

UNION POSTALE

September 2009

.....
Moving the postal sector forward since 1875



Universal Postal Union,
a specialized agency
of the United Nations

3

Global Monitoring System
Improving
quality of
service

Japan Post joins
Post*Net

UPU Monument's
centenary



Mail Daters and Mail Roller Dater

1 Mail Daters Type 26 and 242

Standard head
diameters:
30 and 35 mm
Figure size: 3 mm
Various date
configurations

2 Ink Pad for Mail Daters Type 123

Plastic case with
removable cover,
135 mm Ø

3 Dater D28c with Textplate

Date in figures,
full year, stylo set.
Figure size: 3 mm
Textplate
of steel: 29 mm Ø

4 Mail Roller Dater Type 130

Figure size: 3 mm
Diameter of
Roller: 26 mm
Diameter of
postmark: 29 mm max.

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2009

September

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

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

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in brief



Stand up and be counted Photo: UNEP

Global

Putting the environment first

Actions speak louder than words when it comes to the environment and the UPU has stepped up its efforts to explore the postal industry's environmental imprint. The Union is working with partners across the sector and with fellow United Nations organizations to raise awareness of environmental issues within Posts. And the UPU director general's message on World Post Day on October 9 will focus on climate change.

In one project, the UPU sustainable development group is currently

collecting data on the industry's carbon footprint. This is the most comprehensive survey ever conducted on the postal sector's environmental impact. Questionnaires have been sent to all of the Union's member countries and results are scheduled to be published later this year.

The Union is also proudly supporting the "Seal the Deal" campaign, spearheaded by its sister agency, the United Nations Environment Programme. This calls on world leaders to commit to goals to reduce carbon emissions during the inter-

national summit taking place in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December. As part of its involvement, the UPU is inviting members of the postal sector to help seal the deal in two locations. During the Post-Expo conference in the German city of Hannover, visitors can stamp and sign a "Seal the Deal" banner, asking world leaders to save the planet. The giant banner is eight metres long and made from organic cotton, which is environmentally friendly. At the International Bureau, attendees of the UPU's next Council of Administration, taking place from October 26 to November 13, will also have the chance to make their mark on the banner. The cloth will be then displayed in Copenhagen.

In another project, the UPU has partnered with PostEurop – one of its restricted unions – and the International Post Corporation to coordinate efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) generated by the postal sector. These organizations are working on a common GHG Inventory Standard. This will contain the main common principles for quantitative reporting. It will be made available to the 191 UPU member countries at the beginning of 2010. This will result in a harmonized methodology to calculate actual emissions. FM

The figure

3,100,000

kilobytes of electronic messages are exchanged on the UPU's POST*Net network every month by designated operators.

Editor's note

Time flies. Six months have passed and two issues published since I became editor-in-chief of Union Postale. As an experienced journalist and editor, I am firmly committed to taking the magazine to new heights with the help of its readers. So far, you have given me a very warm welcome. Hundreds of you responded to the readership survey, with the overwhelming majority providing constructive feedback on our publication. I would like to thank you all for taking the time to reply. Your comments have been and will be instrumental in tailoring Union Postale to your needs.

It will, of course, take some time to collate and analyse all of the survey's results but, based on your opinions, a number of improvements have already

been made. These include a revamped Market Focus and a new section profiling one of my colleagues at the International Bureau in Berne. You have already been introduced to the new rubric People in my maiden issue (Union Postale, 03/09, June 2009) and reader feedback on this has been very positive. More detailed results from the readership survey will follow in the next issue.

This time, the Global Monitoring System is our cover story. As you know, quality of service is a key part of the Union's strategy. And the launch of this worldwide project is a sure sign of the UPU's commitment to improving service quality across the sector.

Faryal Mirza, Editor-in-chief

International Bureau

AFI supports UPU conference on financial inclusion



The Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI) is sponsoring a conference on financial inclusion organized by the Universal Postal Union on November 9-10, 2009. The two-day workshop will bring together UPU member countries, central-bank governors and financial supervisors from across the globe. Among those sharing their experiences of bringing financial services to the world's poor will be Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Thanks to the AFI's grant, nine developing countries will also be able to participate in the proceedings. These will take place at the UPU's headquarters in Berne, Switzerland.

Fundraising from external partners is part of the UPU's efforts to secure extra support for its activities to modernise and reform postal services. For its part, the Bangkok-based AFI was set up in 2008 with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The AFI's mission is to ensure that an extra 50 million people living on less than two US dollars a day have access to formal financial services, like savings accounts, by 2012.

On a separate note, the UPU's first forum on postal regulation will take place on November 12 during the Council of Administration. Participants will discuss financing the universal postal service and the impact of liberalisation, as well as various regulatory models. FM

Global

Postal leaders to attend Hanover event

POST-EXPO 2009

The UPU will once more take part in the annual industry event, Post-Expo, being held in Hanover, Germany, from September 29 – October 1. An integral part of this is the World Postal Business Forum, organized by the Union and open to conference attendees. Here, top postal leaders will discuss the economy, technology and the environment. The UPU will also have its own stand where its experts will be on hand to answer questions about its work and software products. Visitors will be invited to participate in the "Seal the Deal" campaign (see related item) by stamping and signing a giant, ecologically friendly banner at the stand. The banner will eventually be sent to the Danish capital, Copenhagen, for display during the international summit on climate change taking place in December. FM

in brief

who's who

A rewarding performance

Name Julia Bazukina

Position Standards and measurement manager

Department EMS Unit

Nationality Russian

I joined the UPU in 2006 and then became a regional coordinator in the EMS Unit. In May 2009, I was promoted to my current position after I returned from maternity leave. I am now in charge of a team of four, dealing with several EMS projects, such as the audit and measurement programme, standards, procedures, performance measurement, the EMS Operational Guide and other publications, standard agreement and various reports.

The most exciting project I am currently working on is implementation of the EMS Pay-for-Performance Plan. The concept of financially rewarding performance in EMS had its beginnings in 2000. So far, it is the best-known way to improve performance, although persuading members to sign up to the plan takes time. However, once they join, members immediately focus on how to improve their quality of service. Nearly 70 members are participants and we are working hard to increase this number. What I like about this part of my job is that you can see results quickly, often as soon as members join the plan.

My team also coordinates the collection of data and creation of reports supporting the EMS activities of designated operators. There are plenty of information pieces coming in and it is great when you realize how they all fit together. We can see, for example, which parts of the operational process are not working or areas where intervention or improvement is needed. I am in touch with EMS designated operators all the time, usually by email and phone. The contact becomes face to face when the Postal Operations Council and Council of Administration meet in Berne. These are usually very busy and very efficient times for us as many countries like to ask their questions in person if they are at the International Bureau.



Express a speciality Photo: Alexandre Plattet

International Bureau

ISO secretary-general visits UPU in Berne



Edouard Dayan greets Rob Steele in August 2009 Photo: Alexandre Plattet

Rob Steele, the secretary-general of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), has met with the director general of the Universal Postal Union, Edouard Dayan, to discuss ways to strengthen the organizations' existing collaboration. The visit marked Secretary-General Steele's first visit to the UPU since he took up his position in January 2009. Discussions focussed on implementing their formal cooperation, as set out in the cooperation agreement of 2008, and identifying new areas of mutual interest. The latter includes creating standards for addressing, e-business and financial services.

The UPU currently has liaison status on 17 of ISO's technical com-

mittees and sub-committees. As an inter-governmental organization, the Union has already developed about 100 postal standards. However, it recognizes that no organization is an island and the focus has been extended from creating standards for processing physical mail to other areas of interest for the postal sector, such as electronic and financial services. Norms for such services are developed at international forums like ISO, where the UPU is endeavouring to increase its participation in activities that might impact the postal industry. **PM**

Russia

Technical agreement signed with Russian Post

The Union and the Russian Post have signed a memorandum of understanding, intending to set up a regional technical centre (RTC) in Moscow. The centre – once approved – would provide support for UPU software in postal payment services to Posts in Eastern Europe and North Asia. It would also train users according to the principle of neighbours assisting each other.

For the UPU, the establishment of RTCs ensures the proper deployment of its software applications and platforms. This includes the provision of operational and technical support and the sharing of technical know-how on a regional basis with designated operators. There are currently two RTCs worldwide, located in Tunisia and Singapore.

The MOU was signed during the 16th Pochtovaya Troika conference, held on July 1–2 in St Petersburg. The biennial meeting was attended by delegates from across the postal sector, with discussions focussing on the global financial crisis. Dignitaries included UPU Director General Edouard Dayan, Russian Post Director General Alexander Kisselev and Igor Shegolev, Russian minister of telecommunications and communication. FM

Global

Decent work and chocolate bars



Winner Dominika Koflerová from the Czech Republic

The first prize in the UPU's International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People has been awarded to a letter on how fair-trade chocolate improves working conditions in developing countries. Writing to her sister, 14-year-old Dominika Koflerová of the Czech Republic, said: "The chocolate I just ate was no ordinary chocolate. The Zambian producer who made it received enough money to give him and his family a decent living."

The jury was not only impressed by the letter's originality. "The young Czech also clearly explained

how rich countries can help to improve working conditions by consuming fair-trade goods," it said, summing up the verdict of the five judges. The panel consisted of representatives from the UPU, UNESCO and the International Labour Organization, the two partner organizations in the 2009 contest. About 60 countries took part, with entrants writing on the theme: "How decent working conditions can lead to a better life."

Nguyen Dac Xuan Thao, a 13 year old girl from Viet Nam, was awarded second prize. Her letter was beautifully structured and, centred on her father's accident at work, her composition was a fine example to readers all around the world, said the jury.

Two contestants shared the third prize: Alina Beiner of Belarus and Dejan Kovač of Montenegro. The jury decided that 11-year-old Alanis Todeschini Marca (Brazil), 12-year-old Aditya Gupta (Aruba) and 13-year-old Sandhya Ramani (India) all deserved special commendations.

Talking about AIDS

The theme for the 2010 competition asks youth around the world to write a letter to someone to explain the importance of talking about AIDS and protecting oneself against this disease. The topic is in line with the UPU's HIV awareness campaign currently being conducted with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS or UNAIDS. This global project is utilising the postal network and its employees to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS. Other campaign partners include the ILO and UNI Global Union. JB

Further information is available at:
• http://www.upu.int/about_us/en/hiv_prevention_campaign.shtml

Quality monitoring goes global

In a marriage between radio frequency identification technology and affordability, the Global Monitoring System enables member countries of the Universal Postal Union to measure the quality of international letter-mail at an affordable price.

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By
Faryal Mirza

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Illustration:
Ray Hegelbach

Monitoring quality of service using a state-of-the-art solution that does not cost the earth has just received a boost from the digital age. Since August 2009, 21 UPU member countries have been using the Global Monitoring System (GMS) in the first phase of the project's roll-out. The system uses passive radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to improve postal services and its scope is a worldwide first for a number of different reasons. Its geographical scope is unprecedented, given that at some point in the not-so-distant future all of the 191 UPU's member countries will be invited to join. The system makes no discrimination between members from industrialised, developing or least developed countries for two main reasons. These are that the cost of participation is affordable and the technology used is based on open standards.



Evolution

Between now and December 2009, 530 independent individuals (so-called panellists) will send 24,000 test letters containing RFID tags from 38 nations to 21 participating countries. These letters will pass through 45 postal facilities. The data collected as the test letters pass through special gates will be transmitted to the UPU and used to help Posts identify service failures and improve operational efficiency. A further 30 countries are expected to join the new scheme from 2010.

For many Posts worldwide, improving the quality of their letter-mail services is a priority. But the dilemma some operators face is: how can we make improvements if we have no system to measure quality of service? In the digital age, there are hi-tech solutions that use sophisticated electronics to monitor quality levels,

but the challenge for some operators was to find one that was affordable and effective. With the GMS, the UPU is now able to offer its member countries a fitting solution. "No postal operator can afford not to have a performance-measuring system in place to monitor the quality of its operations and service in order to improve efficiency, remain competitive and retain customers," emphasises UPU Director General Edouard Dayan. "And what is good about the GMS is that it is for all postal operators, not just those coming from industrialised countries," Dayan adds.

Industrialised approach

One industrialised country that has been involved from the start with the project is Switzerland. "The constant improvement of the quality of our products and services

“What is good about the GMS is that it is for all postal operators, not just those coming from industrialised countries.”

UPU Director General Edouard Dayan

is a fundamental element of our strategy. That is why we quickly realised that it was a good idea to examine this new project,” reveals Paul Epiney, head of Swiss Post International Switzerland (SPIS). He adds that the GMS is an “exciting adventure”.

Costs were also a decisive factor in SPIS’ decision to join the GMS. “Any investment should be based on solid economic reasons and the passive technology used by GMS is the most advantageous in the mid-term,” adds Epiney. Another important element for SPIS was the system’s accessibility for all UPU member countries. “It permits new countries – for which access to other systems in the past was too onerous – to join and enlarge the circle of participants,” says Epiney. “We too can profit from an intensified exchange with a certain number of these countries,” he adds.

Final frontier

Akio Miyaji, the UPU’s quality of service coordinator, reveals that letter mail was the final frontier when it came to monitoring quality of service. “For parcels and EMS, it is easy to measure quality of service because electronic registration takes places along the delivery chain, so from the time the product leaves the customer to the time it arrives, it can be tracked,” Miyaji explains. Letter mail, however, is a different product altogether. “If a letter is posted into a mailbox, there is no record of when it entered that box and, in normal cases, no record is made of the final delivery,” Miyaji says. There

are, he adds, simple ways of registering the transaction times of letter mail, such as using pen and paper. However, given the trend towards linking quality of service measurements to payments for delivery between Posts (terminal dues), a science-based system was considered to be the best way forward by UPU member countries. The Bucharest Congress in 2004 instructed the Postal Operations Council to look into expanding the “pay for performance” model to international letter mail. The concept of financially rewarding performance had first been introduced to express mail services (EMS) in 2003.

The challenge for the UPU was to develop a new system based on technology and drawing on its own experience in quality of service. It was clear that a scientific tool to record time electronically was needed. There was a system already on the market using RFID technology to monitor mail deliveries. However, the transponders or tags being used to do the monitoring were considered too expensive to be at the heart of what needed to be a system that was globally accessible and affordable for all UPU member countries. This method also utilised a customised semi-active RFID solution, where each customised tag cost around 20 US dollars.

Open competition

It was during consultations between industry experts and the UPU’s quality of service group that the concepts of ‘open’ or ‘global standards’ were mentioned. Using

“The GMS will provide objective data, showing where improvements to operational quality should be made.”

Claudia Torrejon Puebla, head of quality management at Correos Chile

“Our role at the UPU is to provide an affordable solution to everyone that will ensure the equitable handling of mail.”

Akio Miyaji, the UPU's quality of service coordinator

passive RFID technology based on global standards in a new monitoring system would drive participation costs down dramatically. Now that the GMS is a reality, participants can buy a passive RFID tag for just 0.30 US dollars.

The Spanish supplier chosen to provide RFID equipment to the project, AIDA Centre, had to participate in an open tender, as did potential panellist providers. “Selecting suppliers through tenders and using open-standard technology meant we got the best solution at the best price,” explains Miyaji. Using global standards also has operational benefits. “Open standards are important when the solution tries to solve a problem where more

than one supplier, Post or manufacturer are involved,” explains Joan Pons, AIDA Centre’s managing director. “The use of open standards allows sharing of the same technology around the entire supply chain, regardless of which countries are involved,” adds Pons.

And once countries are equipped with the GMS technology, they can extend their monitoring activities to domestic mail. Improvements to a country’s international quality of service are expected to have a positive effect on domestic-mail operations. One country looking into this possibility already is Chile. “The GMS is an opportunity to extend monitoring to mail throughout the country to assess operational processes, so that our

Benefits of using passive RFID technology in the GMS

- The passive technology involved follows global standards (EPC Global GEN-2), allowing its use all over the world. The same tag or transponder also can be globally read on an open-standard basis;
- The price of passive technology is extremely low; and
- Since the passive transponder does not need a battery, it is very thin. The tag can be easily concealed in a regular standard envelope.

Joan Pons, managing director, AIDA Centre

Panellist supplier

Quotas, a German company, was selected through a tender process to provide the independent panellists crucial to the GMS. With participants in more than 80 countries, the company recruits individuals through a number of channels. These include internet banners, direct mail, newspaper advertisements, international organizations or local field services. "In general, we target our recruitment efforts at people with an interest in international exchange," reveals Jens Ebering, Quotas' research director. "The motivation of many panellists springs from the unifying goal of improving postal services worldwide," he adds. And how does the company deal with the challenge of managing different panellists in different countries working on one project? "The key is clear and simple communication taking into account the cultural situation in each country," says Ebering.

Countries taking part in the GMS' first phase

Aruba, Chile, Greece, India, Korea (Republic), Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands Antilles, Norway, Peru, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela

Post can measure each operative part of the distribution process automatically through RFID technology," says Claudia Torrejon Puebla, head of quality management at Correos Chile. "The system will provide objective data, showing where improvements to operational quality should be made," she adds. In the future, the same technology could eventually be used to track other items, such as parcels, and manage assets like postal equipment.

As for the costs of participation, Miyaji emphasizes that they are very affordable. "Our role at the UPU is to provide an affordable solution to everyone that will ensure the equitable handling of mail," he underlines. Countries needing help to finance their participation in the GMS may apply to the UPU's Quality of Service Fund for assistance. The GMS team has developed a process to facilitate such applications. The UPU is also committed to helping countries analyse their GMS data and will assist them to streamline their operational processes on request.

For further information, please contact Akio Miyaji, quality of service coordinator, (akio.miyaji@upu.int), or Antonio Caeiro, GMS project manager, (antonio.caeiro@upu.int).

Japan joins POST*Net

June 30 was a red-letter day in the history of the Universal Postal Union's POST*Net – the network that facilitates electronic communication between Posts – took place. Japan Post successfully migrated to the electronic data interchange network developed and maintained by the Postal Technology Centre, the UPU's technical arm.

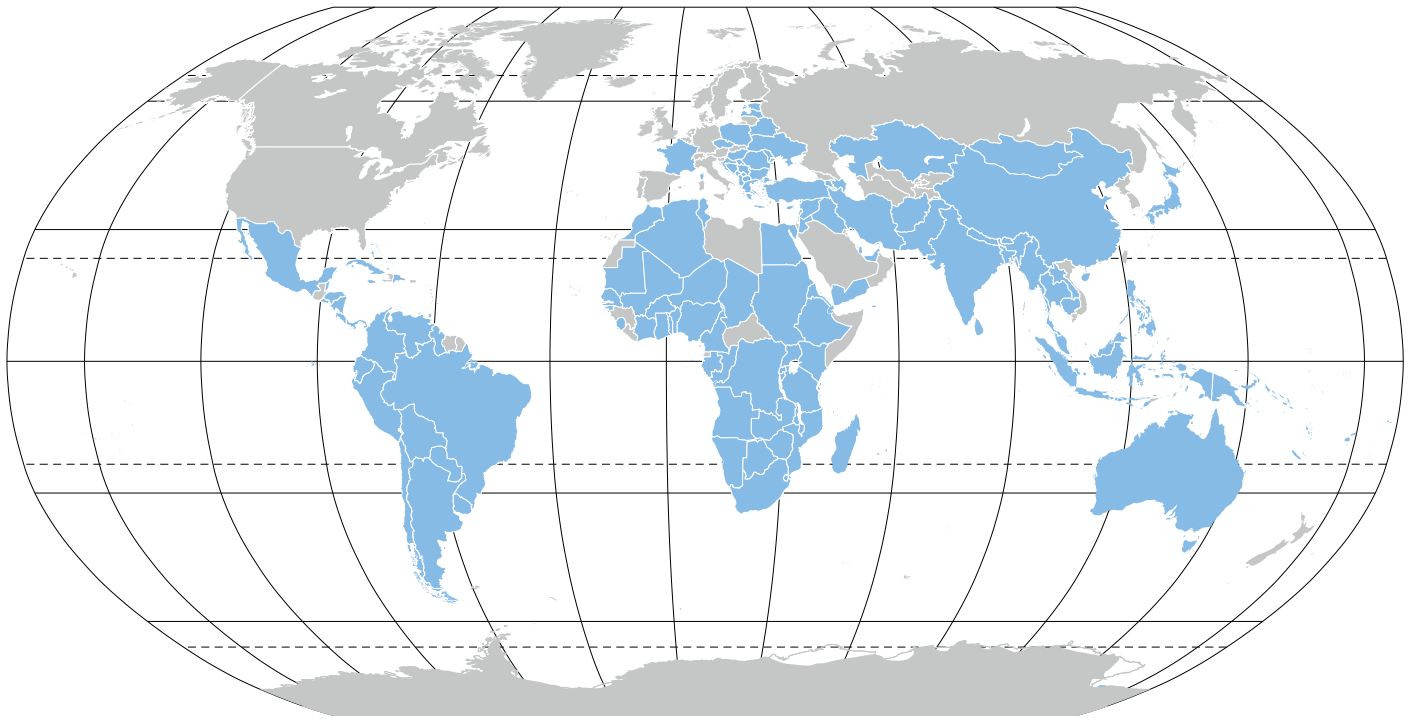
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**By
Monika
Kugemann**

Japan Post is the latest member of the POST*Net system, joining more than 140 other Posts on the UPU's global postal network. Convinced by POST*Net's performance and features, this operator decided to abandon the electronic data interchange (EDI) network it had been using for years. This important decision by Japan Post is a result of the long-standing relationship between the land of the rising sun and the UPU. Japan has supported the Postal Technology Centre (PTC) since the 1990s and has regularly sent experts to UPU headquarters. Among them was Kazuo Kamishiro. Previously in charge of network management at his country's Post, Kamishiro joined the UPU in 2006. As a Japanese expert, he was responsible for coordinating PTC missions in Asia Pacific. When he first started working in Berne, Kamishiro was sceptical about the qualities of POST*Net. "At that time, honestly speaking, I thought Japan Post would never change its network to POST*Net. But since I started working here, I had to change my view," he reveals.

As his involvement in the PTC's operations grew, Kamishiro noticed POST*Net's many features, in areas such

as quality of service. One advantage was the PTC managing POST*Net entirely in-house with the network hosted in two data centres. This avoided network outages if one data centre failed. The result is a network availability of 100 percent, paired with a superior service level.

"Once I knew this, it gave me the confidence to suggest that Japan Post use POST*Net," remembers Kamishiro. As Japan was in the process of evaluating its costs and procedures, Kamishiro's proposal came at the right time. The operator went on to express an interest in joining the UPU's network. Two years of discussion and extensive tests followed, culminating in Japan opting for POST*Net. Two factors were vital. "First of all, Japan Post thinks about the quality of service rather than the cost," explains Kamishiro. "But the costs it paid to its previous network were quite high." The UPU's network had significantly lower costs, while its service and performance compared favourably with its competitor. With the adoption of POST*Net, Japan Post is not only maintaining but has actually increased its high standards in quality of service, while paying much less.



.....
Japan joins industrialised countries like France and Australia on POST*NET (participants in blue)
Illustration: Arnaud Fourny with die Gestalter

For the UPU, Japan Post's choice was a clear signal to other countries that PTC products were worth a second look. "If Japan is satisfied with our services, any industrialised country can be too," says Harald Weyerich, head of the PTC.

Connecting Posts

And Posts around the world would have reason to be satisfied with the functionalities of POST*Net. As an electronic network, it facilitates communications between Posts. In contrast with paper messages, notification of outgoing and incoming mail items can be realized almost in real time through EDI. This is important as it saves Posts time and money, while enhancing their environmentally-friendly profile. EDI messaging also ensures that quality of service agreements are met, as services by individual Posts are recorded promptly and accurately. And POST*Net messaging is the backbone of the UPU's postal money order network. Every month, messages equalling 3.1 million kilobytes are exchanged through the network.

Planning ahead

Pre-advice of oncoming mail via EDI messaging is vital because Posts can use their records of electronic messages to plan their logistics, identify quality problems and invoice one another. Since postal remuneration is increasingly linked to quality of service, "Posts have an interest in having a smooth and immediate transport of

messages over their networks", according to Weyerich. This is why "the availability and performance of networks increasingly play an important financial role for Posts", he adds. Furthermore, POST*Net provides a transmission time of less than three minutes for practically all messages.

The fact that POST*Net uses standard EDI messages offers additional benefits. Thanks to standardization, a participating Post no longer needs to negotiate individual bilateral agreements with the other operators using the same network and can directly generate performance statistics for postal accounting. The network is protected from outside interference through virtual private networks (VPN). VPNs allow Posts to communicate with each other over the internet as if they were physically connected, while avoiding sensitive information being accessed by third parties.

POST*Net has further advantages in comparison to other EDI networks. "The UPU not only transports messages but also has special knowledge about their content," says Weyerich. "This – and our dedication to postal services – allows us to provide additional value-added services to our members." One of these services is an automatic alert that informs Posts of abnormalities in their mail volumes, thus allowing them to quickly take corrective action.

Mail service solutions

Apart from POST*Net, the Postal Technology Centre, (PTC), has two other main pillars. International Postal System (IPS) is a fully fledged management solution that helps Posts to improve their service level in international mail. International Financial System (IFS) allows Posts to offer money order services, such as migrant remittances. As a neutral trusted third party, the PTC also coordinates the development of e-services technology among countries, with the aim of sharing services among Posts and to provide routing and accreditation.

At the helm

Technology development at the PTC is steered by the UPU's Telematics Cooperative (TC), whose mission is to "enable Posts and their partners to be linked and to deliver leading market services". Three specialized user groups focus on international mail services, international financial services and advanced electronic services, allowing countries to directly influence postal-technology development. When the PTC receives a new idea from the cooperative, it assesses the level of common interest among countries and launches a new technology project if required. The TC is currently com-

posed of 128 countries with a special interest in postal technologies.

The cooperative approach developed by the TC with its cost-based pricing ensures that the PTC's high-quality postal applications are available to all Posts, regardless of their level of development. "As a non-profit organization, our goal is always to provide state-of-the-art electronic services to our members at the cheapest price possible," explains Weyerich. "As a United Nations specialized agency, we also have a social responsibility to developing countries and must make sure that our services can be used by everybody."

The proliferation of PTC software brings advantages to all. Since less developed countries also use the applications, industrialised countries no longer need to maintain manual procedures for interacting with the former. "This is a win-win situation," says Weyerich. "The industrialised countries invest in the improvement of an application, the others can access the system and everybody can communicate as if they were one organization."

POST*Net

What it is: The UPU's global postal electronic communications network

What it does: transport of standard EDI messages

Areas of use: electronic communications between postal operators worldwide

Value-added services: monitoring service and integrated alert system in case of anomalies, basis of track and trace, quality measurement, postal remuneration and invoicing

Advantages: developed for the postal community and its needs; postal ownership allows for direct influence on network evolution; cost-based pricing adapts to the development level of the country

Facts: 100% service availability; 99.80% of messages transferred in less than three minutes

IPS

What it is: The UPU's integrated international mail management application

What it does: helps Posts improve international mail service quality

Components: IPS, IPS Light, PSSG/PNG, TriPS (airlines)

Areas of use: all classes and categories of international and domestic mail

Value-added services: end-to-end monitoring of items, receptacles and dispatches; automated dispatch handling, track and trace, EDI messaging

Advantages: complete paperless mail management from origin to destination, including transit, international carriers and handling through customs

Facts: currently used by 147 international postal operators

Inspiring Posts

More users, and the fact that UPU applications can help Posts save money, have enhanced the PTC's importance in recent years. "The financial crisis has increased the growing interest in our solutions," says Weyerich. To manage the extra attention, the PTC has expanded its staff during the past two years. In 2006, employees, including those based at its regional centres, numbered 40. By 2009, this had increased to 60.

Currently 85 percent of all Posts use IPS but this number might increase in the near future as various industrialised Posts are entering a renovation cycle for their international mail software. Many have already adopted IPS, having realised that the total cost of ownership is much less with PTC software than updating their old systems.

Financial services

IFS is another PTC product. With traditional mail revenues declining, financial services have become a crucial component of the postal-service panoply. "IFS is a business opportunity for Posts," says Marcelo Quinteros, the PTC's operations manager. "First because they only need to split revenues between two parties (the sending and beneficiary Posts), instead of having to share them with third-party providers. And secondly because

the UPU can guarantee the security, confidentiality and reliability of their financial transactions, plus interconnectivity with our worldwide network."

Through flexible interfaces, the IFS family of software solutions can adapt to the situation and interests of individual operators. Posts that already have a domestic system for money orders can use IFS to extend their services to manage international money orders. The system allows Posts to offer a service that charges less than the traditionally high fees that senders pay for international-money transfers with market competitors. "IFS not only helps to provide money orders that are more affordable, it also makes remittances available to all and not only to a specific group of people," explains Quinteros. "It thus extends these services to a percentage of the population that is usually not considered or serviced."

And there is more: "Through the UPU's extensive network of Posts around the world, including the widely accessible postal services of individual countries, we can physically reach almost everywhere in the world," says Quinteros. While Posts generate more revenue, their customers, such as migrant workers, pay less to financially support relatives in another country.

In addition, designated operators can directly influence IFS development. A recent demand from operators was for an application for domestic-money transfers. The UPU had asked Posts interested in this kind of service what they would expect from a domestic system. Thanks to detailed input, a new IFS module is now available.

Future prospects

Apart from extending the IFS family, the PTC is investigating further possibilities to fuel the growth of the postal sector to help it come to terms with the loss of traditional mail volumes during the economic recession. One solution could be the internationalization or interconnection of postal e-services, such as postal-registered e-mail or postal e-shopping. Other future areas of activity at the PTC are the complete EDI-fying of the postal logistics supply chain, including an automated link to the customs authorities (joint project with the World Customs Organization), automated paperless invoicing between Posts and standard regulations for inquiries and claims. Solutions are expected to be in place by the next UPU Congress in 2012. In addition, the PTC is providing the management system for the UPU's Global Monitoring System and the Global Post*Code Database.

Monika Kugemann is a freelance journalist

IFS

What it is: The UPU's software application for international money order services

What it does: handles all phases of international money processing through EDI

Components: IFS v3, IFS light, STEFI, IFS domestic - module for domestic money orders

Areas of use: electronic transfer of money orders and fund transfer services

Value-added services: standard international accounting, monitoring and quality control measurement, sophisticated data encryption, supported by its own PKI

Advantages: postal-owned - Posts are not dependent on third-party providers; in times of crisis, more trust in posts than in banks for money transfers

Facts: currently used by 40 designated operators in production, another 60 preparing for introduction

.....
**'Around the
World' in a
contemporary
postcard**

Courtesy of
Burgerbibliothek Berne



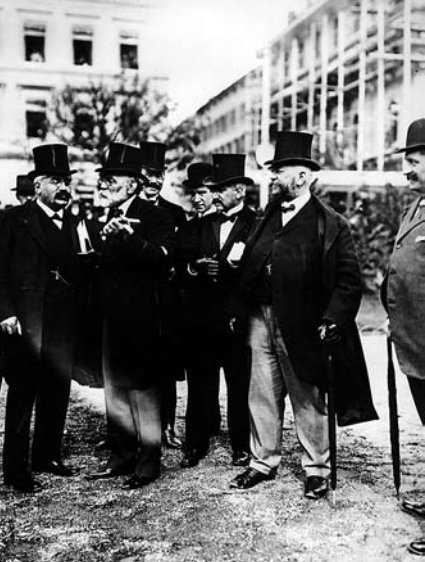
Happy 100th birthday to the UPU monument

In October, the Universal Postal Union celebrates the centenary of its iconic monument. Completed by French sculptor René de Saint-Marceaux in 1909, the sculpture marked the founding of the UPU 35 years earlier.

.....
**By
Sarra Daldoul**

For the past century, the UPU monument has stood in the Kleine Schanze park, close to the Swiss Parliament building. This imposing work in red granite and bronze features a globe encircled by five female figures passing letters to one another. These allegorical figures symbolize the five continents of the world. Looking on is the dignified figure of Berna, seated at the foot of the monument, who represents the city of Berne, where the UPU was founded in 1874. The column of clouds forming the base of the monument recalls the majesty of the Swiss Alps.

Given the rich symbolism of the monument, the UPU gradually adopted the globe and encircling maidens as its emblem. The official logo has remained unchanged since its formal adoption in 1967, apart from the recent addition of two olive branches to reflect the UPU's membership of the United Nations family.



.....
**René de Saint-Marceaux,
 second from left,
 in Bern**

Photo: Museum of Communication,
 Bern

.....
**The lavish opening
 ceremony on
 October 4, 1909**

Photo: Burgerbibliothek Bern

The competition

The idea of erecting a monument to commemorate the founding of the UPU was first put forward at an extraordinary congress held in Bern in July 1900. The proposal by Victor von Podbielski, secretary of state at the German department of Posts, was approved unanimously, leading to the launch of an international competition on October 31, 1902. The artists were given until September 15, 1903 to send their entries to the Swiss Parliament building.

The 11-member jury, mostly made up of European sculptors and architects, received more than 120 designs. These were presented in the form of models to a scale of 1:10, constructed from fragile plaster, which had to be shipped to Bern in wooden crates – not a comfortable journey in the age of steam, and not all the models survived this journey intact. Meeting at the Swiss Parliament from September 23–25, 1903, the jury reviewed all the entries, including those that had arrived late or in pieces. The judges found it difficult to agree on a shortlist.

“Around the world”

Ironically, entry No.12 submitted by René de Saint-Marceaux, entitled “Faster”, was among the 66 designs rejected in the first round of voting. But one jury member, French sculptor Paul Bartholomé, proposed including the design among a group of 14 set aside for a second deliberation.

After several further rounds of voting, it was agreed that six artists, including de Saint-Marceaux, would be admitted to a second, closed competition. Their proposed designs were exhibited to the general public for a month at the Bern city riding school. The artists were invited to refine their designs to “adapt them to the conditions of the competition” and then resubmit them to the jury.

On August 8, 1904, the reworked design by de Saint-Marceaux, now entitled “Around the World”, was

declared the winner. The sculptor had developed the design by adding the seated figure of Berna. The jury described his design as “a work of great talent, striking in its originality, and gracefully proportioned; an elegant representation of the institution it is designed to honour”.

The Swiss Federal Council decided that the monument should be sited in the Kleine Schanze (“Little Redoubt”) park, located in what was then known, appropriately enough, as Steinhauerplatz (“Stonecutters’ Square”).

Monumental celebrations

The sculpture was due to be installed at the end of 1907, but for various reasons, including the poor health of the sculptor, the delivery date had to be put back. Five years after triumphing in the competition, de Saint-Marceaux finally delivered his work in August 1909. Several tonnes of granite and bronze left his workshop in Neuilly, on the outskirts of Paris, for Bern. As the Bernese newspaper, Der Bund, reported on October 4, 1909, “the pieces were transported in some sixty wagons”.

The inauguration date was set for October 4, 1909, and a lavish celebration was laid on in honour of the 63 delegates from 52 countries, along with the diplomatic corps and many other public figures. The invitees enjoyed three days of festivities, with banquets, excursions, and visits to some of the most picturesque corners of Switzerland. The celebrations were reported at length in the Swiss press.

A hundred years on, the monument is as imposing as ever, and symbolizes in its own way the role of new communication technologies in linking the continents. Back in 1909, Eugène Ruffy, UPU director general, speculated that de Saint-Marceaux, in creating his ethereal letter-carriers, was foreseeing a day when “our mail might be conveyed through the air, in gossamer-like engines able to fly across boundaries”.



The monument today

Photo: UPU

René de Saint-Marceaux

(Reims, 1845 – Paris, 1915)

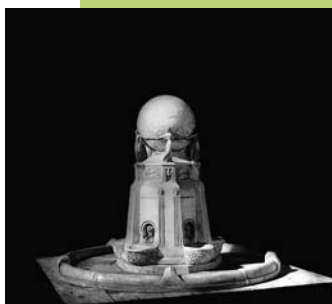
A pupil of sculptor François Jouffroy, de Saint-Marceaux was admitted to the French Academy of Fine Arts in 1905, one year after winning the UPU competition. The artist is known for numerous works on display at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, as well as in the streets and squares of Reims (France), his place of birth. His best-known works include Effigy of Abbé Miroy (1873), The Spirit Guarding the Secret of the Tomb (1879), Champagne Foam (1887) and the tomb of Alexandre Dumas, Jr.

Celebrations in 2009

To mark the centenary of its monument, World Post Day and the organization's 135th birthday, the UPU, in conjunction with the city and canton of Berne, is organizing festivities on October 9 in the Kleine Schanze park.

Swiss Post and La Poste (France) will also be launching a joint stamp issue. The Swiss stamp will be for official UPU mail only, while the French stamp will be for use by the general public. An exhibition will be held at Berne's town hall (Rathaus) from October 9 – 11. It will then be moved to the International Bureau for the duration of the Council of Administration session (October 26 to November 13). A wide range of historical documents and stamp issues retracing the monument's history will be on show.

Models wanted



Design by Ignatius Taschner and Auguste Herr

Photo: Museum of Communication, Berne



Emil Hundrieser's entry

Photo: Museum of Communication, Berne

Thanks to extensive trawling through Bernese museums and archives, the article's author was able to uncover some of the original entries submitted to the competition a century ago: plaster and bronze models by de Saint-Marceaux and the plaster models submitted by German artist, Emil Hundrieser, and Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi (the French sculptor responsible for the Statue of Liberty in New York). The models are stored at the Museum of Communication in Berne. Part of the entry by Georges Morin (Germany) and bronze details from the design entitled "Human Races" by Auguste de Niederhäusern Rodo (Switzerland) are to be found in the Berne Fine Art Museum.

All the world's a stage

Letter carrier Anadi Bhattacharjee is based in Port Blair in the Indian Andaman Islands. A familiar sight on his beat for six years, Bhattacharjee has clocked up 25 years at India Post. Married with one child, he originally hails from Howrah, near Kolkata, capital of West Bengal. When he is not out on his rounds, Bhattacharjee is a keen amateur thespian. He earns 13,400 Indian rupees (275 US dollars) a month.

By
India Post (Port
Blair) and Faryal
Mirza

Photos:
India Post

Why did you decide to become a letter carrier?

Anadi Bhattacharjee: The reason is simple: to earn my livelihood.

If you had not become a letter carrier, what would you have been? When I was younger, I wanted to be an English teacher but my parents could not afford the training. Becoming a radio artiste was another ambition, which I have since fulfilled. I have been interested in acting since I was in the eighth grade at school. Over the years, I have acted in and directed a number of street, stage and radio plays.

What are your working hours like? I work six days a week and rest on Sundays. An average week is 48 hours. I am also entitled to 30 days of paid holiday a year. After a working day, I usually do drama rehearsals between 6.30 and 9.30 in the evening.

What benefits do you get from your employer?

Allowances for children's education, housing and my uniform, as well as travel concessions and medical benefits, to name a few. As a government employee, I also have a pension scheme.

Are you happy to be a letter carrier?

I am. Thanks to my drama training, I am always smiling and easy to get on with. I never argue or get angry with my customers. I like making people happy and many customers have written to my boss, thanking me for my services.

Has your job changed much over the years?

In the past, I used to deliver mostly personal letters. Now it is mainly commercial mail. I also process mail on a computer these days.

Anadi Bhattacharjee in the
Aberdeen Bazaar



India Post



The route

My route is about five kilometres altogether, which I cover on foot. I pass a number of landmarks in Port Blair, such as the Aberdeen Bazaar, the Clock Tower, the governor's residence and the Netaji stadium. I deliver mostly to shops and offices and meet people from all walks of life. Some of them recognise me from the plays I have acted in or directed. Because of my hobby, I am friends with many people I meet on my route. Recently I was at the vegetable market when a seller recognised me from one of my plays. He told me how much he had liked my performance and would not accept payment for the vegetables I wanted to buy. This happens quite a lot.

How are postal workers regarded in your country?

They are seen as honest, hard working people using outdated methods.

India Post has a history stretching back more than 150 years. It is state-owned and belongs to the ministry of communications and information technology. When India gained independence from the British in 1947, the Post had 23,344 post offices. Today, it has the largest postal network in the world with 155,503 post offices. On average, each post office serves 7,160 people and covers an area of approximately 21.2 km². The main postal services available to the general public are ordinary letter post, EMS, registered mail, parcels, logistics, life insurance, savings accounts and remittances. In 2008, inward mail items reached 36 million.

The Post Office Savings Bank is the oldest and largest banking institution in the country. More than 17 million people use India Post's banking system. The Post has a three-percent market share of the life-insurance business in India. Since 1884, Postal Life Insurance (PLI) has provided coverage, initially to employees of the postal department and now to all government employees. In 1995, PLI was extended to the country's rural population under a new scheme called Rural Postal Life Insurance.



facts & figures

India

Capital city	New Delhi
Official languages	Hindi and English
Country population	1.1 billion
Area	3.2 million km ²
GDP per capita	820 USD
Currency	Indian Rupee (INR)
Main industries	Metallurgy and manufacturing

Buying basics

Domestic letter rates	INR 5 (ordinary letter)	(0.10 USD)
Milk	INR 20/litre	(0.40 USD)
Rice	INR 25/kg	(0.50 USD)
Chappati flour	INR 18/kg	(0.37 USD)
Fish	INR 50/kg	(1.00 USD)
Bananas	INR 28/kg	(0.57 USD)
Cigarettes	INR 30/packet	(0.60 USD)
Coca-Cola	INR 35/litre	(0.70 USD)
Cinema ticket	INR 50	(1.00 USD)

Talking about an operational revolution

Since 2004, the Saudi Post Corporation (SPC) has undergone a strategic make-over to show the public that it means business. Steering the changes is the operator's president, Mohammad Benten. He tells Union Postale about introducing new concepts, such as standard addresses and e-commerce, to the desert nation.

By
Faryal Mirza

Photo:
Tareq Mahmood

What is the Saudi postal market like?

Mohammad Benten: Posts outside the United States and Europe are underdeveloped because very few people depend on them to do their major businesses. What is usually done in the West through the Post is done here by going personally to finish the business, such as getting passports and identification papers. People used the Post in the past because they were writing letters due to the difficulty in communicating otherwise. Unfortunately for quite a while, with the evolution of telecommunications and technology, such as email, many people thought that their dependency on the Post would diminish and that they wouldn't need the latter anymore. Their correspondence today depends mostly on email, fax, SMS and phone calls. Some of the ex-pats in Saudi Arabia, who are mainly labourers from Asia, still use letter mail.

You arrived at SPC in 2004. What were the challenges you faced?

Coming in at this time, we had to do a lot of market surveys and talk to people. We then launched a huge campaign to let them know that the Post was not only about letter mail but much more. This included e-government services and direct mail, about getting the right information at the right time and savings that they could get through us. It is taking time but more and more organizations such as banks – one of our major customers – are starting to require a physical address for people to open accounts and to get credit cards. So, business is picking up.

One of the major things to tackle was addresses. The addressing system that is used by most of the countries outside the western world is not very exact sometimes; it is relative addressing. We had to come up with a standard address with a unit number, street name,



“We are in a market where people think the Post is only for sending romantic letters.”

city and postal code. We had to postcode the entire kingdom and developed a new numbering system that is the property of SPC. It then made it easy for us to come up with navigators and electronic maps. It took us a while to postcode the whole kingdom, to issue numbers to all the houses and to convince major services like the police and fire rescue to use these addresses. We then started to build up our databases, could think of profiling and entering the direct-mail business. This also enabled us to use sorting machines to automate processes.

What kind of techniques did you use to bring postcodes to your country?

We had to do a state-of-the art analysis of maps to come up with a special technique. It is the first of its kind in the world and we are copyrighting it. If you have the postcode and look at a map of our country, you can pinpoint where that postcode is as it contains information about the city or village and sometimes even an actual neighbourhood. All the numbers in the code, which has five digits, have a meaning. The first digit refers to a region in Saudi Arabia; if the second digit is even, you are in the north of that region. This postcode is not just only for the Post but can also be an asset for use in planning, social purposes, building

schools and hospitals and e-government. It was a national project, which we overtook and everyone is going to benefit from it.

What followed the postcode project?

We came up with an innovative technique to number houses and buildings within these postal codes. House numbers have a meaning. For example, if you are on an eastbound street, the four-digit number starts with a 2, 3, 4, 5. Houses starting with 6, 7, 8, 9 are on a northbound street. We are actually numbering each metre in that postcode, so it doesn't depend on the building. With this technique, we have been able to do navigation and GPS mapping very quickly because it is linear mapping. It solves the problem of reading the names of streets and cities as everything is embedded in the house number and postcode.

Why are you copyrighting the addressing technique you developed?

Because we want people to use it. It has a lot of mathematics and technology behind it and, when it is copyrighted, we can give the technology to people in other areas of the world to use. Talking about numbering and postcodes is usually controversial in certain countries. It is not an easy issue to tackle as there are questions about who should do it, whether it should be

the Post, the authorities or the federal government. We don't expect that countries will come and say: "You have this numbering system and we want to use it." But we think people in the Arab world and Asia will figure out that with formal addressing you can use map navigators and be reached through GPS and databases.

What effects have formal addresses had on Saudi Arabia?

In the business area in particular, people have started to realise the benefits of an addressing system. We now have a number of spin-off businesses, such as limousine services by phone. It used to be very difficult to describe your address before to such a service and it took a long time for a car to get to you. Not anymore. Home delivery has also become easier, leading to many e-malls being established. SPC has the largest e-mall in the country and people are using it because their addresses are known and the products can be delivered to their homes.

Why did you open your own e-mall?

We are in a market where people think that the Post is only for sending romantic letters. We have shown the public that we now deliver products, service people wherever they are and offer them things that they really need. We

also deliver their government documents and financial statements and let them do business, as well as selling and buying goods available in other parts of the country.

Our e-mall (www.e-mall.com.sa) is very extensive and similar to amazon.com. In Saudi Arabia, we have major, small and tiny cities, villages and rural areas. The major cities are like any other major city in the world with big department stores and fancy malls. Such facilities are not available in other areas, so we worked with the major department stores and catalogued their products. We made the goods available on our e-mall so that people anywhere in the country can buy them on the web. They can also buy them through our offices. We have about 6,000 points across the country, so people in a village can shop at a major department store in a city two hours' flight away just by going to a post office. There, they can sit down with one of our agents at a terminal and buy goods, which are delivered to their home the next day.

Does the e-mall only offer products from large stores?

No. The e-mall offers another important service: helping local craftsmen to sell their products. In some of our villages, there are craftsmen making traditional ornaments and jewellery, which you cannot find elsewhere. In cooperation with our tourism board, we surveyed such people in remote areas and catalogued their products so that anyone could buy their handmade goods. Now, you can see and buy them in any of our offices or through the e-mall. Then, our man will go to that craftsman, buy the piece from him, giving him the money, and will ensure delivery to the customer. We are really utilising our delivery and logistics networks, our offices and our computer network to provide services to people.

How has the structure of SPC changed since you came onboard?

It was a government department that operated and regulated the Post, served by civil servants. We restructured the Post into strategic business units that work on a commercial basis. We also had to rebuild our manpower with young, professional people, who really understand and can utilise technology to do the postal work that we require.

Every business unit competes with whatever competitor is present on the market. For example, with our logistics network, we established a company in partnership with the private sector called Naqel. This competes with other companies to do transportation across Saudi Arabia. Fortunately, it is the largest logistics company in the country and the only one capable of doing this business effectively but the market is open for anyone to enter in theory. We opened up competition in delivery, so, in each city, we have a delivery unit that is totally separate from SPC while being owned by it, delivering not only letters but other items. Some international couriers contact us to deliver their documents, especially in rural areas. We don't talk about the Post as one unit: it consists of delivery, logistics, retail offices, courier services or EMS, and a number of departments and they are all open to competition from other players.

When talking about private operators in this country, some of which are international, they don't compete with the Post, they compete with a business unit of the SPC. It is a very fair competition and any relations with the Post are based on service-level agreements (SLA). In the case of when we offer services through EMS, it is done through an SLA, whether it is delivery or processing of international items for private operators.

Is there much regional cooperation between SPC and other Arab postal operators?

The regional approach is still not used in the Arab world. Most of the postal structures in our world are government-owned and operated, I would say, except in some of the Gulf states with which we work very closely to enhance business, in EMS, for example. We don't look at ourselves as a regional operator. We see ourselves as a postal operator that works in the international market, so we compare ourselves to Deutsche Post, Poste Italiane, United States Postal Service and the like.

What will SPC focus on in the future?

We will make sure that people realise that the Post is an infrastructure for their life. We want to ensure that you can participate in e-government services from home, so you fill in the applications and the postman will collect the documents and return them to you and all trackable from your computer. We want to make sure that people understand that you can't talk about e-business or e-commerce in Saudi Arabia without considering the Post as an infrastructure as who else is going to deliver the goods, do cash-on-delivery, and so forth? We also want the public to know the Post is the best means of communication with the government. You write a letter to the Saudi king, send it by registered mail and we shall make sure that it will get to the king's office. Send a letter to a ministry through us and we will give you proof of delivery. These are the kind of things that we tell people and we want them to understand that we are there to serve them and make their life very comfortable.

United Kingdom

Royal Mail has announced that it will invest 120 million pounds sterling to provide new equipment to delivery staff. The funds will finance additional handheld devices to track deliveries, new vehicles and electric trolleys amongst others.

Italy

Poste Italiane has ended the first half of 2009 on a positive note with total revenues reaching 9.4 billion euros, an 11.4 per cent increase on the comparative period last year. The operator said its insurance and financial services were primarily responsible for the

increase. Consolidated net profits hit 468 million euros during the same period, up 16 million euros.

Morocco

Poste Maroc could be opening a postal bank in January 2010, according to local media reports. Minister Ahmed Chami said Barid Bank would be owned fully by Poste Maroc in an interview with the Moroccan *Le Matin* newspaper.

Switzerland

Swiss Post's PostFinance has seen customer deposits and profits rise during the first six

months of 2009. About 65,000 new customers opened 136,000 new accounts. Profits reached 200 million Swiss francs during this period.

China

China Post has extended its International EMS Guarantee Service to the UK and Spain. The end-to-end time limit for outbound and inbound shipments to and from these countries is guaranteed. If deliveries are not made within the time limit and the service provider is at fault, customers are entitled to a refund.

FM

Two postal veterans to retire

Two of the longest serving chief executives in the postal industry have announced their retirement. Helge Israelsen is stepping down as CEO of Post Danmark (Denmark) after 21 years. Graeme John of Australia Post is also retiring after more than 16 years in the top job.

The recent historic merger between the Danish Post and the Swedish Posten heralded the "right time to pass on the baton", said Israelsen in a press release. He added: "I do not leave Post Danmark without sadness and interest in the company's future, for which reason I look forward to being at the new group management's disposal with advice in the time ahead." The CEO of Posten Norden, the new merged company, is Lars Nordström.

For John's part, it was with "sadness, satisfaction and immense gratitude" that he had announced his decision to end 20 years of service. "I had originally intended to retire last year but I decided to reconsider when the world economic crisis hit. I now feel confident that we are well prepared for the challenges ahead," he said. He will continue to advise the board on strategic issues. His successor has yet to be announced. FM

Correos wins prize for children's rights

By Jérôme Deutschmann

Spain's postal operator, Correos, has won the Unicef social responsibility award for its commitment to promoting children's rights in Spanish society. To mark the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 40,000 letter carriers from Correos delivered a brochure to more than 12 million households. This described the precarious situation of many children and invited readers to consult Correos' website for more information. According to Unicef, this initiative was the largest of its kind undertaken by a Spanish enterprise to make people aware of the need to protect children, particularly the most vulnerable ones.

The award also recognizes the operator's socially responsible activities during the past 30 years. As a public-service enterprise, it is involved in a number of other initiatives aimed at helping the disabled, promoting the integration of foreigners and protecting public health and the environment.

"When Unicef suggested we launch a large-scale awareness-raising campaign,

we accepted the challenge by placing all of our logistics and delivery capability at its service to reach as many Spanish households as possible," says Jesús Evangelio Rodríguez, director of corporate social responsibility at Correos.

Correos has been collaborating with the United Nations agency since 1972. "Our network of 2,250 post offices represents the main point of sale for Unicef greeting cards and national lottery tickets. Part of the latter's proceeds go to Unicef," Rodríguez says. The operator also collects writing materials and has already sent millions of pens, pencils and notebooks to disadvantaged children in South America, Africa and Asia for another Unicef project.

Correos is also involved in a number of charitable endeavours with other partners. These include the "Correos delivers smiles" initiative with Clowns Without Borders, intended to improve the quality of life for children in hospital. This programme was recently extended to the mentally disabled, foreigners and children of inmate mothers.

Botswana to launch national addressing project

By **Thapelo Kalake**

Physical addressing in Botswana will receive a boost from the nation's government on September 15 when Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi, minister for communications, science and technology, launches a new campaign. The Addressing Botswana project will pave the way for implementing a comprehensive system of street names and property numbering throughout the country. At the recently held Southern Africa Postal Operators Association's strategy conference in Zimbabwe, Minister Venson-Moitoi was quoted as saying: "It is important that this postcode and addressing project succeeds and is implemented as it is aimed at allowing the people of Botswana improved access to services."

Pele Moleta, BotswanaPost's chief executive, says that his organization is excited about this initiative. "Through the project and its expected results, service providers like BotswanaPost will be able to efficiently offer targeted services to the market," Moleta said. He added that, during the project's initiation, many government departments, international organizations and businesses had indicated their interest in working together. This was because they recognized the positive impact the project would have on their businesses and services provided to their customers.

The Project

The project's launch follows BotswanaPost's recent study on the methodology to develop and disseminate physical addresses and postcodes in Botswana, carried out in cooperation with the Universal Postal Union. The analysis revealed that a comprehensive system of street names and property numbering does not exist throughout Botswana. This has a detrimental impact on the provision of services and affects business' ability to operate efficiently. In Botswana, the city councils and municipalities are responsible for street-naming and numbering.

The new national project will enable a methodology to be put in place that will create and disseminate national postcodes and addressing standards. It will specify the prerequisites for a national address database that can be used by all national stakeholders in their different bids to deliver services to the nation.

Going national

This means that the initial project started by BotswanaPost will now be directed to the national and governmental levels to ensure that each planning authority works with the same aims and follows similar procedures for street-naming and numbering. This will give the project a real chance of positively affecting the lives of people and businesses in Botswana.

It is hoped that the successful implementation of Addressing Botswana will lead to a great improvement in Botswana's current socio-economic status. Moreover, it will add to current national efforts to improve service delivery and will also help the country to attain the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

"Addressing Botswana" is expected to:

- lead to economic growth by reaching all sectors of society;
- improve reach of social services (health, education, etc);
- give equitable access to communication and other services to all members of society;
- improve targeting and thus extend access to public utilities;
- allow greater financial inclusion of individuals in banking services;
- provides businesses with opportunities to extend their customers and range of services;
- enable faster and more efficient response by and provision of emergency services;
- allow for more efficient delivery of products and services and specifically home delivery of mail and packages;
- permit development of databases for customer management and marketing campaigns.

Thapelo Kalake is head of operations at BotswanaPost



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