

UNION POSTALE

December 2008

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4

Financial crisis

Its impact on the postal sector





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The postal sector is not immune to the effects of the current financial crisis. But several experts also believe postal operators could reap its benefits, if they play the trust card and react quickly.

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134th year

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in brief

POC and CA hit the ground running



Ambassador Bishar Hussein chairing his first session as chairman of the UPU Council of Administration.

Photo: Alexandre Plattet

The new Postal Operations Council (POC) and Council of Administration (CA) held their first sessions at UPU headquarters from 29 October to 14 November, laying solid groundwork for the coming four years.

The POC confirmed the various working groups and their chairmanships. These groups now have until

the next session in April 2009 to prepare their work plans. The committees responsible for the letter post, parcels and postal financial services amended various UPU regulations concerning those services. The new regulations will come into force internationally on 1 January 2010.

Other major decisions included the POC's endorsement of the UPU's ambitious project to develop a global monitoring system for the letter post. Once it is in place in 2010, the UPU will be able to give designated postal operators accurate information on the quality of their inbound international mail service and to set the amounts countries receive under the terminal dues system.

On the parcels side, the member countries decided to introduce more demanding performance objectives in 2010 to improve quality of service. To be eligible for the bonus payments associated with the parcels service, countries will have to exchange a certain percentage of electronic messages with each other

and achieve specific goals in terms of customer complaints and inquiries.

Union budget increases

The CA approved the Union's Programme and Budget and decided to abandon the practice of zero nominal growth, to which the UPU regular budget had been subjected for eleven years. The Union's new budget for the next two years will total 73.2 million Swiss francs – a 2.56 % increase over the previous budget. It takes account of inflation and the rising operational costs facing the International Bureau, the UPU's secretariat in Berne. Also, for the first time, 1% of the budget will be earmarked for staff training, with the aim of ensuring that the organization keeps pace with its changing environment.

In addition, the CA adopted a resolution classifying Palestine for the purposes of terminal dues and the Quality of Service Fund (see related article). **RL**

The figure

54

That's the percentage of direct mail advertising read by citizens of the United Kingdom, compared to 27 % of e-mail ads. According to research by International Post Corporation, direct mail advertising gets read more in all countries than its e-mail counterpart. Americans read 54 % of direct mail they

receive, and only 31 % of e-mail ads. In Sweden, the read rate for direct mail stands at 47 %, compared to 30 % for e-mail. France has the lowest read rate for e-mail ads; only 13 % of such messages get read, compared to 46 % for direct mail.

Editor's note

An opportunity riding the dangerous wind

The financial crisis is having repercussions on every industry, including the postal sector. While it may be months before we fully appreciate its impact, our cover story nevertheless takes a look at how the experts view the situation and what insight or predictions they offer.

As some operators adjust their strategies, there is a general sense that the crisis could produce opportunities for postal operators, especially in the area of financial services. With a bit of innovation, risk-taking and trust – the Post's most important trump card –, many feel that operators could neutralize some of the negative effects of the crisis with gains in other areas.

According to a Chinese proverb, "a crisis is an opportunity riding the

dangerous wind". Only time will tell us who has managed to harness those opportunities as they blow by.

Speaking of trust, it is heartening to see more and more employers putting their trust in women. We look at women's progress in moving into positions of responsibility in the postal sector.

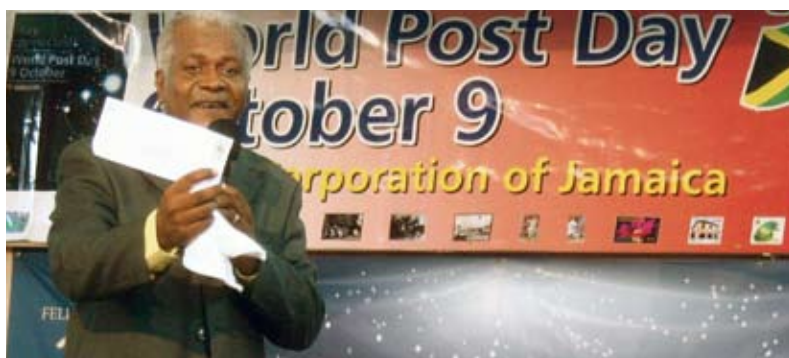
A cliché though it may be, it does seem that times are a-changing. The photo on page 15, showing women of various nationalities representing their country's government, regulator or designated operator at the latest UPU sessions in Berne, or working at the International Bureau, would have been very different had it been taken even 10 years ago. If they haven't yet

shattered the glass ceiling to assume the top jobs in their organizations, many women are making headway, and today hold key positions in operations and logistics, male fiefdoms traditionally.

The postal sector's sustainable development in the years to come will depend partly on more gender equality. Meet some of the women who are boldly taking on some of the most difficult jobs in the industry, and clearing the path for others.

Rhéal LeBlanc, editor-in-chief

Best wishes from Baghdad... and other parts of the world



Pastor Al Miller, from Kingston, holding up a letter, led a service to launch World Post Week on Sunday 5 October. He delivered a stirring spiritual message recalling the World Post Day theme "Stay connected".

Some 50 countries around the world again celebrated World Post Day, 9 October, in style. There were the usual post office visits, stamp launches, exhibitions, public celebrations, employees' sporting events and more, but the celebrations are getting more creative as the years go by. In Jamaica, for example, people didn't celebrate postal services for just one day, but for an entire week.

And if you ever wondered who takes note of World Post Day, well there's Jamal Nasser Hussein, the chief airport controller at Baghdad international airport. He sent his best wishes and congratulations to the UPU on a lovely hand-written postcard in which he said: "I do not have Internet so I use postal letters, and I write about 300 (of them) every year."

UPU member countries have been celebrating World Post Day since 1969.

» For an overview of World Post Day celebrations, visit www.upu.int/world_post_day/en/

in brief

Consultative Committee forges ahead



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Formerly with the Direct Marketing Association, Charles Prescott was re-elected as chairman of the Consultative Committee, but this time as a member of the Global Envelope Alliance.

Addressing, revenue protection and sustainable development will be among the priority areas of the Consultative Committee over the next four years.

Gathering just before the first session of the new Council of Administration, members of the body representing postal sector stakeholders other than designated operators or national governments agreed to focus their efforts on these three critical issues for the postal sector.

In terms of addressing, the Committee will work on the development and the implementation of standards to ensure the quality of addressing, which will in turn contribute to improving direct mail activities. It will also encourage UPU member countries to adopt change-of-

address programmes and seek solutions to the problem of undeliverable mail. And the Committee will also look for ways to better protect postage revenue, a problem that makes it difficult to sustain the development of postal services, especially in developing countries. Technical solutions and procedures exist to ensure secure franking, posting, accounting and billing of mail, but their complexity or high costs sometimes prevent operators from adopting them. The Committee will help designated operators to identify effective and affordable solutions to better protect revenue, and share best practices among countries. Finally, the Committee will support the UPU's sustainable development activities. **RL**

Conference to look at new postal business models



ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE
FÉDÉRALE DE LAUSANNE

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For the third year in a row, the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), one of Switzerland's premier universities, will be holding a conference within the framework of the Global Research and Education Network, an initiative launched in 2006 with the UPU.

The theme of the conference, to be held on 27 April 2009, will be: "New business models for a changing postal industry". Interested participants have until 18 April 2009 to register online at <http://postal-leadership.epfl.ch>

The conference will mark the launch of the second edition of the

EPFL's Executive Master in Postal Leadership course. The continuing education programme – the first of its kind in the world – targets postal managers, regulators and other professionals working in associated sectors. In addition to receiving a high-quality education, participants follow courses in, and make business visits to, Singapore, Australia and the United States. Between each module, they have the opportunity to apply what they learn to their jobs.

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» <http://postal-leadership.epfl.ch>

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Palestine to receive and pay terminal dues

The UPU Council of Administration adopted a resolution on 14 November that classifies Palestine for terminal dues and Quality of Service Fund (QSF) purposes, a prerequisite for integrating the Palestinian postal service into the worldwide postal community.

The Israeli and Palestinian Posts had declared, during the 24th Universal Postal Congress in August, that they would both work to achieve this.

According to the latest resolution, Palestine will now receive payment for processing postal items exchanged with other countries (called terminal dues), and will in turn pay such dues to countries processing mail coming from its territory.

Palestine will also be able to make use of the QSF to finance projects aimed at improving the quality of its postal service.

All countries, except the least developed countries, contribute to the fund through the terminal dues they pay.

"This resolution is just one solid step towards realizing the right to postal services," said the United Arab Emirates delegate speaking on behalf of the Arab countries. "We need to ensure that this is sustainable and that this step is followed by others to enable Palestinian people to exchange mail with all Union member countries."

For her part, the Israeli delegate reiterated, "in a spirit of cooperation", her country's commitment to continuing the bilateral work initiated to facilitate the integration of the Palestinian postal services into the worldwide postal community and finding technical and operational solutions for improving these services.

A UPU consultant visited Palestine in November to evaluate the general situation of postal services and identify the priorities of a development plan to modernize these services. **RL**

Rewards for a job well done

Jan Bojnansky, director of international affairs at the Slovakian Post (left), receives an award of excellence from Edouard Dayan, UPU director general, and Sommanogo Koutou, chairman of the Quality of Service Fund (QSF) board of trustees. The prize was recently awarded to Slovakia, as well as to eight other countries, for excellent execution of their QSF projects. QSF projects are evaluated two years after completion to determine longer caption whether the objectives have been met and the quality

of service improved. In 2008, Argentina, Belarus, Chile, Hungary, Indonesia, the Netherlands Antilles, Russia, Slovakia and Saint Christopher and Nevis received awards. Since 2001, the QSF has funded close to 500 projects aimed at improving, among other things, delivery, security and access to postal services in developing countries. **RL**



Photo: Alexandre Plattet

In post we trust

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With the world in the grips of a financial crisis, what effects are being felt in the postal sector? As Posts ask themselves what this crisis will mean for them, *Union Postale* takes a closer look at the bigger picture, and finds that all is not doom and gloom.

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By
Faryal Mirza

As banks go into receivership, share prices tumble, people lose their homes and the global economy veers towards a recession, postal operators, like other businesses, are feeling the credit crunch.

Times are tough for the United States Postal Service (USPS), the biggest postal service in the world, whose ailing national economy is home to the catalyzing sub-prime troubles. USPS posted a net loss of 2.8 billion dollars for the last financial year, which ended on 30 September 2008. Mail volumes also decreased during this period to 202.7 billion pieces, a decline of 9.5 billion pieces.

In a statement, USPS explicitly blamed the financial crisis. "Declining mail volume was a symptom of the worsening national economy, particularly related to the financial



and housing industries and to trends toward the use of electronic mail," it announced.

Other Posts around the world are also sounding the alarm bells in their latest financial results. Royal Mail in the United Kingdom claims that its operations "face additional risk from the squeeze in the UK economy... and from the drive by both businesses and individuals to cut their costs as the economy tightens." It adds that it is "particularly vulnerable to a downturn in the advertising market, which is a key element in overall mailings."

Although Deutsche Post admits to feeling the effects of the financial fallout, it also sees a silver lining to the dark clouds. The German operator reports that freight volumes are down in a few markets and is bracing itself for

further decline in the near future. It remains positive, however, seeing potential for business growth in other areas such as contract logistics.

"In times of crisis, companies outsource many services. This situation could result in opportunities from which we – for example, our contract logistics division – could profit," says spokesman Dirk Klasen.

For those Posts requiring injections of capital to shore up infrastructure or boost reserves, it seems not to be a good time to seek a cash-rich investor. Traditional candidates like private equity firms have themselves been feeling the pinch, with worldwide stocks nose-diving. In recent weeks, the press has also reported anticipated plans by the Danish government to buy back the 22% stake in Post Danmark that it had sold to the CVC private

equity company in 2005. None of the parties involved has commented on the development, but there is widespread speculation that yet another private investor is retreating from investments to go and lick its stock-market inflicted wounds. However, this reversal of privatization is hardly good news for other Posts already partially privatized or considering complete privatization. The French government recently put on hold its plans to privatize La Poste, citing the current economic climate, but it insisted the process was simply stalled, not abandoned.

Keeping an eye on direct mail

When the chips are down in the business world, one of the first postal casualties is direct marketing. Recent figures reveal that financial services are sending out less direct marketing mail to their customers. Mintel Comperemedia, a supplier of consumer, product and media intelligence, reports that, in the United States, estimated direct mail volumes from credit card companies for the third quarter of 2008 stand at 1.34 billion pieces. This represents a decline of 13% over the previous quarter and a decrease of 28% compared to the same period in 2007.

"Historically, whenever things go bad, one of the first things to be cut is the direct marketing budget. Direct marketing has always been 'below the line', in other words, it's something we do on whim, but not as a strategy for our business growth," explains Charles Prescott, chairman of the UPU's Consultative Committee, and a former vice-president of the US Direct Marketing Association.

Prescott is guardedly optimistic about how much direct marketing mail will suffer from the financial crisis.

"For many mailers, there will be a hiccup and for others it will be the final straw. Some companies will increase their mail volumes, although most will decrease," Prescott predicts.

He adds: "My message to Posts is: 'You are not a utility anymore. You are in constant competition with other media. It is more expensive to carry a message with you.'"

However, Prescott emphasizes that the days of direct mail are not numbered. He says that US marketers are returning to the use of mail, "realizing that it has an important and viable role to play to obtain and maintain customers in business-to-business and business-to-customer segments."

Ralf Schlözer, from the market research firm InfoTrends, says advertising budgets will certainly be tighter over the coming months, but it is difficult to know just what impact this will have on direct mail compared with other advertising media. He points to research showing that print is still the preferred medium for receiving marketing messages, and also one of the most trusted. His advice to Posts: help advertisers make the content of advertising mail as relevant as possible, and provide effective tools and data to encourage them to use this medium. Schlözer says it is particularly important to have "unambiguous and complete address systems", to provide direct mailers with hard facts about the benefits of print and to address environmental issues. He says a particular challenge is enabling small and medium-sized businesses to enter into direct mail. Posts should consider providing them with low volume set-ups and easy access to the mail stream. "The market is more open for aggressive pricing during a crisis, and it is frequently a driver for outsourcing and managed services," he says.

Playing the trust card

For some operators, the world's economic woes may indeed provide new business opportunities. One key weapon in their arsenal is the consumer's perception that the post can be trusted, says the UPU's José Ansón.

"You can trust the post. Trust is an asset that has not recently been seen as such by postal services. The focus has been on speed and reliability. The current crisis could shift the focus to trust and help attract customers unhappy with traditional banking," Ansón suggests.

For those operators able to bank savings and offer term deposits, the cash registers could start ringing. In the case of Swiss Post's financial arm, PostFinance, they already have. In the first nine months of 2008, PostFinance attracted 62,000 new customers, who opened



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A rough year for the Austrian Post, whose stocks have gone up and down as the financial crisis evolved. The situation has not been any better for Deutsche Post, PosMalaysia, Singapore Post and the Netherlands' TNT, also listed on the stock market.

220,000 new accounts and brought in 4.8 billion Swiss francs in new assets. The new accounts represented a 55% increase over the same period in 2007 and brought the total number of accounts to 3.56 million. When Switzerland's two largest banks, UBS and Credit Suisse, revealed how hard they had been hit by financial losses relating to subprime investments, they saw their public credibility take a dent. In a recent survey by Young & Rubicam, 80% of participants said the country's largest bank, UBS, was less trustworthy than it was a year earlier. Reduced public confidence in banks and PostFinance's state guarantee may be two important reasons why the Swiss have flocked to the Post.

Consumer trust may also help Posts ride the e-commerce wave, according to James Roper, chairman of the consulting firm IMR World.

"The entire heart of distance trading is based on trust and there are two sorts of organizations that can genuinely and universally hold that trust: the banks and the Posts," says Roper. However, he adds: "If you look at what's happened in the last year, we would all agree that the banks have excluded themselves... in a fairly comprehensive way."

Roper believes that Posts, to their detriment, have so far been slow to jump on the e-commerce bandwagon.

"The huge opportunity that exists will not wait forever. Internet shopping is a truly universal phenomenon and the obvious contenders that could provide a universal solution – and not only for delivery, but also for identity, trust and payment – are the Posts."

Roper warns that if Posts do not seize the gilded carrot being held in front of them, other carriers will. "It will be picked up in a very fragmented way by individual operators that might do well in one country or one continent, but they will not have the universal approach that is possible with the Posts." Given that online shoppers are expected to spend 400 billion euros in 2008, half of which is of relevance to postal operators, the rewards could be very high. And Roper believes that a certain specialized United Nations agency could be instrumental in the process.

"The UPU is the obvious contender to pull all of that together and make it happen," he says.

In times of crisis, postal savings banks earn high praise

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As world leaders and their finance ministers seek solutions to the biggest economic downturn since the Great Depression, and aim to better protect people from future financial fiascos, two influential newspapers on opposite sides of the Atlantic weighed in with editorials in early October that caught our attention. Why? Because at a time when people everywhere are looking for the safest places to put their money, the two articles see the post office as one such place, and recognize its ability to promote financial inclusion for everyone, a UPU objective for many years.

First, Great Britain's *Guardian* newspaper published an editorial entitled "Banking: The case for postal delivery". The editorial begins with an appreciation of what the subprime loans scheme set out to do – to make "finance more democratic". Despite the well-known consequences of that scheme, the editorial agrees with the principle that "the goal of widening access to finance should not be abandoned" and designs a unique role for the British Post Office to play in this respect.

"Unsung it may be, but the Post Office has one of the biggest networks in Britain," writes the *Guardian*. "At the last count there were 14,500 branches, compared to 10,423 bank branches. And the network has 28 million customers, despite all the closures and cuts. As once sturdy financial institutions topple, a national bank available at post offices would surely answer the anxiety of savers unsure where to put their cash. It would not need to offer the highest interest rates, but stability. Instead of foreign call centres, a post-office bank would be local. And instead of offering other firms' financial services (such as Alliance & Leicester), the post office could offer its own accounts. Such a scheme would also offer those outside the banking system a way into it...."

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This was an interesting viewpoint shared just a few days later by the well respected *New York Times*, which published an op-ed piece by Michael Lind, a fellow at the New America Foundation. Lind also made the case for the post office's ability to give more people access to savings plans and provide them with the security they need.

Lind identifies four problems he says the structure of public and private finance in his country has failed to solve: almost 10 % of Americans do not have a bank account; citizens worry about the security of their savings; the country's debts to foreign governments and financial institutions keep increasing; and public infrastructures are insufficiently funded.

A postal savings bank could help to solve these problems, argues Lind. He cites the postal service's long tradition of managing savings, and points to the success of countries like India and Japan in using their postal savings banks to become less dependent on foreign investors. The writer goes on to decry a US Congress decision in 1966 to abolish the postal savings system that existed, and urges the government to consider setting up a new one.

Lind writes: "A new postal savings system should be part of America's post-meltdown financial architecture. When Congress created the postal savings system nearly a century ago, one of its goals was to encourage savings among the large number of low-income immigrants. A new system would help today's immigrants as well as the native poor. Banks are not interested in people with so little money, many of whom are preyed upon by payday lenders and credit card companies.

"A postal bank could also supply middle-class and affluent Americans with an extra layer of financial security. The accounts would be limited to a small amount per person. They would provide a government-guaranteed, low-risk, low-return invest-

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ment, even for those who put most of their financial assets in conventional bank accounts and the stock market."

He concludes: "A revived postal savings bank, in addition to holding much of the national debt, could provide a purely domestic source of savings that could be tapped by a national infrastructure bank. There is growing support for such a government-chartered institution, which could borrow money to modernize roads, power grids and sewage systems; according to one estimate, we need \$1.6 trillion over five years. That money is unlikely to come from Congress...

"When the financial crisis has passed, Americans will need to rebuild our financial system. A new postal savings system should be part of the plan."

At a time when postal services sometimes struggle to remain relevant alongside the Internet and new technologies, the two editorials provide high praise for postal savings services, and offer a clear vision for one aspect of the postal business that many countries are developing, and that could be developed in many others.

It will be interesting to see whether governments heed this advice or not, but the development of postal financial services remains an important part of the UPU's work, particularly that of the Postal Operations Council committee responsible for overseeing postal financial services in the next work cycle leading to the Doha Congress in 2012.

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Search for "Mailing our way to solvency" on www.nyt.com and "Banking: the case for postal delivery" on www.guardian.co.uk to read the full articles.

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Getting aggressive about remittances

Another opportunity ripe for the picking is in the area of remittances, even though this sector will also feel the heat from a suffering global economy.

"The remittance market, worth more than 300 billion US dollars, will certainly get a hit... especially the US-Mexico remittance corridor. There will be increasing pressure on migrants to retain their jobs and their pay packets," says P.T.S. Kumar, chairman of the UPU committee on postal financial services.

Kumar, who is also deputy director general of global business at India Post, adds that the reason why remittances could be a source of increased business during these dark times is the "increasing pressure from home on migrants to remit the same amount and to not reduce it. Hence, migrants will look to an operator who is reliable and secure and who offers a cost-effective rate."

Cue the Posts. Kumar believes this is an opportunity they should not miss.

"The post office can exploit this situation amply well. We can offer a reasonable rate, which cannot be matched by the competition, especially the private money operators, who may have to increase their rates for various reasons. This is the chance for us to get aggressively into the market, provide some value additions like cash-to-account services, intimation of remittance arrivals, better foreign exchange rates and win the customers."

Staying on strategy

At the UPU, Edouard Dayan recently told member countries that, in these difficult times, the postal sector is well positioned to help small and medium-sized companies grow their business nationally and internationally. "It is also an opportunity for postal operators to diversify their activities," said the director general.

For his part, the chairman of the Postal Operations Council, Hellenic Post CEO Andreas Taprantzis, is keenly aware that postal operators are facing turbulent times.

"To implement the new world postal strategy would have been difficult (in any case), given the provocative agenda, but the financial crisis has increased the sense of urgency and should facilitate (implementation)," says Taprantzis.

The Nairobi Postal Strategy, a roadmap for the development of world postal services over the next four years, was unanimously adopted by UPU members at the 2008 Congress held in Geneva (see *Union Postale*, September 2008).

The head of a postal operator himself, Taprantzis says that Posts will have to brace themselves and be prepared for the cost-cutting that will take place across the board. Predicting how quickly Posts could adapt to new playing rules in an economically difficult environment, however, is a tall order.

"State operators are not a uniform industry. Some are fast, ruthless animals ready to attack any opponent; others are slower at decision-making," he explains.

Despite the trouble ahead facing postal operators, what is clear is that the global financial crisis could also open the door to new business opportunities. Only the Posts can decide whether they play or pass.

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Faryal Mirza is a freelance journalist based in Berne.

Women on the verge

Have women
finally shattered
the glass ceiling?

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With more and more women being appointed to top jobs within the global postal sector, women finally seem to be winning the battle for gender equality in our industry.

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By
Faryal Mirza

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Coming from every corner of the world, many women represented their country's postal authorities during the most recent UPU sessions in Berne.

Photo: Daniel Rihs



Delegates at recent UPU sessions would agree that, compared to a decade ago, there are more women at management level in the postal sector. Given that women account for about half of postal workers on average, could it be that the proverbial glass ceiling has finally been shattered? Or is there still a long way to go before women and men are treated as true peers in the postal workplace?

This year alone in the postal world, two decisive blows in favour of women were struck in the eternal battle of the sexes: Ildikó Szüts became CEO of Hungary's Magyar Posta, and Rodah Masaviru was elected secretary general of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU). Such events – and other appointments of a similar calibre that have taken place in recent years – indicate that the postal sector is not faring too badly when it comes to granting equal opportunities to women.

Strongly illustrating that contention is Ildikó Szüts, a human resources specialist, who took on the CEO mantle at Magyar Posta in April 2008. Women there make up nearly two-thirds of workers, accounting for 90% of lower management, the majority of whom are post-office managers.

"However, at the top-management level, the proportion of women is about 25%," says Ildikó Szüts.

Unlike many other sectors of the national economy, says the Hungarian CEO, Magyar Posta pays its male and female workers the same, using the principle of 'equal pay for equal work'. Outside the Post, it is not uncommon, she says, for employers to stipulate that women workers may not have children within the first two years of joining a company. Magyar Posta, on the other hand, claims to be family-friendly and offers flexible working hours to employees who double as mothers.

Did Ildikó Szüts ever feel being a woman was a hindrance to climbing the corporate ladder? Evidently not.

"Personally, I have not felt it to be a disadvantage to have been and to be a woman manager. In my opinion, a woman who looks for and undertakes challenges, who performs highly... and is quality-oriented, is sure to achieve success in the masculine business world," she replies.

Rodah Masaviru, a veteran of the Kenyan postal scene, says her election to the power seat of PAPU was far from an easy ride. After refusing to bow to pressure to remain as the union's assistant secretary-general, she stood for election against three male candidates. Two pulled out from the race at the last minute and gave their backing to the remaining male candidate. However, that did not stop Masaviru from forging ahead and winning the backing of the PAPU member countries.

Masaviru adds that it is not easy for African women to make it to the top rung of the ladder, despite the opportunities that exist. Also, the prevailing culture plays a decisive role in holding women back. "People know that women can do the job, but there is still a reluctance for women to adopt these positions. Women are more focused and, if given the chance, can do as well as men, if not better," Masaviru explains.

Her own rise to the top was littered with obstacles.

"It was difficult for me. As a woman, you must really stand up for yourself to be considered and you have to fight for your rights. It does not come on a silver platter. You must be extremely good in your work and fight for advancement."

In her opinion, women make for more open and sincere managers than men, who tend towards saying what the boss wants to hear. Agreeing all the time with the boss does not help to improve an organization, according to Masaviru, as her own experience as a manager proved.

Gender balance

As for the UPU itself, about 42% of the 220 staff working in the International Bureau in Berne are women. However, at the professional level, they account for only 21%. Juliana Nel, director of the executive office and communications, and Odile Meylan, the UPU's legal adviser, are two of them, and both are members of the management committee.

While the number of positions available is limited, only 20% of applications the International Bureau receives for professional positions come from women. For that reason, the UPU is urging member countries to encourage more women to apply for positions, and a recent

report by the UN Joint Inspection Unit recommended that a policy be adopted to pursue better gender balance at the professional level, especially in senior management positions.

When asked why women make good managers, Nel says women in general have a high level of motivation and commitment, better organizational skills, are often more practical than men and have a better eye for detail. But, she added: "For me, it would be a personal insult to get a job just because I am a woman and not because I am the best candidate for the job."

Cultural issues

Across the globe in Viet Nam, Nguyen Thi Boi Lan is currently director general of the government's department of posts, which regulates the country's postal sector. She recognizes that women do have career opportunities, but that there are also hurdles to overcome.

"I had to do my best at everything to get to where I am. The biggest challenge for Asian women is how to divide their time, because they want to be the best wife, the best mother and the best worker, too," she says.

As a married mother of one, who also cares for her parents, Nguyen Thi Boi Lan has had to do more than her fair share of juggling.

"It is more difficult for Asian women because living conditions are not always ideal."

This means extra parental duties, such as having to accompany children on public transport in Viet Nam, which is too dangerous for younger ones to use on their own.

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In Kazakhstan, women make up 75% of the Post's workforce.



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Women, like these Ukrainian workers (upper photo) and Belgian mail carrier, make up a large portion of the postal operations workforce. According to UPU data, Eastern European Posts seem to employ the greatest number of women. In countries such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine, the percentage of the female workforce varies between 80 and 90%.



Agreeing that women can get ahead in the career stakes is Dorcas Scantlebury, deputy postmaster general of the Barbados Postal Service. However, in the more than 150 years that the Barbadian Post has existed, there has not been a single woman postmaster general, she rues.

"I would say the glass ceiling has yet to be well and truly shattered. We are well represented, but when you look in the boardrooms and at the big decision-making levels in our country, we still have a long way to go, although we have made a lot of progress."

So, why is gender equality in Barbados taking the scenic route?

"It is more of a cultural rather than a sexist thing. The perception here is of women being in a caring or careful role, so you will see a lot of women in human resources, accounting and finance. Women tend to dominate where painstaking work is required," Dorcas Scantlebury explains.

Her own experience shows that people assume "a woman may not be tough enough for the job when dealing with a large staff", something she has worked hard to overcome.

"The cultural aspects of any country are not always easy to change. However, women are showing excellence and through this natural evolution they will find their rightful place. The natural way is sometimes the better way," she adds.

Trying to deal with the incumbent culture in her own country is Catina Aghayan, who works in Qatar as a quality and development consultant for the national operator, Q-Post.

"As a woman working in the Arab world, it is not easy. You have to adapt your style. It is another culture. Confrontation does not work. You have to be creative to get your message across," she says.

However, she has noticed that more and more women are coming forward for a bigger slice of the workplace cake.

"Today, women are encouraged to take on management positions. Within five years, I am convinced we will see more women in positions of responsibility in the postal sector. They also work and study hard to further their careers."

Giving women a boost

Some postal operators try to give their women employees a helping hand to reach their professional goals. One such operator is New Zealand Post, which launched a "Women in Leadership" programme in 2007. This Post employs more than 10,000 individuals, 61% of whom are women. Overall, women account for 20% of senior management. Prior to the programme's launch, the organization asked executive females to take part in surveys to find out what they thought about their working environment. When asked what was the one thing the organization could do to "most encourage women to aspire to be leaders or to seek further promotion as leaders", 33% of respondents wanted the company to "provide support and encouragement". Nearly 15% of respondents said: "Change the 'maleness' of the culture."

Support and encouragement on the job were two factors that helped Clare Kernot, general manager of the international business, on her career path. She emphasizes that having a family was no bar to her career at New Zealand Post. The proof: it was after she returned from her second round of maternity leave that she was promoted to senior manager.

"Coming back and taking on a bigger role was a very positive experience. I never expected my biggest career opportunities to happen while I was having children and taking maternity leave!" she says.

However, it wasn't all plain sailing.

"To be honest, it was really tough to be in a senior role with two young children, who really missed their mum and didn't sleep well through the night, but we got through it," she says.

While the proverbial glass ceiling may not have been shattered, it has certainly been cracked, as experiences of women in Posts around the world show. While women are more and more frequently proving to be the best man for the job, most cultures are still undergoing a gradual sea-change in attitudes, and it is still often assumed that women cannot be taken totally seriously in the workplace.

» Read more women's comments on the topic at
www.upu.int/union_postale/en/index.shtml

Reaching for the top

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A quick survey of female high-flyers in Posts around the world reveals that many have climbed the corporate ladder to the top, most notably in South America, Central America and the Caribbean. These regions alone count close to 20 women heading up national postal operations. These women include Cristina Gonzalez, president of Administracion Nacional de Correos in Uruguay, Eva Marisol Escalona Flores, president of IPOSTEL in Venezuela, and Marta Amado, from Panama (read the interview on page 20). In Africa, Phuti Tsukudu is the chairperson of the South African Post Office, and Motshoanetsi Lefoka its CEO. South Africa has the distinction of having women in every top position overseeing the postal sector, including the minister of communications and the director general of the department of communications, which is the regulator. Moya Green, of Canada, is the only woman heading the post of a major industrialized country.



Time for change

.....
By
Rosa Cifuentes
and
Rhéal LeBlanc
.....

Photos:
Ana Lucia Pita

.....
As in many parts of Latin America, postal services in Panama are now receiving the attention they deserve. Marta Amado is leading the efforts to modernize postal services in her country.

In Latin America, many heads of national postal services are women. Marta Amado, director general of posts and telegraphs (COTEL), part of Panama's ministry of government and justice, since 2004, is one of the many women occupying executive positions working for the state in her country; in fact, 70 % of senior government officials in Panama are female.

Amado was born to work for the Post. In his time, her father was director of the Post, and other members of her family have also worked in the sector. Her commitment to work and her family background have helped to turn her job into a challenge and a "great passion".

Amado spoke to us about her experience as a woman at the helm of a postal operator, but also about her efforts to turn the Post into a robust, modern institution capable of meeting the challenges of the fierce competition it faces while offering a universal service. The UPU integrated postal reform and development plan (IPDP) being implemented in Panama is one of the tools that help guide her in her work.

What main challenges do you face as a woman heading a company? What has your personal experience been like?

Marta Amado I'm glad to say that in my country women are on an equal footing with men in the workplace. We have come a long way in overcoming discrimination. In fact most students at the University of Panama are women. So gender issues are a thing of the past, a matter for previous generations. That said, there is still some reluctance to accept that a woman is in charge and making decisions. Even so, in our case, the fact that we have shown how we can work, making decisions and giving our all, has overcome certain notions which – as I said – now belong to the past.

In terms of work, the Post is the best thing that ever happened to me, a complex experience at home and abroad. Every day sees a new challenge. Every day we must keep track of anything happening around the world that might hold up communications. Every day

something new has to be dealt with. Modernizing the postal services has called for tough decisions to be made, reforms to be carried through and old habits to be rooted out. There is never a dull moment.

What is the state of the postal sector in Panama today? The IPDP study suggests that there are several challenges. What is your assessment?

The IPDP is an excellent tool and it provides the sector with a road map. It has made our work easier and helped us to see that there is a lot of room for improvement. We are now looking for funds to continue the studies already begun by the IPDP, through a national programme called "Panama Competes". This goes to show that we need to reform not only our institution, in order to compete in today's market, but also the sector as a whole. The law will need to be amended and new technologies will have to be introduced.

.....

“We must add value to what we already have... We cannot make do with the status quo or the same postal service we offered 30 or 40 years ago.”

Panama adopted the IPDP in 2005. Where are you in terms of establishing the legal framework needed for organizing the postal sector?

Have you made good progress in all areas of the IPDP?

The government of Panama is determined to stand by its commitment to complete the IPDP. At the end of 2007, we briefed the president on our ideas about how the postal sector needed to be developed to make the quantum leap it was crying out for. Following approval by the cabinet, headed by the president, the draft law creating the public operator “Correos de Panamá”, defining the universal service and consolidating the postal reforms is currently under discussion at the assembly of deputies, where it went through the transport committee in October. We now hope the law will be given the green light for 2009. The process will come to a head once we get funding. Our executive has already asked the ministry of economy and finance, which grants international loans, to make the

postal service a national priority: that will open more doors when it comes to getting funding.

By when could Correos de Panamá become a more independent institution?

We hope that by 2009 we'll have a stronger institution and that the only remaining step will be to obtain funding. The law will give us the independence we currently lack, since we depend on the ministry of government and justice.

Panama is committed to a universal postal service, so it will treat it as a state obligation. We are working to find the right form for it to take. The safest option would be for the state to compensate the Post for providing the universal postal service. But we are also going to try and strike a balance between the services that can generate the most revenue and our social programme. In other words, we want an institution that can meet its obligation of providing a universal postal service and compete with the private sector. Of course, we must first obtain

funding and, as our investment study shows, we shall be looking for 10 to 12 million US dollars to break even and offer all the services of a modern Post. We will not confine ourselves to handling letters, but will also be introducing multiservice counters and develop hybrid mail capabilities.

Would the funding only be for Correos y Telégrafos de Panamá (COTEL) or for the market as a whole?

It would only be for the public operator.

How do you see the IPDP being taken further? What are your ideas and plans?

Once the law has been passed and the funding is there, I hope that within a few years we can reach the same level as some other Latin American countries. Unfortunately, we (this administration, that is) made a late start, so we have some catching up to do. That explains why we are investing far more commitment and energy in this project.

Studies show that, in 2005, COTEL held around 20 % of the postal market in Panama. Has its market share changed? And what is your aim in that regard?

In spite of all the difficulties and the fact that we still depend on the ministry, we have increased our market share. The main objective is to bring the whole postal sector – private and public – up to the same level. We need free competition and a well defined legal framework where we can all compete on a level playing field, under the rules of free enterprise. For that reason, Correos, which also acts as regulator, is undergoing modernization, part of which entails embarking on the process of separating functions.

As the IPDP has pointed out, we need a clear and transparent framework. In turn, we need a regulator that sets the rules for everyone, regulating and overseeing the State and private sectors alike. Of course, the public sector will be obliged to provide the universal postal service as laid down by the UPU Postal Convention.

Because there is no balance at present, is that so?

Quite right, there is no level playing field. Our all-out efforts to bring ourselves up to date show that we want to compete on equal terms. I do not think that we can do more to show that.

According to the IPDP studies I mentioned earlier, it appears that one of the main problems facing COTEL is the postal market's lack of credibility. What do you intend to do to raise customer confidence?

The fact that we were so out of date and lacked the right technology meant that we fell short when it came to oversight. We had to dismiss and even prosecute some people who were guilty of misconduct. That showed the public that we meant business in our attempt

to improve our service and our image. Once we become an independent State institution, we'll need to change our image. We are going to have a new logo and, in order to brush up our corporate image, we will also need to project a new corporate vision and adopt a new mission statement. We intend to modernize our institution by all the means technology offers. Our plan is expected to take a maximum of three years. By then the public will have seen a lot of changes. Technology will be a great help: everything we do will be monitored, supervised and highly visible.

In which areas of the postal market will COTEL need to be more active and more dynamic?

I think we need to focus on parcels and improve that service enormously. This sector is growing fast in Panama and we have been lagging behind. Home delivery of parcels is virtually non-existent. We tend to lack street names or else the system is highly disorganized – in some places street names exist, in others they don't, and in others still different institutions use different addresses. Street signs are one of the authorities' main responsibilities. Once we impose some kind of order, we can start delivering parcels. There are currently a number of private companies offering this service and doing a fairly good job, but they use their own databases. I think it is the State's duty to ensure that streets are properly named and signposted, according to clear and binding rules, so that not only the postal sector but also the small delivery companies, plus ambulance and fire-fighting services, can rely on more accurate addresses across the country. Bearing that objective in mind, I think this is where we should focus: the parcels market and home delivery.

What is COTEL's approach to postal financial services?

We are now turning our attention to the financial sector, but not only domestically. Take maintenance payments and money transfers by giro – after all, people often have to send money from the region where they live to their families located in another part of the country. We have a highly developed service, but our oversight system could do with some improvement. We haven't even entered the international market yet. Once we are independent, we can cut some of the red tape and decide on the right methods. Then we can sign bilateral agreements, starting with those countries with large numbers of migrants living in Panama: Panamanians tend not to migrate, but we have many immigrants from other countries. Most are from the Dominican Republic and Colombia, but there are increasing numbers of Europeans, too.

Could a money transfer service similar to the one launched between Spain, Chile and Uruguay also be useful for your country?

I am sure it could be – for me this is not only business but it's also a way of supporting the universal postal service. Having a comprehensive postal network means making it far more accessible and closer to the people. This approach allows one person to send money and another person to receive it in another country, whether they live far or very close by. What we are aiming for is to link it to the universal postal service and our social objectives. We, in the postal sector as a whole, are also doing our best to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. For example, in Panama we are supporting a national programme called "Network of Opportunities". This network identifies families living in extreme poverty and then we, Correos de Panamá, go and give them money – it used to be 35 US dollars a month, now it's 50. The families must first be officially classified as extremely

poor by means of a census. But the money is not a gift – there are responsibilities on both sides and the family must show that their children go to school and are receiving health care. And that is where the postal sector comes in: lending our support because we can, because we are much closer to the people. That is how we are seen because these people don't have to travel to a bank, for example.

How does the programme work exactly?

On the appointed payment days, a postal worker travels to certain areas and hands over the money to the families who live there. The postal worker is accompanied by senior officials from the ministry of social development, which conducts the censuses. If, for some reason, a family is unable to make it to the specified place on that day, because of poor weather conditions for example, the money is deposited at the nearest post office for a certain time, until they



can go and collect it; if they fail to do so the money returns to the programme. What is important is that we are reaching extremely poor people, people who have often been totally forgotten. Thanks to this government project we can find out who is there and which families need our support. Our support is all they receive and it is all done through post offices.

How long has this programme been operating?

It was started just two years ago. The difficulty was exactly how to reach those people and that is where the Post came in: the State employees closest to the people are postal workers. They live alongside the people, they know everybody, and they often make huge sacrifices to get the money to them: for example they might have to walk for 12 hours or more, or even take a helicopter to a certain location and then walk or hire a horse to reach a really remote location. It is very hard work but we are truly happy to do it because we

feel we are helping those who need it most.

Tell me how you see the role of postal services in general in Panama and in Latin America as a whole? How do you see the role of the postal service in people's everyday lives?

Some countries in Latin America have already set about working on changing things around. We must add value to what we already have, in the knowledge that the world has changed. We cannot make do with the status quo or the same postal service we offered 30 or 40 years ago. I think the region is waking up. There are countries where tremendous changes have taken place, countries whose postal services stand out because they made those changes in time and had that vision. Some of us lagged behind, but we now share the same vision and want to catch up with those that overtook us.

Would you agree that the postal sector in Latin America is booming?

Yes, I think you can reach out and feel it. From the outside it might not be so noticeable, but at meetings of our restricted union, the Postal Union of the Americas, Spain and Portugal (PUASP), it is glaringly obvious how determined we all are not only to make improvements to our service, but also to increase the range and quality of our operations, while striving towards meeting the Millennium Goals. Yes, our postal services are very active. Probably because we know that we have a pile of work in our in-trays.

A plea for tolerance



.....
1st prize – Moïse Luther Hoza
(Central African Republic)



.....
By
Jérôme
Deutschmann

In the words of Moïse Luther Hoza, winner of the 2008 edition of the UNESCO-UPU international letter-writing competition for young people, "Tolerance is generally regarded as a virtue, because it helps to avoid conflicts".

The boy from the Central African Republic, who hopes to be a doctor some day, was one of the more than three million young people under 15, from 67 countries, who competed.

In his letter to a friend who has experienced the horrors of war and now lives in the United States, Moïse advises him to give his enemies a second chance to atone for their misdeeds. By doing this, he will see the results of

tolerance: "They will be grateful to you and you will be at peace, because you will have avoided a conflict... and you will make friends with them, and share with them your culture, your traditions and values, and your language." The ideas are presented in a logical manner, and the reasons are clearly expressed. The UNESCO jury described the letter as a "valuable lesson in tolerance".

The jury felt that Roman Chikhline, the Belarusian boy awarded second prize, had written a letter that was dynamic in both structure and content. The young writer used beautiful metaphors evoking patience, compassion and love to explain why the world needs tolerance.

37th UNESCO-UPU international letter-writing competition

The winning letter

Raphaël Dufun
Post Box
Washington
United States of America

Dear friend,

I am really pleased to be given the opportunity to write you this letter. I know you are well and that it will reach you. I would like to offer you my moral support, as you know no peace; only the nostalgia for peace brought on by wars, decisions and hatred. I also know that for you every day that passes is an ordeal and a great struggle in your country. As time goes by, evolution, development, progress, pride, hatred and war have all opened up huge divisions, differences, confrontations and mutual contradictions between men, countries, nations and continents.

Have you never, ever asked yourself why there are so many changes and differences, so many decisions and reasons for hate?

Well, simply because people are not used to putting up with or tolerating what could be banned, rejected or accepted, nor are they willing to do so. If we all could just adopt, accept and analyse one another's opinions, we would be stronger and more tightly knit, standing shoulder to shoulder. "United we stand", as they say, solid countries based on tolerance make much faster progress than countries that steadfastly reject other people's opinions and values. Do people in your country accept their differences? Are they united? Do they come together to vote for effective decisions?

Yes! The world really needs more tolerance, because tolerance has for so long enabled nations to come together in reconciliation, creating a more mixed community, based on differences and shared values. Tolerance is usually seen as a virtue, because it tends to help us to avoid conflicts. It has also enabled many people to escape the scourge and anger of revenge and given them a second chance in life, promoting different races and nations, the unifying culture of languages, the survival of traditions and the consolidation of countries. In today's world tolerance should be a goal in life. It still has not been adopted by everyone and maybe there is a problem of information and awareness. We have yet to see more of the virtue of bearing or tolerating what we can accept or forgive. We need it for ensuring the stability of future generations, for promoting and sustaining cultures, traditions and the wealth and variety of values. We need the mutual trust that results from bringing people closer together, above all to lead the world to its zenith.

Dear friend, I know that, like everyone, you too have been hurt and traumatized by this war. Like many others you have lost dear ones to this conflict, one of the nastiest consequences of intolerance. And I sense that the flames of revenge burn in your heart. But calm down, take a hold of yourself and forgive their intolerance! Poor things! Tolerate them and give them a second chance to redeem themselves and you will see the results of tolerance! They will be grateful to you and you will know peace, not only because you avoided a conflict but also because you did not have to spill blood. Since kind deeds are never wasted, you will make new friends and have so much to share with them: your culture, your traditions, your values and your language. And vice versa. You and they will discover the virtues of peace as a weapon.

I send you my best wishes. Try and tell everyone you know about tolerance, give them information and documentation, hold meetings with your family, friends and neighbours, and talk about tolerance. I hope you will answer this letter. I also hope that you will come and spend your summer vacation with me.

From your friend,

Hoza Moïse Luther



.....
2nd prize – Romane Chikhline
(Belarus)



.....
3rd prize – Mónica Albino (Portugal)

The third prizewinner, Mónica Albino of Portugal, imagined herself a Martian observing the continents of planet Earth through a telescope using a “toleranceometer”, an instrument for measuring tolerance. Her insightful description, displaying both maturity and creativity, shows how a 12-year-old schoolgirl perceives tolerance in the world.

Decent work: the subject of the 2009 competition

The theme chosen for the 2009 competition is: “Write a letter to someone explaining how decent working conditions can lead to a better life.”

Decent work, the theme chosen in partnership with the International Labour Organization, is an integral part of each of the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals.

The UPU urges countries to take part in this competition and to work with their educational authorities. The theme of decent work should encourage pupils and students to consider ways to eradicate child and forced labour, eliminate inequality and prevent hazards in the workplace. A very explicit film about decent work may be viewed on the ILO website: www.ilo.org/public/english/dw/index.html

Each year, some 60 countries take part in the UNESCO-UPU letter-writing competition, which was first held in 1972.

Market focus

Full liberalization on hold

The Dutch government, which had been due to open up the market to full competition on 1 January 2009, has shelved these plans for the time being. Sandd and Selekt Mail, competitors of TNT Post, have signed a collective agreement with the trade unions that will lead to gradual improvements in working conditions for the two companies' delivery staff, who are currently paid on a piece-rate basis. The Dutch government plans to push for this process to be sped up. Ministers in the Netherlands are empowered to

intervene in labour negotiations where improved working conditions are being sought. Holland's mail market should be fully liberalized by 1 January 2011. At the moment, TNT Post holds a monopoly on letters weighing less than 50 grammes. When this monopoly finally goes, there will be a rush of firms vying to deliver these letters, such as bank statements, on behalf of large businesses and financial institutions.

Source: ANP

New identity

At the beginning of September, the Mexican postal service changed its name from Sepomex to Correos de México. This was no mere cosmetic change, being accompanied by the recruitment of 2,500 new staff, a 40% increase in the size of the postal vehicle fleet, new delivery routes, a new corporate image, new services on offer via the Internet, and computerization of numerous offices and sales points. Access to new technology will also be offered in every post office throughout the land. Other changes will see postal services being offered in the 23,000 Diconsa stores across Mexico, and non-perishable foodstuffs being sold in post offices, alongside telephone and Internet services.

Source: www.eluniversal.com.mx

Fill up your car, drop off your mail

In October, fuel retailer Petrol and postal operator Posta Slovenije launched a "Petrol Letter" service that allows Slovenians to post letters at service stations. A parcel drop-off service has already been available at 131 Petrol stations since last February. Posta Slovenije has delivered 8.5 million parcels and over 300 million letters since the beginning of this year.

Source: Slovenska Tiskovna Agencija

Bermuda's new roadmap

The UPU is to help restructure Bermuda's postal service. Terry Lister, the minister of energy, telecommunications and e-commerce, announced that the country would benefit from an integrated postal reform and development plan (IPDP) developed by the UPU. The IPDP will serve as a roadmap for postal service reform in the coming five years. The UPU regional adviser for the Caribbean and a postal reform expert have been working closely with representatives of the postal

operator, the ministries of justice and finance, and the trade unions. The plan will include definition of the universal postal service, the establishment of a regulatory framework and financing mechanisms, and diversification of postal services. Bermuda is the 62nd country or territory to benefit from an IPDP.

Source: The Royal Gazette, Bermuda

Market focus

Renaissance for postal savings banks

For decades, African governments have been using their extensive postal networks to provide access to small savers' services and basic financial services in rural and urban areas alike. Recent reforms in the financial sector in numerous African countries have led to expansion in the range of products offered by these postal banks. Last year, Kenya Post's savings bank, known as Post-bank, attracted savings of 12 billion Kenyan shillings and recorded a profit of 174 million shillings, mainly through investing these savings. The

directors of this savings bank believe there is scope to increase this return still further by continuing to expand the bank and diversifying the range of products and services. The bank is pressing for a change in the law on postal savings banks to enable it to offer loans and credit facilities to people on low incomes and to micro-businesses.

Source: All Africa.com

Mobile money orders

Pakistan's minister for postal services has announced the launch of new services based on the latest communication technologies. These will include the "mobile money order", the result of an agreement between Pakistan Post and the companies Mobilink and Customer Internet System. Mobile phone customers will be able to transfer money by means of an SMS text message. Registered customers will receive a PIN code from Mobilink, enabling them to make online transfers, with recipients collecting the funds from selected post offices. This service is the first in a series of innovations designed to turn Pakistan Post into a modern service provider.

Source: Business Recorder

Breaking records

Australia Post has announced record results for the 2007 financial year. According to its annual report, the state-owned business earned record pre-tax profits of 592.2 million Australian dollars, up 5.4% on the previous year. There was revenue growth in all three main business areas – letters, parcels and retail. Australia Post also met or exceeded its universal postal service objectives, delivering 95.9% of all domestic letters on time against a target of 94%. The report showed that letters remained a vital form of communication, with domestic letter-post volumes up 2% – the strongest increase since 1999.

Source: Australia Post press release

The great escape

Deutsche Post is to halt its domestic express delivery services in the United States on 30 January. International deliveries will, however, continue. This will result in the loss of a further 9,500 jobs, on top of the 5,400 that have already gone since the beginning of 2008. The German postal operator's foray into the American market began in 2002 when it bought up express carrier

DHL, followed by Airborne Express. The company was soon racking up losses as it struggled to assert itself in the domestic market in the face of UPS (market share 51%), FedEx (31%) and the US Postal Service (13%). The economic slowdown brought on by the financial crisis was the final straw for the German group, whose American adventure cost it a cool 7.5 billion euros.

Source: Trends/Tendances



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