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**42<sup>ND</sup> ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL**  
**11<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Arusha Tanzania**

**THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

<p><b>1. Subject</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report of the Chairman of the Administrative Council</li></ul>	<p><b>References/Paragraphs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Article 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Administrative Council of the Union</li><li>- Article 5 of the Detailed Regulations of the Convention</li></ul>
<p><b>2. Decision expected</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take note of the report</li></ul>	

## **PAPU ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 2023-2024**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

First and foremost, permit me once again to express my sincere gratitude to the PAPU Membership that gave the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) the opportunity to lead the Council during the period 2023/2024.

I am therefore pleased to table my report to the Administrative Council and give an account of what has been accomplished by my office during the period under review, as annotated hereinafter.

### **2. THE 41<sup>ST</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE PAPU ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL HELD IN JULY 2023, IN ARUSHA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

As per the provisions of Article 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the Administrative Council of the Union, the Chairman shall organize the work during sittings. He shall open and close sittings, direct the debates, grant the use of the floor, submit to a vote, matters under discussion when deemed necessary, announce the results of votes, and rule on points of order as per the present Rules of Procedure.

Furthermore, Article 5 of the Detailed Regulations charges the Administrative Council with the responsibility of directing, controlling, and coordinating financial and administrative activities of the Union in between Ordinary Sessions of the Plenipotentiary Conference, among others.

In line with these provisions, distinguished Delegates, I am pleased to report that during the year under review, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as represented by myself, successfully carried out this leadership and oversight responsibility. My office carried out those responsibilities after taking over from my predecessor, Mr Rorarison of Madagascar, that adorably steered the Union during the period 2022/2023 and took the Union to a higher level. Of course, this would have not been possible without the cooperation and support of the Secretary General and his Staff at the General secretariat. I therefore sincerely thank the former Chairman and the entire PAPU General Secretariat for their support which made our stewardship, as a Bureau, smooth and successful.

You will recall that at our meeting held at the Arusha International Conference Centre (AICC), here in the United Republic of Tanzania last year, we considered and approved the under-listed activities, among others, that were submitted to the Council for consideration:

- a) Theme of PAPU Day Celebration 2024;
- b) Programme of Activities for the 2023/2024 Financial Year;
- c) Report of the Activities of the General Secretariat
- d) Budget of the Union for the 2023/2024 financial year;
- e) Appointment of the External Auditor.

I am glad to report that all these activities were satisfactorily executed and are contained, in detail, in the respective Administrative & Technical Committee Reports, as well as in the Report of Activities of the General Secretariat for the year 2023/2024 that will be tabled before you for consideration later.

The other activities which were carried out during the period under review are as follows:

### **3. SIGNED AUDITED ACCOUNTS**

The signing of the audited financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 was the first task that I performed here in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, during the 41<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the Administrative Council. I have confirmation from the General Secretariat that the Audited Financial Statements were circulated to all Member States and Associate Members in line with the Financial Regulations of the Union in September 2023.

### **4. THE INAUGURATION OF THE PAPU TOWER ON 2<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024 BY THE HEAD OF STATE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

My office led the Union during the inauguration of our iconic 17-Storey Headquarters on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 for Africa's Postal Continental body, a joint venture project between PAPU and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, represented by Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA). You may recall that the shareholding structure of the Project is 60% by PAPU and 40% by TCRA.

The inauguration of the PAPU Tower was presided over by the distinguished patronage of the Head of State of the United Republic of Tanzania, Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan amid much fan fair and aplomb, in the presence of Ministers in Charge of the Post, African Ambassadors, African postal sector and Universal Postal Union leaders, international dignitaries and Plenipotentiaries. Her Excellence congratulated all of us in the Sector for a job well done in constructing the PAPU Tower to completion and took the opportunity to call upon all indebted Member States to make payment plans to clear their arrears. She

This landmark event was preceded by two key activities, both, under the theme ***"PAPU TOWER, Inspiring the African Postal Sector Transformation to Anchor Digital and Smart Economies"*** as follows:

#### **4.1 The Ministerial Business Roundtable**

The Ministerial Business Roundtable, a first of its kind, took place on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2023 at the the same venue for the Council Meetings.

This one-day event had two (2) sub themes, viz, ***"Investment Opportunities in the Postal Sector in Africa"*** and ***"Transforming the Post in Africa for Environmental Sustainability"***. Honorable Ministers took turns to give policy issues that affect the Post in Africa and the discussions gravitated towards tightening the continent's strategy for postal growth and sustainability.

***“Convinced of the necessity to develop and maintain an effective coordination framework to ensure harmony in the development of postal services in Africa”***

#### **4.2 Postal Business Dialogue for Operators, Regulators & Partners**

The Postal Business Dialogue for CEOs/PMGs of Designated Operators and Directors General of Regulatory Authorities was held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. At the Dialogue, pertinent issues affecting the postal sector were discussed. This one-day event had three moderated segments with following thought provoking subthemes:

- a) ***“Rethinking the Postal Business Model in the Digital Era”***
- b) ***“Optimizing Postal Infrastructure via Innovation and Diversification;”***
- c) ***“Balancing the Product/Service Portfolio to Enhance Business Sustainability.”***

This event offered an opportunity for Postal Operators and Regulators to discuss and exchange ideas on their strategies on the desired forms and levels of digital transformation of the Post as an engine for economic growth. They also engaged Partners on the possible collaborations with the Post in service delivery and innovative solutions for various postal business segments, including e-commerce, e-government, e-health, Philately and others.

#### **5. SIGNING OF MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN PAPU SECRETARY GENERAL AND VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS.**

In the two days, that is, on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 during the afore mentioned events, we witnessed the strengthening of relations between PAPU and key strategic partners in the sector. These partners included continental bodies like the African Telecommunications Union, (a sister organization in the African Union umbrella), EMSP, a Postal training Institute based in Cote d'Ivoire, Supply chain solution suppliers Native Logistic eV, Ship2MyID, Geomain, Amarante and Mail Americas. These agreements are in line with PAPU Convention Preamble, which states as follows:

***‘Convinced of the need to promote partnership with the private sector in the development of postal services in Africa in line with the Cairo 2008 CIT Ministers Declaration and Action Plan approved by the AU Summit in June 2008;’***

We congratulate the General Secretariat for forging these relationships which save as compass direction pointers for our members for solutions and also promote the PAPU brand.

#### **6. PAPU'S PARTICIPATION AT THE 4<sup>TH</sup> EXTRA-ORDINARY CONGRESS WHICH TOOK PLACE IN RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA IN OCTOBER 2023**

My office and that of the Secretary General, provided the necessary link and coordination to the Union Members during the Universal Postal Union (UPU) fourth Extraordinary Congress in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which was held from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023. At this gathering, postal Plenipotentiaries discussed and successfully made decisions that will affect the global postal terrain.

The Extra Ordinary Congress made groundbreaking agreements on Opening Up of the UPU to Wider Postal Sector Players and passed a raft of proposals that will see deeper engagement of the UPU with wider postal sector players and partners outside the UPU network of government-designated postal operators.

**On climate action**, a “green package” was approved during the Congress, outlining voluntary climate action targets for the postal sector aimed at reducing the global greenhouse gas emissions of the postal sector.

The package also establishes a framework for climate action, focusing on mitigation, adaptation and climate finance, supported by a dedicated climate facility. It is prudent that as a Union we commence active dialogues on this very important global issue which is affecting our Region in a big way as witnessed by the cyclones that have continuously pounded some of our member countries leaving a trail of destruction, deaths and causing both floods and droughts.

On **modernization plans for postal financial services**, the Congress also ushered in transformational changes to postal financial services, with a focus on modernization and interconnection with wider postal financial service players. This will evolutionize the UPU’s legal frameworks for postal payment services to accommodate these developments

On **increased budget**, the UPU member countries decided to increase the UPU’s regular budget ceiling to provide the organization with additional financial resources. As a Union, we take a leaf from this action and we will consider having similar discussion’s around this subject matter so as to better support our General Secretariat in particular, and our Union membership in general.

On the last day of the Extraordinary Congress, the UPU launched its first “State of the Postal Sector” postal development report which comprises data from the majority of the 172 UPU Member countries. Subsequent to its presentation, Awards of Excellency were given to those who achieved the highest overall level of postal development including Regional Champions . I wish to seize this moment to sincerely congratulate the Union Member States, namely, Ethiopia and Morocco, that received the awards for attaining the highest level of postal development in Africa. Congratulations for your hard work and the good outcomes which put Africa on a higher pedestal of postal development. These are achievements worth emulating and I therefore encourage other Member States to work hard and follow suit

Finally, during this segment of the Congress, the UPU also celebrated the winners of its 52<sup>nd</sup> International Letter Writing Competition, for which children were invited to write a letter to someone explaining the super powers that they would need to achieve their mission of making roads safe for all children. The competition was organized in cooperation with the United Nations Road Safety Fund. In this regard, I am proud and

elated, as I believe we all are, that Claire Gakii, aged 13, from our own Member State, Kenya, received the gold medal for her letter, which she read before the delegates during the closing plenary of the Congress.

It is gratifying to see that Africa approached this UPU Extra-Ordinary Congress in unity, fully prepared as guided by the PAPU Task Force on the Opening up of the UPU to Wider Postal Sector Players. A lot of advance preparatory work and consultations across the world's postal regions had been done through this Task Force chaired by Cameroun, to inform, educate, consult, share experiences and engage PAPU members on this topical, yet mission-critical subject matter.

## **7. PAPU STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

In pursuit of the Mission and Vision of the Pan African Postal Union as well as the implementation of the Africa Postal Strategy 2021-2025 a number of activities were undertaken including meetings of the Four Committees that support this Council, Working Groups, Task Forces, and Expert Teams, CEO Forums, and African Postal Regulators Forum. The work of these Union Structures were augmented by the First African Regulators Conference held in Senegal and the 2<sup>nd</sup> African Philately Conference held in Morocco. I am also aware that the General Secretariat facilitated the convening of Coordination meetings in preparation of the UPU meetings of its Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council in October 2023 and April-May 2024. These meetings help to galvanize Africa's position on postal matters and also help to identify key issues for the Region as the African Lead Countries to Committees of these Councils make presentations and solicit for views prior to their engagement at the global stage.

## **8. CHALLENGES**

During my tenure, inherent challenges were encountered as follows:

- a) The failure of Member States to pay mandatory contributions as and when due also continues to affect the smooth implementation of our activities. We also still have Member States that have not paid their contributions to the PAPU Tower project which is affecting the final conclusion to the building and elongates the period before which PAPU will start realizing returns from this magnificent building. I plead with my fellow Members to please honour our obligations to empower the Union to move forward in pursuit of our shared dreams;
- b) The prevalence of the natural disasters such as the ones that occurred in Morocco (Earthquake) and Libya (Flash floods) in September 2023 and their untold ramifications on humanity and property in general and especially on the postal sector. This calls for our continued alertness and pro-active planning for disaster aversion and mitigation

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

For the smooth running of our organization, I wish to recommend the following actions going forward:

- a) Compliance with the required payment of mandatory annual financial contribution to the budget of PAPU within the first six months of the financial year ending precisely on 30<sup>th</sup> November of every year. This action will not only enable the General Secretariat to plan and execute the approved activities seamlessly but it will also enable Member States and Associate Members to avoid the 2% statutory surcharge for late settlement of annual contributions stipulated in the Union statutes.
- b) I urge and encourage our Member States who are members of the POC & CA to continue the upward surge in their attendance and effective participation at these UPU meetings;
- c) I appeal to Member States to identify, engage and pursue a sustained drive for more Associate Members to ensure sector-wide collaboration towards rapid development of postal services in Africa towards the attainment of a single global postal territory through public-private partnerships. In this regard, I request for a doubling of efforts by all Member States to scout for and recommend corporate organizations that are stakeholders in the postal/ICT sector to join PAPU as Associate Members;
- d) Finally, I express appreciation to the Government and people of the United Republic of Tanzania for selflessly and commendably hosting the PAPU headquarters as well as their continued support rendered to the General Secretariat domiciled here in Arusha;
- e) Appeal to Member States to deal with Natural disasters in line with the Disaster and Risk Management Guidelines developed by the Union.

## 10. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, on behalf of the Government and people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, indeed, on my own behalf, I wish to seize this opportunity to sincerely thank all members of the Administrative Council who served in the Bureau during the year 2023/2024 and will conclude their mandate this week, namely, Ethiopia (1st Vice Chair), Morocco (2nd Vice Chair), Eswatini and Benin (Rapporteurs) for the unwavering cooperation and support that was given to Democratic Republic of the Congo as Chairperson during the period under review.

I am also highly indebted to the Secretary General and his entire staff of the General Secretariat who efficiently worked with us and gave us all the support that we needed from them.

Furthermore, I will fail in my duty if I do not thank all Member States for their cooperation throughout my tenure. It is gratifying to note that we have been receiving brotherly cooperation from Member States as a Bureau. In the same spirit, I wish that you extend the same gesture to the Chairperson and members of the incoming bureau for this Council Session.

I, therefore, wish to seize this moment to sincerely congratulate the incoming bureau in advance for the well-deserved nomination as office bearers of the Administrative Council of the Union for the next financial year,

2024-2025. I have all the hope that it will be an exciting period for them despite the challenges that continuously present themselves to the Union. As I hand over the mantle of leadership to them, I am confident that they will take over from a fairly solid foundation and sincerely believe that they will take the Union to gratifying and greater heights. In line with the “open door” policy that I practice, should they need any assistance or views from me during their tenure, I will be available at their behest.

Lastly, but of course not the least, I wish you and the entire Union exceptionally exciting and successful deliberations during this Session and in all future interactions.

Thank you very much for your kind and rapt attention.

**Mrs. Sandra Tshibonge**

**Director General of Société congolaise des postes et télécommunications (SCPT), the Designated Postal Operator of Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) under the Congolese Posts and Telecommunications Corporation) and Chairperson of PAPU AC 2023/2024**