

**REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE (OTC) HYBRID MEETING HELD IN  
ARUSHA, TANZANIA, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2024**

<b>1. Subject</b> Operations and Technology Committee Meeting Report	<b>References/Paragraphs</b>
<b>2. Decisions Expected</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consideration and adoption of the Committee Report;</li><li>• Adoption of the Draft Resolution attached thereto.</li></ul>	

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This document is presented to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Administrative Council for consideration.

**2. SUBMISSION OF THE REPORT**

The report, together with a draft Resolution, is attached here.

**3. CONCLUSION**

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Administrative Council is requested to:

- i) Consider and Adopt the Report;
- ii) Adopt the Draft Resolution.

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## **OPERATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT**

**3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Operations and Technology Committee meeting was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania.

### **2.0 OPENING REMARKS**

#### **2.1 Remarks by the Chairperson**

The Chairperson, Mr Abdaty Ka called the meeting to order and commenced the deliberations for the day at 09:00 GMT. He welcomed everyone present for taking the time to attend the meeting in person or virtually. The Chairman indicated that the meeting would receive reports from the various Working Groups and deliberate on other pertinent matters affecting postal operations. He urged members to contribute to the discussions actively and wished everyone fruitful deliberations.

#### **2.2 Remarks by PAPU Secretary General**

The Secretary General, Dr. Sifundo Chief Moyo, reiterated that the mandate of the Operations and Technology Committee is to develop strategies and initiatives to address all matters relating to Postal Operations.

He stressed that the Operations and Technology Committee is the ideal forum for African Designated Operators to deliberate on emerging issues affecting their operations. He further pointed out that the deliberations and draft resolutions agreed upon by the meeting will be escalated to the Administrative Council for endorsement.

The Secretary General commended the Committee Bureau and Members for their commitment to the Committee's work and assured them that the PAPU General Secretariat would always be available to provide the necessary support for the Committee's success. Lastly, he wished participants fruitful deliberations.

### 3.0 CONFIRMATION OF BUREAU

The Committee Bureau is as follows:

- Chairperson: Nigeria;
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairperson: Algeria;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chairperson: Senegal;
- Rapporteurs : Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda;
- Secretariat: PAPU Secretariat.

The Chair and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairperson were not in attendance at the start of the meeting hence, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair, Senegal chaired the meeting.

### 3.1 Committee Member States

The Committee is made up of the following Member States: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Kingdom of Eswatini, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

### 3.2 Meeting Participation

#### 3.2.1 Members States Present (In-person & virtually):

Angola, Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Kingdom of Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda Zambia and Zimbabwe.

#### 3.2.2 Other Organizations Present

Southern Africa Postal Operators Association (SAPOA) and East African Communications Organization (EACO).

#### 3.2.3 PAPU General Secretariat

The General Secretariat provided Secretarial services to the meeting. The Secretary General was in attendance, leading the General Secretariat Team.

The detailed list of participants is attached to the report as **Annex 1**.

### 4.0 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4.1 The General Secretariat presented the Draft Agenda, which was adopted with no amendments. The main items on the agenda were as follows:

- a) **Progress Report on the Programme of Activities of the Operations and Technology Committee (2023/24);**
- b) **Remuneration Working Group (RG) Report;**
- c) **Digitalization and Innovation Working Group (DIG):**
  - i. Presentation of Working Group Report;
  - ii. Status of Implementation of Digitalization of Postal Services in Africa.
- d) **Promotion of Philately Working Group (PPG):**
  - i. Presentation of Working Group Report;
  - ii. Status of Philately Services in Africa.
- e) **Supply Chain Working Group (SCG):**
  - i. Presentation of Working Group Report;
  - ii. PAPU/AFRAA Activities Report.

## **5.0 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES OF THE OPERATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE (2023/24)**

**5.1** The General Secretariat presented the progress report on the Programme of Activities for the Operations and Technology Committee in document **PAPU/ATC/OTC/01/2024 - Doc No.02**.

**5.2** On the conveyance of prohibited and dangerous goods, the Committee noted with concern that most Designated Operators find it challenging to export some items, especially food items and crafts from Africa. It was recommended that the issue be handled through the Ministries of Industry/Trade/Commerce under different protocols on trade in goods signed between Member States to ensure that appropriate solutions are found.

**5.3** The Committee noted the considerable progress made in implementing the Committee's Action Plan through its four Working Groups and a Task Force. The progress report, submitted to the Administrative Council for noting, is attached to this report as **Annex 2**.

## **6.0 REMUNERATION WORKING GROUP (RG) REPORT**

The Remuneration Working Group Chairperson, Mrs. Nermin Hassan Mohammed (Egypt), presented a summary of remuneration issues contained in **PAPU/ATC/OTC/01/2024 - Doc No.03**. The main areas covered were:

### **6.1 Key Issues from UPU Remuneration Integration Group:**

### 6.1.1 Report by Expert Team 4 of the Remuneration Integration Group (RIG)

Expert Team 4 of the UPU Remuneration Integration Group discussed key issues related to transit groups, basic air conveyance rates, sampling threshold, format separation, terminal dues rates and rate structure, and remailing.

### 6.1.2 Expert Team 2 Report on the implementation of Congress Resolution C 13/2021 on the Integrated Remuneration Plan for 2022–2025.

Different remuneration systems for Terminal Dues, Inward Land Rates (ILRs), and EMS rates currently in force result in issues regarding the alignment of the remuneration of letter-post items (in particular small packets), lightweight parcels, and EMS items. Resolution C13/2021 aims to achieve better system alignment, integration, and rationalization to achieve an Integrated Remuneration System (IRS).

Therefore, UPU Expert Team 2 is reviewing the different remuneration systems to implement Resolution C13/2021.

The Chairperson updated the Committee on the Integrated Remuneration (IRP) as per the discussions of the S5 Postal Operations Council (POC) Session. The update is summarized in the table below.

Topic	Current proposal by UPU Expert Team	Implications on African countries (Group IV)	Africa position
<b>P and G format</b>	It is proposed that the floor rates increase annually by 4.5%. The cap rate is proposed to increase annually by 7.5% to ensure an increasingly country-specific remuneration for the P/G format.	At the end of the current Congress cycle, the minimum and maximum rates were 0.330 SDR per item and 2.574 SDR per kg, 0.440 SDR per item, and 3.434 SDR per kg. At the average weight of 42.3 g, by 2030, the gap between the revenue at the floor rates and the revenue at the level of the cap rates will have widened from 28.6% in 2025 to 42.1% in 2030, the gap between the revenue at the floor rates and the revenue at the level of the cap rates will have widened from 28.6% in 2025 to 42.1% in 2030	The 4.5 % annual increase for both cap and floor is reasonable and in line with the world inflation rate. The 7.5 % increase for Group I countries will increase the gap to unfair levels for developing and least developed countries. Therefore, African countries should oppose this proposal and seek to lower the annual increase in cap rates.
<b>Small packets</b>	Starting from 2027, for Group IV countries and territories listed in Annex 1 whose domestic tariffs are not set by costs (e.g., owing to social obligations), the DO may request the	Group IV countries, from now will be referred to in Annex 1 will have two options for remuneration from 2027	African countries should be careful while using EMS rates or self-declared rates. if we have increased our rates too high, it will affect our

	<p>application of EMS international inbound remuneration rates (i.e., those in force the previous calendar year) reduced by 75% and use the resulting remuneration rates to substitute the domestic reference rates in paragraphs 28, 29 and 3032, and 33 above. However, this would need to be validated by a competent authority responsible for supervising the postal service and formally notified to the IB in writing. Where EMS international inbound remuneration rates are not available, the remuneration rates may be self-declared as long as they are confirmed in writing by the competent authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Using floor rates as defined by the Acts</li> <li>ii) Using 25 % of their international inbound EMS rates as a substitute for domestic reference tariffs for small packets upon validation by a competent authority responsible for supervising the postal service and formally notifying the IB in writing.</li> <li>iii) If there are no EMS international inbound rates, the remuneration rates may be self-declared as long as they are confirmed in writing by the competent authority.</li> </ul>	<p>competitiveness in the African markets.</p> <p>The current proposal is based on the current EMS rates for Group IV countries; if any country increases its EMS rates, it should not increase small packet rates unless it is genuinely required to.</p> <p>No African county is advised to increase their EMS rates to increase their small packet rates.</p>
<p><b>New parcel rates system</b></p>	<p>Generally:</p> <p><u>Para 47 - The proposed system for parcel rates aims to move from ILRs and to apply the same methodology as small packets using</u></p> <p><b>Basis:</b> Collection of priority single-piece tariffs of equivalent domestic services for 250 g, 500 g, 1 kg, 2 kg, 5 kg, 10 kg, and 20 kg parcels, exclusive of taxes. These tariffs should correspond to a service that includes tracking and liability (service features corresponding to the ordinary parcel service as envisaged under the IPP, i.e. excluding proof of delivery);</p> <p><b>Cost-to-tariff ratio:</b> 100%;</p> <p>Para 48- To mitigate possible impacts of introducing a new remuneration system for parcels, it is envisaged to apply a transitional arrangement with maximum annual changes (both increases and decreases) during the first years of</p>		

	<p>the new system by reaching the end state by the end of the next Congress cycle (year 2030). At the weight point of 4.652 kg, the self-declared parcel rates for ordinary parcels should not exceed the “transition revenue,” which is determined as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transition revenue for 2027: (“ceiling revenue for 2027” x 0.25) + (“Full ILR 2026 revenue” x 0.75);</li> <li>- Transition revenue for 2028: (“ceiling revenue for 2028” x 0.50) + (“Full ILR 2026 revenue” x 0.50);</li> <li>- Transition revenue for 2029: (“ceiling revenue for 2029” x 0.75) + (“Full ILR 2026 revenue” x 0.25);</li> <li>- Transition revenue for 2030: (“ceiling revenue for 2030” x 1.00) + (“Full ILR 2026 revenue” x 0.00).</li> </ul>		
<p><b>How the new Parcel rates for Group IV countries are calculated</b></p>	<p><b><u>For Group 4 countries</u></b>  <b><u>F) For those countries and territories listed in CA C 2 2024.1-Doc 8. Annex 1</u></b>  and whose domestic tariffs (under point a) are not set by costs (e.g., owing to social obligations), the DO may request the application of EMS international inbound remuneration rates (i.e., those in force the previous calendar year) reduced by 30% and use the resulting remuneration rates to substitute the domestic reference rates resulting from the steps described in points a) through f). Whether or not the domestic parcel tariffs are cost-covering needs to be validated by a competent authority responsible for supervising the postal service and submitted to the IB in writing. Where EMS international inbound remuneration</p>	<p>From 2027, group 4 countries will use 70 % of EMS international inbound.</p> <p>A competent authority responsible for supervising the postal service must validate whether the domestic parcel tariffs are cost-covering and submit the determination in writing to the IB. Where EMS international inbound remuneration rates are not available, the remuneration rates may be self-declared as long as they are confirmed in writing by the competent authority.</p>	<p>African countries shall be careful when using EMS or self-declared rates. if we have increased our rates too high, it will affect our competitiveness in our African markets</p> <p>The current proposal is based on the current EMS rates for Group 4 countries; if any country increases its EMS rates, that country should not increase parcel rates unless it is truly required to.</p> <p>And no African county is advised to increase their EMS rates to increase their parcel rates.</p>

	<p>rates are not available, the remuneration rates may be self-declared as long as they are confirmed in writing by the competent authority.</p>		
<p><b>100 tons protection threshold</b></p>	<p>Para 40- Consequential to the discontinuation of the “default” E format terminal dues system (by replacing it with the methodology outlined above) would be the <b>removal of the current threshold of 25 tons, i.e. the provision in Convention article 29.1.1.7. In other words, the DOs of countries classified in groups II and III will apply the remuneration rates currently provided for in Convention Article 29. <u>The current threshold in Convention Article 29.1.1.6 may be revised after reviewing the flow study results. Below the threshold, countries and territories listed in Annex 1 would pay per-item and per-kg floor rates instead of the flat per-kg rate in Article 31.11 of the Convention.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>41) From 1 January 2027, it is proposed that all items containing goods (small packets) be fully separated from documents. Consequently, it is proposed that all items containing goods are remunerated based on the actual number of items. Those items would no longer be subject to sampling as the items are identifiable based on the barcode. From that date, no dispatches that mix documents and goods would be allowed.</u></b></p>	<p>According to Integrated remuneration system principles in the same document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring the provision of an affordable and viable universal postal service through sustainable remuneration to delivery designated operators (DOs);</li> <li>- The UPU remuneration system's shift towards a self-declared system makes postal services unaffordable for most Group 4 countries.</li> <li>- The 100-ton protection threshold was proposed in option V in 2019 to protect Group 4 countries from the new self-declared system. It differentiates threshold between countries that are economically powerful enough to pay self-declared rates and those that are vulnerable and need to be protected by floor rate payments.</li> <li>- There will be a split in document and goods dispatch, and the 100 tons will need to be divided into 20 tons for documents and 80 tons for goods, but not lower.</li> <li>- What is proposed that all items containing goods are remunerated based on the number of items is good enough for Group I countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- African countries must defend 100 tons threshold to guarantee access to affordable postal service,</li> <li>- The proposed review – in the document - will be made based on current volumes, which are, after the postal network has lost the majority of its market share</li> <li>- The 100 tons protection threshold was proposed in 2019 before the postal network lost its market share due to the expensive increases in UPU remunerations after the UPU extraordinary congress in 2019 and before the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> <li>- The protection threshold shall be maintained for these reasons. Africa can accept the proposal that all items containing goods be remunerated based on the actual number of items while maintaining the 100-ton <b><u>protection threshold.</u></b></li> </ul>



After deliberations, it was proposed that PAPU Member States designate remuneration experts to facilitate participation and implementation of remuneration issues discussed at the POC and Congress levels to ensure that Africa's interests are protected.

To this end, members were urged to attend the Remuneration Integration Group meeting to be held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024, since an important proposal to increase the Group I cap rate by 7.5 % annually while maintaining the floor rate at 4.5% will be tabled.

## **6.2 Status of Implementation of Working Group Action Plan:**

### **6.2.1 Integrated Product Plan (IPP) Riyadh Congress Resolutions.**

The 4<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Congress, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in October 2023, approved several resolutions on reviewing the Integrated Product Plan (IPP) relating to M bags, registered items, tracked delivery services, and delivery advice. The Committee was informed of the resolutions made, their effective dates, and the actions that Designated Operators must take.

### **6.2.2 Remuneration Workshops.**

Three Remuneration Workshops were held during the 2023/24 financial year:

- i) PAPU, in collaboration with Egypt Post and International Post Corporation (IPC), organized a PRIME Workshop for the Africa and Arab Regions. The workshop was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Virtual participation was facilitated for participants who could not travel to Egypt.
- ii) PAPU and other Restricted Unions in Africa, in collaboration with the UPU, organized two International Mail Accounting Workshops as follows:
  - 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024 in Cairo, Egypt, for English-speaking countries
  - 30<sup>th</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 in Cotonou, Benin, and French-speaking countries.

The following **recommendations** were tabled by the Remuneration Working Group for consideration and adoption by the Operations and Technology Committee:

- i. Designated Operators in Africa should actively participate in the work of the POC sessions, and Standing Group meetings, particularly regarding the review of the Integrated Product Plan (IPP) and the Integrated Remuneration Plan (IRP), to ensure that the fully integrated product portfolio and the resultant remuneration systems address the needs of African Posts and their customers;
- ii. Designated Operators in Africa should ensure full implementation of the different services in the updated IPP as approved by Congress;

- iii. DOs should actively participate in Remuneration workshops to ensure they are up to speed with current remuneration systems and accounting procedures to safeguard their revenues;
- iv. DOs should join the PRIME system to ensure that they earn extra revenue for their mail services.

**The Committee adopted the Remuneration Working Group Report and its recommendations.**

## **7.0 DIGITALIZATION AND INNOVATION WORKING GROUP (DIG)**

### **7.1 Presentation of Working Group Report**

The Digitalization and Innovation Working Group Chairperson, Mr. Abdaty Ka of Senegal, presented the Group's report under **PAPU/ATC/OTC/01/2024 - Doc No. 04.**

The report focused on the following main areas:

#### **7.1.1 Status of Implementation of Working Group Action Plan**

The Committee was apprised of the progress made by the Working Group in implementing the Resolution made by the 41<sup>st</sup> Administrative Council Session. The group's activities included enhancing the digitalization of postal services, participating in meetings and sharing best practices, improving digital infrastructure, and implementing specific innovations, among other things.

#### **7.1.2 Postal Digitalization Activities**

The Working Group participated in other postal digitalization activities as follows:

- i) **African Union (AU) Digital Transformation Strategy**

The General Secretariat participated in the workshop on the AU Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS) organized in September 2023. The DTS aims to achieve **“An integrated and inclusive digital society and economy in Africa by 2030.”**

- ii) **Administration of the questionnaire on the digitalization of postal services in Africa**

The questionnaire was recirculated to the Member States as a reminder for those who had not responded in 2023 and those who had responded to provide updates, where applicable.

#### **7.1.3 Project Implementation in Cooperation with the UPU**

Under the Digitalization and Innovation Working Group, the Committee was informed that PAPU is implementing the following projects in collaboration with UPU:

- i) **Financial Inclusion Technical Assistance Facility (FITAF)**

- ii) Electrification and Connectivity Project of Post Offices in Africa
- iii) Postal Prosperity Zone (PPZ) Initiative

#### **7.1.4 Postal Innovations**

The Expert Team to spearhead the implementation of the Africa Integrated E-Commerce Platform, which was tasked with developing a framework for an e-commerce platform, was implored to expedite its work to ensure that Africa collectively pools its resources.

The Committee was informed of the different innovations being implemented by African countries, some of which made presentations during the Working Group meeting. These were Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal and Uganda.

The following **recommendations** were tabled by the Working Group for consideration and adoption by the Committee:

- i) Integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into digitalization plans or future developments of the postal sector since it is a vital component of digital transformation;
- ii) PAPU Member States were urged to complete the questionnaire on the digitalization of postal services to expedite the progress of building an African database of digital postal services;
- iii) PAPU Member States were encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to submit their applications to UPU to get support for the Digitalization of Financial Services (DFS);
- iv) The General Secretariat was instructed to continue engaging with project parties, namely UPU and AU, to identify potential funding partners and ensure the projects' success;
- v) PAPU Member States should consider embracing the Postal Prosperity Zone Initiative to boost business volumes, especially in e-commerce;
- vi) The development of the Africa Integrated E-Commerce Platform should be expedited so that members can benefit from its pooled collective capacities;
- vii) Designated Operators were encouraged to learn from shared experiences and increase the success stories.

**The Committee adopted the Digitalization and Innovation Working Group Report and its recommendations.**

#### **7.2 Status Report on Digitalization of Postal Services in Africa**

The General Secretariat presented an update on the Status of Digitalization of Postal Services in Africa under **PAPU/ATC/OTC/01/2024—Doc No.05** and its Annexes. The report was an analysis of a questionnaire

circulated to Member States, whose objective was to elicit and collate information on the Digitalization of Postal Services in Africa to establish the status and use the information obtained as a baseline for interventions.

After the questionnaire was re-circulated in January 2024, thirty-six (36) responses were received, representing 80% of PAPU Member States. The detailed analysis of the responses was presented and discussed by the Committee.

Tanzania raised a relevant point relating to financial services and postal payments, a pillar whose achievement was only 24%. Unrealized actions in this pillar represent 59%. This could be explained by the fact that some Postal Administrations separated, have transformed, or exclude financial services from the entire array of postal services. Given this, it is necessary to integrate/include financial services to better assess this pillar's level of digitalization. In other words, most DOs do not offer these services. It is, therefore, necessary to consider only the DOs that continue to offer these services in the analysis.

Member States were encouraged to share experiences and best practices to assist those lagging behind.

The Committee took note of the progress made and adopted the report.

The following **recommendations** were tabled by the Working Group for consideration and adoption by the Committee:

- i) PAPU Member States were encouraged to respond to Questionnaires.
- ii) PAPU Member States were urged to continue implementation of the digitalization agenda.

## **8.0 PROMOTION OF PHILATELY WORKING GROUP (PPG)**

### **8.1 Presentation of the Working Group Report**

The General Secretariat presented the Promotion of Philately Working Group Report on behalf of the Chairperson, Mrs. Funmilayo Esiri of Nigeria, vide document **PAPU/ATC/OTC/01/20234 - Doc No. 06**.

The following were the salient issues in the report

#### **8.1.1 Status of Implementation of the Working Group Action Plan**

The Promotion of Philately Working Group reported that they had implemented the following main activities in line with the Working Group Action Plan:

- i) Issuance of PAPU Joint Stamp Commemorating the Commissioning of the PAPU Tower.
- ii) Organization of the 2<sup>nd</sup> African Philately Conference (APC) held in Rabat, Morocco on 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.
- iii) Organization of a Capacity Building Workshop held in Rabat, Morocco on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.

- iv) Participation at the World Association for the Development of Philately (WADP) Forum held in Bangkok, Thailand on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.

### **8.1.2 2<sup>nd</sup> African Philately Conference (APC)**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> APC, organized from 21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 at Fairmont La Marina Rabat Salé Hotel in Rabat, Morocco, was held under the theme '**Sustainability of Philately Business in the Digital Era**'. Over seventy (70) participants from thirty-four (34) Member States attended the Conference.

The Conference aimed to allow participants to exchange their experiences and learn about technical and marketing innovations from other philatelic industry players to grow and sustain the philatelic business.

### **8.1.3 Capacity Building Workshop Report**

The Philately Capacity Building Workshop was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023 at Fairmont La Marina Rabat Salé Hotel in Rabat, Morocco. The United States Postal Service (USPS), in collaboration with PAPU, provided a fellowship for one participant from each of the PAPU Member States to attend both the Conference and Workshop, resulting in high attendance of over 50 participants from 34 countries.

### **8.1.4 Questionnaire on Status of Philately Services**

The Working Group approved the circulation of a questionnaire on the status of Philately Services in Africa, an outcome of the successful Promotion of Philately Working Group Meeting held on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2024.

### **8.1.5 Proposal on Creation of the Africa Philatelic Federation.**

The Working Group reported on the proposal to create the Africa Philatelic Federation and the need to develop a roadmap with activities to be implemented before its creation. The major activity was to ensure that most PAPU Member States have Philately Departments and the requisite knowledge to run their businesses.

The following **recommendations** from the Philately Working Group were tabled for consideration and adoption by the Committee;

- i) Establishment of an African Philatelic Federation/Association to develop Philately in Africa;
- ii) Active participation in Philatelic exhibitions and programmes organized by PAPU and UPU;
- iii) Consider issuing a joint stamp to pay homage to women's active participation in the philately business;
- iv) Designated Operators to collaborate with renowned industry partners in all spheres of the philately business, that is, but not limited to design, production, marketing, and sale;
- v) Establish partnerships among and between Designated Operators in the sale and promotion of philatelic products;

- vi) PAPU Member States were encouraged to participate in the African Joint Philatelic Hub hosted by Morocco to exhibit and boost the sale of their stamps;
- vii) PAPU Member States were encouraged to share information on illegal stamp issues to discourage malpractice.

The Report of the Promotion of Philately Working Group was adopted by the Committee, along with its recommendations.

## **8.2 Status of Philately Services in Africa**

The General Secretariat presented a report on the Status of Philatelic Services in Africa under **PAPU/ATC/OTC/01/2024 - Doc No. 07** and its Annexes. The report was an analysis of a questionnaire circulated on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024, whose objective was to elicit and collate information on philatelic activities being implemented by Designated Operators in Africa to ascertain the status and craft interventions and programmes to assist in filling any identified gaps.

At the time of analysis, twenty-nine (29) Designated Operators (DOs) had responded to the Questionnaire, giving a response rate of 64%. Three more DOs responded after analysis, giving a total response rate of 71%.

The detailed analysis of the responses, which covered the following four (4) main areas of the philately business, was presented to the Committee:

- i) Organization of Philately Business;
- ii) Stamp Production;
- iii) Marketing and Sale of Philatelic Products;
- iv) Digitalization of Stamps.

The Committee considered the report and made the following decisions:

- i) Took note of the status of philately services in Africa.
- ii) Urged PAPU Member States to respond to Questionnaires to ensure that the African status of Philately is fully accounted for.
- iii) Encouraged PAPU Member States to increase investment in philately and continue with the digitalization of Philatelic business in line with global trends.

## **8.3 Sharing of Experience on Digitalization of Philately Business - Presentations**

Mr. Marcus Bücherand Mr. Michael Domer from Deutsch Post and STAMPfinity, respectively, made two presentations to the committee on the digitalization of philately. The presenters shared their experiences in issuing NFT and crypto stamps and the benefits of issuing these digital stamps to Designated Operators.

The first crypto stamp was issued in 2019, and to date, twenty-eight (28) countries worldwide have issued them, and their sales are increasing. The Committee was informed that Ghana Post has issued the first crypto stamp in Africa.

## **9.0 Supply Chain Working Group (SCG)**

### **9.1 Presentation of Working Group Report**

The Supply Chain Working Group Chairman, Mr. Jasson Kalile of Tanzania, presented the Group's report under document **PAPU/ATC/OTC/01/2024 - Doc No.08**.

The following were the highlights from the report:

#### **9.1.1 Status of Implementation of the Supply Chain Working Group Action Plan:**

##### **a) Operational Efficiency and E-commerce Development Project (ORE 3)**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> ORE 3 Workshop for Anglophone African Countries was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023, while the one for francophone countries was held from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023 in Cotonou, Benin. Another workshop was held for the Arab region, which includes North African countries.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop for the African Region was held from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in Gaborone, Botswana, for French and English-speaking African countries.

The Workshops aimed to enhance participants' knowledge and practical skills related to postal service efficiency, quality of service, and compliance with e-commerce requirements.

##### **b) PAPU Security Action Group Creation**

In line with Article 8 of the UPU Convention and its Regulations, Designated Operators were encouraged to comply with the S58 and S59 standards and attain certification. The following African countries have so far attained security standards certification for their critical facilities: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Egypt, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, and Togo.

The Working Group endorsed the creation of the PAPU Security Action Group to develop, coordinate, facilitate, and implement the Africa Region security strategies in line with the UPU Postal Security Standards, S58 & S59, through the UPU Postal Security Group (PSG). The General Secretariat has since written to subregional organizations to nominate at least two representatives per subregion.

##### **c) Mail Transportation:**

###### **i) Transport Workshop Report;**

In collaboration with PAPU, the UPU organized a Transport Workshop from 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Arusha, Tanzania. The Workshop's primary objectives were to examine ways to improve transport

performance (Leg 2) and foster the establishment of Regional Transport Hubs to ensure efficient international mail transportation in Africa.

### 9.1.2 Quality of Service Performance Review

Africa's participation in the Global Monitoring System (GMS) remains low after the Covid-19 pandemic. Seventeen (17) DOs participated in GMS Link in 2023 compared to twenty-three (23) in 2019, while sixteen (16) DOs participated in GMS World compared to thirty-three (33) in 2019.

It was noted that E2E quality of service performance for outbound international mail from Africa is generally below the expected targets. Mail within Africa took an average of 13.5 days to be delivered, with an **on-time delivery rate of 34.5%**.

Only Eswatini, Malawi, Morocco, Togo, and Tunisia met their inbound targets for GMS Link in 2023. The rest of the countries performed far below expectations; hence, they must improve their performance to achieve the targets.

It was noted that GMS was very expensive; hence, Regulators need to assist their DOs with resources to acquire GMS equipment to facilitate their participation. However, DOS should focus on the post's future, e-commerce. Therefore, investment should be channeled towards acquiring equipment to facilitate item tracking. DOs were reminded that they are entitled to a one-year bonus for only providing EMD scans for tracked delivery service items as approved by Congress.

### 9.1.3 Global Issues: UPU POC Supply Chain Committee

The Committee noted the key global supply chain issues under the UPU Postal Operations Committee 1 (Supply Chain) covering the following:

- Customs Compendium;
- European Union Import Control System (ICS2) Release 2;
- UPU EAD Global Postal Model- outstanding issues;
- Postal Transport Guide approved by POC.

It was recommended that Members take note of developments in the international space at UPU relating to the Customs Group, Transport Group, and Security Group and take proactive steps to remain compliant with standards and established targets.

The Supply Chain Working Group tabled the following **recommendations** for consideration and adoption by the Committee:

#### a) On Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE 3)

- i) DOs should use quality monitoring tools like QCS and IQRS to assess their performance and take corrective measures;



- ii) DOs should use on-site evaluation missions to improve operational efficiency and their specific country's project implementation performance;
- iii) Country Project Managers should continue implementing activities in their Country Roadmaps and Action Plans to improve regional performance.

**b) On Security matters**

- i) Create the PAPU Security Action Group (SAG) to spearhead the development, coordination, facilitation, and implementation of the Africa Region security strategies in line with the UPU Postal Security Standards, S58 & S59;
- ii) Constitute the membership of PAPU SAG with UPU Security-Certificated members working at Security Units and duly nominated by DOs PMGs/DGs of Designated Operators of PAPU Member States;
- iii) Adopt the Terms of Reference of the PAPU SAG.

**c) On Quality-of-Service Performance Review**

- i) Designated Operators were urged to participate in GMS Link quality of service testing to facilitate participation in the quality-of-service link to terminal dues and earn extra revenue through Terminal Dues;
- ii) Designated Operators were urged to participate in GMS World quality of service testing to monitor and improve quality of service for international mail;
- iii) Designated Operators were urged to invest in equipment acquisition (scanners, computers) to offer tracked delivery service, which is ideal for e-commerce as the 4<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Congress approved. DOs can attain additional revenue by only providing EMD scans during the first year.

**d) Key Global Supply Chain Issues**

Member States were urged to take note of international developments at UPU on Customs Group, Transport Group, and Security Group and take necessary compliance steps to meet standards and established targets

**The Committee adopted the report and its recommendations while commending the Working Group for a job well-done.**

**9.2 PAPU-AFRAA Activities Report.**

Ms. Joan Toroitich of Kenya presented the report of the PAPU-AFRAA Task Force on behalf of the Chairman under **PAPU/ATC/OTC/01/2024 Doc No. 09**. The main areas covered by the report were:

**9.2.1 Status of Implementation of the Task Force Action Plan.**

The activities implemented under the PAPU-AFRAA Task Force included the following:

- i) Collaboration with AFRAA, which attended the 41<sup>st</sup> Administrative Council and the PAPU -AFRAA Task Force meeting;

- ii) Organization of the transport work in Arusha from 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in collaboration with UPU;
- iii) Leg 2 (mail transportation) performance by Designated Operators for 2023.

On addressing transport challenges and compliance with Electronic Advance Data (EAD) as well as the ICS2 Release 2 requirements, it was recommended that:

- i) DOs should separate documents from goods when dispatching since documents are exempted from EAD;
- ii) Ensure that the correct ITMATT and other EAD data are captured;
- iii) Participate in the UPU Compliance project to identify compliance issues and take corrective action.

### **9.2.2 Regional Transport Facilitation**

The Committee noted the Regional E-commerce Hub, officially launched in Addis Ababa on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024. It also noted that Ethiopian Airlines had engaged the General Secretariat in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance collaboration in mail conveyance in Africa. However, it was underscored that the MoU should not substitute the service-level agreements signed between the airline and Designated Operators.

Members raised several concerns with Ethiopian Airlines, some of which included delays in conveying mail, non-response to inquiries, damage to postal items, and language barrier (for French-speaking countries), which the General Secretariat needs to communicate to ET and endeavor to address within the framework of the MoU.

The MoU is also not exclusive, as DOs are free to sign SLAs with other airlines that exchange electronic data and meet the international requirements for the conveyance of international mail.

### **9.2.3 Africa Transport Think Tank Creation**

Further to the Regional Transport Workshop, which was held from 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023 in Arusha, Tanzania, and whose objective was to improve transport performance (Leg 2) in Africa and foster the establishment of Regional Transport Hubs to ensure efficient international mail transportation in Africa, a Transport Think Tank (TTT) was created.

The Transport Think Tank (TTT) consists of

- i) Ten Transport Experts from Designated Operators (DOs) from the following Member States: Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, and Togo;
- ii) Two (2) UPU Transport Experts;
- iii) Two (2) PAPU General Secretariat.

**The Committee noted the creation of the Africa Transport Think Tank and its co-option into the PAPU organs.**

The **recommendations** on Transport Matters were as follows:

- i) PAPU Member States should support the PAPU organs that seek to address the transport challenges in Africa, namely the Transport Think Tank and the PAPU AFRAA Task Force;
- ii) The PAPU General Secretariat will circulate a questionnaire to establish the status of mail transportation in the Member States' designated operators;
- iii) PAPU Member States were encouraged to sign SLAs with ET on mail conveyance in line with the envisaged PAPU-ET MoU and with other airlines that exchange electronic data and meet the international requirements for the conveyance of international mail.

## **10.0 DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Once arrangements are finalized, the General Secretariat will communicate the date and venue of the next meeting of the Operations and Technology Committee. Working Group meetings will be organized as necessary throughout the year.

## **11.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)**

Egypt informed the Committee that they had launched a postal service termed 'Bareedi', which is an equivalent of e-registered mail. Egypt requested to make a presentation to share their experience on the service during the next Committee meeting.

Burkina Faso commended the General Secretariat for the quality of documents/reports presented during the meeting. They suggested that the Secretariat consider seeking technical support from USPS to organize a security and safety training workshop for African countries to be well prepared and comply with international security requirements.

## **12.0 ADOPTION OF THE COMMITTEE REPORT**

The General Secretariat presented the draft report for adoption by the Committee. They adopted the report with a few amendments.

A draft Resolution containing the Committee's recommendations was presented for adoption. The draft resolution is submitted to the Administrative Council for consideration and adoption. It is attached to the Report as **Annex 3**

## **13.0 CLOSING**

The Secretary General thanked everyone, including the Working Groups, for contributing to the committee's work. He called for action from Designated Operators to follow through on the recommendations and ensure implementation. He pledged the support of the General Secretariat in ensuring that the Committee meets its mandate.

The Chairman thanked all the delegates and committee members for contributing to the meeting's success. He also expressed gratitude to the Secretary General and his Team for supporting the Committee in executing its work and closed the meeting.

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Status of Implementation of Operations and Technology Action Plan 2023/2024

COMMITTEE 1: OPERATIONS & TECHNOLOGIES COMMITTEE (OTC) 2023-2024						
S/N	KEY RESULT AREA	MILESTONE	BY WHEN	Done	In progress	Not Done
REMUNERATION WORKING GROUP						
1.	Letter Post Remuneration System	i) Outline the remuneration for undeliverable items (UV)	Q3 2023			
2.	Parcel Post Remuneration	i) Expound the Parcel Post Remuneration Model	Q2 2023			
		ii) Explain the Quality Performance system of the Parcel Post Remuneration system	Q2 2023			
		iii) Illuminate the implications of Remuneration System on Africa	Q3 2023			
		iv) Organize a Remuneration Working Group Meeting	Q4 2023			
		v) Request for feedback from Member States (Questionnaire)	Q4 2023			
3.	Remuneration Issues	i) Identify and summarize key issues	Q2 2024			

		ii) Communicate to the Committee and Member States	Q2 2024			
<b>DIGITALIZATION AND INNOVATION WORKING GROUP</b>						
4.	<b>Digital Infrastructure and modernization of operations</b>	i) Provision of digitization environment and infrastructure within Member States to cover the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electrification and alternative power sources</li> <li>• Internet connectivity</li> <li>• Networking of offices</li> <li>• Cloud computing</li> </ul>	Q2 2023			
		ii) Members to ensure provision of hardware at Post Offices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Servers</li> <li>• Computers/laptops</li> <li>• Printers</li> <li>• Scanners</li> <li>• Digital Scales</li> </ul>	Q3 2023			
5.	<b>Digitalization of Postal Services</b>	i) Migration of services from the traditional onto the digital platforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-Post</li> <li>• E-commerce</li> <li>• E- Government</li> <li>• Digital financial services</li> <li>• Mobile banking solutions</li> </ul>				
		ii) Deploy technology-based value-added features on the Integrated Product Plan (IPP) portfolio to ensure full implementation of IPP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECOMPRO</li> <li>• Tracked delivery service</li> <li>• Small packets</li> </ul>				

6.	Postal home-grown digital innovations	i) Develop own digital solutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Software</li> <li>• Applications</li> </ul>	Q2 2023			
7.	Human Capital Development	i) Training workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT systems</li> <li>• Tools</li> <li>• Cyber security</li> </ul>	Q4 2023			
8.	Communication and Feedback on Digitalization and Innovation Progress	i) Members' active participation in the different projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional/Global Meetings on Innovation and Product Development</li> <li>• Digitization implementation initiatives</li> </ul>	Annually			
		ii) Information feedback from Member States on the implementation of the projects	Annually			
<b>PHILATELY WORKING GROUP</b>						
9.	New trends and innovations in philately business	i) Explore new markets for African philatelic products in partnership with other stakeholders	On-going			
		ii) Philately information feedback from Member States (Questionnaire)	Q2 2023			
		i) Explore digital stamp products on the market	On-going			
10.	Promotion of philatelic products	ii) Promote philatelic products and activities on different platforms.	On-going			
		iii) Participation by Member States in philatelic activities organized by PAPU, UPU, fellow Members and other Organizations. (meetings/workshops/conferences/exhibitions)	On-going			
11.		i) Share information on illegal and counterfeit issues	Q2 2023			

	<b>Illegal and counterfeit stamp issues</b>	ii) Craft strategies to eradicate illegal and counterfeit issues of African stamps	Q2 2023			
12.	<b>Sharing of best practices on Philately</b>	i) Identify Member States exceling in the philately business to share experiences during workshops/ Committee meetings	Q2 2023			
<b>SUPPLY CHAIN WORKING GROUP</b>						
13.	<b><u>Transport Matters</u></b>	i) Constitute National Contact Committees with transport stakeholders (Airlines, Aviation, Handling Agents etc.)	Q2 2023			
		ii) Achieve affordable mail conveyance rates	Q4 2023			
		iii) Consolidate reports on participation and feedback from PAPU /AFRAA Taskforce	Bi-annually			
		iv) Ensure efficient intra-Africa mail conveyance	Q4 2023			
14.	<b>Customs Matters</b>	i) Members' participation in Regional/Global Meetings on the subject area	On-going			
15.	<b>Security Matters</b>	i) High Cyber Security awareness by Members	Q2 2023			
		ii) Member participation in Regional/Global Meetings on Security matters	Q3 2023			
		iii) Prevent acceptance of Prohibited items and Dangerous goods into the Postal System - illicit trade	Q4 2023			

**Draft Resolution No. ... /PAPU/AC/XLII/2024**

**Operations and Technology Matters**

The Administrative Council of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), during its 42<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Session in Arusha, Tanzania, from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024;

**Recalling** that the Operations and Technology Committee Action Plan for the period 2022-2025 was approved by the 40<sup>th</sup> Administrative Council held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), by Resolution No. 02/PAPU/AC/XL/2022 on Operations and Technology Matters;

**Considering** that the Committee continued its work in the implementation of the Action Plan through its four Working Groups and a Task Force, viz;

- a. Remuneration Working Group;
- b. Digitalization and Innovation Working Group;
- c. Promotion of Philately Working Group;
- d. Supply Chain Working Group.
  - o PAPU-AFRAA Task Force

**Noting** that the Committee held its meeting from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to deliberate on specific issues relating to Operations and Technology emanating from the Working Groups and the Task Force;

**Acknowledging** that, indeed, the specific issues have been deliberated and agreed upon:

**Further Noting** the Progress Report on Implementation of the Program of Activities of the Operations and Technology Committee;

**Do hereby** adopt the Operations and Technology Committee Report and its recommendations on the following:

**a. On Remuneration:**

- i. Designated Operators in Africa should actively participate in the work of the POC, sessions, and Standing Group meetings, particularly regarding the review of the Integrated Product Plan (IPP) and the Integrated Remuneration Plan (IRP), to ensure the resultant fully integrated product portfolio and the resultant remuneration systems address the needs of African Posts and their customers;
- ii. Designated Operators in Africa should ensure full implementation of the different services in the updated IPP as Congress approves;

- iii. DOs should actively participate in Remuneration workshops to ensure they are up to speed with current remuneration systems and accounting procedures to safeguard their revenues;
- iv. DOs should join the PRIME system to ensure that they earn extra revenue for their mail services.

**b. On Digitalization and Innovation:**

- i. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into digitalization plans or future developments of the postal sector since it is a vital component of digital transformation;
- ii. PAPU Member States were urged to complete the questionnaire on the digitalization of postal services to expedite the progress of building an African database of digital postal services;
- iii. PAPU Member States were encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to submit their applications to UPU to get support for the Digitalization of Financial Services (DFS);
- iv. The General Secretariat was instructed to continue engaging with project parties, namely UPU and AU, to identify potential funding partners and ensure the Projects' success;
- v. PAPU Member States should consider embracing the Postal Prosperity Zone Initiative to boost business volumes, especially in e-commerce;
- vi. The Africa Integrated E-Commerce Platform's development should be expedited so members can benefit from its pooled collective capacities;
- vii. Designated Operators were encouraged to learn from shared experiences and increase the shared success stories.

**c. On Philately:**

- i. Establishment of an African Philatelic Federation/Association to develop Philately in Africa;
- ii. Encouragement of active participation in Philatelic exhibitions and programmes organized by PAPU and UPU;
- iii. PAPU Members to consider issuing a joint stamp to pay homage to women's active participation in the philately business;
- iv. Designated Operators to collaborate with renowned industry partners in all spheres of the philately business, that is, but not limited to design, production, marketing, and sale;
- v. Partnerships be established among and between Designated Operators in the sale and promotion of philatelic products;
- vi. PAPU Member States were encouraged to participate in the African Joint Philatelic Hub hosted by Morocco to exhibit and boost the sale of their stamps;
- vii. PAPU Member States were encouraged to share information on illegal stamp issues to discourage malpractice.

**d. On Operational Readiness for E-commerce (ORE 3)**



- i. DOs should use quality monitoring tools like QCS and IQRS to assess their performance and take corrective measures;
- ii. DOs should use on-site evaluation missions to improve operational efficiency and their specific country's project implementation performance;
- iii. Country Project Managers should continue implementing activities in their Country Roadmaps and Action Plans to improve regional performance.

**e. On Security matters**

- i. Create the PAPU Security Action Group (SAG) to spearhead the development, coordination, facilitation, and implementation of the Africa Region security strategies in line with the UPU Postal Security Standards, S58 & S59;
- ii. Constitute the membership of PAPU SAG with UPU Security-Certificated members working at Security Units and duly nominated by DOs PMGs/DGs of Designated Operators of PAPU Member States;
- iii. Adopt the Terms of Reference of the PAPU SAG.

**f. On Quality-of-Service Performance Review**

- i. Designated Operators were urged to participate in GMS Link quality of service testing to participate in the quality-of-service link to terminal dues and earn extra revenue through Terminal Dues;
- ii. Designated Operators were urged to participate in GMS World quality of service testing to monitor and improve quality of service for international mail;
- iii. Designated Operators were urged to invest in equipment acquisition (scanners, computers) to offer tracked delivery service, which is ideal for e-commerce as the 4th Extraordinary Congress approved. DOs can attain additional revenue by only providing EMD scans during the first year.

**g. On Key Global Supply Chain Issues**

- i. PAPU Member States were urged to note international developments at UPU in the Customs Group, Transport Group, and Security Group and take necessary compliance steps to meet standards and established targets

**h. On PAPU/AFRAA Activities:**

- i. PAPU Member States should support the PAPU organs that seek to address the transport challenges in Africa, namely the Transport Think Tank and the PAPU AFRAA Task Force;

- ii. The PAPU General Secretariat will circulate a questionnaire to establish the status of mail transportation in the Member States' designated operators;
- iii. PAPU Member States were encouraged to sign SLAs with ET on mail conveyance in line with the envisaged PAPU-ET MoU and with other airlines that exchange electronic data and meet the international requirements for the conveyance of international mail.

#### **CALLS UPON**

The Member States to implement the above recommendations;

#### **INSTRUCTS**

The General Secretariat to coordinate the implementation of the Committee's activities and update the Administrative Council.

*Done in Arusha, Tanzania, on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2024*