

UPU Conference Declaration

2009 Hong Kong statement on the development of cross-border e-commerce

21 and 22 May 2009, Hong Kong, China

Considering:

- that the postal sector has been a facilitator of cross-border trade and commerce for hundreds of years and that the development of a three-dimensional postal network of physical, financial and electronic services is more relevant than ever;
- that postal operators provide universal service every day in the 191 UPU member countries;
- that some 16 million parcels are delivered every day in the 191 UPU member countries;
- that the postal sector was recognized by the international community at the World Summit on the Information Society in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005 as an important infrastructure for the development of e-business and e-commerce;
- that the UPU was designated as co-facilitator for Action Line C 7 (E-Business) of the WSIS agenda;
- that the 24th UPU Congress approved resolution C 28/2008 calling on governments and postal operators to support the development of an enabling environment to facilitate e-commerce in developing and least developed countries before 2012, as well as resolution C 35/2008 approving an e-services action plan for the development of new services to support e-commerce;
- that, according to a recent European Commission report on cross-border e-commerce in the European Union, e-commerce is still predominantly a domestic success, with the gap between domestic and cross-border e-commerce widening in 2008;
- that acknowledged barriers to growth in cross-border e-commerce include inadequate infrastructure and Internet penetration, insufficient trust and the fear of fraud, piracy and counterfeit goods, the inefficiency of postal networks (including delivery performance), the lack of transparent final costs (including shipping and handling charges) and inconsistent customs handling costs and procedures;
- that e-commerce can generate substantial wealth and spur economic growth, but that access to the global e-commerce phenomenon has generally not been shared equitably, especially in the underserved communities;
- that direct mail and e-commerce have a close relationship in the promotion of e-retailing opportunities;
- that there is a pressing need for the various stakeholders (including policy-makers, decision-makers, postal development and donor organizations, and supply chain partners) to work collectively to promote the growth of cross-border e-commerce.

Therefore, we the participants in the 2009 UPU Conference on the Development of Cross-border E-commerce hereby call on:

Policy-makers and decision-makers

- to integrate the development of postal resources into countries' e-commerce or ICT strategic plan in order to facilitate growth in domestic and cross-border e-commerce;
- to create an enabling legal environment;
- to ensure the regular monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation;
- to encourage the introduction of country-wide addressing systems to support the delivery of e-commerce,

The UPU and its member countries

- to facilitate and coordinate the formulation and implementation of e-commerce strategies by postal operators worldwide, and particularly in the emerging markets, developing countries and least developed countries, by providing access to best practices and technical assistance;
- to apply appropriate technologies, make investments in postal networks and the development of human resources, and promote market access for the benefit of e-commerce;
- to keep pace with ongoing developments and to adapt postal products and procedures in line with the new demands of customers arising from the growing acceptance of e-commerce;
- to implement comprehensive track and trace processes that can support the instantaneous end-to-end monitoring of postal traffic relating to e-commerce;
- to develop a "landed cost" pricing system that makes it easy for cross-border customers to understand the total cost of the transaction, including the handling costs of outbound and inbound operators, and customs charges;
- to develop online shopping malls for markets, where appropriate;
- to develop postal payment services in line with the needs of the e-commerce market,

Customs authorities

- to cooperate with the UPU and to accept electronic customs pre-notification advices in order to ensure efficient customs clearance,

The private sector

- to establish mutually beneficial medium- to long-term partnerships with postal operators for the purpose of improving management of the postal network, thereby increasing the use of e-commerce;
- to encourage cooperation between e-commerce merchants and postal operators to ensure that e-commerce customers have quick, easy and seamless access to postal delivery services.