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STRATEGY COMMITTEE
5th, 6th JUNE 2024, ARUSHA, TANZANIA

REPORT ON THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT ICT ISSUES

1. Subject General Secretariat ICT Issues	References/Paragraphs PAPU ACTION PLAN 2022-2025
2. Decision Expected <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take note of the Report on the General Secretariat ICT Issues• Adopt the Recommendations tabled• The Committee to guide where necessary	

1. INTRODUCTION

This Report is presented to apprise the Strategy Committee on the General Secretariat ICT Issues for consideration and further escalation to the 42nd Ordinary Session of the Administrative Council. This document contains updates on the General Secretariat ICT Issues within the PAPU General Secretariat for the period under review, i.e., 2023/2024. The main areas of focus of the document are the following areas:

- PAPU ICT Support Unit;
- Development of an Interactive Website;
- Domain Hosting at Dot Post;
- Telephone Installations and Equipment at the General Secretariat
- Internet Connectivity at the General Secretariat
- Proposal to Create an ICT Working Group;

2. ICT SUPPORT FOR THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

The ICT services at the PAPU General Secretariat are under the ICT Unit, which is responsible for carrying out all ICT-related matters. The ICT Unit currently has two positions: the ICT Manager (currently vacant) and the IT Technician, who reports to the ICT Manager. The ICT Unit at PAPU is tasked with the following functions:

- Develops, maintains, and reviews ICT activities and operations at the General Secretariat;
- Enforces standards and procedures about the application of ICT systems throughout the General Secretariat;
- Implements and maintains hardware and software infrastructure systems at the Secretariat;
- Coordinates and provides technical support to end-users of ICT systems solutions;
- Manages programming and database administration, including management of central database, websites, Internet, intranet, and webmail;
- Ensures electronic security of sensitive and critical Secretariat systems;
- Prepares specifications, tests, and registers all ICT equipment of the Secretariat;
- Provide ICT training for the General Secretariat Staff.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

The Pan African Postal Union has a website, which it uses to communicate and update its membership and the public on all communication, events, official documents, and the calendar of events by the General Secretariat. The Website is also used to carry news about stories that concern the activities at the PAPU General Secretariat.

However, the Website is outdated and needs to be revamped to improve its 'look and feel,' be interactive and be linked to other related sites for Member States, Postal bodies, and the African Union. The website redesign process will specifically seek to achieve the following objectives:

a) Enhance PAPU's overall visibility

- Give prominence to the Union's strategic role as the continental driver of the postal development and regional integration agenda;
- Emphasize PAPU's commitment to promoting digitalization, sustainability, and innovation in postal services;
- Ensure timely, preferably near-real-time, coverage of PAPU's participation in significant events and engagements with various high-profile personalities.

b) Enhance User Experience

- Streamline navigation for easy access to information;
- Improve responsiveness for users of mobile devices;
- Ensure universal access using a user-friendly interface for users with visual, auditory, motor, and cognitive disabilities.

c) Foster Member Engagement

- Develop member-exclusive sections with secured logins (like the UPU website);
- Provide access to a repository of resources, target-specific news and updates;
- Allow members to collaborate and share insights through discussion forums, online questionnaires, etc....;
- Use the website for various engagements with Member States, including registration for events, administration of questionnaires, etc.

d) Facilitate Communications

- Cater for various audiences by offering systematic multilingual (English-French) content;
- Connect social media accounts for real-time updates.

3.1 Preliminary Work on Website

Whereas the Website redesign process is expected to be ongoing, as a starting point, the following work is expected to be carried out:

a) Enhanced User Interface

- Implement a clean, modern, and responsive design;
- Simplify navigation with intuitive menus;
- Comply with web accessibility standards (WCAG).

b) Member Portal

- Create a secure member area with unique logins;
- Offer resources, documents, and materials that are accessible to members only;
- Incorporate an elaborate and updated member directory to promote networking.

c) Content Management

- Streamline the content structure for easy access to information;
- Develop a content management system for efficient updates;
- Provide multilingual support (English-French) for essential content (documents and pages).

d) News and Events

- Enhance the news section to provide regular updates;
- Enhance the events' upcoming calendar and add registration capabilities;
- Offer email subscription options to receive updates via email quickly.

e) Discussion Forums

- Integrate forums for PAPU Members to discuss relevant topics;
- Monitor and moderate discussions to maintain a professional discourse;
- Foster knowledge-sharing, networking, and collaboration among members.

f) Contact and Support

- Incorporate a contact system with various inquiry categories;
- Add a live chat feature for real-time assistance;
- Display contact information for PAPU organs, units, and key stakeholders, which will be restricted according to membership status.

4. OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS OF THE INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

Once redesigned, the website should deliver the following benefits:

- i) **Enhanced user experience:** Thus, users should have easier access to information and

services, enhancing their overall experience;

- ii) **Member engagement:** The member portal and discussion forums should foster interactions between PAPU members, especially on specific topical issues;
- iii) **Greater outreach:** The website should attract a broader audience, including potential members, partners, and Stakeholders;
- iv) **Enhanced communication:** Visitors should have more accessible and efficient means of contact and engaging with PAPU, including access to readily available updates;
- v) **Data-driven decision-making:** Analytics will provide insights into user patterns and preferences, informing subsequent upgrades.

5. DOMAIN HOSTING AT DOT POST

- 5.1 To boost and enhance internet security and align the PAPU Domain with a more secure and industry-related domain, the Union is advised to migrate from the current domain, dot Africa (www.upap-papu.africa), to dot post, the postal top-level domain host managed by the Universal Postal Union.
- 5.2 The Union must fully migrate to dot post from dot Africa. Hosting the Union's Domain on the UPU dot post is advantageous as it constitutes a trusted, stable, secure, and innovative standard identifier of the postal community, established by and for the use of the postal community members. The platform is a secure, tried, and tested infrastructure whose security is continuously being enhanced.
- 5.3 The UPU's Dot Post has been identified as the secure internet infrastructure to host the PAPU domain. Currently, PAPU is hosting its email domain with Cybernet Ltd, a company based in Arusha. We have hosted our email domain with the company for 20 years at \$120.00 annually.

6. TELEPHONE INSTALLATIONS AND FACILITIES AT THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

- 6.1 The General Secretariat has not been connected to the landline system since its relocation to the PAPU Tower. This has generally limited the accessibility of the General Secretariat as stakeholders had limited options when desiring to contact the General Secretariat.
- 6.2 The General Secretariat has embarked on an exercise to install telephone facilities at the General Secretariat's offices at the PAPU Tower. The equipment acquired includes the IP PBX, which will provide voice connectivity to desk phones within the General Secretariat. The IPPBX oversees the outgoing and incoming calls across the telephone network using an internet connection provided by the landline company Tanzania Telecommunication Ltd. The installation will ease communication within the Secretariat offices located on 3 floors, namely 13th, 14th, and 15th floors

7. INTERNET CONNECTIVITY STATUS AT THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

- 7.1 The General Secretariat has both Cable and Wi-Fi connectivity whereby the internet connectivity is at 40mbps for all three (3) PAPU floors. The service provider deploys a fiber optic connection for our internet connectivity.
- 7.2 Currently, the 13th and 14th floors use cable and Wi-Fi, while the 15th, the ICT Capacity Building Center, is only on Wi-Fi as the cables have not yet been installed. Procurement of the cabling to enable connectivity is underway.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

a) On the Development of an Interactive Website

- i) Member States are invited to support revamping the PAPU Website by appointing and seconding Website experts to work with the General Secretariat on the project.
- ii) The General Secretariat is urged to use the Union's website to give prominence to the Union's activities and its strategic role as the continental driver of the postal development and regional integration agenda;

b) On Hosting of PAPU Domain at Dot Post

The General Secretariat is urged to migrate the Union's domain to the UPU's Dot Post Top Level Domain, which provides a secure environment.

9. DECISION

The Report and recommendations are tabled before the Strategy Committee for consideration and:

- i) Take note of the Report on the General Secretariat ICT Issues;
- ii) Adopt the Recommendations attached thereto;