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STRATEGY COMMITTEE (SC)
5th, 6th June 2024, Arusha, Tanzania

PAPU ICT CAPACITY BUILDING CENTER REPORT

1. Subject PAPU ICT Capacity Building Center Report	References/Paragraphs PAPU Strategic Plan 2021/2022-2024/2025
2. Decisions Expected <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take note of the PAPU ICT Capacity Building Center Report• Adopt the Report Recommendations.• Provide necessary guidance	

1. INTRODUCTION

The PAPU ICT Capacity Building Center Report is tabled before the Strategy Committee for consideration and note. The Report outlines the centre's strategic positioning and the role that it will play in the digitalization of the postal sector in Africa through online training, face-to-face training, and capacity building in conjunction with Partner Organizations.

2. BACKGROUND

The Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) was established with a visionary mandate from Africa's founding leaders to drive the development of the African postal sector. This mandate emphasizes the pivotal role of postal services in promoting regional integration, socio-economic development, and people's cultural lives across the continent. The postal sector is evolving and is transitioning to the digital space, and hence, the PAPU Capacity Building Centre will serve as an essential vehicle for supporting the digitalization of postal services in Africa in conformity with the Union's Objectives as set out in Acts of the Pan African Postal Union as indicated below:

2.1 Objectives of the Union

1. Foster development cooperation among Member States in the area of postal services;

2. Promote and facilitate access to quality universal postal services;
3. Promote and facilitate reform of the postal sector;
4. Promote and facilitate technical assistance in the postal sector;
5. Promote and advance common positions of Member States on postal issues;
6. Promote research and development in the postal sector;
7. Promote regional projects for developing the African Postal network;
8. Promote the development of new postal products and services;
9. Promote the sustainable development of the postal sector;
10. Promote affirmative action in the development of the postal sector.

2.2 The PAPU Capacity Building Centre will be essential for supporting the digitalization of postal services in Africa. The PAPU General Secretariat is embracing digitalization to support the African postal sector revolution, making it more agile, customer-centric, competitive in the global marketplace, and fit to serve the emerging Digital economies on the continent.

2.3 The Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) ICT Capacity Building Center will play a crucial role in postal digitalization by equipping postal employees across Africa with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to rapidly changing technologies.

2.4 PAPU ICT Capacity Building Centre is also a UPU Centre of Excellence that provides capacity building in programs developed by UPU.

3. POSTAL DIGITALISATION CONTEXT

3.1 Digital transformation is a driving force for innovative, inclusive, and sustainable growth for many sectors. Innovations and digitalization stimulate and streamline business processes in the post. As postal services worldwide undergo significant transformation driven by digital innovations and solutions on all aspects of the postal business, the Posts in Africa need to re-imagine their business models and processes to anchor them on digital platforms.

3.2 Digitalization offers a transformative opportunity for African Posts to integrate their business processes and enhance operational efficiency. By leveraging digital technologies such as blockchain, cloud computing, big data analytics, and the Internet of Things (IoT), drones, postal operators can streamline their workflows, automate tasks, and improve service delivery. Digitalization allows postal services to offer new services such as e-commerce, digital financial services, e-logistics, and digital mailboxes, diversifying their revenue streams and ensuring long-term sustainability

4. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ICT CAPACITY BUILDING CENTRE

4.1 The PAPU ICT Capacity Building Centre was established on the 15th Floor of the PAPU Tower after it was formally inaugurated in September 2023 by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Her Excellency Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan.

4.2 The broader objectives of the PAPU ICT CB Centre are to assist PAPU members in the development of digital skills, research, and innovation, to enable the African postal industry to take up the innovative digital

solutions needed for postal services to remain competitive and meet growing consumer demand for mail logistics, Financial Services, E-Government Services, Trade facilitation, and communication services. Research and innovation will also be harnessed to recommend policies and strategies in identifying potential intervention areas targeting sustainable postal development in Africa. Research and innovation will be pursued to explore how Postal Operators can boost efficiency, lower costs, and enhance the customer experience by embracing digital solutions and technologies.

4.3 The Centre can accommodate 50-60 trainees and is already equipped with over 60 Desktops. The Centre is yet to be operationalized as the recruitment of the necessary human resources led by the ICT Manager is in progress. The PAPU ICT Capacity Building Centre is equipped with state-of-the-art IT infrastructure:

- A training lab with modern facilities viz. Software, Desktop Computers, Overhead Projector and Printers;
- Additional resources like an Interactive White Board, Video Conferencing facilities,
- To be linked with the High-Performance Computing (HPC) Applications at NM-AIST to boost research and data storage.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PAPU ICT CAPACITY BUILDING CENTRE

The Terms of reference for the PAPU ICT Capacity Building Centre comprise but are not limited to the following:

- a) Support PAPU Member States to create a sustainable business environment for DOs to thrive and benefit from ICTs and digitalization;
- b) Encourage PAPU Member States to invest in and rollout quality and affordable ICT infrastructure as well as other intangible assets such as software for competitiveness and growth;
- c) Support member States on a real-time basis on information about the postal sector to aid in informed decision-making;
- d) Assist PAPU Member States in getting the regulatory infrastructure right for trust, security, privacy, and consumer protection;
- e) Ensure that the PAPU member states assimilate a culture of cyber security to enhance trust in the use of ICT and combating cyber-crime and spam;
- f) Assist PAPU Member States in their re-skilling and upskilling in the ICT field and optimizing the PAPU ICT Capacity Building Centre;
- g) Assist PAPU Member States by working in conjunction with Partners to provide e-business and ICT skills within the African postal sector;
- h) Partner and support PAPU Member States to conduct ICT-related Research, Development & Innovation (RD&I);
- i) Encourage PAPU Member States to participate in ICT-related Regional Projects;
- j) Assist PAPU Member States to protect their revenues that may arise from downtime caused by IT system failure and business interruptions;
- k) Assist Member States in avoiding the risk of loss of financial records and financial information due to IT system failures;

- l) Training on Implementation of AU and PAPU policies, strategies, frameworks, guidelines, etc., for Governments, Regulators, and Designated Operators;
- m) Capacity building in the Security of Networks, Cyber Security, Postal Services, and Policy & Regulatory Harmonization;
- n) Digital Literacy of Emerging Technologies for the 4th Industrial Revolution like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Block Chain Machine Learning, Data Analytics, Cloud computing, Internet of Things (IoT), etc;
- o) Industry tailor-made and non-ICT training in Leadership, Management Courses, Product Entrepreneurship, Postal Management, Problem-solving and Creativity, Regulations and Competition, Strategic Thinking, etc.

6. THE PAPU ICT CAPACITY BUILDING CENTER AREAS OF FOCUS

The Center will identify and roll out innovative digital solutions and services that cater to the specific needs and challenges of the postal industry, with particular emphasis on the following areas:

i) ICT Support

- a. Provide first and second-line support to Member States on ICT tools;
- b. Coordinate and provide technical support to end-users of ICT systems solutions at the General Secretariat and at the PAPU Member States;
- c. Provide remote support to Member States, assist in implementing ICT Solutions, and apply PTC tools such as IFS, IPS GMs, Mobile money, etc.

ii) New Product Development

- a. Assist in developing digital solutions, e.g., web design and developing the African e-commerce platform.

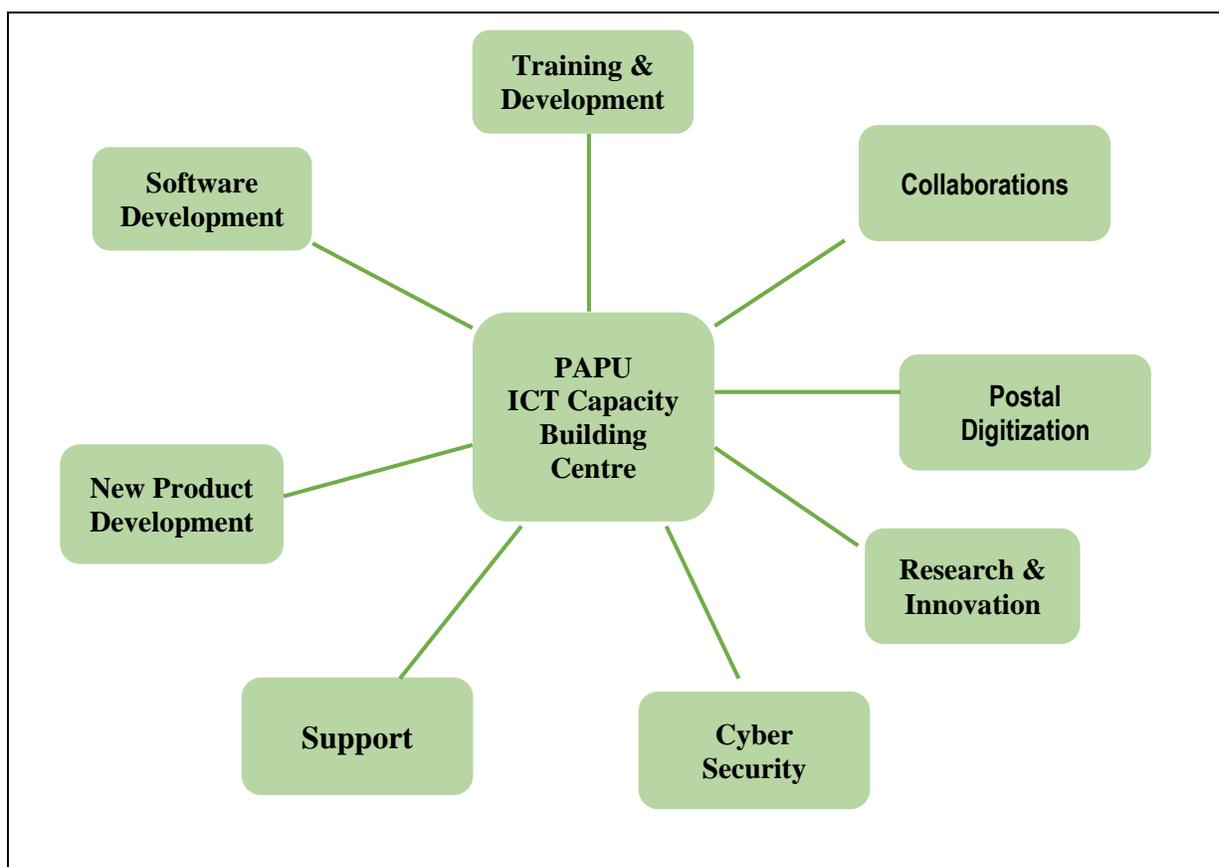
iii) Training

- a. The PAPU ICT Capacity Building Center aims to become a one-stop shop for the design and development of modules and programmes for sector learners, using innovative modes of teaching and learning
- b. The center's training programs will focus on enhancing technical proficiency, fostering innovation, and promoting the integration of digital solutions within postal operations.
- c. The Capacity Building Centre will also provide online training sessions and Podcasts will also be held as part of the execution of its mandate.

- iv) **Digital skills development:** Aimed at building the purpose-driven digital skills needed to embrace digital transformation in the postal industry and digital solutions for postal services and digital postal financial services, recognizing that by taking up these digital solutions, Africa's postal industry can improve efficiency, cut costs and enhance the customer experience.;

- v) **Postal Service digitization:** Aimed at improving efficiency, cutting costs, and enhancing the customer experience through digital solutions and technologies;
- vi) **Data collection, analysis, sharing, and centralization:** Aimed at promoting appropriate tools or systems for data collection, analysis, sharing, and centralization to make informed decisions and improve postal service delivery. This shall entail collaborative research and training of PAPU members in data analysis;
- vii) **Cybersecurity:** Shall entail ensuring security and confidentiality of digital systems and data in postal service systems, platforms or integrated media, and postal payment systems;
- viii) **Digital Innovation:** Aimed at promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in postal service delivery through innovative digital platforms for e-commerce, postal payment systems, postal-item tracking, and monitoring specifically tailored to the African environment;
- ix) **Digital Financial Services and the Digital Economy:** Shall entail conducting studies and research on how the postal sector, as a vital component of the digital economy and the financial inclusion ecosystem, can leverage ICT and postal payment systems to advance e-commerce in Africa;
- x) **Data-driven postal regulation:** This will entail supporting regulatory authorities in developing reliable, digitized systems for collecting, analyzing, and publishing relevant postal market data, with the aim of involving consumers of postal services and digital postal payment services in regulatory activities.

The diagram below shows the various areas of focus for the Centre:



7. COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

The PAPU ICT Capacity Building Centre will pursue its objectives through established strategic collaborations with specialized training and development institutions with high-level trainers and international researchers. The institutions located elsewhere in Africa and other regions provide training and research in Postal Services, Regulation, and ICT. As a precursor to the establishment of this Centre, the General Secretariat established a framework through signing MoUs with key institutions that will provide the necessary support, expertise, and collaboration in the areas of interest for the development of the Postal Sector in Africa.

i) The African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI):

- The African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI) is an Intergovernmental Organization established in 1991 to supplement and spearhead ICT development efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its mandate is to develop human capacity in ICTs through training, consultancy, and research. The Institute provides capacity development and advisory services and promotes innovation through quality programmes, strategic alliances, and partnerships.
- Currently, the member States that have ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) include Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique, Kingdom of Eswatini, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and The Gambia.

ii) Ecole Multinationale Supérieure Des Postes (EMSP) :

- EMSP's mission is to cater for initial and continuing training, research, and cooperation in the postal sector.
- The Advanced Multinational School of Posts (EMSP) of Abidjan is an Intergovernmental Training Organization (OIF) created in 1970 under the aegis of the UPU by eight (8) French-speaking West African Countries, namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

iii) UPU-TRAINPOST:

- The TRAINPOST programme, develops postal training guides and materials for managers and instructors. Models are made available to course developers.
- The TRAINPOST platform provides online courses in various areas, such as postal regulation/reform, operations, management, human resources, and postal technology.
- These courses are provided free of charge to postal employees and are available in English, Arabic, French, Russian, and Spanish.

iv) African Telecommunications Union (ATU)

- The African Telecommunications Union is a specialized institution of the African Union in the field of Telecommunications/ICTs, currently based in Nairobi, Kenya. ATU's mandate is to promote the rapid

development of information communications in Africa to achieve universal access and full inter-country connectivity.

- The ATU's objectives and priorities for the period 2023-2027, as defined in its Strategic Plan, relate to Digital Transformation, Cybersecurity, Internet Connectivity, Capacity Building, Research and Development, and Financial Inclusion.

v) **AMARANTE**

- AMARANTE Consulting is a company registered in the United Arab Emirates whose mission is to enable digital and economic inclusion and postal sector development in emerging markets. In these markets, where access to products and markets is suboptimal, technology, innovation, and creative business models can play a major role in increasing the standard of living of local populations.
- AMARANTE assists with transforming the Posts, strategy development, strategy review, implementation assistance, and partnership development related to postal services in the PAPU Member States.
- PAPU signed an MOU with Amarante in September 2023

vi) **The Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) - Arusha**

Partnerships with renowned stakeholders, especially academia, cannot be overemphasized in order to strengthen the drive for digital transformation in the postal sector.

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 7 March 2024 to serve primarily as a cooperation framework between PAPU and Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) for development and research in areas of interest to the postal sector and for building the skills required for a successful postal digital transformation.
- More specifically, the MoU is aimed at facilitating capacity-building for PAPU members in the areas of Digital postal services, ICT, developing innovative and modern solutions, notably in e-commerce, digitization of data collection, Big Data analytics and sharing systems, interoperability of postal services and postal payment systems, data-driven regulation and cybersecurity
- The NM-AIST in Arusha is in a network of Pan-African Institutions of Science and Technology across Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Its mission is to deliver and promote high-quality and internationally competitive teaching and learning, research and innovation, and public service in Science, Engineering, Technology, and Innovation (SETI), leveraging entrepreneurship to enhance the value added to people and natural resources, stimulating, catalyzing, and promoting economic growth and sustainable development in Africa.
- The NM-AIST's objective is to be the bridge between research and industrial development through a strong link with industry for technology transfer and the establishment of technology-cum-business incubators and innovation centres for seeding innovations and spinning off competitive technological products.

8. **TARGET GROUP**

The primary beneficiaries of the ICT Training Centre include ICT Managers, Operations Managers, postal regulation managers, Policy Makers, postal experts, and Regulatory Experts from PAPU Member States.

9. THE NEXT STEPS IN OPERATIONALISING THE CENTRE

- a. Recruitment of Staff
 - i. IT Manager – Overall charge of the Centre
 - ii. IT Specialists – Technical support in the Centre's Key delivery areas
 - iii. Human Resources Officer – Training and development coordinator
- b. Identification of ICT and Digital Skills Gap and training needs at the African Posts
- c. Facilitation for Online Training
- d. Course content development
- e. Initiate Research processes.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The PAPU ICT CB Center is well-positioned to tap into technology's transformative power in advancing postal digitalization and enhancing communication and development across the African continent. By providing cutting-edge facilities, fostering innovation, and supporting capacity-building initiatives, the Center is well-placed to become a pivotal resource for Member States of the Pan-African Postal Union (PAPU).

10.2 The success of the PAPU ICT Center will anchor on collaborative partnerships and a shared commitment to harnessing technology for the greater good of Posts in Africa. The Centre will be mission-critical in nurturing talent, encouraging innovation, and promoting best practices as the African Posts pursue the digital transformation journey. The PAPU ICT Center will be the nerve center for technology utilization to strategically create a lasting positive impact on postal products and services, ensuring that African Citizens are afforded efficient services.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategy Committee is invited to consider the PAPU ICT Capacity Building Center Report and apprise the Administrative Council accordingly.

- i) To note the capacity building and imparting of digital and ICT skills to Postal employees in the Member States.
- ii) To note the role of the research, innovation, and new services development that the PAPU ICT Capacity Building Center will play in the digital transformation of the Postal Sector in Africa.
- iii) Encourage Member States to engage in ICT-related Research, Development, and Innovation (RD&I) to explore new technologies and solutions tailored to the postal sector.

- iv) Promote initiatives that ensure digital solutions are accessible and affordable to all, particularly in underserved areas.
- v) Encourage the postal Sector in PAPU Member States to leverage digital technologies to enhance transparency, efficiency, and customer satisfaction in postal services.