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EC 2024 Doc 18 Add 1
(updated on 14 August 2024)

Regional Position of the Asia-Pacific in the UPU Dubai Congress

Co-Chaired by AUSTRALIA and INDIA

Executive Council Meeting 2024
Siem Reap, CAMBODIA
14 August 2024



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Background



Background

- The Asian-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) held a unique position among the Restricted Unions of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) during the UPU Extraordinary Congress in Riyadh by presenting a regional position of the Asia-Pacific on opening the UPU to Wider Postal Sector Players.
- This regional position was finalized through discussions during the 2023 Executive Council meeting and subsequent online consultations. Australia and India led this work in 2023, with support from the APPU Bureau.



Proposal

- Recognizing the value of having a regional position on important postal sector issues, it is proposed that the Union continue efforts to develop regional positions in the future.
- These regional positions can assist countries in developing their domestic policies and presenting the region's stance at the upcoming UPU Dubai Congress.



Activities Undertaken by UPU

- The Universal Postal Union has initiated steps to develop the UPU Postal Strategy for 2025-2029 since 2023. The first draft of the strategy was presented to the Council of Administration during the S5 session, documented in CA C3 2024.1 Doc 8 Annex 1.
- This draft was developed following the circulation of a survey in 2023, the presentation of initial inputs in S4, and regional consultations (virtual) in the first half of 2024.



Suggested topics for regional position

- During the EC preparatory meeting, a list of possible subjects for developing a regional position was discussed. The following four topics were identified as potential subjects to initiate the works:
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 - (i) Gender equality and empowerment of women in the postal sector
 - (ii) Climate action for the postal sector
 - (iii) Postal Financial Services
 - (iv) Importance of Development Cooperation in the UPU



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Gender equality and empowerment of women in the postal sector



Background

- Gender equality is a fundamental human right and an essential foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. In the postal sector, promoting gender equality leads to improved decision-making, increased innovation, and better service delivery. Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls is also one of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG 5).
- While progress has been made, women remain underrepresented in many areas of the postal sector, particularly in leadership roles. This paper aims to address the current status, challenges, and opportunities for improving gender representation within the sector and promoting gender budgeting. The under-representation of women is also evident during meetings of the UPU and other international postal gatherings.



Policies implemented by member countries

- Mentorship and leadership development programs for women.
- Initiatives to encourage girls and young women to pursue careers in the postal sector.
- Women-specific postal products and services.
- Encouragement and support for female representatives to become part of delegations during international engagements.



Draft position during the Congress

Postal administrations worldwide need to implement targeted recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain women in the postal sector. There is an increasing need to promote gender-sensitive policies and practices, such as flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies.

While the strategy document has made efforts to address gender equality, the UPU needs to develop and implement a comprehensive gender equality framework for the postal sector. Quantifiable targets for the inclusion of gender equality goals should become part of the UPU's strategic plans and activities.



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Climate Action for the Postal Sector



Background

- Addressing climate change is a critical global priority, and the postal sector, with its extensive network and significant operational footprint, has a crucial role to play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable practices.
- The postal sector in the Asia-Pacific region has made good progress in implementing climate action initiatives. However, there remains a wide variation in the adoption of sustainable practices across different countries. Some have made significant strides, while others are still in the early stages of integrating climate action into their operations.
- According to available data, key areas of environmental impact in the postal sector include carbon emissions from transportation, energy consumption in facilities, and waste generation. Efforts to address these impacts have been varied and often dependent on national policies and available resources.



Actions adopted by member countries

- **Adoption of Low-Carbon Technologies:** Investing in electric and hybrid vehicles for postal delivery, and utilizing renewable energy sources for postal facilities.
- **Energy Efficiency Improvements:** Implementing energy-efficient practices in postal facilities to reduce consumption and costs.
- **Waste Management Programs:** Developing comprehensive programs to reduce, reuse, and recycle materials, thereby minimizing waste generation.
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** Partnering with international organizations, governments, and private sector entities to leverage resources and expertise.



Draft position during the Congress

Postal administrations worldwide need to prioritize climate action by adopting sustainable practices and technologies. There is an urgent need to transition to low-carbon transportation options, invest in renewable energy, and implement comprehensive waste management programs.

The UPU should develop and promote a robust climate action framework for the postal sector. This framework should encourage member countries to develop their own strategies and action plans in alignment with their national policies and circumstances, recognizing the historical differences in development among countries. While creating a framework, it is important that countries are not forced into a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather supported in creating tailored solutions that address their unique challenges and opportunities.



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Postal Financial Services



Background

- Postal financial services play a critical role in enhancing financial inclusion, particularly in underserved and rural areas. Leveraging the extensive network of postal services can bridge the gap between traditional banking services and unbanked populations, fostering economic development and social inclusion.
- The postal sector in the Asia-Pacific region offers a wide range of financial services, including savings accounts, money transfers, insurance products, and payment services. However, the extent and effectiveness of these services vary significantly among member countries, and not all postal operators provide financial services.
- According to available data, many countries have successfully integrated financial services into their postal operations, providing crucial financial access to millions of people. However, other countries face challenges related to infrastructure, regulatory environments, and technological limitations.



Policies implemented by member countries

- Leveraging Existing Networks: Utilizing the extensive reach of postal networks to provide financial services, especially in remote and underserved areas.
- Integration with Private Service Providers: Collaborating with banks, fintech companies, and other private sector entities to enhance service offerings and reach.
- Utilization of Cashless Networks: Exploring and integrating with cashless/ less-cash ecosystems to promote digital financial services.
- Digital Payment Solutions: In order to be part of the digital payment ecosystem, and expand financial inclusion, post offices have started offering digital payment solutions in their operations.
- Capacity Building Programs: Enhancing training and development programs for postal employees.



Draft position during the Congress

Postal administrations worldwide should appreciate and leverage the existing postal network to provide financial services where applicable, recognizing its potential to enhance financial inclusion and economic development.

Policies should encourage countries to utilize postal services for financial services, integrating with other service providers to offer a broader range of financial products and services. This integration can create synergies, improve service delivery, and expand reach.

Effective utilization of cashless/ less-cash networks and ecosystems created by individual member countries should be explored to promote digital financial services and digital payment solutions. By leveraging these networks, postal services can offer convenient, secure, and efficient financial transactions to their customers.

The UPU should support these initiatives by providing a flexible framework that allows member countries to develop strategies and action plans aligned with their national policies and specific needs. Recognizing the policy differences among countries, the UPU's strategy should be supportive and adaptable.



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Importance of Development Cooperation in the UPU



Background

- Development cooperation is crucial for enhancing the capacities of postal operators, especially in developing countries, to provide efficient, reliable, and modern postal services. It fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and resource mobilization to address common challenges and achieve sustainable development goals.
- The Universal Postal Union (UPU) has a long history of supporting development cooperation projects that enhance postal services worldwide. These projects focus on areas such as capacity building, technology upgrades, financial inclusion, and improving service quality.
- In the Asia-Pacific region, the implementation of the UPU's Development Cooperation Strategy has led to numerous projects aimed at modernizing postal operations, improving efficiency, and expanding service offerings. However, the impact and reach of these initiatives vary widely among countries, reflecting differences in resources, infrastructure, and local conditions. Also, there are constraints of institutional funding for on-field projects relating to technical assistance activities.



Opportunities for advancing cooperation

- **Increased Funding and Resources:** Mobilizing additional financial resources through the UPU, partnerships with international organizations, donor agencies, and the private sector.
- **Enhanced Coordination Mechanisms:** Improving coordination among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation and sustainability of projects.
- **Capacity Building Programs:** Expanding training and development programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of postal employees.
- **Supportive Policies and Regulations:** Advocating for national policies and regulatory frameworks that facilitate development cooperation.



Draft position during the Congress

Postal administrations worldwide need to prioritize development cooperation by actively participating in and supporting UPU initiatives. There is a need for increased investment in capacity building, technology upgrades, and other development projects to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of postal services.

The next cycle of the Development Cooperation Strategy should focus on addressing current challenges in the sector, including:

- **Sustainable Development:** Emphasizing the adoption of environmentally sustainable practices, reducing carbon footprints, and promoting green technologies within the postal sector.
- **Disaster Management:** Developing robust disaster management and recovery plans to ensure continuity of postal services during and after natural disasters.
- **Capacity Building:** Strengthening training programs to build the capacity of postal employees, enhancing their skills in modern postal operations, technology use, and customer service.
- **Quality of Service Improvement:** Implementing initiatives aimed at improving the quality and reliability of postal services, including faster delivery times, better tracking systems, and enhanced customer satisfaction.



Draft position during the Congress

The UPU should refine and expand its Development Cooperation Strategy to address emerging challenges and opportunities. Member countries should be encouraged to develop their own strategies and action plans in alignment with their national policies and specific needs. The presence and capacities of Restricted Unions should be gainfully utilized in the effective implementation of the strategy.



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Thank You