in accordance with the present Agreement and be fully responsible for all its relations with designated operators of other member countries and with the International Bureau.

Article 7
Ownership of postal payment services funds

1 Any sum of money, given in cash or debited to an account for the execution of a postal payment order, shall belong to the sender until such time as it is paid to the payee or credited to the payee's account, except in the case of COD money orders.

2 During the validity period of the postal payment order, the sender may recall this postal payment order until its payment to the payee or until it is credited to the payee's account, except in the case of COD money orders.

3 Any sum of money, given in cash or debited to an account for the execution of a COD money order, shall belong to the sender of the COD item once the order has been issued. The payment order shall then be irrevocable.

Article 8
Prevention of money laundering, terrorist financing and financial crime

1 Designated operators shall take all necessary steps to fulfil their obligations stemming from national and international legislation aimed at combating money laundering, terrorist financing and financial crime.

2 They should inform their country's competent authorities of suspicious transactions, in accordance with national laws and regulations.

3 The Regulations shall set out the detailed obligations of designated operators in respect of user identification, due diligence and the procedures for implementing regulations against money laundering, terrorist financing and financial crime.

Article 9
Confidentiality and use of personal data

1 Member countries and their designated operators shall ensure the confidentiality and security of personal data in accordance with national legislation and, where applicable, international obligations, and the Regulations.

2 Personal data may be employed only for the purposes for which it was gathered in accordance with applicable national legislation and international obligations.

3 Personal data shall be notified only to third parties authorized by applicable national legislation to access that data.

4 Designated operators shall inform their customers of the use that is made of their personal data, and of the purpose for which it has been gathered.

5 The data required to execute the postal payment order shall be confidential.

6 For statistical purposes, and possibly also for the purpose of quality of service measurement and centralized clearing, designated operators shall be required to provide the International Bureau of the Union with postal data at least once a year. The International Bureau shall treat all individual postal data in confidence.

Article 10
Technological neutrality

1 The exchange of data necessary for the provision of the services defined in this Agreement shall be governed by the principle of technological neutrality, which means that the provision of these services does not depend on the use of a particular technology.

2 The procedures for executing postal payment orders, including the conditions for depositing, entering, dispatching, paying and reimbursing orders and for processing inquiries, and the time limit for making the funds available to the payee, may vary according to the technology used for transmitting the order.

3 Postal payment services may be provided on the basis of a combination of different technologies.

Chapter II
General principles and quality of service

Article 11
General principles

1 Accessibility via the network and financial inclusion

1.1 The postal payment services shall be provided by the designated operators via their network(s) and/or via any other partner network in order to ensure accessibility to these services for the greatest number, and with a view to ensuring access to, and use of, a wide range of affordably priced postal payment services.

1.2 All users shall have access to postal payment services regardless of any contractual or commercial relationship existing with the designated operator.

2 Separation of funds

2.1 Users' funds shall be ring-fenced. These funds and the flows that they generate shall be separate from operators' other funds and flows, particularly their own funds.

2.2 Settlements relating to remuneration between designated operators are separate from settlements relating to users' funds.

3 Currency of issue and currency of payment in respect of postal payment orders

3.1 The amount of the postal payment order shall be expressed and paid in the currency of the destination country or in any other currency authorized by the destination country.

4 Non-repudiability

4.1 The transmission of postal payment orders by electronic means shall be subject to the principle of non-repudiability, in the sense that the issuing designated operator shall not question the existence of these orders and the paying designated operator shall not deny receipt of the orders, insofar as the message conforms to the applicable technical standards.

4.2 The non-repudiability of electronic postal payment orders shall be ensured by technological means, regardless of the system used by the designated operators.

5 Execution of postal payment orders

5.1 Postal payment orders transmitted between designated operators must be executed, subject to the provisions of the present Agreement and the national legislation.

5.2 In the designated operators' network, if both member countries use the same currency, the sum delivered to the issuing designated operator by the sender shall be the same as the sum paid to the payee by the paying designated operator. If the currency is not the same, the sum shall be converted on the basis of an established exchange rate upon issue and/or payment, as appropriate.

5.3 Payment in cash to the payee shall not be conditional on receipt by the paying designated operator of the corresponding funds from the sender. It shall be made subject to the fulfilment by the issuing designated operator of its obligations towards the paying designated operator regarding instalments, the regular settlement of accounts, the provision of a liaison account or settlement via the centralized clearing and settlement system.

5.4 Payment into the payee's account by the paying designated operator shall be conditional on receipt of the corresponding funds from the sender, to be made available by the issuing designated operator to the paying designated operator. These funds may come from the liaison account of the issuing designated operator or from a centralized clearing and settlement system.

6 Setting of rates

6.1 The issuing designated operator shall set the price of postal payment services.

6.2 Charges may be added to this price for any optional or supplementary service required by the sender.

7 Exemption from charges

7.1 The provisions of the Universal Postal Convention concerning exemption from postal charges on postal items intended for prisoners of war and civil internees shall apply to the postal payment service items for this category of payee.

8 Remuneration of the paying designated operator

8.1 The paying designated operator shall be remunerated by the issuing designated operator for the execution of postal payment orders.

9 Intervals for settlement between designated operators

9.1 The frequency of settlement between designated operators of sums paid or credited to a payee on behalf of a sender may be different from that in respect of the settlement of remuneration between designated operators. Sums paid or credited shall be settled at least once a month.

10 Obligation to inform users

10.1 Users shall be entitled to the following information, which shall be published and made available to all senders: conditions covering the provision of postal payment services, prices, charges, exchange rates and arrangements, conditions of implementation of liability, and the addresses of information and inquiry services.

10.2 Access to this information shall be provided free of charge.

Article 12
Quality of service

1 Designated operators may decide to identify postal payment services by means of a collective brand.

2 The Postal Operations Council shall define the quality of service objectives, elements and standards for postal payment orders transmitted electronically.

3 Designated operators must apply a minimum number of quality of service elements and standards for postal payment orders transmitted electronically.

Chapter III
Principles for electronic data interchange

Article 13
Interoperability

1 Networks

1.1 In order to exchange the data needed to execute postal payment services between all designated operators, and to monitor quality of service, designated operators shall use the Union's electronic data (EDI) exchange system or any other system ensuring the interoperability of the postal payment services in accordance with this Agreement.

Article 14
Ensuring the security of electronic exchanges

1 Designated operators shall be responsible for the proper functioning of their equipment.

2 The electronic transmission of data shall be made secure in order to ensure the authenticity and integrity of the data transmitted.

3 Designated operators shall make transactions secure, in accordance with international standards.

Article 15
Track and trace

The systems used by designated operators shall permit the monitoring of the processing of the order and its revocation by the sender, until such time as the corresponding amount is paid to the payee or credited to the payee's account, or, if appropriate, reimbursed to the sender.

Part II
Rules governing the postal payment services

Chapter I
Processing of postal payment orders

Article 16
Deposit, entry and transmission of postal payment orders

1 The conditions for depositing, entering and transmitting postal payment orders are set out in the Regulations.

2 The period of validity for postal payment orders may not be extended and is set in the Regulations.

Article 17
Checking and release of funds

1 After confirming the payee's identity in accordance with national legislation and the accuracy of the information he has provided, the designated operator shall make the payment in cash. For an inpayment order or a transfer, this payment shall be credited to the payee's account.

2 The time limits for release of the funds shall be established in the bilateral and multilateral agreements between designated operators.

Article 18
Maximum amount

Designated operators shall inform the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union of the maximum amounts for sending or receipt set according to their national legislation.

Article 19
Reimbursement

1 Extent of reimbursement

1.1 Reimbursement within the framework of the postal payment services shall cover the full amount of the postal payment order in the currency of the issuing country. The amount to be reimbursed shall be equal to the amount paid by the sender or to the amount charged to his account. The price of the postal payment service shall be added to the amount reimbursed in the event of an error made by a designated operator.

1.2 There shall be no reimbursement of a COD money order.

Chapter II
Inquiries and liability

Article 20
Inquiries

1 Inquiries shall be entertained within a period of six months from the day after that on which the postal payment order was accepted.

2 Designated operators, subject to their national legislation, shall have the right to collect from customers charges on inquiries in regard to postal payment orders.

Article 21
Liability of designated operators with regard to users

1 Treatment of funds

1.1 Except in the case of COD money orders, the issuing designated operator shall be accountable to the sender for the sums handed over at the counter or debited to the sender's account until:

1.1.1 the postal payment order has been duly paid; or

1.1.2 the payee's account has been credited; or

1.1.3 the funds have been reimbursed to the sender in the form of cash or as a credit to his account.

1.2 For COD money orders, the issuing designated operator shall be accountable to the payee for the sums handed over at the counter or debited to the sender's account until the COD money order has been duly paid or the payee's account has been duly credited.

Article 22
Obligations and liability of designated operators to each other

1 Each designated operator shall be liable for its own errors.

2 The conditions and extent of liability are set out in the Regulations.

Article 23
Non-liability of designated operators

1 Designated operators shall not be liable:

1.1 in cases of delay in the execution of the service;

1.2 when they cannot account for the execution of a postal payment order owing to the destruction of postal payment service data by force majeure, unless proof of their liability is otherwise produced;

1.3 when the damage has been caused by the fault or negligence of the sender, particularly concerning his responsibility to provide correct information in support of his postal payment order, including the fact that the funds remitted are from a legitimate source and that the postal payment order is for a legitimate purpose;

1.4 if the funds remitted are seized;

1.5 in the case of prisoner-of-war or civilian internee funds;

1.6 when the user has made no inquiry within the period set in the present Agreement;

1.7 when the time allowed for recourse in respect of postal payment services in the issuing country has expired.

Article 24
Reservations regarding liability

No reservations may be made to the provisions regarding liability prescribed in articles 21 to 23, other than in case of a bilateral agreement.

Chapter III
Financial relations

Article 25
Accounting and financial rules

1 Accounting rules

1.1 Designated operators shall comply with the accounting rules defined in the Regulations.

2 Preparation of monthly and general accounts

2.1 The paying designated operator shall prepare for each issuing designated operator a monthly account showing the sums paid for postal payment orders. The monthly accounts shall be incorporated, at the same intervals, in a general offset account including instalments and giving rise to a balance.

3 Instalment

3.1 In case of an imbalance in exchanges between designated operators, an instalment shall be paid by the issuing designated operator to the paying designated operator, at least once a month, at the beginning of the settlement period. In cases where increasing the frequency of settlement of exchanges reduces the period to less than a week, operators can agree to waive this instalment.

4 Concentration account

4.1 In principle, each designated operator shall have one concentration account for users' funds. These funds shall be used solely for settling postal payments paid to the payees or for reimbursing non-executed postal payment orders to senders.

4.2 Any instalments paid by the issuing designated operator shall be credited to the concentration account for the paying designated operator. These instalments shall be used exclusively for payments to payees.

5 Security deposit

5.1 The payment of a security deposit may be required in accordance with the conditions provided for in the Regulations.

Article 26
Settlement and clearing

1 Centralized settlement

1.1 Settlements between designated operators may pass through a central clearing house, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Regulations and shall be carried out from the designated operators' concentration accounts.

2 Bilateral settlement

2.1 Billing on the basis of the general account balance

2.1.1 In general, designated operators that are not members of a centralized clearing system shall settle accounts on the basis of the balance of the general account.

2.2 Liaison account

2.2.1 Where designated operators have a giro institution, they may each open a liaison account by means of which shall be settled their mutual debts and claims resulting from postal payment services.

2.2.2 Where the paying designated operator does not have a giro system, the liaison account may be opened with another financial institution.

2.3 Currency of settlement

2.3.1 Settlements shall be carried out in the currency of the destination country or in a third currency agreed between the designated operators.

Part III
Transitional and final provisions

Article 27
Reservations at Congress

1 Any reservation which is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Union shall not be permitted.

2 As a general rule, any member country whose views are not shared by other member countries should endeavour, as far as possible, to conform to the opinion of the majority. Reservations shall be made only in cases of absolute necessity, and shall be duly justified.

3 Any reservation to an article of the present Agreement shall be submitted to Congress as a Congress proposal written in one of the working languages of the International Bureau and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

4 To become effective, any proposal concerning reservations must be approved by whatever majority is required for amendment of the article to which the reservation relates.

5 In principle, reservations shall be applied on a reciprocal basis between the reserving member country and the other member countries.

6 Reservations to the present Agreement shall be inserted in its Final Protocol on the basis of proposals approved by Congress.

Article 28
Final provisions

1 The Convention shall be applicable, where appropriate, by analogy, in all cases not expressly governed by this Agreement.

2 Article 5 of the Constitution shall not apply to this Agreement.

3 Conditions for approval of proposals concerning this Agreement and the Regulations

3.1 To become effective, proposals submitted to Congress relating to this Agreement must be approved by a majority of the member countries present and voting which are parties to the Agreement and which have the right to vote. At least half of these member countries represented at Congress and having the right to vote shall be present at the time of voting.

3.2 To become effective, proposals relating to the Regulations of the present Agreement must be approved by a majority of the members of the Postal Operations Council which are present and voting, which have the right to vote, and which are signatories or have acceded to the Agreement.

3.3 To become effective, proposals introduced between two Congresses relating to this Agreement must obtain:

3.3.1 two thirds of the votes, with at least one half of the member countries which are parties to the Agreement and have the right to vote having taken part in the vote, if they involve the addition of new provisions;

3.3.2 a majority of the votes, with at least one half of the member countries which are parties to the Agreement and have the right to vote having taken part in the vote, if they involve amendments to the provisions of this Agreement;

3.3.3 a majority of the votes, if they involve interpretation of the provisions of this Agreement.

3.4 Notwithstanding the provisions under 3.3.1, any member country whose national legislation is as yet incompatible with the proposed addition may, within 90 days from the date of notification of the latter, make a written declaration to the Director General of the International Bureau stating that it is unable to accept this addition.

Article 29
Entry into force and duration of the Postal Payment Services Agreement

This Agreement shall come into force on 1 July 2022 and shall remain in force for an indefinite period.

In witness whereof, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries have signed this Agreement in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each party by the International Bureau of the Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021

Final Protocol to the Postal Payment Services Agreement

At the moment of proceeding to signature of the Postal Payment Services Agreement concluded this day, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries have agreed the following:

Article I
Scope of the Agreement

Notwithstanding article 1, Viet Nam reserves the right to provide the COD money order service on its territory.

Article II
Operational functions

1 With reference to article 6.4 and in application of articles 3 and 4 of the Postal Payment Services Agreement, any operator designated by France shall open postal payment services only with operators of member countries that are signatories to the Agreement.

2 In cases where one of these operators is not a designated operator, it shall only be able to pay orders received from the French designated operator. To conclude an exchange contract with a French designated operator, this operator shall first provide a copy of the declaration of its participation in the exclusive execution of postal payment service orders, made to the competent authorities of the member country concerned, which may, at its discretion, combine it with an authorization.

3 These same provisions shall apply reciprocally on the national territory of France to any operator in France wishing to enter into a partnership exclusively with designated operators of other member countries that are signatories to the Postal Payment Services Agreement.

In witness whereof, the plenipotentiaries of the governments of the member countries have drawn up this Protocol which shall have the same force and the same validity as if its provisions were inserted in the text of the Postal Payment Services Agreement itself, and they have signed it in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each member country by the International Bureau of the Union.

Done at Abidjan, 26 August 2021