



2nd AFRICAN POSTAL REGULATORS CONFERENCE
2ND AND 3RD DECEMBER 2024, VICTORIA FALLS - ZIMBABWE

CONCEPT NOTE

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Liberalization of the postal market has attracted a whole slew of private operators vying to serve the same customers by offering virtually identical services. Against this backdrop, operators are waging a fierce and unyielding battle with each other as they seek to capture a larger slice of the market. At the same time, postal customers are constantly demanding more sophisticated and specific technologically-driven services. This is clearly a compelling call for the Post to embark on digital transformation if it is to remain competitive in today's fiercely competitive market. Such digital transformation inevitably entails embracing ICT as a means of sharpening the postal industry's competitive edge, offering innovative and carefully-gearred postal products and services, as well as boosting postal service quality and consumer satisfaction. With this in mind, operators need to be fully up to speed in harnessing the opportunities offered by ICT in the handling of postal items, from pick-up to last-mile delivery. Nothing short of this should allow the Post to improve operational efficiency in order to offer top-quality services to customers.

Another prerequisite for digital transformation is the development of a robust and responsive regulatory framework. In this respect, the regulator is responsible for creating a level playing field for both private and public operators, protecting the interests of consumers and facilitating investment to create jobs and diversify the spectrum of services on offer.

However, while the opportunities presented by digital technologies are undeniably manifold, they also pose serious challenges in terms of infrastructure development, training, security, personal data protection, among others. And although the primary interest in these issues may lie with postal operators, regulators and line ministries alike will need to implement the right regulatory instruments with a view to coming up with the most practical and effective solutions. They must therefore be ready to tackle these challenges by constantly exploring innovative solutions, hence the overriding need for innovative and appropriate postal regulation.

For this to materialize, postal regulators must - in addition to their national regulatory mechanisms - establish a platform for ongoing dialogue on the challenges currently besetting Africa's postal industry, in order to devise mutually-agreeable solutions that pave the way for the post to assume its preeminent role as a catalyst for national socio-economic development.

In recognition of the value and timeliness of convening a gathering of African postal regulators, coupled with the unqualified success of the 1st African Postal Regulators' Conference, the Administrative Council institutionalized the African Postal Regulators Conference to be held as an annual event during its 41st ordinary session, by means of **Resolution No. 06/PAPU/AC/XLI/2023**.

Accordingly, the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) is partnering with the Communications Regulators' Association of Southern Africa (CRASA) to organize the 2nd African Postal Regulators Conference. By way of reminder, the Postal

Regulators Conference is an ideal arena for the following postal industry players to share experiences and best practices, as well as explore solutions to challenges confronting the sector: Ministries, Regulatory Authorities and Designated Operators.

2. THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The core theme of the 2nd African Postal Regulators Conference is: ***“Emerging postal industry and regulation trends in the digital age.”*** In order to expound on this main theme, a line-up of panel discussions will be exploring the following sub-themes:

- ✓ Impact of digitalization of traditional services and emergence of value-added services on the postal sector regulatory landscape;
- ✓ Technical, legal and regulatory challenges affecting digitalization of postal services; and
- ✓ Regulatory techniques and methods for effective compliance and enforcement in the digitalized postal sector.

3. OBJECTIVES

a) Main objective

The overarching objective of the 2nd African Postal Regulators' Conference is to foster the sharing of experience and expertise, in order to jointly devise practical solutions to challenges facing Africa's postal industry on the policy and regulatory fronts.

b) Specific aims

More specifically, this 2nd Postal Regulators Conference is aimed at:

- Taking stock of postal digitalization progress across Africa;
- Clearly articulating the challenges, issues and outlook for postal digitalization in Africa;
- Clarifying the role and positioning of Africa's postal industry players in the continent's postal digitalization movement;
- Mapping out key success factors for postal digitalization in Africa.

4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The following outcomes are expected from this year's edition of the 2nd Conference of African Postal Regulators:

- Increased awareness among Member States of postal digitalization issues and challenges;
- Clear understanding of respective roles of postal industry players in effectively digitalizing Africa's postal services;
- Actionable recommendations made to postal operators, regulatory authorities and government ministries.

5. TARGET PARTICIPANTS

The following participants are expected to attend the event:

- High-level decision-makers responsible for postal policy;
- Executives and senior manager of postal regulatory authorities;
- Executives of designated postal operators;

- Regional and sub-regional postal organizations;
- International experts and consultants engaged in postal activities;
- Representatives of training schools and centers.

6. PANELISTS AND DISCUSSANTS

The Conference will feature panellists and discussants from Member States' postal operators, regulatory authorities and ministries, the PAPU General Secretariat and sub-regional postal organizations (COPTAC, CRASA, EACO, WAPCO and SAPOA).

7. DATE AND VENUE

The 2nd African Postal Regulators Conference is co-organized by PAPU and CRASA from 2nd to 3rd December 2024 in Victoria Falls (Zimbabwe).

8. LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

- Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English and French.

