

UNION POSTALE



UPU
UNIVERSAL
POSTAL
UNION

145 YEARS

DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT

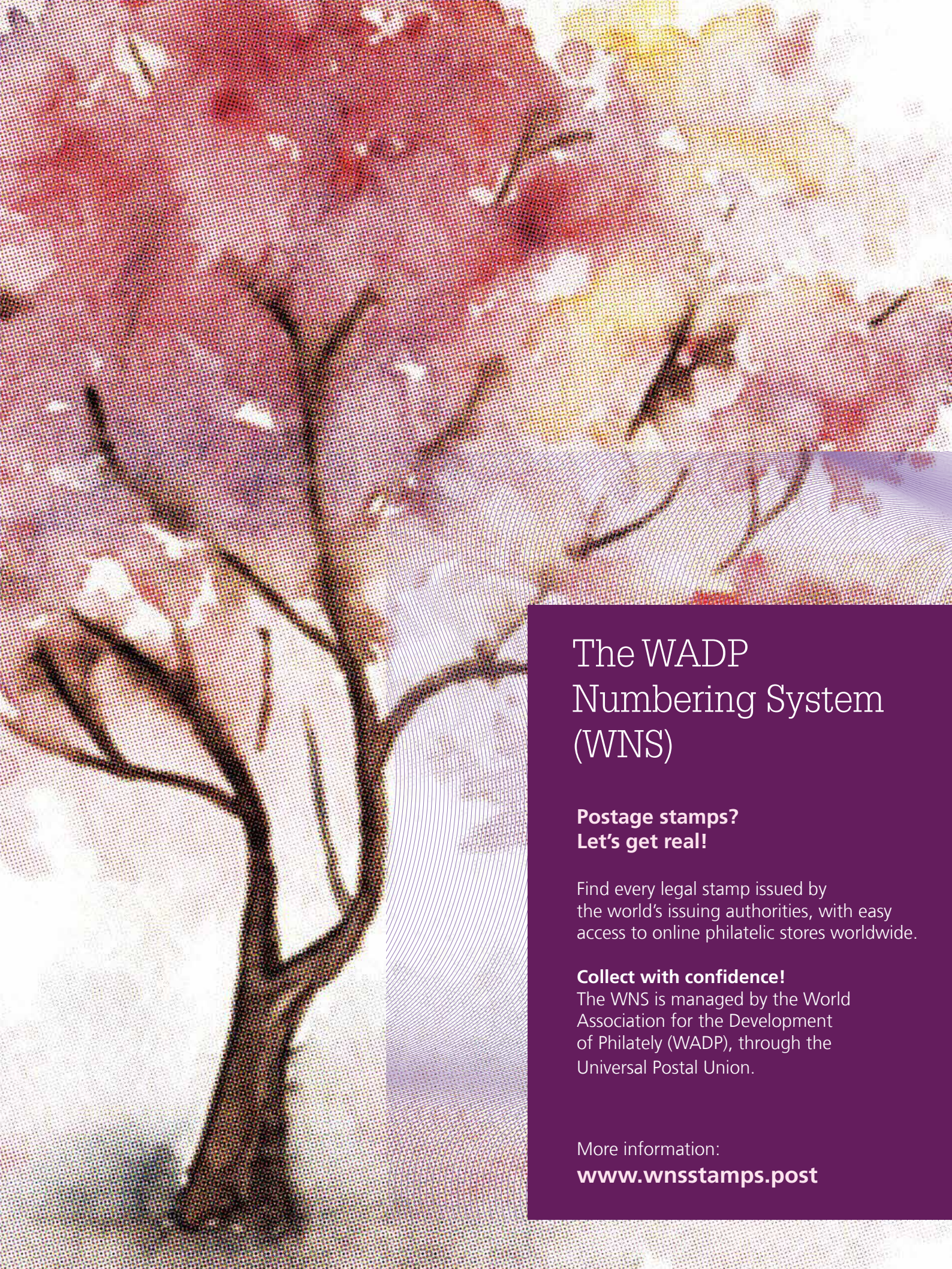
Spring 2019

BEFORE THE STORM

14 Securing
the supply chain
with CDS

16 Cover story

24 "Little hands"
win big prize



The WADP Numbering System (WNS)

**Postage stamps?
Let's get real!**

Find every legal stamp issued by the world's issuing authorities, with easy access to online philatelic stores worldwide.

Collect with confidence!

The WNS is managed by the World Association for the Development of Philately (WADP), through the Universal Postal Union.

More information:

www.wnsstamps.post

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.

#3 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.

#4 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.

#5 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.

#6 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.

#7 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 reforms, 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.

#8 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.

#9 SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A deeply woven part of their countries' socio-economic 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.

#10 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.

- 6** FOREWORD
On our 145th birthday, let's celebrate the UPU's unique ability to transform with the times

- 7** EDITOR'S NOTE
Shifting mindsets

- 8** IN BRIEF
Plans for Abidjan on the move
Ecom@Africa makes new strides
Who's who at the UPU
Brigitte Rakotondrajao,
Assistant to the Deputy
Director General

- 13** ANNUAL PHOTO
COMPETITION
Hidden corners of Berne

- 20** E-COMMERCE
**UPU participates in Africa
eCommerce Week**

- 21** The Financial Inclusion
Technical Assistance Facility
(FITAF)

- 32** MARKET FOCUS
**China delivers record
parcels for Double 11**
**Saudi Post provides new
services for pilgrims**

- 37** UN FAMILY
**From climate policy to
climate solutions – bridging
the governance gap**

- 38** CALL TO ACTION
**Ballot for a third
extraordinary congress**

- 39** IMPORTANT
UPCOMING EVENTS

- 40** DIGEST



IN BRIEF

9

Development efforts to be strengthened in South Pacific islands

The UPU will roll out special development projects in the South Pacific after the Director General's visit to five countries in the region in late February surfaced common challenges among the region's small island developing states (SIDS).

14

SOLUTION SPOTLIGHT

Securing the supply chain with CDS

The Customs Declaration System (CDS), a solution developed by the Postal Technology Centre (PTC), is the UPU's answer to modern communication between Posts and Customs.



INTERVIEW

22

Women in the Post: an interview with Jasminka Krivokuća

In celebration of International Women's Day, UPU News got in touch with Pošta Srpske CEO Jasminka Krivokuća for her perspective on gender balance and her journey to the highest ranks of her organization.

CONTENTS

16

COVER STORY

Before the storm

A devastating 2010 earthquake that left Haiti Post reeling sparked a new conversation about disaster risk management among the postal community. Nearly 10 years and a special task force later, the UPU has managed to flip the script, changing the conversation from emergency response to emergency preparedness.



24

FEATURES

“Little hands” win big prize

Thirteen-year-old Chara Phoka from Cyprus took home the top prize in the UPU’s 2018 International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People with her moving letter describing the journey of a letter travelling from a Afghan refugee child’s small hands to the larger hands of adults on its way to the United Nations.

28

POSTAL STATISTICS

Growing parcels market an opportunity for the Post, according to latest UPU research

The UPU’s latest “Postal economic outlook” takes an unprecedented look at competition within the postal sector. It shows that designated operators hold a declining share of the market for postal services, including in the fastest-growing segment – parcels, as explained by the UPU’s resident economist, Mauro Boffa.



34

UN FAMILY

UPU at COP24

Susan Alexander, UPU Expert on Postal Regulation and UN Policies, represented the organization during a panel entitled “Innovative climate technologies and sustainable maritime transport for a climate resilient industry”.

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.

The Universal Postal Union neither endorses any products or services offered by third-party advertisers nor guarantees the veracity of any claims made by the same. Opinions expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the UPU.

It is expressly forbidden to reproduce any part of UNION POSTALE magazine (including text, images or illustrations) without prior permission.

Spring 2019

Refers to the season in the country of publication.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
Kayla Redstone (KR)

AUTHORS: David Dadge (DD),
Olena Muravyova (OM),
Fella Rabbahi (FR), Sonja Denovski (SD),
James Hale (JH)

DESIGN AND LAYOUT:
Sonja Denovski

SUBSCRIPTIONS:
publications@upu.int

ADVERTISING:
kayla.redstone@upu.int

CONTACT:
UNION POSTALE
International Bureau
Universal Postal Union
P.O. Box 312
3000 BERNE 15
SWITZERLAND
PHONE: +41 31 350 31 11
E-MAIL: kayla.redstone@upu.int
WEBSITE: news.upu.int/magazine



On our 145th birthday, let's celebrate the UPU's unique ability to transform with the times

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) was conceived in a very different world to the one we know today. Anyone walking through towns and cities in the early 1870s would have seen horse-drawn coaches and carts, and arc lights to brighten dark streets. Thomas Edison's lightbulb would not be invented until 1879 and the telephone, although in existence, would not transform communications for many years.

The postal sector, before the UPU, was also another world. Countries had agreed individual postal agreements. In some cases, senders needed to calculate postage for each leg of the journey and find their own forwarders, if there was no direct delivery.

All of this changed in 1874 with the Treaty of Bern and the formation of the General Postal Union, later renamed the Universal Postal Union. The UPU was aptly named and to this day provides a direct link to the universal service obligation and our underlying duty to deliver a postal service to the world forged by consensus.

Originally born out of the concerns of largely advanced countries, the UPU for decades has been at the forefront of work on behalf of developing regions, including Africa, to encourage a postal future that is prosperous for all. In the postal world, we are the voice of inclusiveness as shown by our work to help achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This year we celebrate our 145th birthday on World Post Day, 9th October, together with our member countries, postal operators and the UN family. Does the weight of history sit heavily on our shoulders? The answer is emphatically 'no'. Our unique selling point is our ability to transform, and in doing so, catalyze the international postal sector to deliver change benefiting customers and governments alike.

An industry once relying on horses and coaches for postal delivery has shown itself capable of relentlessly absorbing and improving upon the advances of the different decades. During the period of industrialization and mechanization, for example, we vastly improved upon postal delivery times and rates. Today, we embrace new advances in the areas of digitalization, e-commerce and financial services. The horse has been replaced by the car, which is being replaced by the electric car and eventually the self-driving car. We live in an age of highly adaptive technological marvels. As society advances, so does the UPU and the international postal sector.

What has enabled the UPU to remain so flexible, but also crucially relevant over the last 145 years? It is our dynamic vision and our desire to encourage innovation. With each successive Universal Postal Congress, with each successful project and programme, and with each strategy and regional plan, the UPU delivers inestimable value to its member countries and designated operators. We are 145 years old and our experience and our collective memory, allied to a ceaseless search for new technology, are formidable and unmatched.

It is my belief that we stand on the cusp of a prosperous future for the international postal network, but we can seize on this bright future only by making use of our shared history and perpetual embrace of transformation. For 145 years, the UPU has been unrivalled in its ability to deliver development in the postal sector and improve its effectiveness. We will keep developing and enhancing our tailored services in the many years and decades to come.

Bishar A. Hussein, Director General,
Universal Postal Union



EDITOR'S NOTE

SHIFTING MINDSETS

As you may have noticed, we have exceptionally closed 2018 at just two issues and launched into 2019. This interruption to the regular schedule is regrettable, but this year we look forward to bringing you our regular four issues in spring, summer, autumn and winter.

In our **Spring 2019** edition, we are putting the focus on the UPU's contribution in disaster risk management. Our cover story shows how the organization has changed its mindset from one focused on response, to one focused on preparedness. It also recognizes the significant achievements made by the task force dedicated to the subject, which wrapped up its work last autumn.

In this magazine you will also read about the UPU's work in the field, including the Director General's recent visit to several small island developing states, the organization's participation in COP24 and UNCTAD's Africa eCommerce week, and progress made on the Ecom@Africa project. As usual, we have included updates on global postal statistics following the release of the UPU's latest Postal Economic Outlook.

We look forward to continue bringing you quality content and updates on the postal sector.

Kayla Redstone, Editor-in-chief



The UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein and Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz pose with Côte d'Ivoire's Vice President Daniel Kablan Duncan, and other high-level officials after the launch ceremony.

Plans for Abidjan on the move

TEXT: David Dadge

Côte d'Ivoire officially launched its work on the 2020 Universal Postal Congress during a high-level ceremony in Abidjan, attended by Vice-President Daniel Kablan Duncan and Prime Minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly, as well as the UPU's leadership.

"Mr Vice-President, I express my profound gratitude to the President, to your good self, and to the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire for the tremendous support shown not only to the UPU but also to the African postal sector," said UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein.

"I am proud to say that, today, thanks to your diligence and your determination, and for the very first time in the UPU's 145-year history, we will hold the Universal Postal Congress in sub-Saharan Africa," said the Director General.

Mr Hussein noted that the Congress would be arriving at a transformational moment in

the region's history, a time of great opportunity and a time of great potential growth.

"Across Africa, the fair winds of technology are delivering sweeping changes to how Posts work and to how commerce is conducted," he added. Mr Hussein went on to say that the digital economy was enabling Posts to make ever-greater contributions to government purses and creating greater access to e-commerce, e-services, and other digital solutions.

Leadership support

During a meeting with the UPU Director General, the Vice-President affirmed his government's commitment to the successful organization of the 2020 Congress, noting that the necessary funds had been mobilized and a national organizing committee created to carry

out preparations for the event. The Vice-President himself will oversee the committee.

The two also discussed how the Ecom@Africa project, which will see the country host an e-commerce hub serving West Africa, would stimulate local exports (see page 11 for more information on the project).

The Universal Postal Congress is expected to bring together some 2,000 delegates from the UPU's 192 member countries to take decisions on the UPU's work between 2021 and 2024.

The meeting will be held from 10 to 28 August 2020, at the Sofitel Abidjan Hotel Ivoire. **DD**

With files from Kayla Redstone.

Development efforts to be strengthened in South Pacific islands

The UPU will roll out special development projects in the South Pacific after the Director General's visit to five countries in the region in late February surfaced common challenges among the region's small island developing states (SIDS).

TEXT: Kayla Redstone



The UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein presents Samoan Minister of Communication and Information Technology Afamasaga Lepuia'i Rico Tupai with the keys to postal vehicles secured through the QSF.

UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein participated in a series of high-level meetings with heads of state, ministers and postal CEOs during his mission to the South Pacific islands, which included stops in the Solomon Islands, Nauru, Samoa, Fiji and Tonga.

At meetings with the Prime Ministers of the Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tonga, and the President of Nauru, the Director General briefed the leaders on important global issues the UPU is working to address. They also discussed ongoing UPU projects in the Pacific and ways of enhancing UPU cooperation with member countries in the region.

These discussions highlighted some common challenges identified among the countries and areas in which the UPU's expertise would be helpful, such as in e-commerce development, diversification of the postal business portfolio, development of international remittances and capacity-building for postal staff.

As a result, the UPU's Development and Cooperation Directorate will begin work on a special regional project for Pacific island countries with a special focus on human resource development and capacity-building.

Financial burden lifted

It was the Director General's first visit to the region since the 2018 Extraordinary Congress in Ethiopia last September decided to reduce the contributions paid by SIDS, some of which have been placed under sanction or have gone into debt owing to their inability to pay their UPU membership fees.

"Even though all proposals are of utmost importance, I wish to declare here that my heart and sympathy go to the developing and less developed countries and small island states, many of which are not here with us today either because they are under sanctions or crippling debts which they cannot afford to pay," said Mr Hussein during the Extraordinary Congress.

During meetings with the Director General, several heads of state expressed their gratitude to the UPU for lifting the financial burden off their nations so that they could participate fully in the Union's activities going forward.

During a reception for the UPU head in Nauru, the country's President, Baron Waqa, highlighted this point during a special state dinner for the Director General.

"I wish to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Director General for his valuable support to Nauru and to all the other countries who benefited by re-joining the international postal community," he said, later adding that the UPU's "assistance and support to small island states in reaching this milestone decision on membership fee reductions is commendable."

CEO conference

While in the region, the Director General also attended a CEO conference for the Pacific in Samoa.

In his opening remarks, Mr Hussein noted the development initiatives the UPU has taken to encourage the development of the Post in the region, especially in SIDS.

The CEO conference discussed global postal trends and the UPU's future World Postal Strategy, as well as specific issues and challenges faced by the region, such as the implementation of the UPU's operational readiness for e-commerce (ORE) project, disaster risk management, the universal service obligation, and the need to adapt to rapidly changing technologies.



The UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein with then Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, Rick Houenipwela

Samoaan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Neioti Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi thanked the Director General for his attendance and for considering the Pacific's perspective on UPU policy.

"With your Excellency at the helm, we trust that special considerations, exceptions or interventions be constantly permitted for small member countries. Not only to shoulder adverse effects of new UPU policies and regulations, but to build small member

countries' capacity to accommodate and comply with these new policies and regulations," said the Prime Minister.

During his visit, the Director General attended an international mail accounting workshop held for the region in Samoa, and later presented the Samoan Minister of Communication and Information Technology with three postal vehicles acquired through the UPU's Quality of Service Fund (QSF). **KR**



The UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein with Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Lufesoliai Neioti Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi (centre)



The UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein meets with Tongan Prime Minister 'Akilisi Pohiva

Ecom@Africa makes new strides

TEXT: Olena Muravyova

Launched in 2016, Ecom@Africa aims to ensure the development of e-commerce through the African postal network, giving micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) better access to local and international markets by simplifying import and export procedures. The project has been seen as a lifeline for African Posts as they struggle to build up their business given the decline in letter-mail and traditional postal services.

Two countries – Côte d'Ivoire and Ethiopia – recently joined the initiative, signing formal agreements in late 2018 to launch e-commerce hubs to serve their respective regions and Tunisia having just laid the foundation of its Ecom@Africa fulfilment hub in March 2019.

Speaking during the Fifth Extraordinary Session of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) in Antananarivo, Madagascar, in July 2018, UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein called the UPU project a key enabler of e-commerce, which allows African citizens and businesses to participate in national, regional, and global economies.

"Barriers to e-commerce in Africa are many and varied. We need one platform that can address all the challenges comprehensively. Ecom@Africa powered by the Post is the solution," he said.

Foundations laid

Tunisia was the first country to come on board the initiative, hosting an Ecom@Africa onsite assessment in March 2017 and signing its cooperation agreement with the UPU in July 2017. It is now in the midst of implementing its roadmap of 15 activities, including the installation of UPU's Customs Declaration System (CDS) and the upgrade of Tunisia Post's IT tools. It is also the first Post to use the UPU's new e-commerce application-programming interface allowing postal operators and their commercial

partners to automate orders, payments, shipments, customs clearance, and deliveries.

It is also the first to begin construction on its Ecom@Africa hub. The UPU Director General attended a ceremony at Tunis-Carthage International Airport in March 2019 where he helped lay the first part of the fulfilment centre's foundation.

Firm commitment

Ethiopia is the latest to join the initiative, having signed a cooperation agreement in December to construct a hub for East Africa.

Commenting on this important milestone in the development of the country, Mr Hussein said the agreement confirmed the Ethiopian government's "commitment to launch Ecom@Africa, a single window platform for domestic and international e-commerce trade."

In February 2019, UPU experts assessed five main areas of the project during their mission to Addis Ababa: regulatory and investment conditions, the local postal network and its supply chain partners, the future hub, its virtual marketplace, and APIs. The team held meetings with Ethiopian Minister of Innovation and Technology Getahun Mekuria, Ethiopian Airlines, the Ethiopian Postal Service, the Ethiopian Customs authority, and the national investment committee to discuss next steps. UPU experts made recommendations on policies that the government would have to develop and transport and delivery improvements that must be made as a precursor to establishing the hub. As the next step, the government will create a national addressing system.

The government intends to construct a modern fulfilment centre very close to Addis Ababa Bole International Airport. The centre will focus on domestic e-commerce, transit, and international outbound mail flows.



The UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein sets the first foundation at the Tunis Ecom@Africa fulfilment centre.

Working on policy

The UPU also signed an Ecom@Africa cooperation agreement with Côte d'Ivoire late last year, during the UPU Second Extraordinary Congress in Addis Ababa. The country officially launched the project during a December 2018 ceremony attended by UPU Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz, Ivorian Minister for Digital Economy and Post Claude Isaac Dé, La Poste (Côte d'Ivoire) CEO Isaac Gnamba Yao, partner institutions and UPU experts.

UPU experts have since conducted an onsite assessment of the Post's operational readiness for e-commerce and made several recommendations on necessary policy development and postal IT infrastructure investments to be made. The local government has already found two possible locations for the country's future hub.

The UPU is currently working with four other African countries to negotiate Ecom@Africa agreements: Cameroon, Kenya, Morocco, and South Africa. **OM**



Name
Brigitte Rakotondrajao

Directorate
Executive Office

Position
**Assistant to the Deputy
Director General**

Nationality
**Franco-Swiss, originally
from Madagascar**

It was 33 years ago that Brigitte Rakotondrajao joined the UPU.

She had finished her university studies in literature, French, English and Spanish in Lausanne and was looking to move from her student job as a secretary to something more permanent. That was when she saw the UPU's advertisement in search of a typist in her local newspaper. She applied and got the job.

Three decades later, she now assists the second-highest office in the International Bureau: the Deputy Director General.

"I am very lucky because I have always worked with very motivated people who gave me the drive to keep improving myself. They pushed me to try new things and once I succeeded, I pushed myself even further," she says.

This drive led Rakotondrajao to accept various new challenges within the International Bureau. After a short stint as a typist, she went on to become a proofreader. A few years later, she joined the team responsible for technical cooperation across the globe, spending many late evenings organizing workshops and coordinating with consultants. After that, she took on what she describes as one of the biggest challenges of her career: assisting in the creation of the UPU's EMS Cooperative.

"It was very hectic and challenging, but it was very rewarding," she says determinedly.

However, after two years EMS membership numbers began to grow at a stable rate and Rakotondrajao felt an itch to scope out her next challenge, so she accepted an open position to assist the Deputy Director General of the UPU in 1999.

"Working for the Deputy Director General is not like working for any other director because he is an elected official, and as such, he represents the Union. You have to act as a gatekeeper, sometimes as his last line of defence," she details, explaining that the job can never become routine.

"Every single piece of correspondence coming through the office reflects the image of the UPU and should be correct. Every single mission to prepare is always a challenge. Each Council session and each Congress, the *raison d'être* of the Union, even if they look alike, are never the same," says Rakotondrajao.

She adds that "diplomacy, discretion and confidentiality", no matter how difficult the circumstances, are also vital requirements for the job.

Rakotondrajao, who has now worked with three different Deputies, explains that she has learned a lot from each one of them and notes a characteristic they all have in common: a love for the job and for their staff.

Today, she draws inspiration from current Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz's tireless work ethic and dedication to the job. She credits their shared sense of humour for helping them weather challenges together.

Rakotondrajao, who plans to retire next year, reflects on her years at the UPU with a smile.

"I have always worked with people who have made me believe in this organization. My sense of belonging to the UPU is very strong."

She says she is grateful to the UPU not only for her rewarding career, but also for enabling her to provide for her family. After leaving the UPU, Rakotondrajao hopes to help underprivileged children in Madagascar develop literacy skills.

"I would like to give back to my country of origin," she says. **KR**

Hidden Corners of Berne

For the second year running, we asked staff at the UPU's International Bureau in Berne, Switzerland, to put their creative minds to work and submit images for a yearly UPU calendar. This time they focused their lenses on the UPU's beautiful and historic host city. The following images represent the top 13 selected for the 2019 calendar, as voted by staff and UPU delegates.



Alejandra Barreto | Love is Marktgasse



Sergey Dukelskiy | Gurten view



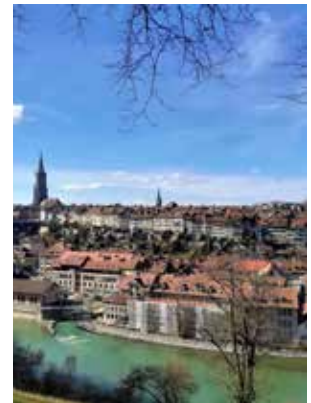
Leolinda Dieme | The beach – an oasis in Berne



Jan Bojnansky | Bernisches Historisches Museum



Sergey Dukelskiy | View from Weltpoststrasse



Jan Bojnansky | Bern Altstadt



Winning Photo, Pooran Parampath | Tree with Lights in Autumn



Nannette Villajos | Winter



Shuangming Han | Symbol of the global postal family



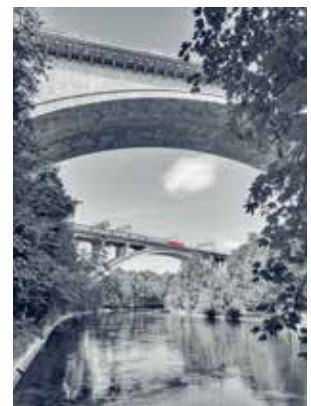
Heather Macaskill | Sittin' on the dock of the (Egel) See



Pooran Parampath | Saxophones in the Window



Sergey Dukelskiy | Gurten



M. Prosser | Lorrainebrücke and Neue Eisenbahnbrücke with IC 819

Securing the supply chain with CDS

The Customs Declaration System (CDS), a solution developed by the Postal Technology Centre (PTC), is the UPU's answer to modern communication between Posts and Customs.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone

The UPU began thinking about digitizing customs declarations more than a decade ago, creating a draft version of the electronic customs declaration message to be exchanged between Posts in 2007 and establishing electronic messages to be exchanged between Posts and Customs in 2011.

Around the same time, Canada Post had decided to establish a new, modern office of exchange in Vancouver and wanted to automate all processes within it, including customs clearance for postal items. The goal was to provide information for 100% of items before Canadian Customs received them.

After some discussion in the Postal Operations Council, Canada Post decided to work with the PTC, providing funding to develop what is now known as CDS.

"CDS exists thanks to Canada, but is a solution that can be used by any country," says Stéphane Herrmann, Lead Technical Account Manager for Mail Products and Services with the PTC.

CDS speeds up the customs clearance process by sending information about postal items to Customs and partner Posts in advance.

Before CDS, customers had to fill out the standard CN 23 customs declaration form, providing information on the sender, recipient and item contents. The Post then affixed this form to the package and sent it through customs. This manual process meant that each package was queued at customs, awaiting clearance before being transported to the customer.

With CDS, customers complete their CN 23 form online, automatically generating an accompanying barcode. The Post affixes this barcode to the package with the CN 23, scans it, and automatically transmits the information via electronic data interchange (EDI) messages to partners in the supply chain, including Customs in the sending and receiving countries and the partner Post responsible for last-mile delivery.

EDI messages allow Customs to automate many of their decisions regarding selectivity, risk management and any taxes payable on items before they can be sent.

"This advance information helps Customs to ensure the safety and security of the supply chain and speeds up delivery to customers," Herrmann explains.

Why choose CDS?

CDS has some unique advantages over private solutions.

As a United Nations specialized agency, the UPU is mandated to provide services to its member countries at a very low cost. Therefore, CDS is inexpensive compared to other solutions on the market.

"One of the benefits of CDS is that when one country finances a development on the system, as long as it is not too specific, all users can benefit from it," explains Herrmann. He refers to this model as a "community of users". With CDS, even the smallest Post is able to send and receive quality EDI messages.

Moreover, given the UPU's role in international postal policymaking and coordination with other international supply chain partners such as the World Customs Organization, CDS is regularly updated in line with any changes in international regulations – automatically and at no additional cost.

"This also helps to ensure that all Posts have the necessary level of pre-advice according to new regulations," Herrmann says.

Customs agencies concerned that CDS might not work with their existing systems can rest easy. According to Herrmann, CDS



has been designed to interface with different selectivity settings and tax calculations and all manner of applications used by customs authorities.

How to get started

There is only one prerequisite for using CDS: Posts merely need to have an agreement with their country's customs authority. "The UPU can help to initiate these discussions," Herrmann adds.

Once this minimum requirement is met, CDS can be deployed very quickly.

Member countries can currently choose from two options: CDS and CDS.POST. Deploying CDS requires local installation, meaning Posts must have their own infrastructure to host the system. CDS.POST is an online application hosted by the UPU, which is great for smaller Posts with limited access to infrastructure.

Herrmann explains that later this year, the PTC will offer yet another version of the application, known as CDS Cloud. This option will give each country access to its own dedicated CDS cloud environment.

If you are interested in trying CDS or have any questions, contact ptc.support@upu.int to arrange a free trial. **KR**

Testimonial: Canada Post

Why did Canada Post decide to help finance the development of CDS?

Canada Post (CPC) worked in collaboration with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to align and integrate the systems necessary to facilitate the safe and secure importation of mail when it came to the replacement of our legacy systems. CPC and CBSA have a historical partnership; therefore, collaboration is key when implementing changes to systems and/or processes.

How has implementing CDS improved your operations?

CDS enables CBSA to screen mail, with associated data, in advance of the item(s) arrival in Canada. This facilitates the clearance of legitimate goods. CDS also enables risk assessment and targeting, improving the safety and security of Canadians while facilitating trade. Furthermore, CDS enables the automated assessment of duties and taxes, reducing manual data entry activities. These benefits allow both parties to better manage limited resources.

What would you say to encourage other postal operators to use CDS?

CDS is a tool that enables the use of electronic advanced data (EAD). As the postal community moves towards the 100 percent provision of data for aviation security and with the growth of e-commerce, the use of EAD also assists with trade facilitation and fiscal charging. CDS is an off-the-shelf solution that can easily be customized to the specific national needs of your Customs' regulatory and operational processes.

Before the storm

A devastating 2010 earthquake that left Haiti Post reeling sparked a new conversation about disaster risk management among the postal community. Nearly 10 years and a special task force later, the UPU has managed to flip the script, changing the conversation from emergency response to emergency preparedness.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone



In the wake of the 2011 earthquake, Japan Post delivered to emergency shelters.

The earthquake destroyed the Post's head office, main sorting centre and EMS buildings, paralyzing postal operations and prompting the UPU's International Bureau to create an emergency task force of postal experts from around the world to come to the island's aid. The UPU had already been mobilizing efforts to help disaster-stricken countries get back on their feet for many years, but always from a reactive standpoint, explains Patrick Mendonca, senior director of the Office of the Postmaster General with the United States Postal Service, who has worked with the UPU on disaster risk management (DRM).

"Part of the work done by the UPU was mainly on the response side – providing funding, providing resources. For example, after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, the UPU sent a team in to help Haiti do an assessment of the postal service there," says Mendonca.

The postal network is valued as a critical infrastructure in helping countries recover after a natural disaster. Designated postal operators have an expansive network, are rich in human resources and have daily contact with their communities, making them a key partner in delivering information and delivering humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of a catastrophic event. The more resilient the postal network, the better.

Mendonca adds that many people access important social services such as receiving pension payments or medications through the Post, making it critical to get the network up and running as soon as possible after an incident.

The UPU had already been mobilizing efforts to help disaster-stricken countries get back on their feet for many years

Five components of disaster risk management

- 1. Risk prevention**
- 2. Mitigation**
- 3. Preparedness**
- 4. Response**
- 5. Recovery**

Reactive to proactive

However, it was not until the 2012 Universal Postal Congress that UPU members discussed having a strategy before the emergency happens, agreeing to set up an Ad Hoc Group on Disaster Risk Management dedicated to raising awareness of disaster risk management across the postal sector and developing guidance on how to do so.

As a result, the UPU developed policies on disaster risk reduction and management policies for the sector and a useful guide, called *Building Resilience*, highlighting frameworks, best practices and practical tools for developing a disaster risk management strategy. It also collected case studies from different countries to benchmark different approaches to DRM.

One shining example of a successful approach to disaster management is Japan. The Japanese Post's quick recovery following the 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami that bombarded the country in 2011 has become a benchmark for others and has helped inform the UPU's work on developing guidance for other members.

The Post dealt with the loss of colleagues, the destruction of its offices and destroyed communities, overcoming collapsed infrastructure, lack of vehicles and power outages to continue offering services. Staff delivered mail to temporary shelters, operational post offices extended their service to weekends and national holidays and the organization established mobile post offices soon after the disaster to help serve citizens.

This experience led the Japanese government to provide the UPU with both human and financial resources to develop a DRM programme for all members, focused on preparedness.

The idea is to motivate designated operators to continue improving their DRM activities and build an even more trustworthy brand.

New mandate

A proposal from Japan during the 2016 Congress in Istanbul saw member countries extend the UPU's work in the area of resilience, with an Emergency Assistance and Disaster Risk Management Task Force created under the Council of Administration.

Mendonca chaired that task force on behalf of the United States of America, with other members including China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, India, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Paraguay, Slovenia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

He explains that the group had three goals: to develop a model for providing technical assistance to developing and least developed countries, to develop a certification process for disaster risk management and to identify potential fundraising mechanisms for the Emergency and Solidarity Fund. That task force ended in late 2018 after proudly achieving all three of its goals, he says.

New model

The team's first accomplishment was the development of a technical assistance programme to help developing and least developed countries establish and evolve their DRM plans, give them access to DRM expertise, and give them the means to acquire necessary equipment, such as vehicles, satellite phones and back-up generators.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with two project selection dates per year. Projects submitted must align with selection criteria, including the UN's Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The programme is already benefitting nine countries. Grenada, Nepal and Zambia were the first countries to have their projects accepted in early 2018, with each one focusing on the development of DRM plans, staff training and supplying new equipment. Bhutan, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Kenya, Togo and Viet Nam were selected for the second round of projects at the end of last year.



The 2010 earthquake in Haiti left post offices destroyed.

Certifying preparedness

The Istanbul Congress also gave the group a mandate to develop a potential certification programme, similar to those the UPU provides related to quality of service and security standards. The task force recommended a process using the UPU's DRM guide to set some easy to follow baseline criteria. The UPU's Council of Administration approved this process last autumn and the International Bureau (IB) will be responsible for implementing it over the remainder of the Istanbul work cycle.

Mendonca says this will allow Posts to assess their own preparedness against the certification framework and will give operators a way to benchmark against each other. The idea is to motivate designated operators to continue improving their DRM activities and build an even more trustworthy brand.

Operators applying for the certification will first fill out a self-assessment questionnaire, attend trainings, conduct peer reviews and undergo audits by IB experts before they are assigned one of the three levels: bronze, silver, or gold.

Sustaining the ESF

After the disaster in Haiti, the UPU discussed establishing an Emergency and Solidarity Fund to ensure that the UPU could provide rapid emergency assistance to countries struck by disaster, allowing them to revive their postal activity. It has since helped more than a dozen countries recover from disaster.

“Ever since then, countries have applied for assistance and they’ve been provided different assistance, but the fund is running out of money,” says Mendonca.

Its voluntary funding model has put the ESF at risk as resources are spent faster than they can have been replenished. With only 130,000 CHF left in the fund at the end of 2018, the UPU is already having trouble helping countries in need. This past March, the Director General appealed to member countries for donations, as the amount left in the fund was too small to provide the total resources needed to help restore postal services in Dominica after Hurricane Maria.

The task force proposed that the UPU diversify the fund’s resources by creating synergies with other programmes.

“The UPU might not have many but it does have resources,” says Tetsuo Hasegawa, the UPU’s Senior Expert on Disaster Risk Management. “For example, the resource mobilization unit is working on attracting outside resources and combining its efforts with DRM efforts could be beneficial.”

He explains that the ESF and the UPU’s Quality of Service Fund (QSF), which finances development projects toward improving quality of service, share a “common purpose”.

“In disaster affected countries, it is easy to understand that the service level must be quite low,” he adds.

He explains that administering ESF funds should become more transparent moving forward, with the IB planning to issue reports or other updates on the use of the fund to encourage more donations.

“From the viewpoint of donors, it is necessary to understand: where is my money going and for what purpose my taxpayer’s money being used,” says Hasegawa.

Continuing the work

Despite the strides made by the task force, Mendonca and Hasegawa underline that the sector’s work on disaster risk management and emergency preparedness is far from over.

Data gathered by the UPU since 2013 shows that natural events caused more than a third of disruptions to international mail services. A survey sent by the task force to member countries showed that many Posts were not ready for a disaster. Out of 66 respondents, only 45 percent had an emergency preparedness plan and response

department or unit and only 37 percent said they had a role in their country’s national disaster management plan and process.

“Unfortunately, all member countries need to understand that natural disasters are becoming more and more severe, year by year. So they need to face this fact and learn how to deal with natural disasters,” says Hasegawa.

Member countries’ attitudes have luckily shifted over the years, according to Mendonca, who notes the example of the Caribbean Postal Union, which has dedicated an entire session of their annual meeting to disaster risk management.

“You don’t have to knock on the door to get somebody’s attention on this,” he says, adding that he encourages the IB to continue working with restricted unions to collect information and raise awareness.

On a final note, Mendonca stresses that having a disaster risk management strategy is also good for the bottom line.

“It pays to plan.” **KR**

If you have any questions about the UPU’s disaster risk management activities, please contact Tetsuo Hasegawa (tetsuo.hasegawa@upu.int).



Download “Building Resilience – A guide to disaster risk management for the postal sector”: www.upu.int/en/drmguide

A Japanese postbox stands amongst rubble left by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

UPU participates in Africa eCommerce Week

TEXT: Olena Muravyova



The UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein with Barbara Kotschwar, Senior Director, Global Government, Visa, during eCommerce Week.

The UPU supported the Post's position as a critical partner in the development of the African digital economy during December's Africa eCommerce Week organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) in Nairobi, Kenya. Held under the theme "Empowering African Economies in the Digital Era", the event examined ways to enhance the ability of African countries to engage in and benefit from e-commerce.

Speaking during the Ministerial Roundtable on "Accelerating the e-Trade Readiness of African countries", UPU Director General Bishar A. Hussein expressed appreciation for UNCTAD's "eTrade for All" initiative, which addresses the challenges faced by developing countries in their efforts to be fully included into the e-commerce value chain, and remarked on the complementary work done by the UPU on the initiative. He highlighted the existing practical solutions the UPU has already developed to address e-commerce challenges facing the region.

The UPU has been a founding partner of the eTrade for All since its launch in July 2016, highlighting the significant role of postal networks in the inclusive growth of e-commerce. The UPU has also identified mechanisms and investments that need to position the Post as an enabler to e-commerce growth in developing countries.

The UPU's work within eTrade for All is focused in two key areas: trade logistics and payment solutions. Mr Hussein noted that the two were "the very DNA of Posts and are critical components in e-commerce".

The UPU works directly with postal operators at country-level, helping them develop their trade logistics capabilities and, thus, build their operational readiness for e-commerce. It also provides them with necessary IT tools and solutions to optimize their transport operations, improve their customs procedures and ensure cross-border deliveries. The UPU also supports its member countries in creating a sound national addressing system, which is often one of the key infrastructure gaps in the development of e-commerce.

Digital finance

For all forms of e-commerce, access to competitive and inclusive payment solutions is a critical facilitator. E-commerce and its users benefit from an environment where payments are secure and simple. The UPU is committed to improving financial inclusion by supporting the Post in reaching remote rural populations, including SMEs, by leveraging the strength of its 670,000 postal facilities.

Mr Hussein announced the UPU would help its member countries launch digital financial services reaching as many as 800,000 people through its Financial Inclusion Technical Assistance Facility (FITAF) in 2019 (learn more about FITAF on the next page). The UPU Director General added that the Posts of Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kiribati, Nauru, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tonga, and Viet Nam would be the first to benefit from the programme, which promotes public and private partnerships between Posts and fintech companies in order to

foster financial inclusion for individuals and businesses. The programme also contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by leveraging the Post's role as a public services provider to promote economic development and social inclusion.

As the next step after the assessments, the UPU will urge governments to become fully involved and committed to driving the uptake of e-commerce in their countries by leveraging national postal infrastructure.

"We are building partnerships with international donors and the private sector to support the Posts in their digital journey," added the Director General. The UPU will also continue supporting the eTrade for All initiative and developing practical solutions to boost e-commerce in developing countries in collaboration with the UNCTAD.

Africa eCommerce Week brought together more than 2,000 people from 60 countries, including President of the Republic of Kenya, ministers, CEOs of Posts, heads of international organizations, business leaders, academia and other representatives of the private sector, for a week-long dialogue to identify innovative ways to drive the African digital economy. The event was organized by the UNCTAD, the African Union, the European Union, and the Government of Kenya. **OM**

5 reasons for FITAF

1 Despite some improvements, hundreds of millions of people remain excluded from financial services

According to the World Bank, 1.7 billion adults still lack access to formal financial services. A disproportionate number of those excluded are rural populations, women and young people. FITAF is helping to ensure that traditionally excluded people are brought into the financial fold.

2 Posts connect communities to society

With a global network of more than 670,000 outlets, the Post has an unparalleled reach into even the remotest areas, making it a perfect partner for expanding financial inclusion. By building the postal network's capacity to offer digital financial services, FITAF connects rural communities to the world, empowers women by granting them financial access, and ensures small businesses have the money to grow.

3 The Post is a strong actor in the financial services market

Studies have already shown that Posts are strong players in the financial services market.

- 91% of designated postal operators offer financial services
- 2 billion people access financial services through the Post
- Postal operators still have one of the largest physical networks

4 Through digital transformation and diversification, Posts can add even more value to national economies

Financial services offered by Posts are affordable and efficient. By focusing on developing a digital services offering, Posts will be able to support anyone, anytime, anywhere – allowing small businesses to expand their horizons and adding value to every country's economy.

5 Postal financial inclusion can help achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

FITAF is a gateway to better health, better education and better lives. Posts are an engine for sustainable development, thanks to their reach and their role as public service providers. FITAF works with Posts to help them become a one-stop shop not only for financial services, but also for government services, such as health and social insurance payments.

About The Financial Inclusion Technical Assistance Facility (FITAF)

The Financial Inclusion Technical Assistance Facility (FITAF) is a UPU-led initiative focused on advancing financial inclusion by providing accessible digital financial services (DFS) through the postal network.

With support from Visa Inc. and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the UPU launched FITAF in 2017 to help expand Posts' capacity to offer digital financial services to citizens and small businesses.

FITAF supports Posts on several fronts in relation to digital finance, including assistance with:



DFS assessments



Software acquisition



New product development



Capacity building

Objectives

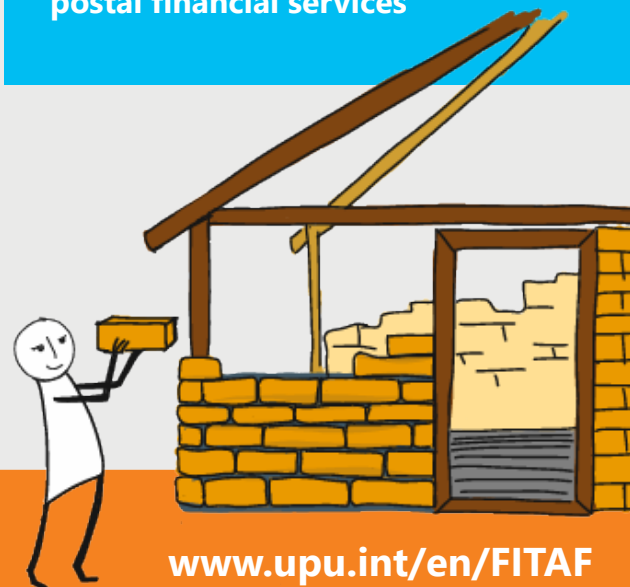
Advance financial inclusion

Drive the digitization of postal financial services



FITAF

Adding **VALUE** to every country's economy.



www.upu.int/en/FITAF



Women in the Post: an interview with Jasminka Krivokuća

In celebration of International Women's Day, UPU News got in touch with Pošte Srpske CEO Jasminka Krivokuća for her perspective on gender balance and her journey to the highest ranks of her organization.

INTERVIEW BY: Kayla Redstone and Sonja Denovski

“Gender equality, not only in the postal sector, but in any sector, can only contribute to the future success of the industry.”

The theme this year is “Balance for Better”. How do you think promoting gender balance can better the postal sector and the communities it serves?

The time when women were perceived as being less capable than men is behind us. There is a rising trend of women in leading positions, taking their decision-making role and influence within society to a higher level. Women can now contribute to everything that was previously exclusive to men. The gap between genders is now shrinking compared to the past, but there is still a long road ahead of us in reaching full equality. A joint effort, from women themselves and their male colleagues, is necessary to accelerate positive changes. The influence of state institutions is

important as well. In my opinion, it will be beneficial to our society to join forces and end gender inequality. Gender equality, not only in the postal sector, but in any sector, can only contribute to the future success of the industry.

As a woman who has reached the most senior role in the Post, how would you describe your journey to the top?

The fact that for the third time in my career I have taken on a director's role and that this is my third mandate as CEO of Pošte Srpske, is evidence that the time when the women were perceived as less capable than men is behind us. Before I took over the role of CEO of Pošte Srpske, I worked as a commercial director in a silk factory in the north-west of

Republika Srpska. Afterwards, I held the same position in a fabric factory in Banja Luka, where I managed 1,500 workers. My ability to progress through professional challenges was crucial to my success. I think that women are riding the wave of change and are delivering results, not only as equals to their male counterparts, but even better in some cases.

“Women are riding the wave of change and are delivering results.”

Did you face any particular challenges due to your gender? How did you overcome those challenges?

You can hear quite often in the business world that women must work twice as hard to reach the top. They were hindered in showing their expertise and knowledge and were positioned low in their organization's hierarchy. Their opinion would be set aside, and they were being constantly obstructed from participating in crucial decision-making. The female role in society was marginalized in every way. That was my trigger. To take action for my future, to be consistent and fight for my place in the business world.

The share of women holding leading positions is much bigger than one or two decades ago. More and more women are at very top of large corporations, hold a seat on an executive board or are members of parliament. They are fighting prejudice with the examples they have set. Due to my constant efforts to contribute towards gender equality as a persistent and hardworking female, I received recognition in the business world, which has even placed me in a higher position than my male colleagues.

As CEO, what are you doing to promote gender balance in your own organization?

I am proud to say that gender equality in Pošte Srpske is well established at every level of our organization. Whether we are talking about business policies or making executive decisions, staff from both genders are included. The way we conduct our business policies is to position everyone on equal footing.

We have come to realize that globalization, rising competition, market liberalization, and changing demographics are influencing the increasing demand for better skills and qualifications, and that is the challenge we must respond to. The reason for increased inclusion of women in management positions and in the workforce lies not only in the need for equal opportunities, but also in the growth of competitiveness. Gender stereotypes have created prejudice in the way men and women are divided according to assumed professional skills or ambitions. Therefore, some employers are letting these stereotypes influence decisions during the employment processes, restructuring or staff promotions, which is not a case in “Pošte Srpske”. We are not giving advantage to genders but to competence, refined skills, knowledge and capabilities, and that decision has both increased productivity and creativity, increased our competitive advantage and has led better business decisions.

Reaching gender equality is only possible in a society that supports women in not only in the working environment, but in every facet of daily life.

How can male leaders and colleagues promote gender balance across the business world?

Today, all of the key players in the economic and political worlds agree that the involvement of women is necessary for prosperity. The role and status of woman as citizens, consumers, leaders and employees is an indicator of welfare, maturity and economic sustainability. My opinion is that a series of initiatives should be taken to enable women to reach their full potential. The business world is still considered as a world created by and for men. Often, women who have reached the managing positions are taking on the “masculine” way of communicating and leading, despite the evidence that a diverse approaches bring about the best decisions and lead to better business results.

Falling into a stereotype trap is dangerous for any organization, but especially those competing in open market with pressure to meet certain targets. Awareness of untapped female potential is the first step towards more successful business. This is a strategic answer to many professional challenges.

“We have come to realize that globalization, rising competition, market liberalization, and changing demographics are influencing the increasing demand for better skills and qualifications, and that is the challenge we must respond to.”

Men should support gender equality. Likewise, women who have reached managing positions should support other women to shift the focus to their successful business achievements, rather than their gender.

What advice would you give to young women who aspire to become leaders in their organizations someday?

You need to make an effort to be able to reach your career goal. To become a leader, knowledge is the first thing you must possess, accompanied by work experience. Then you must have a clear goal and the readiness to take action and work to your full potential. You need to stay positive and believe that the end result is achievable. My advice is not to give up when facing obstacles along the way; do not accept no for an answer. Believe in yourself and rely on your abilities. **KR&SD**

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



"Little hands" win big prize

Thirteen-year-old Chara Phoka from Cyprus took home the top prize in the UPU's 2018 International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People with her moving letter describing the journey of a letter travelling from a Afghan refugee child's small hands to the larger hands of adults on its way to the United Nations.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone

The theme of the 47th competition was *“Imagine you are a letter travelling through time. What message do you wish to convey to your readers?”*. Chara’s letter marked Cyprus’ first gold-medal win in the UPU competition.

“The Little Hand holding me left behind parents, brothers, sisters, friends, but also the terror from the Big Bloody Hands. It wanted to stop struggling to survive. It wanted an opportunity to a normal life; it wanted to stop fearing,” she wrote in what she called “The Letter of an Invisible Life”.

Chara was invited to receive her gold medal during the UPU’s World Post Day celebrations, which brought together members from the Swiss diplomatic community, the Post and UPU staff at the organization’s offices in Berne, Switzerland. She received a standing ovation from the audience after reading her composition during the ceremony.

Speaking during the award ceremony, UPU Deputy Director General Pascal Clivaz said, “Chara, I want to thank you for your letter it has travelled to us at an important time and its story has moved me, as I am sure it has touched our audience today.”

“The Little Hand holding me left behind parents, brothers, sisters, friends, but also the terror from the Big Bloody Hands. It wanted to stop struggling to survive. It wanted an opportunity to a normal life; it wanted to stop fearing”

“You have shown exactly why the letter, and the power of the written word continue to have such a tremendous impact on us all,” he added.

For his part, Director of Cyprus’ Postal Services Department Andreas Gregoriou praised Chara as a young girl “with great sensitivity to human rights and immigrant tragedy, which made her write a letter full of emotion for the people leaving their homes and their country to survive.”



Portugal’s José Duarte, 10, won second prize in the competition for his competition, while 14-year-old Nguyen Thi Bach Duong of Viet Nam took third place. Participants from Bulgaria, Brazil, Kenya, Slovakia and Slovenia were all awarded special mentions.

2019 competition

The theme selected for the 48th edition of the competition is **“Write a letter about your hero”**.

All member countries are invited to participate by organizing a competition on the national level before sending their top composition to the UPU.

The first-prize winner will receive his or her award during the 2019 World Post Day ceremony, which will gather UPU stakeholders and the diplomatic community to celebrate both the 145th anniversary of the UPU and 50th World Post Day.

View photos from the ceremony:

https://www.flickr.com/photos/universal_postal_union/sets/72157700704147921

Read the winning letters:

www.upu.int/en/ilwc

International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People

1st Prize: Chara Phoka, 13, Cyprus

*Letter to the United Nations
Afghanistan, February 2011*

Sirs,

I'm a letter. Not just any letter but a widely-travelled letter both in space and time... My adventure started in 2011 in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Everything was peaceful and harmonious in the small town. I would spend my days carefree at a lonely office. I was a blank paper, impatiently waiting for some wishes and appointments to be written on me. But the next day, everything changed. Television stations stopped broadcasting, communications were interrupted and life entered an endless wait.

Suddenly, a Big Hand took me in order to write on me. At that moment, however, the sirens sounded. Cries and screams were heard everywhere. I felt that something bad was happening, but didn't know what. I had nothing to fear, though, because I was just a blank paper that no one would hurt.

While these thoughts were revolving in my mind, the Big Hand lifted me up and hurriedly put me in the pocket of its pants. A loud noise was then heard behind me, followed by shootings and cries. The Big Hand was holding me so tight that if it had held the world it would have utterly destroyed it. It was trying to save itself and I was listening to its panting. Its large drops of sweat were raining on me.

When we finally got away from the cries, and nothing could be heard anymore, the Big Hand began to write while wetting me with its tears. It was 2011. It wrote down its most secret thoughts and fears, while it continued to smudge me with its hopes and dreams. After a while, it became tired of writing and fell asleep, holding me close to its heart. I listened to its heart-beats while feeling its fear and uncertainty about its life. Eventually, it put me in an envelope and it was then that I changed hands.

The Big Hand walked to a bus station. It handed me over to a fragile Little Hand. I burrowed in the inside pocket of its jacket. Then, the Big Hand lifted up the child with the Small Hands and put us on a bus along with other unaccompanied Little Hands. There, other Big Hands were trying to pass some Little Hands on the buses, even through the windows, to save them.

The Little Hand holding me left behind parents, brothers, sisters, friends, but also the terror from the Big Bloody Hands. It wanted to stop struggling to survive. It wanted an opportunity to a normal life; it wanted to stop fearing.

At some point, the bus stopped. It arrived in Syria. From there, the Little Hand started walking to somewhere else. I shook every time it stumbled its feet on the hard stones.

After many weeks, we finally reached Turkey. It was 2013...

There, the Little Hand searched for ways to secure what it could for its survival. Every day, it worked hard, so Big Hands gave it a few banknotes. From time to time the Little Hand was wetting me with the tears of a faded hope that better days would eventually come...

2015 arrived! The Little Hand gathered the money, gathered its hopes and started walking while I was deep inside its wool pocket. I realized that it gave money to devious Big Hands, human traffickers, who promised that a large ship would take it to Cyprus. From there, it would supposedly go to its relatives in Sweden. The Little Hand set out for a trip once again.

We walked all over Turkey, through valleys and deserts. Finally, we reached the coast. I had never seen so much water in my life. There, a small old boat, full of people, with Little and Big Hands who just wanted to stay alive, was waiting.

The Little Hand was squeezed amongst others and held firmly on the gunwale. The wild waves soaked and defaced me. The Little Hand felt my horror so it put me in a glass bottle. There, I was safe.

Days went by and all I could see was the endless blue. The Little Hand wrote with tears on my yellowed surface. It put me back in the bottle. The ship started leaking. I could feel the cold drops of water, passing inside the bottle. The Little Hand dove into the water so that it would not end up at the bottom of the sea. It swam with all its might, trying to save itself and reach the land. It didn't make it...

A few days later, the sea washed us up, on the Cypriot shores. Dozens of lifeless Little and Big Hands. Small children's hands like small shells were washed ashore by the wild waves. Luckily, I did not remain alone for long, since a Big, firm, fearless Hand lifted me out of the sand. When it read the contents, it said, "It must be delivered! Urgently!" I was pleased that I would finally give meaning and identity to the Little Hand and its short, invisible life.

The Big Hand put me in an envelope and sent me to a post office. From there, I travelled until a Big Hand tore the envelope and pulled me out. I was in Sweden.

I wanted to shout loudly that it was my honour to have lived all the things I had, having felt the pain and strength of the Little Hands. It was an honour for me. I was given the unique opportunity to appreciate the greatness of human life, through innocent and unaccompanied Little Hands which had to face the hard reality, at a time when they should've been laughing, carefree; Little Hands with Big moral Stature...

I'm just a simple letter that has travelled in time... Many other letters have done so. I only wish people would write on every piece of inanimate paper, feelings of joy, hope and love! I only wish!

*With affection,
The letter of an Invisible Life*

Interview with the winner



UNION POSTALE: *Was it your first time entering the International Letter-Writing Competition?*

Chara Phoka: Yes, this was the first time. I had never done something like this before.

My whole class entered. It was during our Greek lessons, so the teacher decided to give us the opportunity to participate and compete.

What were your expectations when you submitted your letter?

I had no idea that I would win first place in the worldwide competition, but I really felt excited. I thought there might be more interesting subjects entered into the competition, but I chose this one because it is very interesting and is a problem that has been troubling many countries.

What inspired you to enter the International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People?

I decided to write a letter about specifically refugees because it is a problem in many countries throughout the world. I grew up among refugees; talking to them, listening to their stories and the main reason I wrote the letter was because I felt really bad about the Syrian boy who washed ashore in Turkey, whose name was Alan Kurdi. For all these reasons I was inspired to write a letter to all these refugees to give them meaning and identity.

Why did you choose the imagery of the little and big hands to portray the journey of the letter?

I chose to write the letter about Afghanistan, but generally, the story of the little hands and big hands is a universal story of all these refugee children. They were victims of war in the past, they are now and I personally believe that they will be victims of war in the future.

Why do you think letter writing is important?

It is important because it helps people from different countries to get to know each other. For some people who want to write letters that might change the world by sharing new discoveries, it is very important because people worldwide will get to learn about their discovery. Now, with my letter, many people will get to know about the refugee problem and how I felt about this problem when I was writing this letter.

What do you hope to be when you grow up?

When I grow up, I would like to be a doctor because I love helping people. I want to do something to change the world – maybe by discovering a new medicine or doing a surgery to save someone's life. **KR**



Growing parcels market an opportunity for the Post, according to latest UPU research

The UPU's latest "Postal economic outlook" takes an unprecedented look at competition within the postal sector. It shows that designated operators hold a declining share of the market for postal services, including in the fastest-growing segment – parcels. The UPU's resident economist, Mauro Boffa, explains.

TEXT: Kayla Redstone
INFOGRAPHICS: Sonja Denovski

Over the past 10 years, many designated operators have successfully replaced the share of revenues lost in the letters segment by expanding their activities in parcels, which made up on average 24.9 percent of global postal revenues in 2017 compared to 14.8 percent in 2007. However, these operators have not yet managed to grow total revenues at the same pace as economic growth – a phenomenon known as "postal decoupling".

The UPU's projections show that while many designated operators still hold a strong position in the letter-post segment, with an average market share of 72.8 percent, their situation in the global parcels market is much weaker, with only 37.8 percent. Non-designated operators hold most of the market share in this segment, a share that is even higher in regions where the market has been widely liberalized, such as Latin America.

With continued double-digit growth in global e-commerce sales, parcels have become the fastest growing segment in the sector and a ripe opportunity for designated operators to drive revenues if they quicken the pace of innovation.

"Unlike the letters market, the parcels market is not yet saturated," explains Boffa. "E-commerce is still taking shares from traditional retail, and new consumer needs are driving this expansion," he says.

Regaining speed

Investments made in the parcels segment seem to be paying off for designated operators, according to UPU figures comparing growth in 2017 with the ten-year trend. In 2017, the growth rate for international parcels expanded to an impressive 29.7 percent compared to the compound growth rate of 13.3 percent between 2007 and 2017.

Online retailers are looking for inexpensive and innovative delivery providers. Designated operators have the advantage of their established worldwide network and, in many countries, their mandate to provide a reasonably priced public service. On the other hand, designated operators have struggled to quickly implement the variety of services today's customers expect, such as anytime, anywhere delivery and simplified return policies.

"We see that designated operators are starting to think more about partnerships with the other sector players to keep up with changing demands," says Boffa.

Buyers' market

Fierce competition in the market is a boon for postal customers, who now have many options available to them.

"The customer is the one that gains in all of this – the market is very pro-consumer right now," says Boffa.

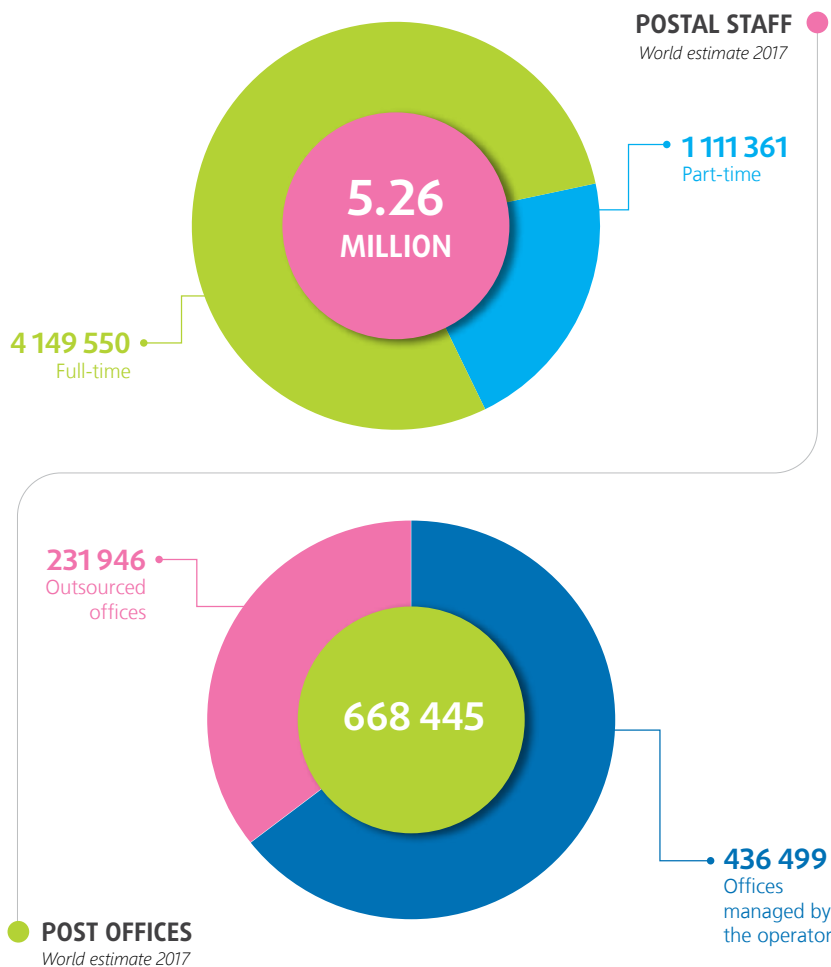
He adds that this provides motivation for operators, both public and private, to continue improving their services for increasingly demanding consumers, and these investments in innovation are likely to pay off.

"Because the market is still growing, designated operators can be sure that they will get their investments in parcel service innovations back," he affirms.

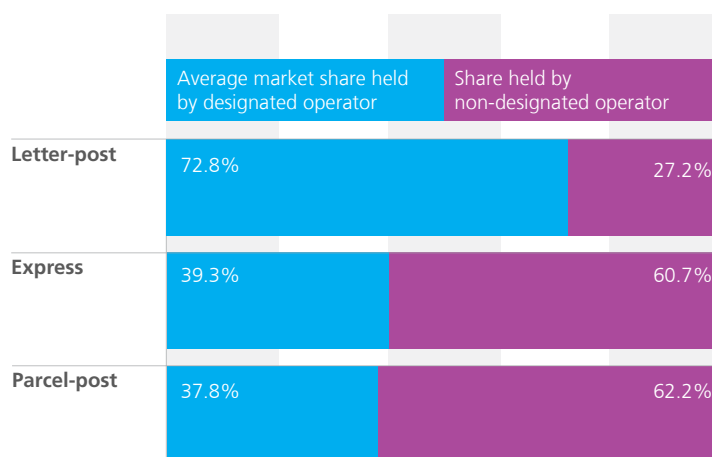
To learn more about the latest postal sector trends and statistics, read the UPU's "Postal Economic Outlook 2019": www.upu.int/en/resources/postal-statistics/latest-results.html.

Postal statistics overview

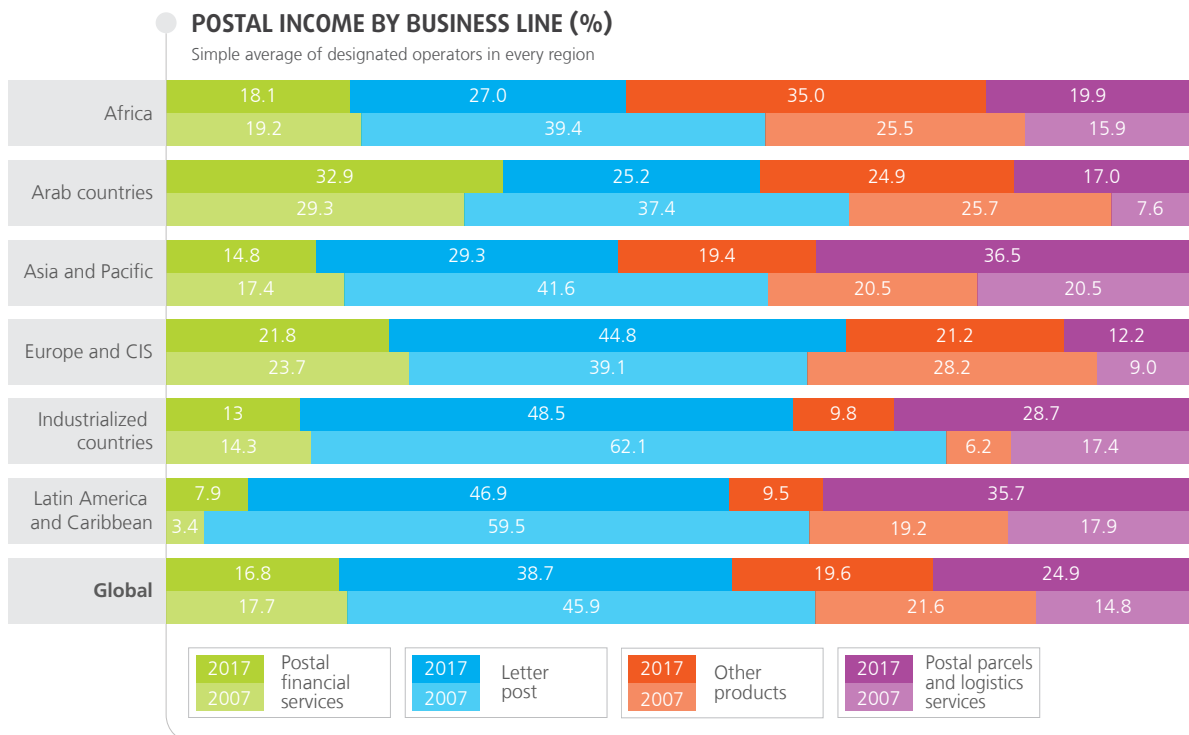
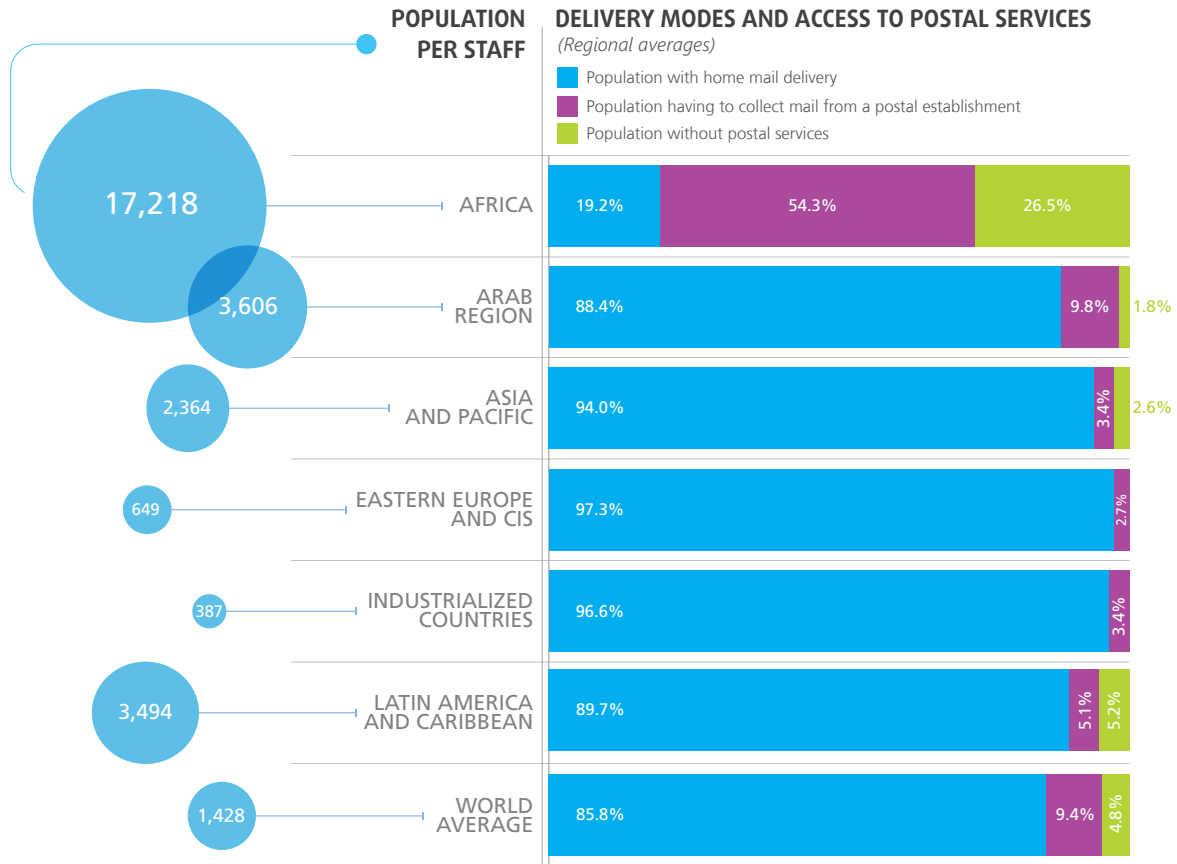
The following infographics reflect the UPU's 2017 postal statistics.



COMPETITION

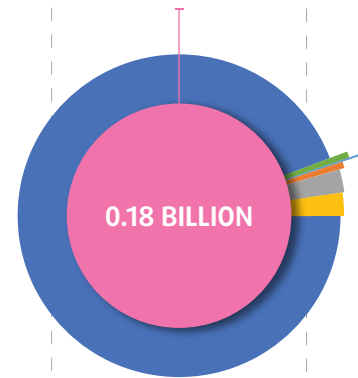
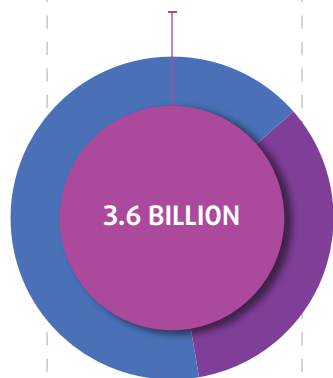
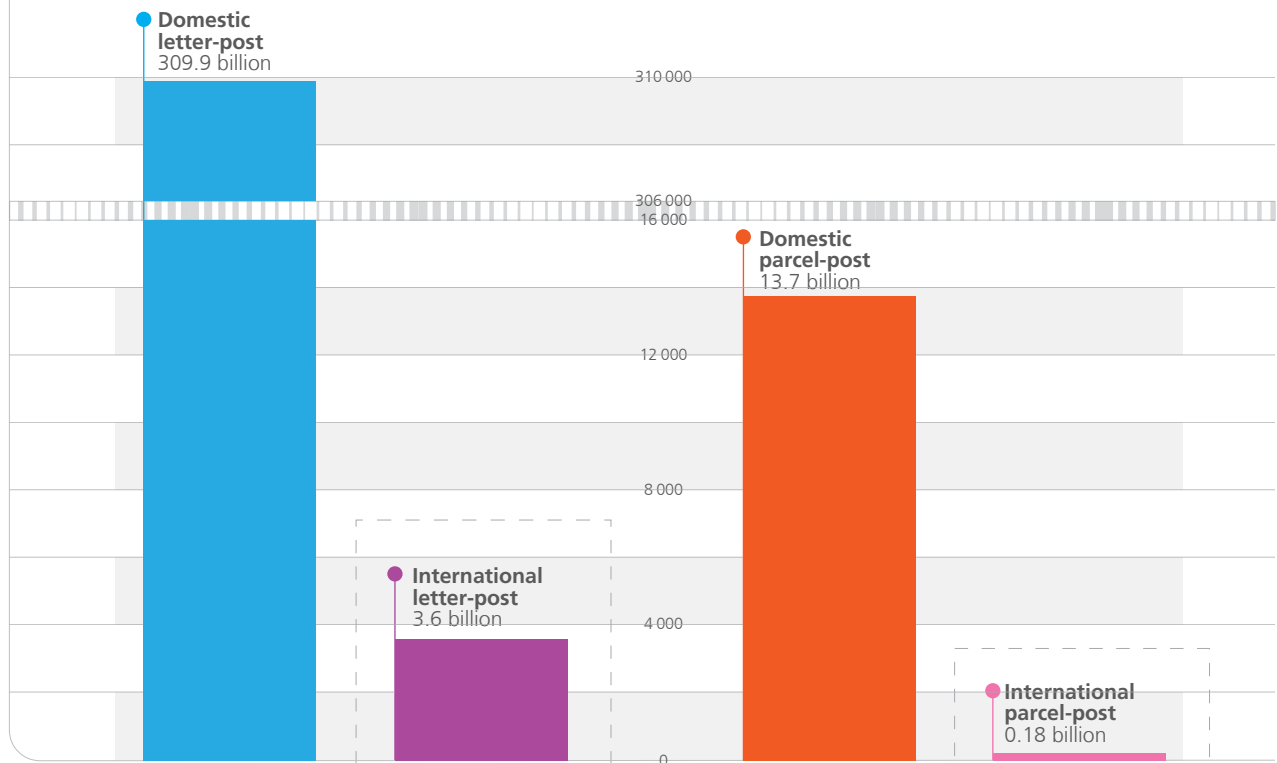


Global estimate based on UPU statistics



World estimate 2017

GLOBAL POSTAL TRAFFIC (items)



REGIONAL POSTAL TRAFFIC (items)

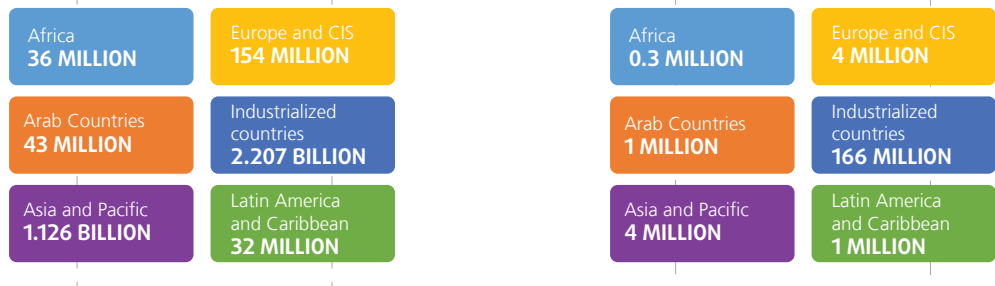




Photo: State Post Bureau of China

China delivers record parcels for Double 11

TEXT: Kayla Redstone

China's annual e-commerce event celebrated each November 11, known as Double 11, saw the Chinese Post and other courier companies process 416 million express parcels in 2018 – a 26 percent increase compared the previous year.

Data from the State Post Bureau of China shows that the country's main e-commerce companies increased their business by 25 percent on the day compared to the 2017, generating a total of 1.354 billion logistics orders on November 11. The Post credited special discounts and a new centralized platform created by WeChat businesses for the strong e-commerce sales.

To deal with the boost in postal traffic for the event, the State Post Bureau said that the country's postal services industry made more than 3 million front-line staff available on the day, increased its transfer centre and fleet capacity by 20 percent and made 110 all-cargo carriers and 400 high-speed rail routes available for express shipments.

Investments were also made in automated sorting machines, unmanned warehouses and intelligent sorting robots.

China's State Post Bureau said it would continue looking towards big data technology to develop better prediction mechanisms and improve analysis of volumes and flows of postal goods and improve service quality. The Post said it was also working on safety, implementing collection inspection, real-name sending and machine checking programmes. Despite the volumes processed during the e-commerce event, the Post assured consumers that it would not lower its requirements for real-name sending during the annual e-commerce event.

This November 11 marked the 10th anniversary of Double 11, which has expanded beyond China in recent years. **KR**

Saudi Post provides new services for pilgrims

TEXT: Fella Rabbahi

Each year, millions of people from around the globe descend on Mecca, the holy sites and Medina in Saudi Arabia to perform the Hajj, an Islamic pilgrimage. Saudi Post has introduced a plan to serve the influx of pilgrims.

During the Hajj period, Saudi Post pulls out all the stops to provide postal services close to the pilgrimage sites. In general, all services are provided by permanent offices for pilgrims, augmented by a number of temporary offices added for the Hajj season. Saudi Post also provides specialized services linked to the religious event including parcel-sending services; fund transfers; the sale of documents for certain religious rites and sale of commemorative postage stamps.

In 2018, Saudi Post set up a pilgrimage business centre, tasked with overseeing activities relating to the Hajj and Umrah, a pilgrimage taken outside the normal Hajj period. This centre carried out the initial planning for the Hajj, including putting in place a detailed programme for the eight weeks leading up to the beginning of the season.

Under this programme, some 300 different tasks were performed, enabling the Post to enter the season fully prepared and meticulously organized, with 834 postal staff – 535 in Mecca and 299 in Medina – mobilized. In addition, 27 temporary offices were set up around Mecca, the holy sites and Medina. The Post also made 100 cars, 79 motorcycles, 355 communications devices, 200 mobile sales points and 600 fixed sales points available to the pilgrims.

Partnering on parcels

The Post worked with other postal operators around the world to promote specialized Hajj and Umrah parcel products created for the convenience of pilgrims. Reasonably priced weight categories developed for the products, advance sender labels with barcodes and a special parcel pick-up service meant they could access affordable and efficient services during the busy period.

Saudi Post President Anef Bin Ahmed Abanomai explained these partnerships aim to streamline relationship between other countries and facilitate the Hajj experience for visitors. He also added that Saudi Post would “welcome any cooperation with other countries”.

Electronic services

Saudi Post has also capitalized on its national addressing system to develop a smartphone application providing locations for Hajj and Umrah sites. This enables pilgrims to find their way around and reach their destinations with ease.

The app covers Mecca, Medina, the holy sites, the road network, landmarks, public services operating at the Hajj and Umrah sites, and accommodation for pilgrims. The application is available in 16 languages.

Saudi Post also made SIM cards for its subsidiary Lebara available to pilgrims at its sale points. **FR**



Photo: Saudi Post

Greening the Blue

In December, the United Nations released its most recent environmental sustainability report, entitled Greening the Blue. The report outlines the environmental footprint of the entire UN system, providing details for each UN agency, including the UPU, which achieved climate-neutral status for the second year in a row.

Introducing the 2018 edition of the report, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said: "The United Nations must lead by example. I am committed to accelerating sustainability efforts and supporting the UN system to achieve climate neutrality by 2020."

As the deadline for reaching that target approaches, the UN system has once again demonstrated its commitment to environmental sustainability. The report shows that, in 2017, UN entities emitted 1.86 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂eq) and managed to offset 39% of those emissions.

As part of the UN family, the UPU has also pledged to achieve climate-neutral status, and it has successfully met that commitment for the second year in a row, offsetting all of its greenhouse gas emissions. On average, in 2017, the UPU generated 1,040 tCO₂eq as a result of direct operations at the International Bureau. Of that amount, 32% originated from the heating of UPU facilities, 67% was caused by air travel, and 2% came from other forms of transport. Emissions per staff member totalled 3.88 tCO₂eq, compared to the UN average of 7.26 tCO₂eq. Moreover, the UPU reported on its water and waste management for the first time. **OM**

UPU at COP24

The Universal Postal Union had the opportunity to share its perspective during the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, known as COP24, this past December in Katowice, Poland. Susan Alexander, UPU Expert on Postal Regulation and UN Policies, represented the organization during a panel entitled "Innovative climate technologies and sustainable maritime transport for a climate resilient industry". She sat down with **UNION POSTALE** to discuss the UPU's contribution to the UN climate change conference and its work on environmental sustainability.

INTERVIEW BY: Kayla Redstone



Could you tell us about the panel you participated in?

The panel I attended was an official UN side event on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9, which aims to “build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”. During this particular panel, we concentrated on how the use of innovative technology can promote climate resilient industries. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) joined us on the panel.

What did the UPU share with participants?

The UPU’s contribution focused mainly on the use of electric vehicles in the transport of postal items. We also shared how Posts in our member countries are able to track, report, record and study their ability to reduce their emissions through the UPU Online Solution for Carbon Analysis and Reporting, known as OSCAR. We told them a bit about OSCAR and we told them a bit about what some countries are doing in terms of e-mobility.

I’m sure it is no surprise to anyone that the UPU has a very large network through which we move billions of letters and parcels. There are millions of employees worldwide and more than 700,000 post offices. We are, therefore, a major contributor to the global economy and to e-commerce in particular. To sustain that industry, over a million vehicles travel millions of kilometres and hundreds of airplanes fly between the continents every day, moving mail from one country to another. Transport is a very large part of e-commerce and the economy. In order for e-commerce to be sustainable, postal services need to go green on a global

level. The message that we wanted to give during COP24 was that the UPU and the Posts are doing their part to help with the greening of e-commerce.

What were some of the lessons you took away from the other panellists?

I was really heartened to see that many economic sectors are doing so much to help with lowering emissions – and this includes work being done by industry as well as by international organizations and governments. It really gives you an optimistic feeling that we’re going to reach the goals set by the Climate Change Convention. The measures that the IMO is undertaking in the shipping industry are similar to what we’re doing here at the UPU. COP reinforced to me that everybody is working together under the SDGs. They are diverse enough that everyone can pick one or even a few that they can concentrate on, but at the same time everyone’s energy and resources are focused on an agreed set of global goals.

How is the postal sector already working to minimize its environmental impact?

Our member Posts are taking action to reduce their carbon footprint. Many are doing simple things such as recycling and implementing bicycle delivery in urban areas. Some are promoting eco-driving, which means learning how to drive in a way that uses less fuel and optimizing delivery routes. They are also working on having automated collection points so that customers do not have to travel all the way to the post office. Using renewable energy sources is also a popular initiative that Posts are implementing and some are even producing their own renewable energy, especially solar. Many countries worldwide are already using electric vehicles in their fleet.

Transport is a very large part of e-commerce and the economy. In order for e-commerce to be sustainable, postal services need to go green on a global level.

What does sustainability look like across the global postal industry? Are some regions more developed than others?

Some regions are definitely more developed than others. Europe, for example, is far more developed than many other regions. However, it is clear that both advanced and developing operators alike are concerned with their environmental impact. When we look at the use of OSCAR, for example, we see that users are quite equally distributed around the world. We don’t have any particular region that is more active than another.

One of the main challenges for Posts in all regions, including industrialized as well as developing countries, is trying to find the technology that they need to implement carbon reduction initiatives. It is not always easy to find the technology that you need, that you want or that is affordable at the local or even at the national level. It might be the case that a Post can't choose green energy sources because none are available locally. Many designated operators are actively looking for green energy as opposed to non-renewable energy and in many markets you can choose that, but in some countries you simply can't. Or it could be that they don't have access to solar panels, or affordable solar panels, or electric vehicles that are suitable for their terrain. These are the types of challenges that countries at all levels encounter when they are trying to figure out ways they can reduce their footprint.

You can't lower your emissions until you know what you currently produce. You need to analyze your footprint based on real data and until you have real data you can't really set up a sustainable reduction strategy.

What is the UPU doing to help Posts lower their carbon footprint?

We are first trying to familiarize them with the notion of being able to reduce their carbon footprint, and we offer them OSCAR, which is a free tool that can be quite helpful even for countries that are just beginning to keep track of their carbon footprint. You can't lower your emissions until you know what you currently produce. You need to analyze your footprint based on real data and until you have real data you can't really set up a sustainable reduction strategy. With OSCAR, Posts can either enter raw data and have the tool perform the calculations, or they can process the data themselves before entering it. Either way, the tool allows them to see from an interactive standpoint where they are and where they can improve and cut their energy consumption, and cutting consumption ultimately helps the bottom line.

We also offer best practices. We have a sustainable development expert at the International Bureau who is happy to answer any questions and offer assistance when member countries request it. We did two webinars in 2018 – one on tips on how to use OSCAR and another on electric vehicles – and we are planning to do more in 2019.



What are the next steps for the UPU?

We intend to communicate more with governments and other international organizations to show them how the Post helps to lower carbon emissions worldwide through its large network. We have also already seen some cases where countries are studying how they can use the Post's fleet and its network as a trusted source of data for smart cities, a concept we will be exploring further. This will also help to support the SDGs while fostering cooperation with local government. Through our cooperation agreement with UNI Global Union, a UPU Consultative Committee member, we expect to conduct an international recycling campaign this year. Outside participation can help us accomplish more than we can by ourselves. **KR**



From climate policy to climate solutions – bridging the governance gap

TEXT: James Hale, Sustainable Development Expert, UPU

Climate action has rocketed to the top of the political agenda in many countries amidst warnings that greenhouse gas emissions are continuing to rise, but what does this mean for postal services? From the COP 24 in Poland to the World Economic Forum in Davos, the message of urgency is clear, but how can we turn national and sectoral commitments into action on the ground?

An ever-expanding catalogue of solutions is available to help Posts reduce their energy consumption and meet the remaining demand in a sustainable way, and electric vehicles and solar panels are no longer science fiction. A key question for Posts is how to choose which climate actions to take. Where should they invest their resources for the biggest reduction in emissions? The most appropriate solutions will vary between operators, depending on factors such as the age of their physical infrastructure, the mix of services delivered and even the local climate.

To support strategic decision-making, member countries requested the UPU to provide an online tool for postal operators to measure their greenhouse gas emissions. The result is the Online Solution for Carbon Analysis and Reporting (OSCAR), which is available to the designated operators of UPU member countries free of charge.

At a basic level, OSCAR can be used to record qualitative information about environmental management activities and broad summaries of greenhouse gas emissions, enabling users to track their emissions and demonstrate their growing engagement with this topic over time. This includes a very popular feature allowing users to record and, if they wish, to share updates about new sustainability projects and innovations. This information also gives the UPU critical insights into innovative projects under way in member countries, and ideas for new programmes it could develop. These functions are valuable for

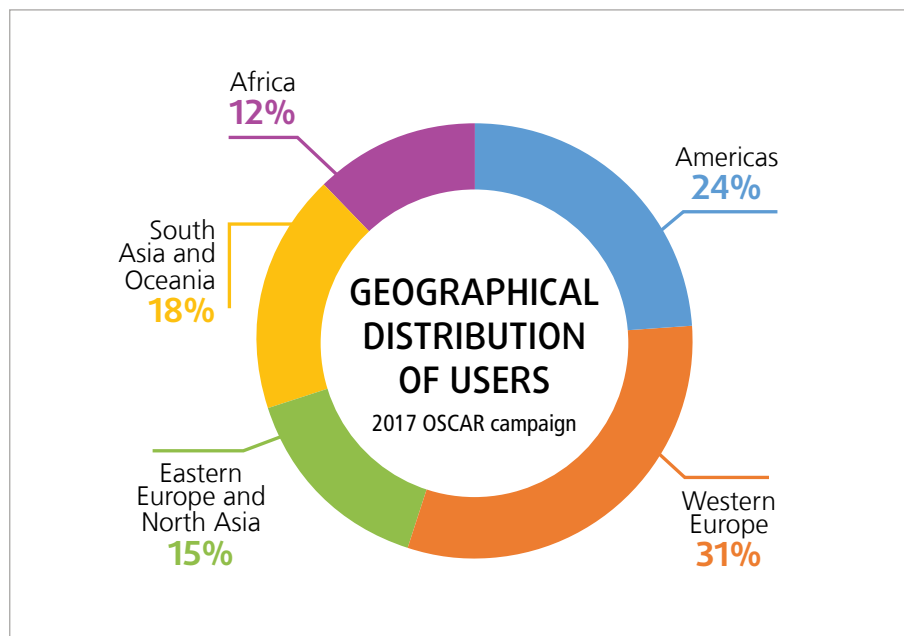
decision-making at the postal-operator level, and are convenient ways of collecting data for other sustainability reporting and accreditation systems in which Posts participate, such as the Global Reporting Initiative.

However, it is by engaging with the detailed reporting of data on emissions from building stock, vehicle fleet and energy mix that the full functionality of OSCAR is revealed. The output is a list of KPIs designed specifically for the postal sector, which Posts can use to support strategic action on emissions reduction. These indicators take abstract data and convert it into a more tangible form, such as CO₂ emissions per item, percentage of alternative vehicles in the Post's fleet, and more. Such data can help inform the climate change strategies of UPU members, irrespective of how advanced their progress is to date.

OSCAR's 2017 annual campaign saw another increase in the detail and quality of reporting. Participation remains evenly distributed across the regions, which we believe is a reflection of the level of support currently provided to users. The tool and guidance are available in six languages, with online help and an e-mail for sending queries directly to our OSCAR team. We are keen to make this tool as inclusive and user-friendly as possible, so please send us your feedback.

This year's OSCAR campaign will open soon. Starting in May 2019, we will be collecting data on the 2018 emissions and sustainability progress of our designated operators. **JH**

For more information, visit <https://oscar.post> or e-mail oscar@upu.int.



CALL TO ACTION



UPU
UNIVERSAL
POSTAL
UNION

BALLOT FOR A THIRD EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS

The UPU Council of Administration (CA) has unanimously recommended that member countries convene an Extraordinary Congress in Geneva on 24 – 25 September 2019 to discuss the terminal dues rates for small packets. This is in direct response to the concerns raised by several member countries about a perceived lack of cost coverage and market distortions caused by these rates. Such an Extraordinary Congress would facilitate the high-level discussions required to find the best way forward to keep the UPU and its single postal territory intact, relevant and sustainable.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE POSTAL BALLOT?

The postal ballot will determine whether UPU member countries wish to convene an Extraordinary Congress to decide on the three options submitted by the CA on the possible revision of E-format letter-post item rates. These options are outlined in CA C 2 2019.1–Doc 6. Convening an Extraordinary Congress requires the support of two-thirds of UPU member countries, so it is imperative that every UPU member country submit its ballot.

WHY DOES THE COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATION RECOMMEND CONVENING AN EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS?

Remuneration is a complex issue in which all member countries have a stake. Having plenipotentiaries of UPU member countries gather in plenary fashion will allow for full discussion and deliberation on the three options, so that member countries can take informed decisions on issues that will have far-reaching consequences for the future of the UPU.

WHY CAN'T THIS MATTER WAIT UNTIL THE 2020 CONGRESS IN ABIDJAN?

On 17 October 2018, the Government of the United States of America officially notified the UPU of its intent to withdraw from the organization effective one year from that date. It identified terminal dues remuneration for E-format letter-post items as its main concern. The withdrawal of any member country endangers the fundamental concept of a single postal territory and risks serious damage to the integrity of the entire international postal network. The CA therefore hopes that UPU member countries can reach a decision on the possible revision of these rates before the stated withdrawal date.

WHO SHOULD SUBMIT THE POSTAL BALLOT?

Only the relevant governmental authority (i.e. ministry, department, regulator, or diplomatic representation) responsible for postal policy and regulatory matters in each UPU member country can submit a ballot. The ballot must be signed by a duly authorized representative of that governmental authority.

WHAT HAPPENS IF COUNTRIES DECIDE NOT TO HOLD AN EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS?

Should countries decide to forgo an Extraordinary Congress, decision making on the three options on the possible revision of E-format letter-post item rates will take place by another postal ballot.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE BALLOT?

The ballot has been sent by post to the relevant governmental authority in each member country. It is also available for download on the UPU website: www.upu.int/en/2019postalballot.

WHEN DOES THE BALLOT HAVE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU?

The ballot must be duly completed by the relevant governmental authority and returned by post no later than **15 May 2019**. A scanned copy of the completed ballot must also be sent by email (Ballot2019@upu.int) to the UPU International Bureau.

For more information please visit www.upu.int/en/2019postalballot

Q2

25-26 April

Regional Strategy Forum for Asia-Pacific

Bangkok, Thailand

29 April - 3 May

Joint UPU-WCO Security Workshop for the Caribbean Region

Bridgetown, Barbados

2-3 May

UPU-EMS Symposium for African countries

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

6-10 May

E-services & Diversification Workshop

Montevideo, Uruguay

6-10 May

Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE) Workshop

Bridgetown, Barbados

15 May

Deadline for the postal ballot on a 2019 Extraordinary Congress

Worldwide

20-21 May

EMS Symposium

Bridgetown, Barbados

3-7 June

Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE) Workshop on Transportation

Montevideo, Uruguay

10-13 June

Joint UPU-WCO Postal Security Workshop

Bangkok, Thailand

11-17 June

CHINA 2019 General World Stamp Exhibition

Wuhan, China

14-15 June

Regional Strategy Forum for Africa

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

11-19 June

Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) 38th Ordinary Session of the Administrative Council

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

24-25 June

Regional Strategy Forum for the Caribbean

Havana, Cuba

24-28 June

3rd Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE) Workshop on Transportation for the Pacific

Nadi, Fiji

26-27 June

PostEurop Remuneration Forum

St. Petersburg, Russia

Q3

1-5 July

Joint UPU-WCO Security Workshop for the Latin America Region

Montevideo, Uruguay

3-4 July

EMS Symposium

Beirut, Lebanon

8-12 July

Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE) Workshop for French-speaking countries

Yaoundé, Cameroon

9-10 July

Regional Strategy Forum for Europe

Minsk, Belarus

22-26 July

Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE) Workshop for English-speaking countries

Cairo, Egypt

23-24 July

Regional Strategy Forum for the Arab region

Cairo, Egypt

12-13 August

Regional Strategy Forum for Latin American

San José, Costa Rica

20-21 August

EMS Symposium

Colombo, Sri Lanka

2-6 September

Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) Executive Council Meeting

Tokyo, Japan

9-12 September

ITU Telecom World 2019

Budapest, Hungary

9-12 September

Postal Reform and Regulation Workshop

Montevideo, Uruguay

10 September

Issue of the EMS 20th anniversary commemorative joint stamp

Worldwide

16-20 Sept.

Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE) Workshop on Small Packets and Supplementary Services

Tunis, Tunisia

Australia

AUSTRALIA POST delivered more than 40 million parcels and 210 million letters in December 2018, an increase of 11.7 percent compared to the same period last year, making it a record month for parcels for the operator. During the festive season, more than 3,000 additional staff were hired across the postal network to help cope with the increased volume. 17 December was the busiest day for the Post with a record 3 million parcels delivered across the country.

Azerbaijan

AZARPOÇT started installing its first parcel vending machine at the central post office in Baku in January 2019. The postal operator intends to increase the number of the machines throughout the city in 2019. The machines are easy to use and are equipped with weights and payment slots. Customers can collect and send their parcels 24/7, choosing any vending machine convenient to them in the country. Additionally, customers can order Azarpoçt cards that allow money orders to be transferred and received across the country and abroad.

Cuba

CORREOS DE CUBA received a new fleet of postal vehicles at the beginning of 2019. The operator's President, Carlos Asencio Valerino, and other members of the Board of Directors unveiled the fleet during a ceremony held at the Guantánamo post office. The new postal vehicles are slated to deliver mail to mountainous and other regions that are difficult to access in Cuba, helping the operator improve the quality of mail delivery.

Egypt

On 9 January 2019, **EGYPT POST** and the **EGYPTIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS** signed a protocol to install postal service kiosks at railway stations across the country. The two organizations will also launch "IPOST", an online parcel delivery service available for customers at the new kiosks. These initiatives are part of the government's project to digitalize postal, railway and cargo services, and to promote financial inclusion.

Israel

ISRAEL POST has called on startups to test their solutions within the postal operator to help it develop an advanced infrastructure that will improve its postal, logistical, financial and e-commerce services. Israel Post has also announced plans to open an innovation centre for technological entrepreneurship in Tel Aviv, where it will offer startups access to the Post's infrastructure, including its data, branches and different experts. Israel Post will assess each solution to see if it can apply and invest in it.

Jersey and Latin America

THE JERSEY POST Group is expanding its postal network to Latin America by investing in APG International, a company specializing in parcels and logistics across the region. This investment is the most recent step in Jersey Post's international strategy of exploiting opportunities outside its finite local market. The operator aims at ensuring long-term growth of its revenues and stability by providing a comprehensive global solution. This way, Jersey Post will be able to leverage the rapidly growing Latin American markets through a new partner with considerable expertise in this area.

Kazakhstan

JSC KAZPOST'S postal and courier services totaled a record 34 billion KZT (90 million USD) in 2018. According to Kazakh monitoring agency Energypprom, this represents an increase of 8.5% compared to 2017. The city of Almaty alone contributed 56.2% of this amount, raking in 19.1 billion KZT (50.3 million USD, with Astana bringing 8.8% (3 billion KZT) and Karaganda 4.2% (1.4 billion KZT). Compared to 2017, the operator's tariffs for these services increased by 3.4% for corporate clients and by 3.9% for other customers.

Mali

LA POSTE DU MALI, in partnership with the Malian Telecommunications and Postal Regulatory Authority (AMRTP), organized a three-day national forum to study the implementation of a postcode and addressing system across the country. The project aims to ensure higher quality mail delivery through the implementation of an effective addressing system. Having a formalized address would allow citizens to fully participate in the economy and access financial services, such as bank accounts, banking services and money transfers.

Netherlands

POSTNL has begun construction on a new parcel sorting centre in Dordrecht to cope with the growing e-commerce market. By the end of 2019, PostNL plans to open two more centres, which will add to the existing network of 22 centres in the Netherlands and six in Belgium. With the new location in Dordrecht, PostNL intends to achieve the BREEAM sustainability certificate, and plans to invest in ecological materials, solar panels and waste heat recovery units. The premises will not use gas and are expected to be a sustainable logistics building. This project will offer up to 400 new jobs.

Oman

OMAN POST has become an international company. CEO Abdulmalik Al Balushi said the company is now connected to more than 150 firms worldwide. He also announced the company's three-phase transformation plan. First, he said the company would focus on making its operations leaner, faster and more innovative to increase its market share and competitiveness. This will include a 24-hour delivery in 15 cities and a 48-hour delivery in the rest of the country. Second, it will enhance its logistics network of 83 branches across Oman, diversifying its product and service portfolio. Finally, the Post intends to expand its international reach through e-commerce.

Singapore

SINGPOST announced it would deploy artificial intelligence (AI) on its regional logistics last mile platform (LaMP) to offer better delivery service for customers across Southeast Asia by enhancing the reliability and traceability of their parcels. Developed by the logistics provider LogiNext, the AI route planning software will automatically find and schedule optimized courier routes considering various factors, such as addresses, preferred delivery times, traffic and weather conditions. Customers will receive an alert 30 minutes before their parcels arrive, which is especially convenient for customers in large cities such as Bangkok and Jakarta, where only approximate parcel arrival times are provided.

Switzerland

Since 10 December 2018, **SWISS POST** has been transporting laboratory samples from University Hospital Zurich (USZ) to the University of Zurich (UZH) campus using drones from the logistics systems provider Matternet. Thanks to this technology, the samples are delivered twice as fast, saving patients, doctors and other medical personnel waiting time. Drone deliveries are also more environmentally friendly. The project is planned to last one year.

Tanzania (United Rep.)

TANZANIA POSTS CORPORATION announced its plans to bring digital financial services to rural areas of the country. The postal operator has started purchasing the necessary technological equipment and expects matching funding from the government. The project will allow customers to benefit from new services such as online shopping, electronic payments and delivery of packages, and the operator to build customer trust, relationships and sales, thus improving its financial situation.

Togo

TOGO POSTS CORPORATION assigned a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) to organize training for its post office staff. The courses will be based on an e-learning platform where participants can earn "Post Office Agent". The MoU will also expand the postal operator's financial inclusion programme, allowing it to implement a geolocation-based addressing system and to analyze the company's costs and revenues. Moreover, the programme will allow citizens of rural areas across the country to access micro-loans.

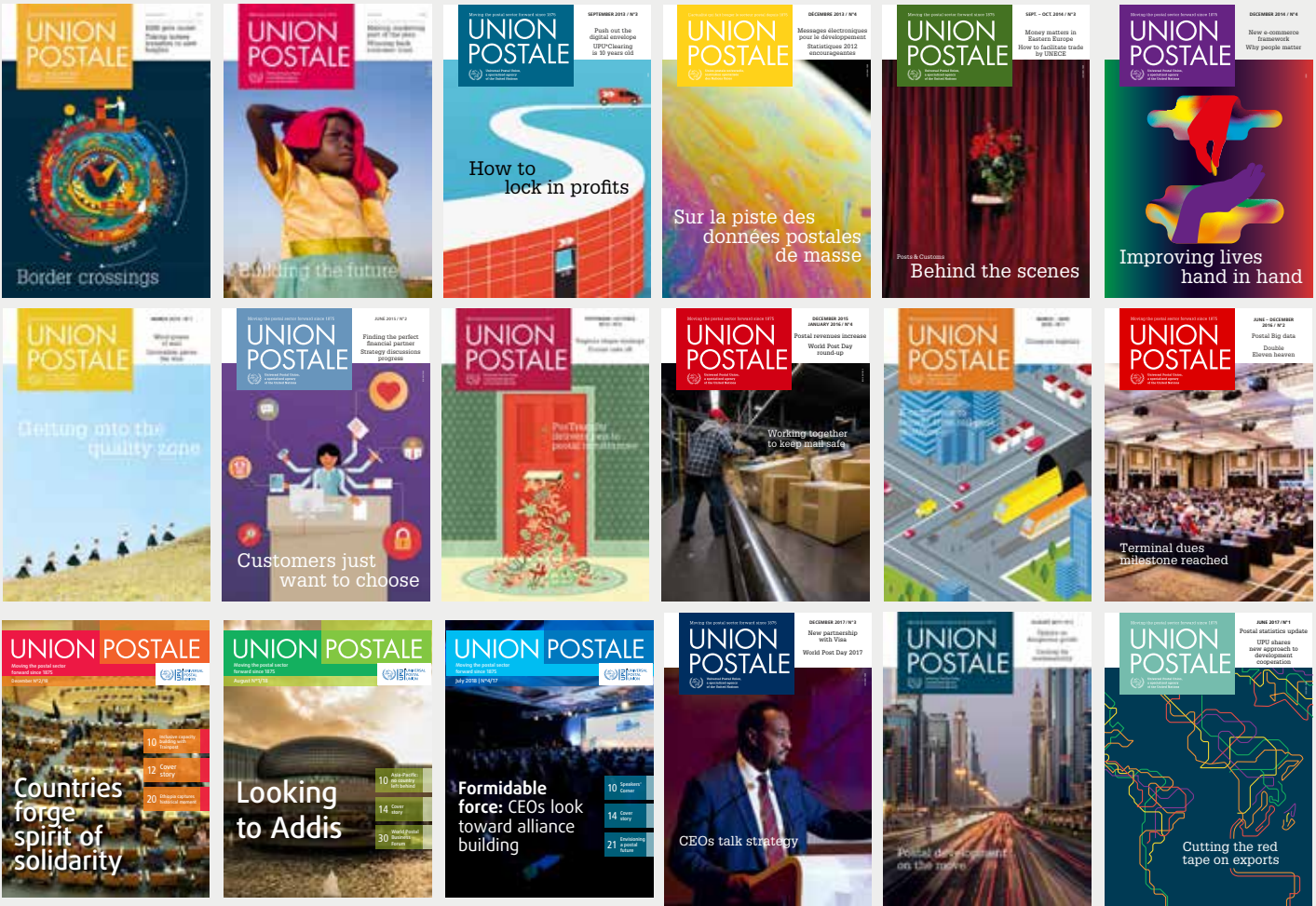
Ukraine

JSC "UKRPOSHTA" is planning to start purchasing and selling foreign currencies at its post offices. This opportunity is part of the transition to a new liberal system of currency regulation stipulated by the country's "On Currency and Currency Transactions" law introduced earlier this year. According to the regulation, any other postal operator can obtain a licence for carrying out foreign exchange transactions from the National Bank of Ukraine if it has a minimum of 50 branches and operates in at least half of the country's regions. Half of its revenues should also come from the postal services it provides.

United Kingdom

ROYAL MAIL has expanded its label printing returns service "Labels to Go" countrywide. The service allows online shoppers to use their mobile phones to print labels for their returned items at 11,500 post offices. Initially, the service was provided by 1,200 postal locations only. To process their returns on Royal Mail's (or on a retailer's) portal, customers get a unique QR code by e-mail that has to be scanned to print the label. This clear, easy-to-use returns option also allows customers to track their packages and to know when to expect a refund or a replacement.

All items by Olena Muravyova



Join the ranks of thousands of satisfied readers now. Sign up for four issues a year of our flagship magazine in one of seven languages.

Private subscribers anywhere in the world can subscribe for CHF 50 a year. Special discount rates apply to UPU member countries.

Fax us your order now on **+41 31 350 37 11** or email us at **publications@upu.int** with the following details →



SUBSCRIBE NOW

NAME

POSITION

ORGANIZATION/OPERATOR

FULL POSTAL ADDRESS

E-MAIL ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

FAX

LANGUAGE VERSION DESIRED

ENGLISH

ARABIC

GERMAN

SPANISH

FRENCH

CHINESE

RUSSIAN

Quality information from innovation



GMS

Global Monitoring System

Measuring mail performance with RFID technology was just a dream for many UPU member countries. Not anymore. Thanks to GMS, Posts can now benefit from a state-of-the-art solution that uses passive RFID at a very affordable price.

For more information, watch the animation film
<http://www.tinyurl.com/gmsfilm>
or contact gms@upu.int.



UPU UNIVERSAL
POSTAL
UNION

FOLLOW US

**We're
SOCIAL!**



UPU_UN



universalpostalunion



universalpostalunion



UPU_UN



universal_postal_union



Universal Postal Union

