



Working Group on Regulatory Development (WGRD)

6th May 2025 (Online)

PAPU/AC/PRC/WGRD/04/2025 - Doc No. 06 and Annex

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REPORT OF THE 2ND AFRICAN POSTAL REGULATORS CONFERENCE

Agenda item No. 8

1. Subject Report of the 2nd African Postal Regulators Conference	2. References/paragraphs
3. Decision expected <ul style="list-style-type: none">Take note of the Report of the the 2nd African Postal Regulators ConferenceMake any relevant comments.	Resolution No. 06/PAPU/AC/XLI/2023 on establishment of an African Postal Regulators Conference;

I. INTRODUCTION

The second edition of the African Postal Regulators Conference was held from 2nd to 3rd December 2024 in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. Under the theme ‘Emerging Postal Industry and Regulation Trends in the Digital Age.’. The 2nd edition was co-organized by PAPU and CRASA in collaboration with the host country, Zimbabwe.

For **two (02)** days, participants exchanged views through presentations and panel discussions, and then formulated recommendations for consideration by Member States.

The PAPU General Secretariat expresses its gratitude to the Republic of Zimbabwe for hosting the Conference and also acknowledges with appreciation the collaboration of CRASA in co-organizing this successful event.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

This Report is submitted to the Working Group for;

- i) For appraisal on the implementation of the Working Group's Work Plan objective on the African Postal Regulators Conference.
- ii) Noting the recommendations of the 2nd African Postal Regulators' Conference that were communicated to Member States for implementation.

III. DECISIONS EXPECTED

Members of the Working Group are requested to

- i) Take note of the Report of the the 2nd African Postal Regulators Conference
- ii) Make any relevant comments.



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REPORT:

2ND AFRICAN POSTAL REGULATORS CONFERENCE

2ND TO 3RD DECEMBER 2024

VICTORIA FALLS

ZIMBABWE

December 2024

I. INTRODUCTION

The following PAPU Member States participated in the deliberations online and/or in-person: **South Africa, Mali, Mozambique, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Malawi, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.**

The following sub-regional, regional and international organizations were physically present: **PAPU, CRASA and OECD.** See detailed attendance in **Annex 2.**

II. SYNOPSIS OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

A. Opening Ceremony

During the opening ceremony, remarks were made by the CRASA Executive Secretary, the PAPU Assistant Secretary General, speaking on behalf of the Secretary General, and lastly by the Deputy Director General of POTRAZ.

The first two speakers expressed their profound gratitude to the Zimbabwean authorities for gracefully agreeing to host this 2nd edition of the Postal Regulators Conference. They also expressed their sincere appreciation to POTRAZ, the Local Organizing Committee and the Zimbabwean people for the warm welcome and excellent facilities provided to ensure a successful organization of the event. Lastly, the CRASA Executive Secretary and the PAPU Assistant Secretary General reiterated the current context in which the 2nd Postal Regulators Conference was being held, commended the fruitful collaboration between CRASA and PAPU and wished participants fruitful deliberations.

In his remarks, the Deputy Director General of POTRAZ welcomed the participants to Victoria Falls and emphasized the importance of the theme of this edition of the event in a context dominated by digitalization of postal services. He concluded his opening remarks by wishing participants fruitful deliberations and a pleasant stay in Victoria Falls.

B. Presentations and Panel Discussions

During a two-day period, participants explored the following sub-themes through presentations and panel discussions:

- i) **Impact of digitalization of traditional services and emergence of value-added services on the regulatory landscape of the postal sector:** this sub-theme was developed through

an OECD presentation on “**Postal Regulators Performance and Governance**”. This presentation was followed by a panel discussion featuring the following Member States: **Lesotho, Mali and Nigeria**. This panel discussion was moderated by PAPU;

- ii) **Technical, legal and regulatory challenges of postal service digitalization:** The challenges were explored via an OECD presentation entitled “**Adapting regulation to emerging challenges and sector changes**”. Following the presentation, participants took part in a panel discussion led by the following Member States: Tanzania, Eswatini and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The discussions were moderated by CRASA.
- iii) **Regulatory techniques and methods for effective compliance and enforcement in a digitalized postal sector:** This sub-theme was developed through two presentations by OECD Experts on the following themes: “**Results-based regulation and implementation of risk-based enforcement and control measures** and “**Overview of the OECD enforcement and oversight toolkit**”. These presentations were followed by a panel discussion involving **Zimbabwe, Namibia and Niger**, moderated by CRASA.

III. CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

At the end of the two-day proceedings, the key takeaways were as follows:

- i) The impact of digitalization and the challenges of regulating the postal sector in the era of new networks, new types of market failure, competition dynamics, growing consumer powers, institutional and transboundary concerns;
- ii) The presence of fierce competition in the market with private operators/private couriers leveraging ICTs;
- iii) The importance of regulation being supported by clear policy objectives and legal powers to intervene effectively;
- iv) The existence and persistence of illegal operators in the postal sector;
- v) The conflicting priorities and trade-offs that regulators need to make between innovation and consumer protection, and the need for regulations and regulatory institutions to adapt to new market realities;
- vi) The need to continue sharing of experiences, best practices and knowledge by on independence and governance ;
- vii) Need for regulators to reinvent themselves by embracing modern methods and tools conducive to digitalization of the postal sector;
- viii) The availability of considerable digital resources developed by OECD on regulatory governance and performance assessment criteria and tools, and other regulatory topics;
- ix) The key success factors, best practice principles and approaches for sustainable and effective regulatory compliance and enforcement;

- x) The application of risk-based and outcome-based and even behavioral regulatory approaches in fostering an environment of effective compliance; and
- xi) The key role of regulators in promoting and facilitating the continued digitalization of postal products and services through the nature of regulatory oversight employed.

IV. CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition, participants made the following recommendations:

1. TO REGULATORY AUTHORITIES TO :

- i) Embrace new regulatory approaches in line with evolving market conditions including the proportionate adoption of evidence-based, outcome-based and risk-based regulation, agile regulation, regulatory impact and regulatory performance assessment
- ii) Consider adopting best practice approaches to institutional governance including a review of guiding values, application of strategic intelligence, proactive stakeholder engagement, agility and international cooperation;
- iii) Improve inter-authority, cross-sectoral regulatory collaboration to leverage the experience, legal instruments, and operational capabilities of other sector regulators in addressing specific regulatory issues affecting the postal sector;
- iv) Actively pursue regulatory harmonization and inter-state cooperation to effectively deal with cross-border challenges and co-regulation;
- v) Actively pursue the development of a standardized, a consistent, approaches to tackling illegal operators in the postal sector , which may include:
 - a. Increasing awareness among consumers and the judicial authorities of the legal and regulatory requirements of the postal sector;
 - b. Establishing effective mechanisms for licensed operators and consumers to report illegal operators for regulatory intervention;
 - c. Promote the exercise of mandates through visible regulatory interventions that support compliance and enforcement efforts including impromptu and risk-based inspections seeking to establish proof of illegal activity; and
 - d. Where necessary, initiate criminal proceedings against illegal operators as a deterrent to other operators in the market;
- vi) Increase awareness of all stakeholders, including consumers and regulated entities on the importance and role of regulation insofar as the postal sector is concerned; and their responsibilities among postal operators;

- vii) Invest in enhancing regulatory capacity to keep pace with evolving market conditions including the development or acquisition of new regulatory tools and processes, and also capacitating staff through training and similar interventions;
- viii) Introduce best-practice mechanisms for determining to root causes of regulatory delivery problems and addressing them effectively through appropriate means;
- ix) Introduce effective, pragmatic and harmonized compliance and enforcement systems, which may involve:
 - a. Categorizing breaches of postal operators' obligations;
 - b. Categorizing penalties for non-compliance ranging from withdrawal of approval to recognition or reward for operators who have distinguished themselves positively in terms of compliance;
 - c. Building trust in the Regulatory Authority by promoting fairness and justice.

2. To Ministries Responsible for the Postal Sector

- i) To strengthen the independence of the Regulatory Authorities in order to enhance regulatory governance and effectiveness.

3. To the PAPU General Secretariat

The general Secretariat to work closely with Restricted Unions to achieve the following:

- i) to propose and facilitate the development of harmonized regional and continental guidelines for promoting effective regulatory governance and the application of new regulatory techniques and approaches including evidence-based, risk-based, outcome-based, agile, proactive and flexible regulation;
- ii) Propose and facilitate the development of regulatory performance assessment frameworks based on the best-practice criteria and indicators for such assessments.