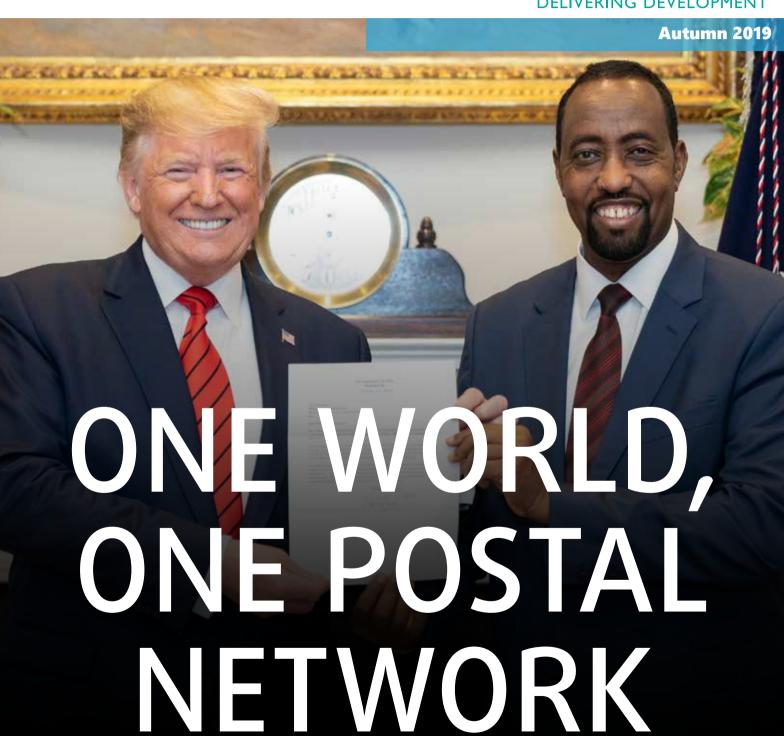
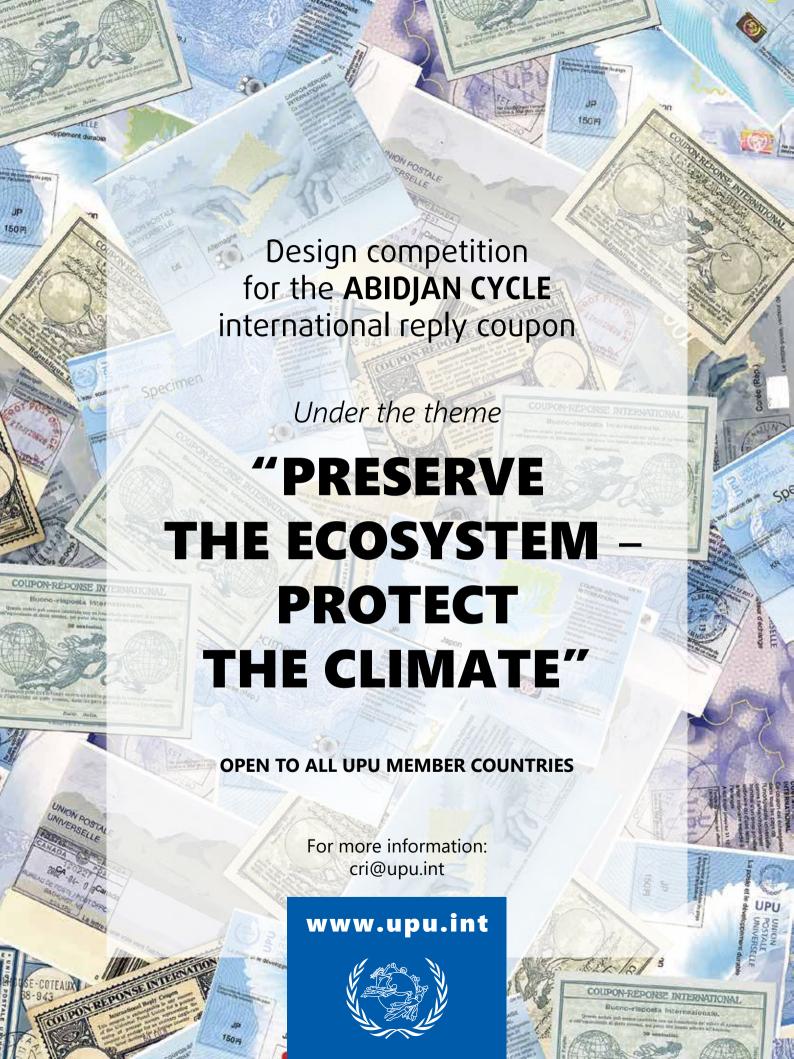
UNION POSTALE



DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT





10 REASONS WHY THE UPU EXISTS

1

GUARANTEEING THE SINGLE POSTAL TERRITORY

The UPU's 192 member countries and the postal networks they administer make up the world's largest distribution network. Freedom of transit for postal items is guaranteed within the single territory, and UPU members agree to respect the rules for international mail exchanges.

2

LINKING NETWORKS

The interconnection of postal networks is crucial to the effective operation of international postal services. The UPU plays a major role in standardization and the creation of technical solutions to exchange electronic data, payments and other information.



IMPROVING QUALITY OF SERVICE

Without quality of service, it is impossible to develop markets and gain customers' trust. The UPU has developed a number of systems, solutions and capacity-building initiatives to help Posts improve their quality of service.



DRIVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The postal network is a motor driving a country's economy, facilitating hundreds of millions of physical, electronic and financial transactions all over the world each day. The UPU assists its member countries in introducing or developing inclusive and sustainable financial services.



FACILITATING TRADE

With globalization and the growth of e-commerce, Posts are ideal partners in facilitating trade – particularly for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The UPU provides a legal, regulatory, and technical framework to support the development of MSMEs through the postal infrastructure.



IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTAL SERVICES

The concept of universal postal service is fundamental for the UPU. The right to quality basic postal services, covering a country's entire territory and at an affordable price, matters now more than ever. Through workshops and expert missions, the UPU is helping countries define the universal postal service and introduce a regulatory framework for the sector.



WORKING TO REFORM THE SECTOR

Postal sector reform remains a major priority for development cooperation. The UPU works in many areas to offer countries structured assistance with reform: raising the profile of postal reform among international financial institutions; facilitating the exchange of best practices; and developing guides for the monitoring, support and assessment of reform.



DEVELOPING MARKETS

The postal market is changing rapidly as it adapts to the opening up of competition and technological advances. The UPU analyzes these changes, and publishes economic and other studies to ensure that member countries and the main sector players have a clear vision of regional and global trends, and identify the factors helping or hindering the development of postal services.



SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A deeply woven part of their countries' socioeconomic fabric, postal services play their role in sustainable development for both the sector and the planet. The UPU supports postal operators in their efforts to incorporate sustainable development into their activities.



COORDINATING WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

As an intergovernmental organization and specialized agency of the United Nations, the UPU is the only body representing and negotiating on behalf of the postal sector in its entirety. The UPU responds to a number of global issues in cooperation with other specialized institutions.



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The UPU's third annual ranking of global postal services has found that reducing development gaps between regions could accelerate postal volumes of cross-border e-commerce.



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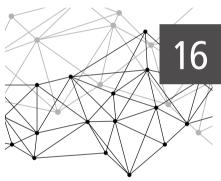


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UPU & UNCTAD collaborate on e-commerce readiness

The UPU has been working with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to support the global uptake of e-commerce, helping to make sure even least developed countries can reap the socioeconomic benefits of the digital economy.

UNION POSTALE

UNION POSTALE is the Universal Postal Union's flagship magazine, founded in 1875. It is published quarterly in seven languages and takes a closer look at UPU activities, featuring international news and developments from the postal sector.

The magazine regularly publishes well researched articles on topical issues facing the industry, as well as interviews with the sector's leading individuals. It is distributed widely to the UPU's 192 member countries, including thousands of decision-makers from governments and Posts, as well as other postal stakeholders. All regard it as an important source of information about the UPU and the postal sector at large.

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

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"V" is for everyone's victory

There was a time during the protracted negotiations over the Universal Postal Union's remuneration rates system when I admitted to myself that the discussion was as much about stamina as acumen. This realization sunk in late in the evening of the conference's first night. Member countries had already rejected Option B – offering optional self-declared postal rates – and as I sat there during the continuing negotiations, the single thought in my mind was what comes next!

The quest for a solution to this agonizingly complex issue has left a trail that winds across much of the world. In the capitals of Europe and Asia, in Washington D.C., but also in many other parts of the world. It snaked its way through an Extraordinary Congress, strategy forums, regional meetings and my discussions with heads of state. Everywhere I went I was asked how this problem threatening the integrity of the Union and the international postal network could be solved.

Once we neared the Geneva Congress, the negotiations began in earnest. Meeting on the Sunday before the Congress, I sensed that, although the discussions were extremely tough, there was a growing fellowship. In later meetings that spirit of fellowship turned to cooperation and finally to a solution that would save the Union.

Option V, as it is known – standing for the Union's victory – was agreed on the night of Tuesday, 24th September, but it still had to be put before every member country. The agreement will see the UPU accelerate rate increases to the system used to remunerate the delivery of inbound international bulky letters and small packets, phasing in self-declared rates starting as soon as 2020. Under the agreed solution, member countries that meet certain requirements –

including inbound letter-post volumes in excess of 75,000 metric tonnes based on 2018 data – will be able to opt-in to self-declare their rates starting 1 July 2020. The decision also includes thresholds to protect low-volume, developing countries from the impact of the swift reform.

My negotiation team, comprised of senior members of the UPU management team, including Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz, but also the Universal Postal Union's experts on this matter, raced against the clock to provide a hard copy of Option V. On Wednesday morning, the plenary session was due to start promptly at 9 a.m., but was dramatically put back until 3 p.m.. The clock was ticking and I worried whether member countries would make the right decision. In my opening speech at the start of the Extraordinary Congress, I had called on member countries "to find the courage to choose the right path not just for yourselves, but for the entire industry," but would they?

I did not have to worry. The member countries voted by acclamation to approve Option V and the threat to the Union receded. As the applause floated across the main hall of the International Conference Centre Geneva, I realized that we had finally succeeded in laying to rest the ghost of remuneration rates that had haunted successive conferences for half a century. Indeed, there was a great irony in the fact that 2019 is a year of anniversaries for our industry: it is the UPU's 145th anniversary; the 50th anniversary of the postal remuneration rate system; and 30 years since our World Congress was held in Washington D.C. with the President of the United States of America, George H. W. Bush. I believe these anniversaries helped concentrate minds on what was at stake.

In my first press conference on 24 September, flanked by the chair of the third Extraordinary Congress, Kenan Bozgeyik, I set out the scale of the problem if the United States of America were to leave the Union. I said, "The departure of the United States from the Union would mean a total destruction of the service. Because the moment any country leaves the treaty, that country does not exist. That means that we cannot exchange any letters, packets or parcels with USPS. So, that means [the US] stamps will not be valid for us, they will not be able to exchange anything." Thankfully, this doomsday scenario did not happen.

I received the country's formal notice that it would remain a member of the UPU from US President Donald J. Trump on 15 October during a visit to the White House.

When I look back on the Geneva Congress, it is hard not to view the decision as a transformative moment for the Union; a moment where at the very time when things looked to have fallen apart, we became more unified. I believe that the negotiations and the solution have strengthened this proud Union. Another pivotal moment came during the second press conference when Dr Peter Navarro, Advisor to the President of the United States and Director of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, told journalists the Geneva Congress was effectively a "trade negotiation."

Dr Navarro's comment has profound implications for the Universal Postal Union; both in terms of where we are now, but also where we are headed. There seems to be a growing realization that the UPU has a role not just in post, but also in e-commerce and trade. What are the likely consequences? I believe there is a re-evaluation of our importance to trade taking place in the world's capitals. It will soon have a tremendous impact on the work we do. The sleeping giant is waking up!

To assist, we are also re-positioning ourselves with a new strategy: the 2020 Abidjan World Postal Strategy. It is designed to dovetail not just with this decision, but to take advantage of our new-found role and relevance. For all these reasons, and having been able to solve the issue of remuneration rates, I think the future of the Universal Postal Union has perhaps never looked brighter or more secure.

Bishar A. Hussein

Director General, Universal Postal Union

EDITOR'S NOTE

AS THE SEASONS CHANGE, SO DO WE

The UPU's third quarter has been one full of excitement, change and unity.

As you have just read in the Director General's foreword, the UPU's third Extraordinary Congress was a whirlwind of debate and consensus-building among the UPU's member countries. Through dialogue, the Union has managed to emerge from the Congress stronger, having agreed on a remuneration solution that offers something for everyone. You will catch a glimpse of the behind-the-scenes efforts that led to this success in our cover story.

In this issue, we introduce a familiar face wearing a new hat: Lati Matata, a Postal Technology Centre (PTC) veteran who has now assumed the role of PTC Director. He explains the vision for the future of the PTC and our "Solution Spotlight" highlights key achievements the UPU's technical arm has made in connecting wider postal sector players to the UPU network. The results of this year's Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD) also make an appearance in this magazine's pages, giving readers some insight into the state of global postal development.

On the following pages, you will notice that we have included a snapshot of our 2019 Readership Survey* results. It has been quite a while since we carried out this exercise, so it was helpful to take stock of readers' feedback.

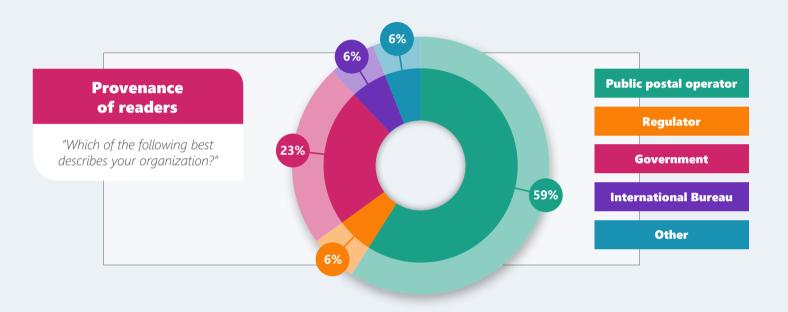
I am heartened to learn that you have appreciated some of the changes we have made over the past several years, including the new design and the introduction of the "Solution Spotlight". I have also taken note of what you would like to see more often in UNION POSTALE. Several of you mentioned wanting to read more about postal innovations or hear more from the UPU's management team and experts, as well as other leaders from the postal sector. We will bear this in mind while planning our future content.

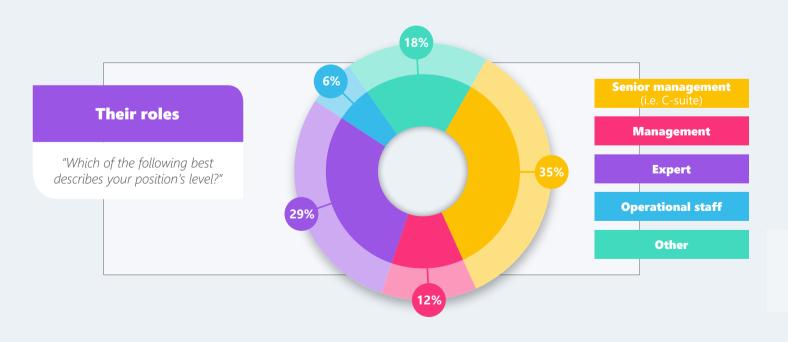
Thank you again for your feedback. I wish you happy reading.

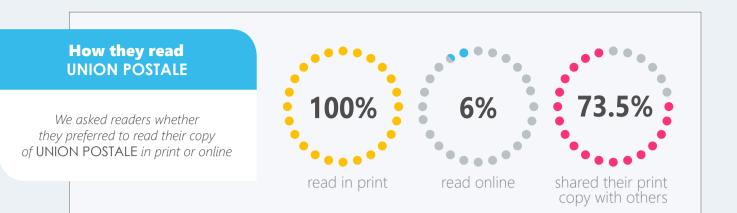
Kayla Redstone, Editor-in-chief

*The results comprise responses from our English language readers. Results from the other language versions are still incomina.

2019 Readership Survey Results



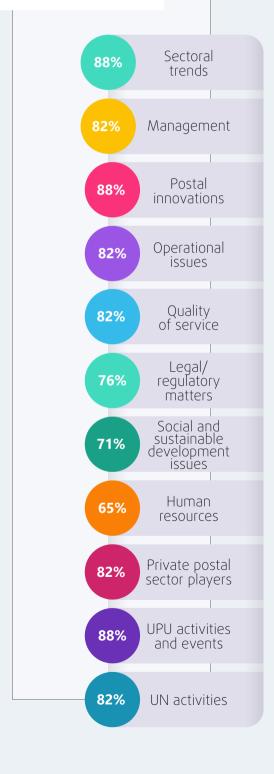






What they want to read

"Would you like to see more coverage of the following topics in the magazine?":



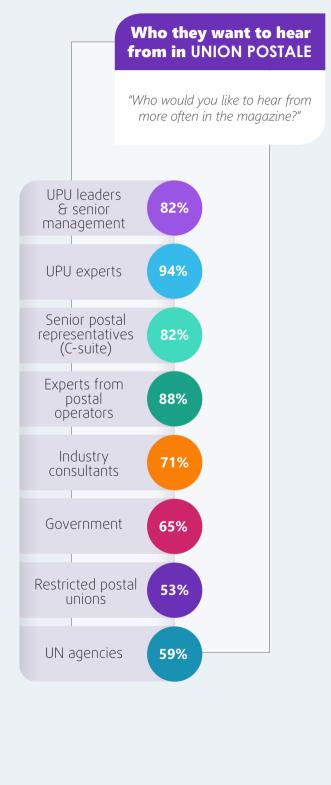






Photo: Dinko Denovski

International Bureau climate neutral for third year running

TEXT: Lovisa Selander

UPU is one of 55 UN entities listed as climate neutral in a recent UN report, meaning that the organization offset 100% of the greenhouse gas emissions produced by its headquarters in Berne, Switzerland. It is the third year in a row that the UPU is climate neutral.

The UN published its latest environmental sustainability report, Greening the Blue report 2019, in September. The report details the 2018 greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation, water consumption and environmental management of the UN System as well as for each reporting UN agency, fund or programme.

In 2018, the UN's operations and facilities emitted 2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2eq) in total, 7 tCO2eq per capita. As much as 45% of the system's reported emissions came from facilities, 42% from air travel and the remaining 13% came from other forms of travel.

The International Bureau of the UPU's operations and facilities emitted 1021 tCO2eq in total, or 4 tCO2eq per capita, which falls below the UN average. These emissions originate from two main sources: air travel (66%), and heating the International Bureau (32%).

The 2018 results also accounted for the organization's waste and water consumption, with each UPU staff member generating an average of 92 kg waste and consuming 14,000 litres of water in 2018. Around 40% of the organization's waste was reused, recycled, recovered or composted. This can be compared to the UN average of 614 kg of waste and 59,000 m3 of water per capita figures which include Field Missions personnel who reside on UN premises.

A staff-led sustainability group, known as Green Champions, is currently exploring options for more efficient paper use and recycling at the IB.

Earlier this year, the plastic cups at the drinking water stations of the International Bureau were replaced with environmentally certified cups made out of 100% biodegradable and compostable cardboard. The organization also installed a charging point for electrical vehicles in its garage.

More information about what the UN System does in order to make its operations more sustainable is available on the Greening the Blue initiative's website, www.greeningtheblue.org.

Lovisa Selander is an Environment and Sustainable Development Expert with the UPU One could say that Lati Matata has grown up with the Postal Technology Centre (PTC), the Telematics Cooperative hub responsible for developing UPU's postal IT solutions.

Matata first got his feet wet with the PTC as a software engineer, recruited by the UPU 19 years ago shortly after graduating with a degree in Electrical Engineering. He became familiar with the PTC during his first job as a developer working on logistics solutions in the East African region.

"I realized that I was passionate about presenting ideas for real-life solutions using technology and I wanted to do that on a global scale," he says.

That passion for providing solutions has driven Matata through the ranks of the PTC, leading him to its helm.

He recalls his first assignment was to find a solution that would enable even small, low-volume Posts to exchange electronic data interchange messages with other operators across the UPU's network. The eventual result was IPS Light, a web-based version of the PTC's International Postal System requiring minimal installation and training. At its peak, more than 60 Posts used the application before its replacement with the UPU Cloud version, IPS.POST.

Matata then had the opportunity to turn his skills toward financial services, working with a team tasked with extending the PTC's International Financial System for postal payments, implementing a new module enabling countries to manage domestic payments and developing a mobile application. He later went on to head the PTC's software development team and worked on the development of PPS*Clearing, a service facilitating settlement between designated postal operators exchanging postal payment services that has reduced a 30-day manual process to an automated process of one week. He adds that he is particularly proud of being part of the team that established the UPU's Big Data platform, the first in the United Nations specialised agency fraternity.

Matata is firm in his belief that the PTC's mission stands apart.

"As a cost-based organization with the purpose of helping designated operators become more efficient, the UPU is an entity tasked to provide an inclusive platform," he says. "With its set of mature IT platforms the UPU adds value to the socio-economic development of its member countries by

reaching customers not reached by the market "

Matata says that seeing the positive impact these solutions have had on member countries has fuelled his drive to take on new challenges. It has also afforded him the pleasure of working in a multi-cultural environment with dedicated and likeminded colleagues.

When the director's position opened up, it seemed like a natural next step.

"I wanted to be part of the journey," he says.

While inclusion remains at the heart of PTC's work, integration is a key principle guiding the vision for the UPU's IT offering.

In April, the UPU's Postal Operations Council and Council of Administration approved a proposal to allow supply chain partners, including airlines, Customs and ground handlers, access to a select range of UPU products and services.

"The UPU's postal IT network is a utility, a road on which not only Posts, but also their partners, can have a competitive advantage in the global logistics market," he explains.

Among these services is POST*Net, an online network for exchanging electronic data that today tracks the majority of postal operations. Matata says the PTC is moving quickly to connect partners to the network so that they can begin exchanging their data. Eventually, the UPU will be able to monitor and measure the complete supply chain to meet modern customer needs.

"This will strengthen the UPU's network and make it a truly globally-integrated postal IT network," he adds.

Another of his targets is launching a mobile extension of the UPU's Customs Declaration System (CDS), which allows the exchange of data facilitating customs clearance for international postal mail.

The app will allow anyone, anywhere to access CDS, including micro, small and medium enterprises looking for an affordable and efficient way to trade on the global market.

"The goal is to reach citizens not served by market forces, bringing them onto the supply chain and granting them access to e-commerce," he says. KR

To learn more about Post*Net and CDS mobile, read the "Solution Spotlight" on page 16.



Name **Lati Matata**

Directorate

Postal Technology Centre

Position **Director**

Nationality **Kenyan**

WHO'S WHO

Reducing postal development gaps key to harnessing e-commerce opportunities

The UPU's third annual ranking of global postal services has found that reducing development gaps between regions could accelerate postal volumes of cross-border e-commerce.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone

"Postal networks have the potential to lead the way in providing both citizens and businesses with affordable access to the economy through the delivery of e-commerce items, but for the entire sector to benefit from this opportunity it will have to work to reduce inequalities across the network," said UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein.

The Postal Development Report 2019 measures the development of postal operators in 172 countries using the UPU's wealth of postal big data, official postal statistics and surveys. The comparative ranking, known as the Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD), is based on four dimensions of performance: reliability, reach, relevance and resilience.

The 2019 report finds that the gaps in postal development have been increasing over the past year, constituting potential hurdles in the development of cross-border e-commerce, which is one the fastest growth areas for postal operators. It also projects that decreasing these gaps, particularly between regions, would contribute to promoting international parcel flows.

Industrial countries received an average grade of 68.9 out of 100 in the index, up one point from 2018, while average scores for Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (49.8), Asia-Pacific (29.5), Arab region (27.29), Latin America (22.7) and Africa (20.6) provided evidence of the growing gap.

Standout performance

Switzerland's postal service took first place in the ranking for the third year running, thanks to its leading scores for relevance and resilience, as well as improvements in its reliability and reach.

During a ceremony held at UPU headquarters on 9 October to celebrate the top scoring countries, Swiss Post CEO Roberto Cirillo thanked Swiss Post employees, who he said, "do an excellent job day after day and night after night."

Improvements in quality of service and reach helped the Netherlands retain second place in 2019. Germany ranked third for the first time owing to increased volumes and faster service. Despite inequalities between regions, standout performers yielded encouraging results. Poland, China (People's Rep.), Tunisia, Colombia and Nigeria each led in their respective regions.

Assistance to members

This year's report includes the 2IPD methodology to help countries understand how the scores were calculated.

The UPU is also offering in-depth, country-specific analysis to countries wishing to learn more about their results. The reports provide recommendations for improving postal development across the four dimensions, including suggestions on UPU services that could benefit the requesting country.

To read the full report, please visit: www.upu.int/en/2IPD

UPU maximizes security training

A new capacity building programme led by the UPU seeks to maximize the adoption of UPU security standards and protect the postal supply chain from dangerous goods.

TEXT: Pooran Parampath & Dawn Wilkes

As the transportation of synthetic opioids, illegal drugs, precursor chemicals, and other dangerous goods through the Post becomes an emerging issue, postal authorities must recognize that they have a legal and moral responsibility to protect the postal supply chain from threats.

Exposure to some of these substances, such as fentanyl, could pose serious risks to postal employees, customers, and the public.

In response, the UPU has taken steps to curb the exploitation of the postal network by developing basic security standards – known as S58 and S59 – to protect the mail, employees and the public. Compliance with these standards is validated through a UPU certification process

However, in facing these new security challenges the need for training and reviews has surpassed the availability of security experts. To ensure the sustainable and rapid implementation of the standards, UPU has been working to build capacity among postal security personnel in developing regions to ensure all countries can achieve certification.

Most recently, this effort has been supplemented through partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) and the World Customs Organization (WCO). The result is an inter-regional postal security capacity building project, referred to as "Countering Transportation of Contraband by Designated Operators".

This joint project aims to train postal staff in Asia-Pacific, the Caribbean and Latin America, not only so that they can detect, deter, and respond appropriately to postal items containing synthetic opioids and precursor chemicals, but so they can prepare their peers to do the same.

Train-the-trainer

To achieve this, the UPU has created pilot groups of regional experts who will eventually take over as regional security facilitators, once they have undergone a group training and self-assessment of their postal operator. The goal is to create a pool of regional security facilitators to assist with self-assessments and conduct onsite reviews.

As part of the training, facilitators have gained practical experience through a simulated review process led by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, International Narcotics Control Board and UPU experts.

The UPU has already trained facilitators from Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Nauru, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Barbados. In the coming months, these pools will be

reinforced with additional facilitators from Aruba, Costa Rica, Viet Nam among others.

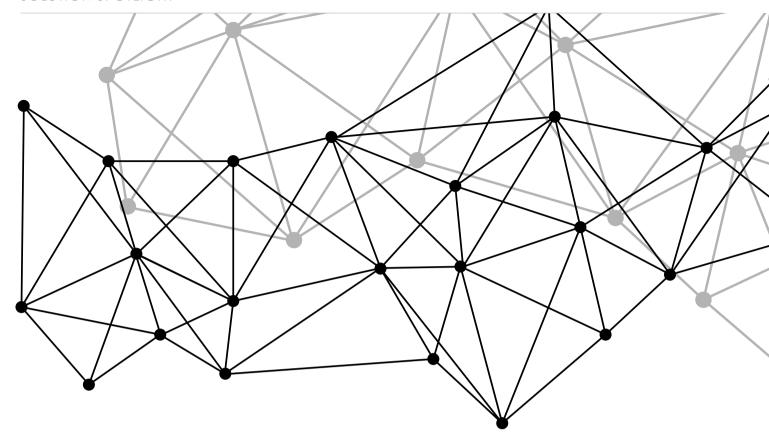
Following these preparatory phases, each region will be able to support and build momentum for the implementation of mandatory security requirements under the UPU Convention. DW&PP

If you wish to participate in this programme, please contact Ms Dawn Wilkes (dawn.wilkes@upu.int).

Dawn Wilkes manages the UPU's Postal Security Programme. Pooran Parampath is the UPU's Training and Caribbean Regional Expert.



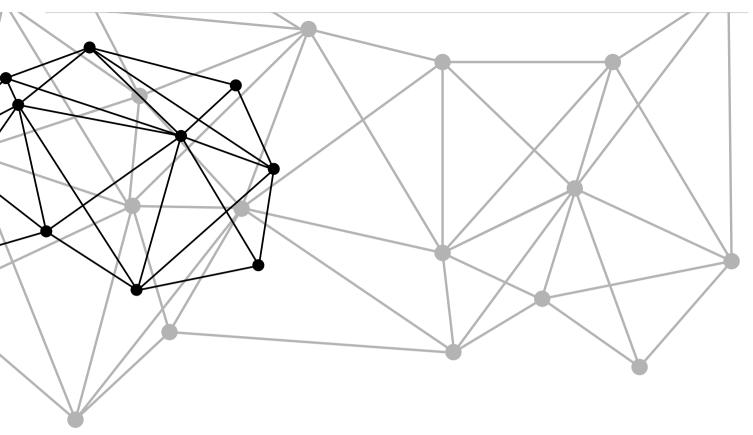
Illustration by macrovector / Freepik



Implementing the EAD roadmap with PTC solutions

The UPU's electronic data interchange network, Post*Net, is one of the first solutions being opened to wider postal sector players. Coupled with a new Electronic Advance Data App for customers, the UPU is making strides to connect the entire postal supply chain from end to end.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone



The 2016 Universal Postal Congress in Istanbul instructed the UPU to implement a policy on the access of wider postal sector players to the UPU's products and services. The idea was to enhance cooperation among stakeholders so that the sector could continue to meet the changing needs of customers.

Actors in critical segments of the postal supply chain, such as Customs, airlines, ground handlers and other transport companies, are now able to access the organization's supply chain-related IT services. This includes Post*Net, an electronic data interchange (EDI) network developed by the Postal Technology Centre (PTC) that provides the possibility to transmit information on outgoing and incoming postal items between stakeholders securely and in real-time. The addition of wider postal sector players to the EDI network is therefore a real benefit for Posts.

Pre-advice of incoming 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. Pre-advising is also a regulatory requirement; electronic advance data (EAD) reinforces the security of the supply chain, keeping track of the contents of postal items.

Seamless network

With several countries and regions imposing EAD regulations beginning in 2021, it is more important than ever to ensure all Posts are ready to exchange this data with critical actors across the supply chain. The UPU has created an EAD roadmap to bring the entire postal network in line with modern needs. Enabling partners to exchange messages with postal operators through this network is a critical step to closing any remaining gaps in communication.

The new policy simplifies access to the system and aims to bring more Post-partner exchanges onto Post*Net to help the UPU monitor key performance indicators, such as quality of service. Additional work is underway to improve efficiency by allowing partners to pull the exact data they need from the system, rather than pushing masses of unfiltered data to them.

Engaging customers

The PTC has also created a solution to connect customers to the network from the very beginning of the process.

The Electronic Advance Data (EAD) App, is the UPU's answer to a growing need for smooth customs clearance in line with security requirements as the Post delivers more and more e-commerce items.

The EAD App allows individual and commercial mail senders to directly input information related to their shipment in line with the UPU's CN 22 and 23 customs declaration forms, so that electronic advanced data is sent directly to involved Posts and Customs. This speeds up the process of customs clearance, ensuring a quick and reliable service for customers. It also ensures that Posts meet the upcoming EAD regulations.

By outsourcing data capture to their customers through the app, Posts save costs, improve the quality of the collected data, and begin to make the collection of declarations more systematic for all items.

The app is user-friendly, with easy input of sender and recipient information, content details and associated documentation. It also sends alerts about restricted or prohibited items, allows users to search dangerous goods information and look up tariffs, and is localizable. KR

If you are interested in learning more about either of these solutions, please contact ptc.support@upu.int.



TEXT: Kayla Redstone



US President Donald J. Trump participated in a drop-by with the Director General of the Universal Postal Union Bishar Abdirahman Hussein and officials on Tuesday, Oct 15, 2019, in the Roosevelt Room of the White House (Official White House Photo, Shealah Craighead)

The Universal Postal
Union will remain
a family of 192 member
countries after the third
Extraordinary Congress
in Geneva pulled together
to find common ground on
postal remuneration rates.





Countries applauded Option V (Photo: Sophia Bennett)

Debate over a 50-year-old system used to compensate Posts for the cost of handling, transporting and delivering letters across borders prompted member countries to call an Extraordinary Congress this September 24-26 – only the third in the UPU's history, but the second in less than two years.

Applause rumbled throughout the main hall of Geneva's International Conference Centre (CICG) on the second day of the Congress as topic leader Jack Hamande announced that the Union had found consensus on a new methodology for postal remuneration. The proposal – "Option V" – was the compromise solution adopted by acclamation.

"Option V stands for victory, but it is your victory," Director General Bishar A. Hussein later told the Congress. "You came together and you showed a sense of responsibility and you proved this Union is resilient."

UPU Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz added, "Together we have proved the value of multilateralism."

"Option V stands for victory, but it is your victory ... you came together and you showed a sense of responsibility and you proved this Union is resilient."

Celebrating its 145th anniversary this year, the Universal Postal Union is the second oldest international organization in the world, making it a case study for the success of international cooperation. The organization has flourished despite major external challenges, including the industrial revolution, the Great Depression, two World Wars and the rise of Internet communication.

However, the organization had faced an unprecedented challenge leading up to the Congress: the possibility of the withdrawal of the United States of America from the UPU's treaties over the system used to remunerate international inbound letters.

Changing needs

The 1969 Universal Postal Congress in Tokyo first introduced the remuneration system, also known as terminal dues. Before 1969, members had delivered each other's letters at no additional cost under the assumption that flows were relatively equal. However, some countries had begun receiving more volumes from abroad than they were sending, prompting the UPU to develop terminal dues.

The system has since undergone several changes, with member countries typically reviewing and improving the methodology used for calculating rates at each Congress.

While its original intent was to help cover the cost of letter-post, in recent years "letters" have begun to include merchandise due to the growing market for international e-commerce. The result: an increase in costs for importing countries, who were beginning to handle larger volumes of heavier items. Some of these items even contained valuable goods, such as electronics, ordered online.

"Together we have proved the value of multilateralism."

The 2016 Congress attempted to remedy this, introducing a new rate class – E format – for small packets and bulky letters. Countries attending the 2018 Extraordinary Congress later agreed a roadmap for modernizing and rationalizing the UPU's remuneration systems, with a view to presenting a proposal for an Integrated Remuneration System to the 2020 Congress.

However, the potential reforms introduced by the 2020 Congress would not come soon enough for some of the UPU's members.

Fast track

On October 17, 2018, the UPU Director General received a letter from the United States government notifying the UPU of its intent to withdraw from the Union's treaties in one year's time. The country cited the remuneration of small packets as its main concern.

A number of other countries stepped forward to voice similar complaints about cost coverage and market distortion under the terminal dues system, prompting the UPU's supervisory body, the Council of Administration (CA), to fast track the discussions.

In just a few short months, with the support of the UPU secretariat, expert teams composed of member country representatives collected inputs and narrowed in on two potential options for adjustments to the system.



Photo: Sophia Bennett

The options found member countries divided with one group advocating a path similar to the status quo, but accelerating planned rate increases (Option A), and another supporting an almost immediate shift to self-declared rates (Option B). A third aimed to find a compromise between the first two (Option C). They decided to send all three options forward for the decision of member countries.



Continuation of the rate structure decided at the 2016 Congress, but bringing scheduled rate increases for bulky letters and small packets forward from 2021 to 2020 and moving all countries into a single rate system by 2020.

Option B

Introduce optional self-declared rates for bulky letters and small packets from 2020. The UPU would have applied country-specific ceilings based on domestic tariffs to prevent excessively high rates.



Bring forward scheduled rate increases, at higher levels, and move all countries into a single rate system by 2020. This option proposed phasing in optional self-declared rates between 2021 and 2025 with country-specific ceilings based on domestic tariffs to prevent excessively high rates.





Photo: Sophia Bennett

Speaking to the CA's April plenary session, the Director General praised member countries for their agreement to address the remuneration matter quickly.

"Let me add that it is clear to me, and I believe to many of you, that the terminal dues system introduced many years ago is no longer fit for the purpose of the market," said Mr Hussein. "Change is necessary."

Member countries ultimately agreed, deciding to discuss the options at a third UPU Extraordinary Congress.

Last mile to victory

In an effort to build further consensus, the Director General had launched a series of consultation meetings and negotiations with member countries beginning two days ahead of the Congress. The meetings sought to identify compromises that could offer something for every country to keep the Union intact.

In line with Congress rules, countries were asked to review the proposal furthest from the status quo: Option B. It was rejected by the end of the first day, meaning that countries would next discuss Option C. If that were rejected, the only option left would have been Option A.

This additional effort to build consensus was critical for the Union. Matano Ndaro, who represented Kenya as a topic leader during the Congress, explains that even if the Congress adopted the "compromise" proposal, Option C, many members would have left unhappy.

"The likely impact of that scenario would have been that we would have driven out a huge proportion of our members who were in favour of Option A, with the other adverse outcome being the likely walking away of one of the oldest and most important members of the Union, that is the United States of America," says Ndaro.

More than 60 countries took the floor in support of the proposal amending the rate-setting methodology and, with no opponents, the proposal was considered to be adopted by acclamation, ending the yearlong sprint to find consensus on the issue.

The result of the discussions was Option V, a true compromise blending together elements of the three original options.

More than 60 countries took the floor in support of the proposal amending the rate-setting methodology and, with no opponents, the proposal was considered to be adopted by acclamation, ending the yearlong sprint to find consensus on the issue.

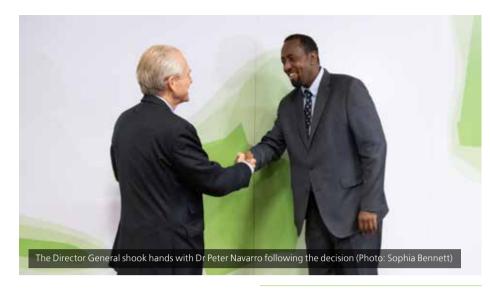
Speaking of the decision, UPU Director for Policy, Regulation and Markets Siva Somasundram said, "This is a landmark decision for multilateralism and the Union. The Geneva Extraordinary Congress has shown that 192 countries can reach solutions on complex issues by acclamation."

The decision is also a testament to the UPU's ability to quickly and efficiently respond to changes in the market. It took the UPU less than one year to study, debate and reach a decision on major reforms to the system used to remunerate small packets and bulky letters – a process which normally takes place throughout the course of each four-year work cycle.

New rules

The new system will allow all countries the option declare their own rates beginning 1 January 2021, including a dual speed option allowing some to implement their self-declared rates as early as 1 July 2020.

To qualify for the dual speed option, a country must have annual inbound mail volumes of more than 75,000 metric



tonnes. Any early adopters would implement self-declared rates on a reciprocal basis with sending countries.

The system will also include ceilings based on domestic tariffs to prevent excessively high self-declared rates. It also includes provisions to protect countries with low volumes – typically least developed countries – allowing them to pay rates lower than self-declared rates.

"This is a landmark decision for multilateralism and the Union. The Geneva Extraordinary Congress has shown that 192 countries can reach solutions on complex issues by acclamation."



Withdrawal rescinded

During a press conference after the proposal's adoption, Assistant to the President of the United States and Director for Trade and Manufacturing Policy, and head of the US delegation, Dr Peter Navarro confirmed that the conditions under Option V would allow the US to remain a member of the Union.

"Today a White House team working closely with the Director General of the Universal Postal Union and a broad coalition of friends and allies in the UPU has more than achieved the President's goal," he said.

Shortly after the Congress, US President Donald J. Trump invited the UPU Director General and his team of negotiators to the White House, where he presented the UPU leader with a letter revoking the country's decision to withdraw from the organization.

Speaking afterwards, Mr Hussein thanked President Trump for his warm welcome and generous hospitality. He said, "I am convinced that the maintenance of the worldwide postal system is a victory for everyone on this planet."

"It is to the great credit of the United States of America, and in particular, the Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, Dr Peter Navarro; the delegations of many other countries; and my negotiating team that we managed to find a compromise," Mr Hussein added.

"I am convinced that the maintenance of the worldwide postal system is a victory for everyone on this planet."

















Behind the scenes

WNION POSTALE spoke with co-chairs Matano Ndaro from Kenya and Jack Hamande from Belgium following the Congress for their insight on the process of reaching compromise on the difficult subject of remuneration.

INTERVIEW: Kayla Redstone **PHOTOS:** Sophia Bennett



Matano Ndaro, Topic Leader (Kenya), UPU Third Extraordinary Congress & Director of Licensing, Compliance and Standards, Communications Authority of Kenya

What do you think this decision says about the spirit of the UPU and its membership?

I think what it says is that the UPU and its membership is a versatile, constructive, forward-looking and considerate fraternity of members. Even though they might have differences in terms of their approaches to solving or resolving problems, such as the review or reform of the terminal dues system, the ultimate goal was to stay together. Every one of these members knows that leaving the UPU would be a nightmarish experience in terms of commercial relations in the transfer, distribution and transport of international mail packets across the world. More importantly, with the growth of e-commerce, there are very agile, very clever competitors out there that would have taken advantage of the dismembering of this one entity, to take away business from the UPU infrastructure and render that infrastructure uncompetitive.

How would you describe your experience as a co-chair in this process?

I can sum it up as interesting and captivating, with a lot of important lessons to draw out. One of those lessons is about persistent search for the greater good of humanity. Having been given an opportunity on behalf of my country, the Republic of Kenya, I cannot express how grateful I am because this has taught me one important thing, which is: with unity of purpose, humanity can surmount any obstacle.



Jack Hamande, Topic Leader (Belgium), UPU Third Extraordinary Congress & Executive Board Member, Belgian Institute for Postal Services and Telecommunications

Could you tell us about the process of creating "Option V"?

Option V came from three different flows. First, it was the initiative of a number of stakeholders to try to find compromise, which was also the basis of Option C. Secondly, it was the initiative of the Director General, who, in advance of the Congress, decided to organize meetings. We had 14 hours to discuss and negotiate about what could be a final compromise. Last, but not least, in the final run during the day and during the night, all stakeholders continued to discuss, to negotiate, and to make sure we could find a final "Option V". It would not have been possible, of course, without the right legal text – it's not only about numbers and ideas, it's also about how to translate those proposals into a legal framework. For this reason, it was very important to have the International Bureau's support, which made it possible to submit the option to the Congress.

What does this decision mean for the UPU going forward?

The impact of Option V also has different dimensions. First, it's an attempt to answer all the stakeholders' needs. As you know, the starting point of this consultation was discussion from different countries who had different needs. Option V creates unity between the members and tries to provide a clear answer to the community. The main gains are that we keep the UPU as one single organization, we will provide an answer in the short-term to a majority of providers, and we will engage in the future to continue to work on this topic to evaluate and continue to elaborate future compromise on these subjects.

What did you enjoy about your experience chairing this topic?

It wouldn't be a secret if I told you that chairing such a meeting creates stress. You should approach such a meeting by being well prepared. I cannot say thank you enough to the International Bureau, which has wonderful people who made this possible by having the files ready, having the content right, without faults, and in high quality. I was not alone on stage, the whole IB team was there to support, as well as my co-chair, who was there to help me. Behind the stage we were passing messages and quickly discussing what might be the best approach to any problems we may face throughout the Congress.

Interviews have been edited for length and clarity.



5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT "OPTION V"

The Universal Postal Union's third Extraordinary Congress gathered in Geneva 24-26 September 2019 to compromise on changes to the system used to compensate the delivery of inbound international bulky letters and small packets. On 25 September, they found consensus on a new system, known as "**Option V**".



IT ENSURES THAT POSTS CAN COVER THEIR COSTS

By phasing in optional self-declared rates based on domestic tariffs, Option V improves cost coverage for the delivering Post and better aligns the payment for international mail delivery with domestic tariffs. In addition, predetermined maximum annual increases protect international customers, both e-commerce sellers and buyers, against excessively high rate increases.



IT RECOGNIZES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMERCIAL MAIL, ESPECIALLY THE LATTER WHEN SENT BY LOWVOLUME DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Option V brings swift reform to the remuneration system, but it includes provisions to protect very low volumes – typically from least developed countries – allowing them to pay rates lower than self-declared rates.

1 July 2020

Countries with annual inbound mail volumes in excess of 75,000 tonnes may implement self-declared rates on a reciprocal basis with sending countries

1 January 2021

All member countries have the option of introducing self-declared rates



IT SH CAN

IT SHOWS THAT THE UPU CAN REACT QUICKLY TO MARKET CHANGES

It took the UPU less than one year to study, debate and reach a decision on major reforms to the system used to remunerate small packets and bulky letters – a process which normally takes place throughout the course of each four-year Congress cycle.



IT IS A SUCCESS STORY FOR MULTILATERALISM

Option V could not have been created or adopted without the sustained spirit of collaboration and determination demonstrated by the UPU's member countries.

It had its genesis in the work carried out by UPU member countries and the International Bureau in developing a compromise proposal (Option C), as well as the subsequent intense efforts to build further consensus, including consultations and negotiations led by the UPU Director General two days before the opening of the third Extraordinary Congress. The result was compromise on a possible solution (Option V) that would offer something for everyone. Member countries agreed to review the option as a package and eventually adopted it by acclamation.



IT KEEPS THE UPU TOGETHER

Following the decision, the Government of the United States revoked its intent to withdraw from the UPU, keeping the organization united, a family of 192 member countries.



25 October

The Council of Administration (CA) decides to fast track discussions on the system used to remunerate the delivery of inbound international bulky letters and small packets.

22 February

The Postal Operations Council's Remuneration Integration Group and the CA's Expert Team on Remuneration meet to discuss proposals for changes to the remuneration system.

10 April

The CA selects three options for member countries to discuss and instructs them to decide if they will do so at an Extraordinary Congress or by postal ballot.

7 June

The UPU receives the required number of votes to announce a third Extraordinary Congress to discuss proposals on the remuneration system.

24 September

The UPU's third Extraordinary Congress begins in Geneva.

25 September

Member countries adopt a proposal on changes to the remuneration system – "Option V" – by acclamation.



#postaltogether







Australia Post moves into new digitalization phase

TEXT: Clare O'Dea

Digitalization is centre stage at Australia Post as the self-funded government business enterprise embarks on a large-scale network overhaul. The upgrade of the national digital network comes shortly after Australia Post became the first provider of digital identification to be accredited by the federal government.

These developments place Australia Post in a strong position to play a key role in the country's digital transformation strategy, which aims for Australia to become "one of the top three digital governments in the world" by 2025.

The organization described the network overhaul as "the largest telecommunications transformation in the country", covering 4,000 Australia Post sites including post offices, mail and delivery centres and offices.

The designated operator chose Comscentre, a Brisbane-based provider of business communications services, as its partner to carry out the upgrade after a year-long national tendering process.

The upgrade involves redesigning the point of sale application on modern application architecture to enable faster delivery of new services to market. The upgrades will also optimise transaction performance for services like Bank@Post and passport applications, while also making Wi-Fi standard in all post offices.

Australia Post Chief Information Officer John Cox said that telecommunication transformation is a key step in Australia Post's growth strategy. The overhaul involves upgrading telematics in vehicles and facilities, and leveraging the recent partnership with Google for data analytics.

"This is the largest and most significant transformation of its type and demonstrates how Australia Post is leaning into the future to complete our ambitious agenda," he said. Comscentre will be using the National Broadband Network (NBN) for the provision of wholesale business-grade services across the country..

"Australia Post has an extraordinary reach with one of the country's largest retail networks and plays a unique role supporting Australian communities. We are delighted that Australia Post has put its trust in the NBN network and business-grade NBN services to support such a significant national transformation," Paul Tyler of NBN said in a statement.

Australia Post is one of the country's leading providers of identity services, completing 8 million identity checks, 1.9 million passport applications, and more than 2 million employment checks every year.

Under the Trusted Digital Identity
Framework (TDIW), consumers can now use
the Post's Digital iD™ to verify their identity
when they interact with government
departments. Digital iD was introduced two
years ago.

Regis Bauchiere, General Manager of Identity Products & Services at Australia Post, said that the organisation is very supportive of the Federal Government's approach to building trusted digital identity options for the Australian community.

"Our growing digital economy is requiring consumers to verify themselves in more and more everyday situations, which is why Australians need to know that their identity is being protected. Once a consumer has verified their identity with Digital iD, they are able to reuse it on their smartphone wherever they need to prove their identity, whether in person or online."

Australia's national digital transformation strategy has three key priorities, all of which rely on digital identification: to eliminate the need to deal with multiple agencies or layers of government, to harness the power of data to improve services and make better and faster decisions, and to provide smart and convenient services that are fit for the digital age.

Separately, Australia Post recently announced an expanded domestic and international air freight deal with Qantas to support the growing demand for parcels.

The AUD \$1 billion (USD 674 million) expansion of the national delivery system will benefit online shoppers and businesses across Australia by increasing capacity and providing greater network flexibility.

Asylum seekers welcome to open accounts at Poste Italiane

TEXT: Clare O'Dea

In the interests of greater financial inclusion, asylum seekers in Italy may open a basic Bancoposta bank account at any Italian post office using a valid residence permit. The permit is considered a "unique and valid identity document" by Poste Italiane and there is no requirement for the customer to provide any additional documentation.

This position was clarified in an internal memo distributed by Poste Italiane to all branches and subsequently published on the website of the Italian Interior Ministry.

Poste Italiane said the taxpayer code included on the asylum seekers' permit is also valid and that the identity document can be used for transactions.

This is good news for the more than 120,000 asylum seekers accommodated in reception facilities across Italy, as well those who have been granted refugee status and applicants with subsidiary permission or humanitarian permission to remain in Italy.

The basic account (conto di base) is available at all bank and Poste Italiene offices in Italy. It is intended for low-income customers who cannot afford banking fees and for those who are unable to register at the local registry office.

It offers the basic range of banking services, such as deposits and withdrawals, and includes a debit card. Account holders may also send and receive money in the SEPA area (Single European Payments Area), which covers all countries using the Euro.

The account is available to anyone legally resident in Italy who holds no other bank account.

In the memo, Poste Italiane pointed out that the asylum seeker residence permit cannot be used to access other banking products or services. It also clarified that the certificates issued by the police to asylum seekers at temporary reception centres do not qualify as identification for the basic account.

When some asylum seekers reported that they were having difficulty opening accounts with Italian banks, the Italian Banking Association (ABI) issued a statement in April confirming that an asylum seeker's residence permit was sufficient identification.

Under a 2014 EU directive, "consumers who are legally resident in the Union and who do not hold a payment account in a certain Member State should be in a position to open and use a payment account with basic features in that Member State."

The directive specifies that asylum seekers are included in the definition of legally resident consumers. A total of 53,596 people applied for asylum in Italy in 2018.

The application of the EU directive is dependent on the banks' ability to respond quickly and adapt their internal procedures, while also complying with know-your-customer (KYC) policies and other international regulatory procedures.



Illustration: Freepik

UPU and UNCTAD collaborate on e-commerce readiness

The UPU has been working with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to support the global uptake of e-commerce, helping to make sure even least developed countries can reap the socioeconomic benefits of the digital economy.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone



Least developed and developing countries face significant hurdles to participate in the digital economy, but they can now benefit from coordinated and crosscutting e-commerce assistance from development partners.

The UNCTAD-led initiative, known as eTrade for All, and its spin-off Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessments, builds upon a network of more than 30 partners across seven e-commerce policy areas. Its online platform, etradeforall.org, offers capacity-building programmes, e-commerce performance indicators, a collaboration tool to connect countries with partners, and digital communication materials providing e-commerce news.

UNCTAD Economic Affairs Officer Cécile Barayre-El Shami explains that sustainable and inclusive e-commerce calls for reinforced teamwork among development partners, including donors, countries and regional organizations.

"We wanted to aggregate technical assistance within the community of

stakeholders involved in e-commerce and create synergies," says Barayre-El Shami.

UPU Digital Economy and Trade Programme Manager Paul Donohoe adds that the UPU was keen to join the cause from its inception.

"The UPU was involved from the formation stage of eTrade for All as we believed collaboration with other partners was key to developing e-commerce and integrating the Post in the e-commerce agenda," he says.

As a founding partner of the initiative, the UPU contributed to the platform's "trade logistics" policy area, offering up solutions, research and case studies on e-commerce promotion and cross-border trade facilitation.

The organization has since contributed to the "Payment solutions" and, most recently, "E-commerce readiness assessment and strategy formulation" sections. It is also engaged in providing logistics, payment and digital solutions in line with eTrade Readiness Assessments, assisting with the "The UPU was involved from the formation stage of eTrade for All as we believed collaboration with other partners was key to developing e-commerce and integrating the post in the e-commerce agenda"

implementation of the assessments' recommendations.

In the programme's first two years of operation, UNCTAD has already received assessment requests from 30 out of 47 LDCs and has completed 24 assessments. Developing countries have also expressed an interest in the programme. The UPU and UNCTAD are working closely on the two first assessments of non-LDCs in Iraq and Côte d'Ivoire.

UPU contribution

The Post is a major channel for the delivery of e-commerce, but according to UPU research, problems related to last-mile delivery, poor addressing solutions, unsafe or inadequate payment systems and a need for postal policy reform are some of the hurdles holding e-commerce development back

As the UN specialized agency for the postal sector, the UPU has developed technical assistance programmes to help countries identify and overcome the weaknesses in the network preventing them from seizing on the digital economy.

One way it does this is through its transversal operational readiness for e-commerce (ORE) methodology, which addresses the quality, reliability and general operational efficiency of the Post's logistics services that are key to successful e-commerce deployment. It also offers up potential UPU products and services that could benefit the Post.

Donohoe adds that the UPU has contributed to more than 18 eTrade Readiness Assessments. It has assisted most recently in Myanmar, Cambodia and Iraq.

According to UPU Donor Relations and Stakeholder Engagement Programme Manager Alexander Thern-Svanberg, the UPU has now also developed a framework

to assess payments readiness for e-commerce (PRE) and digital readiness for e-commerce (DRE) as part of its cooperation with UNCTAD.

"The work done by UPU then leads to recommendations for Posts on how they can improve their infrastructure, processes and policy to encourage the development of e-commerce," says Thern-Svanberg.

These recommendations touch on the development of postal e-commerce strategies, the facilitation of postal trade logistics, e-commerce platforms and payment solutions that could benefit the postal network's ability to deliver e-commerce.

Agenda-setting

However, this work cannot bear fruit without support from the top levels of government. Winning this support is a key objective of the project and the resulting report and concrete actions are sent to the key government ministries involved.

Barayre-El Shami explains that the eTrade Readiness Assessments help provide a "snapshot of the e-commerce ecosystem", as well as recommendations, so that governments work with the necessary partners on e-commerce development.

"It helps countries to see the scope of the difficulties preventing them to take full advantage of e-commerce. It also helps them establish a national project team, formalizing cooperation between government actors, operators and private sector partners to discuss their own issues and devise ways to carry out the recommendations," she says.

"The initiative helps the Post make a case for government support, as well as support from donors and private sector," says Thern-Svanberg.

The most recent success story is Cambodia. Thanks to the project, the country recently established a national project team to execute its eTrade Readiness Assessment recommendations. With decision-makers now taking ownership over the project, the UPU is able to work on securing funding for postal e-commerce projects recommended under the assessment.

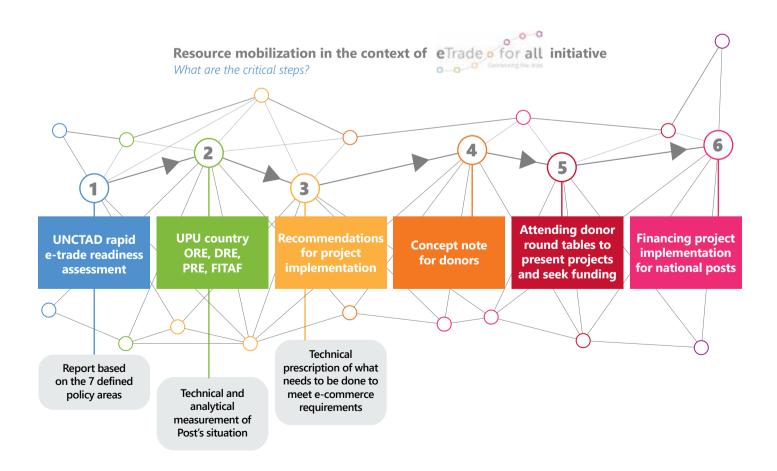
This also helps puts the often-overlooked Post on the government's radar as an

avenue for e-commerce development and trade facilitation.

The World Trade Organization's recent Trade Facilitation Agreement encourages a "single window" for e-commerce, where traders can access and submit required documentation. Through close cooperation with government authorities, such as Customs, the Post is fit to become that one-stop-shop for inclusive e-commerce.

"The objective is to assist countries to engage in the digital economy, capitalizing on the strengths and potential of each partner and institution and countries are becoming interested in having a deeper analysis on the work of the Post in this area," says Barayre-El Shami.

Countries interested in launching an eTrade Readiness Assessment may send the UNCTAD Secretary General Mukhisa Kituyi a formal request letter.



4-8 November

4th Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE) Workshop for Asia

Bangkok, Thailand

5 November

PostEurop Remuneration Forum, Customs Working Group Meeting

Vienna, Austria

6 November

PostEurop Data Integration

Vienna, Austria

7 November

PostEurop Quality of Service and Operations Working Groups Meeting

Vienna, Austria

11-13 Nov

Disaster Risk Management Workshop

Banakok, Thailand

11-12 November

UPU ORE strategic regional project – Training workshop on "Integrated IT solutions for e-commerce and customs time reports" for the designated operators of the countries in South Eastern Europe, Georgia and Ukraine

Berne, Switzerland

18-22 Nov.

PUASP Executive Council

Montevideo, Uruguay

25-29 Nov.

EMS Performance Improvement Workshop for the Asia-Pacific region, in cooperation with the APPU

Banakok, Thailand

26-28 Nov.

UPU Global Conference on Cross-Border Cooperation in an **E-commerce World**

Xiamen, China

4-5 December

EMS Symposium for the European region

Baku, Azerbaijan

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UPU Global Conference on Cross-Border Cooperation in an E-commerce World

26-28 November 2019

Xiamen International Conference Centre Hotel Xiamen, China









Algeria

ALGÉRIE POSTE has announced that all applications for the EDAHABIA payment card have been processed and that there are no valid applications pending. Between June and September 2019, an additional 264,735 cards were produced, bringing the total number of cardholders to more than 5,500,000. An online status update is available for customers waiting on delivery of a card.

Austria

ÖSTERREICHISCHE POST has reported strong results for the first half-year 2019. Group revenue grew to 981.1 million EUR (1.08 billion USD), an increase of 2.7%. The performance was driven by a robust mail business and strong growth in the parcel segment. The Mail & Branch Network Division, up 1.3%, contributed slightly above 70% to the total group revenue for the half-year period. The Parcel & Logistics Division posted growth of 7.8%.

Australia

AUSTRALIA POST has announced a 67% fall in group profits down to 41 million AUD (28 million USD) for the financial year 2019. Letter revenues declined almost 9%, and losses from this business increased to 192 million AUD (131.4 million USD). There has been no increase to the basic postage rate in more than three years. On the positive side, Australia Post earned over 4,774 million AUD (3,266 million USD) in parcels and services revenue, representing 68 % of total revenue.

Canada

CANADA POST has completed the country's first beyond visual line-of-sight drone flight, in collaboration with London Drugs and Indro Robotics. The trial run delivered prescription medication to a grocery store over a 17-kilometre distance from Duncan to Salt Spring Island in British Colombia. As part of the ongoing trials, Canada Post says it is simulating deliveries over bodies of water, icy roads and challenging terrain.

China

DEUTSCHE POST subsidiary
StreetScooter and the Chinese
automobile manufacturer Chery
Holding Group have established a joint
venture to begin local production,
sourcing and development of last-mile
electric light commercial vehicles
(eLCV). The two companies plan to
develop an eLCV for the international
market in selected countries. Mass
production is scheduled to begin in
2021 with production capacities of up
to 100,000 electric vehicles per year.

Finland

The employment terms of the sorting personnel at POSTI'S PARCEL & E-COMMERCE BUSINESS GROUP will change under a new collective agreement due to take effect in November. To remain competitive, Posti says it must adopt similar terms of employment to those used by other delivery industry operators. After an initial transition period, employees may earn more or less based on the efficiency and quality of their work.

Germany

QUANTUM CAPITAL PARTNERS and POSTNL have signed an agreement on the sale of the activities of Postcon, the number-two mail provider in Germany and a subsidiary of PostNL. The transaction is subject to a number of conditions, including regulatory approval, and is expected to close before the end of 2019, PostNL announced. Postcon processes over 1 billion letters a year and has a market share of about 10% in Germany.

Japan

JAPAN POST CO. is expected to end Saturday delivery for standard mail next year after the country's Internal Affairs and Communications Ministry accepted a proposal from a government panel. The ministry will seek to change the law this autumn due to a labour shortage at Japan Post Co. and a drop in demand due to increased use of the internet.

Kazakhstan

KAZPOST has launched a new virtual assistant to help answer customers' queries. Developed using artificial intelligence and algorithms, the chatbot is able to quickly and efficiently track mailings, provide information on posting and delivery rates and advise on all issues related to receiving mail services. The chatbot operates in Kazakh and Russian.

Latvia

LATVIJAS PASTS has acquired the parcel terminal chain Pasta Stacija from Baltcap investment fund for 1.8 million EUR (2 million USD). The 61 parcel machines in the Riga area and in other Latvian cities will complement the company's existing network of more than 370 post offices, 1,300 postmen and 100 couriers, as well as the network of 50 Circle-K fuel stations.

Norway

POSTEN NORGE has announced its adjusted operating profit in the first half-year reached 239 million NOK (26.8 million USD), an increase of 80 million NOK (8.96 million USD) on 2018. Operating profit was negatively impacted by a provision of 473 million NOK (53 million USD) for the restructuring of the postal operations. Posten Norge is preparing for large-scale restructuring when mail delivery will be reduced to every other day from July 2020.

Singapore

SINGPOST has introduced a new initiative to foster closer ties between postal workers and residents. The company has set up a website, mypostman.sg, where people can key in their postal code and find out who their postman is. Residents may then give a rating, provide feedback, or offer words of encouragement.

Switzerland

SWISS POST has acquired Basel-based Distriba AG with the aim of better positioning itself in the unaddressed promotional mailing sector. The delivery of such promotional mailing items in Switzerland is part of the core business of Direct Mail Company AG (DMC), a Swiss Post subsidiary. Swiss Post integrated Distriba into DMC at the end of June.

Thailand

Thailand's Digital Economy Ministry has ordered THAILAND POST to develop an action plan to boost its business capacity in the face of stiff competition from foreign operators. The state enterprise has been losing market share in courier services to several delivery providers. As part of its bid to be more competitive, Thailand Post plans to establish two new logistics centres and an e-commerce centre by next year.

Trinidad and Tobago

TTPOST, is set to complete the national rollout of the S42 address standard and postal codes by the end of the year. Some areas have begun using postal codes and the company has created a web page for its customers to check whether their number is ready. The postcodes will be implemented in time for the 20th anniversary celebration of the revamped postal service.

United Kingdom

The latest quality of service report for THE ROYAL MAIL reveals that the company exceeded its regulatory targets for First and Second Class mail in the first quarter of the financial year 2019-20. During the first quarter, Royal Mail delivered 93.2 % of First Class mail the next working day and 98.9 % of Second Class mail within three working days.

United States

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE (USPS) has launched a new website to help retailers handle returns of online purchases by supporting shipping and returns consolidators that provide delivery for the postal service. The new site replaced the previous Shipping Consolidators site. There's no fee for approved consolidators to be listed on the new site, however they must meet certain criteria.

All items by Clare O'Dea



































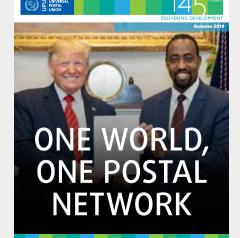
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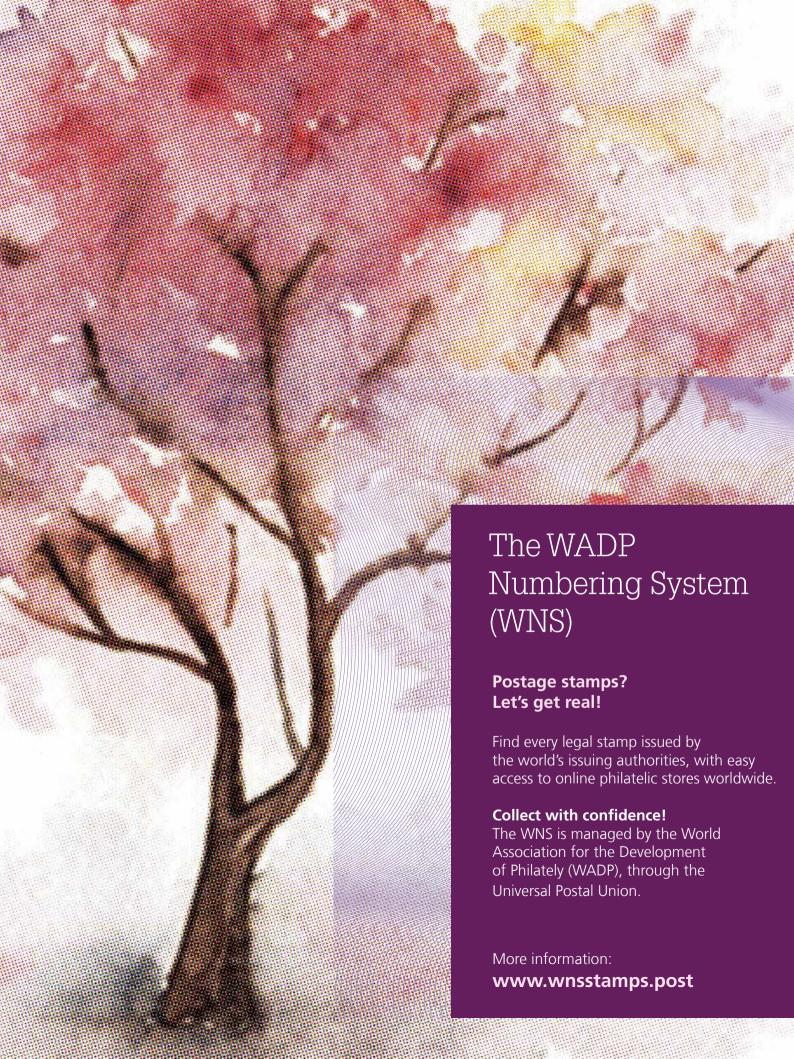












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