



Working Group on Policy and Legal Harmonization (WGPL)
Online Meeting of 30th April 2025

PAPU/AC/PRC/WGPL/04/2025 - Doc No.04d & Annex
Original: French

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Agenda item No.06

1. Subject Terms of Reference of the sustainable development task force	2. References/paragraphs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acts of the Union;• Harmonized Rules of Procedure of the Administrative and Technical Committees;
3. Decision expected <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider this working document;• Make any relevant comments, observations or proposals	

I. INTRODUCTION

Africa is one of the lowest carbon emitters globally, accounting for less than 4% of global emissions¹. However, the continent remains highly vulnerable to global warming. More than 110 million people and nearly 52% of African countries are directly affected by climate change, with economic losses estimated at about \$8.5 billion by 2022.² In light of these statistics, Africa's postal sector—a key player in the continent's socioeconomic development—has a prominent role to play in achieving sustainable development goals. With approximately 12,647 postal outlets and 59,048 employees who handled approximately 529 million letter post items and 5 million parcels³ in 2020, Africa's postal industry can indeed perform a dual function in promoting sustainable development in Africa: Building resilience to climate change and lowering Africa's contribution to global carbon emissions.

¹ Report on Sustainable Development in Africa, Co-published by AU, AfDB and UNDP, 2024

² Report on Sustainable Development in Africa, Co-published by AU, AfDB and UNDP, 2024

³ Postal Networks, UPU, March 2022

It is therefore strategic and fitting for PAPU Member States to engage in meaningful reflections in a formal setting such as a Sustainable Development Task Force, where experts from all Member States can actively share insights and experiences.

II. DECISION EXPECTED

The Legal Experts Task Team is called upon to consider the document and make any relevant comments, observations or proposals.

A Specialized Agency of the AU



Institution spécialisée de l'UA

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Sustainable development is defined as any form of economic development aimed primarily at reconciling economic and social advancement with environmental conservation⁴. Today, it is a global priority in all spheres of activity. Sustainable development takes center stage in both national and international forums, where the goal is to strike the right balance between economic development, environmental conservation and social advancement. With this in mind, various initiatives are being undertaken by States both individually and collectively with collaboration of international organizations.

On the national stage, alongside various awareness-raising campaigns, setting specific conditions for importing certain goods, promoting renewable energy and paperless administrative formalities, governments have enshrined the concept of “corporate social responsibility” in their national policies. This concept strives to encourage companies to contribute to the sustainable development agenda while also being economically viable and thriving. This means that companies must, while keeping an eye on growing their turnover and productivity, be mindful of the impact of their decisions on social development and environmental protection.

On the international stage, the UN approved a programme in 2016 titled the **Sustainable Development Programme**, broken down into 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), several of which deal with sustainable development. More specifically these are Goal 7 “Affordable and Clean Energy”, Goal 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities”, Goal 12 “Responsible Consumption and Production” and Goal 13 “Climate Action”. On the African stage, one of the aspirations of the African Union's Agenda 2063 is: “A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.” .

⁴ Article 1, 8) of PAPU Convention

Besides Agenda 2063, the African Union adopted a Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources on 11 July 2023.

In the same vein, the postal sector is taking several initiatives to support the global drive to promote sustainable development. In this regard, member countries of the Universal Postal Union recently pledged, through the Green Package adopted during the 4th Extraordinary Congress in Riyadh, **to reduce carbon emissions by 85% by 2050**. In addition, the UPU has set up the Carbon Fund and an online tool for monitoring, analyzing and producing reports on carbon emissions called “OSCAR”. Lastly, the UPU has a subsidiary organ called the “Cooperation and Development Committee” responsible, among other things, for sustainable development issues.

At the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), one of the objectives stated in the PAPU Acts is to promote sustainable development. Several initiatives have been rolled out towards this objective, including cutting down on paper consumption, introducing online meetings and using environmentally friendly materials in building the PAPU Tower, and much more being done at Member State level. However, there is no denying that the measures taken by PAPU have been rather low-key and/or lacking in high-profile visibility. It is therefore clear that there is need for a “Sustainable Development” Task Force, pursuant to Rule 6 of the Harmonized Rules of Procedure of the Administrative and Technical Committees, to deal with sustainable development issues in Africa's postal industry.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective and specific objectives of the Sustainable Development Task Force are as follows.

2.1 Main objective

The Sustainable Development Task Force will serve as a formal platform for interaction and sharing experiences and best practices, raising awareness on sustainability issues as well as addressing and monitoring sustainable development matters.

2.2 Specific objectives

The Task Force will specifically offer a platform to:

- i) Share information and studies on sustainable development;
- ii) Assess the status of sustainable development in the African postal sector;
- iii) Identify the impact of postal activities on the environment and climate change;

- iv) Encourage the African postal sector's individual and collective efforts to integrate sustainable development into postal activities;
- v) Propose concrete, appropriate and sustainable measures to support Member States' initiatives to reduce and/or stabilize the carbon footprint on the environment;
- vi) Highlight the contribution of PAPU and Africa's postal sector in implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063;
- vii) Support Africa's postal sector in developing sustainable development policies;
- viii) Build capacity for Africa's postal sector to offer citizens good-quality products and services, tailored to their needs while meeting sustainable development requirements.

3. EXPECTED RESULTS AND DELIVERABLES

The following results are expected from the "Sustainable Development" Task Force:

- i) To provide Member States with sufficient information on sustainable development issues and challenges;
- ii) Raise awareness and improve understanding among Member States of the importance of the role of the African postal sector in sustainable development, particularly environmental protection;
- iii) Propose concrete, appropriate and sustainable solutions to strengthen the role of the African postal sector as a major player in sustainable development;
- iv) Develop policies and/or guidelines to support member states in reducing and/or maintaining the carbon footprint of postal activities on the environment.

4. MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN TASK FORCE PROCEEDINGS

The Sustainable Development Task Force proceedings shall be open to all Member States, Associate Members and Sub regional Postal organizations. Associate Members and Sub Regional Postal organizations shall attend as observers.

5. ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION

The "Sustainable Development" Task Force shall operate under the umbrella of the Working Group on Legal and Policy Harmonization. It shall therefore report to this Working Group, which shall take ownership of any findings or conclusions it reaches before forwarding same to the Policy and Regulation Committee.

6. DURATION OF MANDATE

The Sustainable Development Task Force shall be entrusted with a mandate spanning financial year 2025-2026. Upon expiry of this period, the mandate will be reviewed when the Union finalizes its Strategy for the 2026-2030 cycle.

7. MEETING NOTICE AND FORMAT

The Task Force shall meet physically or remotely when convened by its chairperson in line with the Union *modus operandi*.

8. ORGANIZATION

The Sustainable Development Task Force Bureau shall be made up as follows:

- A Chairperson;
- A Vice-Chairperson;
- 2X Rapporteurs.

The Bureau members shall be installed by the Task Force members at its first meeting.

The PAPU General Secretariat shall serve as the secretariat for the Task Force.

9. FUNCTIONING

The functioning of the Sustainable Development Task Force shall be governed by these terms of reference. However, for all matters not expressly covered herein, reference shall be made to the Harmonized Rules of Procedure of the Administrative and Technical Committees.

10. FINANCING

Members States shall bear the participation costs of their representatives for in-person activities of the Task Force. However, PAPU General Secretariat will assist in organizing Task Force activities by facilitating meetings, including arranging meeting links and language interpretation.