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United Nations  
Economic Commission  
for Africa



UNTACDA II

programme of the Second  
United Nations Transport  
and Communications  
Decade in Africa  
1991-2000

# SUBSECTORAL STRATEGIES

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## Postal Services

**THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS  
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN AFRICA  
(UNTACDA II)**

**SUBSECTORAL STRATEGY FOR POSTAL**



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The strategies and various planned activities and measures advocated for the restoration, modernization and development of the Post in Africa are set out in this document which forms a draft programme for the postal subsector within the framework of the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1991-2000).

## **II. GENERAL SITUATION OF THE POSTAL SERVICES**

Considerable work has been done in many countries over the past ten to twenty years to extend the network (construction and fitting out of post offices, particularly in rural areas, establishment of diversified mail circulation links, training managerial staff, etc). Considerable funds were released, particularly in the 1980s to initiate and continue the development and modernization of the postal services.

This effort produced favourable results up to the middle of the 1980s, particularly in traffic growth. However, this favourable development suddenly went into reverse from around 1985 and a trend towards stagnation or even reduction in traffic and customer disaffection appeared and is still seen, except in a very few countries in which a dynamic commercial policy, recently introduced, is already producing good results.

## **III. EVALUATION OF THE POSTAL SERVICES**

### *a Physical evaluation*

- The present postal network in Africa consists of some 32 000 permanent post offices, ie 6 percent of the world network. The density of Africa's postal network has improved over the last ten years. Whereas the estimated density in the last Decade was one post office per 35 000 inhabitants, it is currently evaluated at one office per 20 000 inhabitants. This is admittedly a long way from the UPU standard of 1 office per 6000 inhabitants, but progress is tangible bearing in mind per capita postal consumption.
- It is generally estimated that postal traffic in Africa fell by an annual average of 2 percent during the 1980s. The drop was considerable in the case of some products such as parcels - approximately 7 percent. There is an average of 4 items per 1000 inhabitants compared with a world average of 36. This trend should have been reversed recently following the introduction by many countries of EMS (Express Mail Service), the world growth rate of which has been 47 percent since 1988. In financial services, the growth rate seems more favourable although it is slow. In the 1980s, postal financial exchanges in Africa accounted on average for 3 percent of world exchanges. At present, it is between 13 and 20 percent, although it is only 6 percent for savings banks.
- African postal service staff is estimated at some 100 000, ie 3 percent of world postal service staff and 11 percent of the postal staff of the developing countries.
- Although there is little statistical information on the subject, it is generally considered that African postal services are poorly equipped. For instance, in Africa in 1988, there was only one letter-sorting machine, 400 cancelling machines, 5900 franking machines and 2600 motor vehicles. That is not enough.
- In addition to the quantitative aspects of this physical evaluation, the following qualitative aspects should be noted: the outdated condition and unsuitability of the infrastructures, the obsolescence of the equipment and technical operating material, means of transport are virtually non-existent and the unsuitability of the staff recruitment and training system for the present needs of the Post.



## *b Organizational and institutional framework*

Many of the organizational and operational problems of the postal services noted in African countries are directly linked to the legal status and any solution to be devised and implemented in this respect must be preceded by a change in the legal status.

The original legal framework of the postal services in Africa is that of a government department often coupled with telecommunications and intended to provide a public service without seeking economic and financial profitability. In general, such a postal administration is granted a legal monopoly but always without any aim of commercial profitability. But this monopoly does not completely protect the Post against competition.

This legal framework of a government department is no longer suited to the present concerns of dynamic, modern and efficient management of the postal services whose customers are becoming more and more demanding with regard to diversified services and quality of service.

As was stressed at the Conference of Posts and Telecommunications Ministers in Nairobi (Kenya) in November 1988, several African postal authorities are convinced of the advisability and value of institutional reforms for giving the Post an autonomous legal status adapted to the current needs and concerns for development, modernization, efficiency and profitability in this sector. It should be pointed out that these authorities also require the two sectors "Posts" and "Telecommunications" to be legally separated but to continue to cooperate in the operational field (particularly in rural areas), within a clearly defined framework.

## *c Management of postal services*

The problems or difficulties linked to postal management may be summarized as follows:

- lack of precise quality of service standards and objectives;
- bureaucratic and unbusiness-like attitude of staff, who are too influenced by the legal status of the postal sector as a government department;
- poor quality of training;
- lack of control over the mail circulation and delivery system and failure to meet objectives and time limits;
- inadequacy and shortcomings of the transport networks and communications facilities at national and regional level (surface and air);
- inefficiency of intra-African links which affects regional and subregional integration;
- lack of a well thought out commercial policy (knowledge of the market, of the competition and of customer requirements, adapting services to needs, information, publicity, promotion, etc) and difficulty in meeting customer requirements;
- poor physical conditions for receiving customers and also staff working conditions;
- public mistrust of postal services, mainly because of frequent loss or rifling of postal items;
- chronic inadequacy of financial resources and equipment;
- frequent hold-ups and delays in processing financial and accounting operations (giro, savings bank, money orders, etc);
- lack of reliable postal statistics.

These factors represent very serious dangers for the postal service, making it highly vulnerable to competition from private couriers and from banks and other private or public financial institutions.



Aware of the unfavourable situation and the dangers incurred by the postal services as mentioned above, many senior African officials have already taken or are planning restoration and improvement activities.

*d Competition and coordination between the Post and other transport and communication subsectors*

For its basic function (mail conveyance and delivery), the Post uses all available means of communication and transport. The expansion and improvement of these facilities are beneficial factors for the Post which must therefore follow the development, particularly in installing its network.

Private couriers and banks or other financial institutions are the major competitors. The telecommunications subsector also competes against the Post in electronic mail.

Coordination between the Post and the above subsectors must be established at national and regional level in cooperation which is beneficial to each subsector. The technical ministries concerned and the regional cooperation bodies could provide the required coordination and cooperation.

*e Protection and security of the Post*

In general, the Post in African countries is granted a legal monopoly. Such a situation, which is beneficial at first sight, could be a protection and security factor for the postal services. However, this monopoly is being increasingly breached by competition from private couriers at national, regional and international level, particularly as it does not cover all postal activities (eg. parcels and financial services are excluded).

The present poor quality of the postal service and the inadequacy of its network benefit the competition.

Measures must therefore be taken by the relevant authorities to strengthen the protection and security of the Post: defining a genuine monopoly, adapted to circumstances, and introduction of a system of verifying its application, continued improvement of the quality of service, combating losses, theft and other misappropriation concerning the mail and the postal financial services, etc.

*f Planning*

Few countries have a postal service development and modernization plan as part of a national plan setting very specific quantified targets.

Some have selected options and projects for the postal services in the short and medium term but they are not formulated as part of an integrated plan. However, consideration is being given to this in support of the planned reforms of status and structures.

*g Regulations and agreements*

The postal services throughout the world form an integrated and mutually supportive network, the operation of which is governed by specific texts at national, regional and international level (UPU, Restricted Postal Unions, bilateral agreements).

All the African countries except South Africa and Namibia are members of the UPU and some of them belong to Restricted Unions. All of them take part in the programmes and measures for the



continued development and improvement of the postal services which those organizations have drawn up. The Washington General Action Plan, adopted by the UPU at its 1989 Congress, is at present one of the fundamental bases for reflection, study and action for the countries concerned with a view to modernizing their postal services.

#### *h Employment policy*

Human resources are rightly considered to be a basic factor in the policy of restoring and modernizing the postal services. In Africa, there is a constraint that the relevant authorities plan to remove as part of the legal and organizational measures for restructuring the Post: the civil service status enjoyed by postal staff which does not fit in with the current needs and concerns of commercial management in this sector. The reform would cover the following points:

- defining a new professional profile in line with the duties and work positions in a commercially run business;
- adopting an appropriate recruitment, training and motivational policy.

#### *i Training*

Training of operational staff is satisfactory on the whole but a great deal of effort still has to be made for training middle-grade and senior managerial staff. This should be aimed more towards specialization in various postal techniques. In this connection, syllabuses which have become unsuitable must be revised. Introduction of a modular training system, specialization of managerial staff, particularly in management techniques, should be the main lines of this reform. The regional schools should play a major role in this field.

#### *j Pricing and operational costs policy*

The Post still applies a tariff policy the low level of which nowhere near covers operating and investment costs. This situation still obtains even in corporations with separate budgets.

From one country to another in Africa, there is a great disparity in the levels of tariffs ranging from 25 to 50 percent for countries with the same per capita income. At the same time, postal rates are well below the rates of other public corporations like telecommunications, water and electricity. This tariff policy makes the postal sector structurally in deficit, with the State having to make up the deficit recorded year after year.

However, the generally accepted view that the postal service cannot be run profitably is starting to be challenged. In some countries, initial, empirical assessments of the market indicate a possible development of services, an increase in revenue and genuine profitability in this sector. However, these objectives can only be achieved by structural reforms and appropriate tariff measures, autonomous corporations and a tariff policy aimed at profitability.

#### *k Maintenance and recurring costs*

Investment in buildings and increasingly sophisticated equipment (computerization and sorting centres, in particular) for the postal services raises problems of maintenance and recurring costs which those responsible must take into account in designing and implementing development and modernization projects. That involves, among other things, rational choices as regards cost, efficiency, technical personnel, etc for the acquisition of appropriate equipment.



**l Capital and technical assistance**

Only a very few African countries which have already adopted sustained postal planning have made major investments for the development and modernization of the postal services, particularly on the construction and equipment of post offices and sorting centres, purchasing vehicles for carrying mail, computerization and training. In most cases, the capital for this purpose has been supplied by the State or with the latter's approval, as the Post's own revenue cannot yet supply surpluses for investment.

The new postal operations and management options specifically aimed at economic and financial profitability should attach considerable importance to the "financial capital" factor: marshalling of the necessary capital, making operations profitable (cost/benefit ratio, tariff policy).

Thanks to multilateral and bilateral technical assistance, the African countries now have competent national managerial staff generally trained in the last few years in regional schools set up with UPU and UNDP assistance. This is one positive result of technical cooperation with these two agencies and some developed countries. Technical assistance remains, however, essential for specialized training of managerial staff.

**m Manufacturing postal equipment**

At the moment, the bulk, if not all, this equipment is imported from abroad as there is no local manufacturing industry in this field. This is a further obstacle because of the high cost (in foreign currency) of the imported equipment, the long delivery times and the fact that the equipment is not adapted to the specific needs of the African administrations. The ideas and the suggestions made in this respect focus on the creation of workshops for making postal equipment in Africa. For reasons of economy, the African postal authorities have already decided to set up four subregional workshops.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF THE KEY PROBLEMS OF THE POST IN AFRICA**

The key problems of the Post in Africa are well known and well defined by senior African officials. It is therefore generally accepted that:

- a the major difficulties of all postal services arise from:*
  - the legal status which is not suited to present-day markets;
  - the inadequate and poorly equipped network;
  - the general lack of financial resources due in particular to a tariff policy which takes little account of profitability and to wasting available means;
  - chronic under-equipment of the operational services linked to a defective investment policy and the lack of a local postal equipment market;
  - unsatisfactory quality of human resources whose training leaves little room for technical specialization.
- b the main constraints are:*
  - communications links and transport means are precarious and unreliable;
  - government policy does not give sufficient priority to the development of postal services;
  - management autonomy is non-existent because of the ambiguity of responsibilities granted to the people in charge and considerable interference from the political authorities.



These key problems and constraints were analyzed in detail at the Conference of Posts and Telecommunications Ministers in Nairobi (1988) and the solutions proposed are contained in the four resolutions and the final act adopted for that purpose (cf annexes).

## V. PROPOSED STRATEGY AND PRIORITIES

### 5.1 *Strategy*

The strategy proposed under the Second Decade will be based on the directives, recommendations or actions contained in the Washington General Action Plan and the Final Act of the Nairobi Conference of Ministers of Posts (1988). The options, projects or development plans already selected or being developed in a particular postal administration should therefore refer to them for the sake of coordination and coherence (cf annexes).

### 5.2 *Proposed programme*

The following options and projects should be selected:

- a Restructuring services and management reform
  - establishment in the short term of a separate telecommunications entity;
  - market research for the different postal products (including financial services) with a view to their development;
  - adoption of quality of service standards and objectives;
  - commercial policy and management adapted to customer needs;
  - computerization of services (operations and management);
  - introduction of a reliable postal statistics system.
- b Improvement of the quality of service
  - restoration of the postal network (repairing of offices and operations centres);
  - recasting of national, regional and international mail circulation plans, with the construction of sorting and transit centres;
  - improved regional integration through better intra-African links;
  - improving mail security.
- c Development of human resources
  - study of an appropriate human resources policy;
  - marshalling of means at regional and subregional level for training managerial staff;
  - stepping up specialized training particularly through a modular system.
- d Manufacturing postal equipment locally
  - establishing at least four units to manufacture postal equipment;
  - effective and permanent participation by countries in managing the units established to ensure their efficacy;



- application of production and management rules to ensure that the equipment produced is competitive;
  - countries' commitment to buying the equipment produced.
- e Development of postal financial services
- expanding the exchange of money orders between African countries;
  - making the giro and savings bank management systems more flexible;
  - introducing new products.

## **VI. PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMMES**

Technical assistance needs for preparing, developing and implementing the projects will be studied by each country and communicated in due course in accordance with the procedure laid down in the preparatory work on the Decade. Some countries have indicated that financial and technical assistance will be needed particularly for sorting centres, computerization of services, staff training and manufacturing equipment, although specific figures have not yet been given.

## **VII. SPECIFYING THE INDICATORS AND QUANTIFIED TARGETS**

The indicators and quantified targets for the postal services must be the quantitative and qualitative objectives to be selected for each sector (product) of activity. The indicators and quantified targets are specified below only for the first phase of the Second Decade (1991-1994). Those for the second phase (1995-2000) must be studied and laid down after the results obtained in the first period have been evaluated. However, quantified projections are mentioned for the year 2000, the base year being 1990.

### **1 *An improved approach to customers through the postal network, including in rural areas: indicators and targets for 1994***

- a Renovation of at least 60 percent of post offices.
- b Revival of postal services by travelling post offices (in suburban areas) and by the rural postal service in the countryside: at least three deliveries a week.
- c Density of postal network: one postal establishment per 20 000 people at most. By the year 2000: one postal establishment per 10 000 people at most.
- d Contracting for closer cooperation with the State and/or local communities in setting up and operating non-profit-making postal establishments opened by express request (participation in cash or kind to cover at least 60 percent of the deficit).
- e Establishment of commercial units at the level of management services and operating centres (marketing, information, publicity, promotion, customer management, continuous monitoring of quality of service, etc).

### **2 *Recovering and increasing traffic in all fields, particularly in financial services: Indicators and targets for 1994***

- a Letter Post (Outward): 4 items per capita per year (Year 2000: 10 items).
- b Postal parcels and packets (Outward): 40 to 60 percent growth (Year 2000: 1 parcel per 10 inhabitants per year).



- c Money orders issued: 40 to 50 percent growth (Year 2000: 1 money order per 5 inhabitants per year).
- d Number of giro accounts: 60 to 80 percent growth (Year 2000: 1 account per 20 inhabitants).
- e Number of postal savings accounts: 60 to 80 percent growth (Year 2000: 1 account per 10 inhabitants).
- f Portion of the Post's funds to be managed autonomously, the rest being paid into the Public Treasury as defined at national level: 40 to 60 percent (Year 2000: 75 to 100 percent) - bank placements to seek financial profitability.

3 *Faster and more regular mail circulation and delivery times through very close control of links by promoting air conveyance (S.A.L.) at national as well as at regional and international level: indicators and targets for 1994*

- a Times from D + 1 to D + 3 at most for domestic mail.
- b Times from D + 1 to D + 4 at most in regional and international links: *In the year 2000, the maximum limits should be reduced to D + 2 and D + 3 respectively.*
- c Increase in the number of post-office-operated domestic surface links.
- d Gradual elimination of sea and land conveyance and maximum use of S.A.L. airmail at regional and international level.
- e Study and construction of at least one sorting and international transit centre per country.
- f Study and introduction of the postcode.

4 *Diversification of financial service products: Indicators and targets for 1994*

- a Study with a view to expanding exchanges of money orders between African countries.
- b Introduction of new giro and savings bank products.
- c Study on setting up a post office bank by amalgamating giro and the savings bank.

5 *Increasing the number of P O boxes to improve and make easier delivery: Indicators and targets for 1994*

- a Growth rate of the number of P O boxes, with the option of decentralization in town districts and villages (CIDEX system): 200 to 300; (Year 2000: 1 box per 50 inhabitants).
- b Box subscription price increase (progressive): 60 to 100 percent.
- c Study of appropriate measures to reconcile the desired growth in the number of P O boxes with the simultaneous existence of a good quality house-to-house delivery service.

6 *Developing new products (EMS and electronic mail): Indicators and targets for 1994 (and forecasts for the year 2000)*

- a Introduction or expansion of EMS and electronic mail in all African countries.
- b Study and general introduction of EMS at national level.
- c Increase in EMS traffic (outward): 30 to 50 percent a year from 1991 to 1994 (and from 10 to 15 percent a year from 1995 to 2000).



7 *Study and introduction of a commercial tariff policy*

- a Adoption of commercial tariffs compatible with a public service.
- b Strict monitoring of investment and operating costs.

8 *Creation of workshops for making postal equipment*

- Study of participation of private partners (technical and financial levels). Partial financing (at least) by regional banks.

The objective in this respect is to actually implement these workshops by 1994.

9 *Readapting vocational training to the new operational and commercial management functions and tasks of the postal services from 1991 to 1994*

- a Study and standardization of different jobs.
- b Study and implementation of a training and adjustment plan for the various standardized jobs.
- c Giving a fresh boost to national and regional training schools.

At least 60 to 70 percent of staff should receive training/further training in the period from 1991 to 1994.

This rate should rise to 80 to 90 percent between 1995 and 2000.

Naturally, related actions and measures must be scheduled to implement the above objectives, particularly the legal and organizational restructuring of the services, commercial policy, reforming vocational training and staff utilization, rationalizing work methods for higher output and improved quality of service and computerizing operations and management.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Senior African postal officials must be in constant contact with the appropriate authorities (in particular, the National Coordination Plan and Committee) to prepare and finalize postal projects under the Second Decade. These authorities must be further sensitized to the major value of postal projects in view of the vital role that the Post plays as a communications system in every country and throughout the world.

Further action could be considered at bilateral, regional and international level to provide more aid for postal administrations in preparing and finalizing their projects under the Second Decade, for instance:

- 1 Making a timely inventory of all the postal projects being developed in countries under the Second Decade.
- 2 Bringing the projects to the attention of the planning authorities and the national coordination committee of the Second Decade in each country concerned.
- 3 Seeking to coordinate projects, particularly regionally oriented ones.
- 4 Making an inventory of the various assistance and support needs expressed by postal administrations with regard to their projects (conception, study, implementation, evaluation, etc phases).



**20th UPU Congress - Washington 1989**

**WASHINGTON GENERAL ACTION PLAN**

**I. Principal objectives**

The Washington Congress, recognizing the increasing competition in the communications market and the impetus which this provides for increased efficiency, along with our customers' demands for greater service reliability and better value for money, agrees that the following actions are essential for the future survival of efficient postal services:

- 1 Governments are urged to ensure that the Post has a legal status and an independent management system and resources, necessary for it to provide efficient postal services to meet customer needs.
- 2 Postal administrations must create market-led cultures where the customer commands top priority: this must be reflected in all policy decisions and operating arrangements.
- 3 Specifically, all member countries of the UPU must give the highest consideration to providing service excellence in all postal services and products, both nationally and internationally.
- 4 The UPU must do everything in its power to encourage Governments and administrations to achieve these objectives, and to give each other mutual support and cooperation to attain them. Specifically, this priority must feature prominently in the work programmes of the EC, the CCPS and the International Bureau.

Individual action points aimed at achieving these objectives are given in part III "Objectives and actions" of this Plan.

**II. Setting priorities for the actions**

Congress has agreed that all the actions contained in this Plan are important. It will not, however, be possible for all administrations to implement all of these actions immediately, as some administrations have only limited resources, and some of the actions can only be achieved over a certain time scale.

In selecting which of these activities to undertake, administrations must first of all bear in mind the objectives listed in part I of this Plan.

If administrations do not have sufficient resources, then it is essential that they encourage their governments to modernize and improve their legal status. This may take some time, and administrations may need to maintain constant pressure on their governments to achieve this.

Nonetheless, there are some actions which can be implemented quickly, and relatively cheaply, by every administration, in order to monitor and improve the quality given to basic services. These must be the first priority of all administrations. Other actions can proceed simultaneously and in parallel, according to the resources of each administration.

All actions must be based above all on two essential principles:

- meeting the needs of customers;
- improving the quality of service.



**III. Objectives and actions**

Objectives	Actions	Responsibility
<b>A. Knowledge of the market</b>		
<b>A.1</b> To achieve a better knowledge of the various components of the communications market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- characteristics of all key market segments</li> <li>- services provided</li> <li>- customer needs</li> <li>- competition</li> </ul>	<b>A1.1</b> Prepare and implement a programme of contacts with customers and market research to obtain continuing data on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- groups of customers, their degree of satisfaction and wishes</li> <li>- competitors, their market shares, organization and methods</li> <li>- market trends</li> </ul>	Adm. CCPS. RU
	<b>A1.2</b> Increase the exchange of market research data between administrations and strengthen inter-administration cooperation in undertaking multilateral or regional market studies	Adm. IB. RU
	<b>A1.3</b> Develop manager training in the use of market research data and customer care practices	Adm. RU

This column indicates the entities responsible for the actions. The abbreviations used are:

Adm = administration

CC = Coordination Committee

CCPS = Consultative Council for Postal Studies

EC = Executive Council

Gvt = Member country's Government

IB = International Bureau

RU = Restricted Unions.



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility
<b>B. Commercial strategies</b>		
B.1 To respond to customer needs	B1.1 Expand the range of services and adapt it to the needs expressed by customers, particularly EMS, electronic mail, parcels priority/non-priority systems and financial services, subject to the need for the services to be cost-effective	Adm
	B1.2 Promote the services and products provided	Adm
	B1.3 Establish commercial and marketing policies, with qualified specialist staff to implement them	Adm
B.2 To adopt a service and tariff policy geared to customer needs in line with the market situation	B2.1 Make national and international service conditions more flexible and adaptable to changing market conditions	Adm
	B2.2 Develop services to meet specific customer needs, eg collection from customer's premises and delivery direct to addressee's address	Adm
	B2.3 Develop flexible, cost-related tariff structures in line with market conditions, eg contract rates for major customers and discounts for pre-sorting by the customer	Adm
	B2.4 Apply fair and cost-related inter-administration payment/compensation arrangements	Adm, EC, RU



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility
B.3 To lay down the principles for the attitude to be adopted towards the competition	B3.1 Define the attitude to be adopted towards the competition on the basis of precise policies and principles, subject to the competition law in force	Adm. Govt
B.4 To specify the constraints of a public service and the corresponding compensations within the framework of the Post's missions	B4.1 Define the constraints of a public service and the corresponding compensations in the form of privileges or financial contributions	Adm. Govt
B.5 To implement commercial customer relations programmes based on the best existing practice	B5.1 Introduce specially staffed Customer Care units designed to give quick and accurate responses to customer inquiries and complaints	Adm
	B5.2 Make information about services and tariffs readily available to customers	Adm
	B5.3 Establish staff with special responsibilities for contact with major customers - 'one-stop shopping'	Adm
	B5.4 Reduce bureaucratic procedures in customer relations	Adm. EC, IB



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility
<b>C. Quality of service and operational strategies</b>		
C.1 To survey traffic and monitor quality in order to: - expedite mail circulation - strengthen the security of items - promote delivery to the addressee's address	C1.1 Define, apply and update standards offering customers an impeccable quality of service	Adm. CCPS, EC, IB, RU
	C1.2 In the domestic and the international service, provide and continuously improve high-quality postal services for all categories of items to meet customer demand for reliable, consistent and cost-effective services, in order to protect the basic postal activity	Adm
	C1.3 Implement a traffic surveillance programme to detect and correct malfunctioning and introduce a tracking system for items and mails	Adm. CCPS, RU
	C1.4 Provide international links for mail circulation networks and constantly review the reliability of the circuits	Adm CCPS, EC, IB, RU
	C1.5 Give equal priority to domestic and international mail so as to apply the concept of a single business	Adm
	C1.6 Make optimum use of all rapid transport means, avoiding wherever possible regular use of inefficient carriers	Adm
	C1.7 Reduce customs formalities and control and lengthy hold-ups in Customs by making best use of national and local "Posts-Customs" Contact Committees	Adm, Gvt



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility
C.2 To ensure rational use of available means	C2.1 Hold costs and tariffs at competitive levels by cutting overheads and simplifying procedures	Adm
	C2.2 Make optimum use of human resources and automation	Adm
	C2.3 Assign dedicated financial and human resources to EMS	Adm
C.3 To modernize operational systems	C3.1 Modernize operational methods and tools	Adm
	C3.2 Develop telematics applications	Adm
<b>D. Management independence</b>		
D.1 To provide the administrative and financial management independence necessary to run the business	D1.1 Have a status ensuring sufficient independence to allocate responsibility for management of human and financial resources and the possibilities of obtaining them	Adm. Govt
	D1.2 Have sufficient resources to run the business, whether raised internally or externally	Adm. Govt
D.2 To make more flexible and adapt the monopoly and national regulations and define a rates policy	D2.1 Have a status providing protection for certain categories of products under a defined monopoly tailored to circumstances, and introduce a system for monitoring its application	Adm. Govt



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility
D.3 To have long-range corporate plans and policies that serve as guides for ongoing activities	D3.1 Define the basic objectives for the postal services	Adm
	D3.2 Prepare and implement plans with clearly identified actions, accompanied by quantified and measureable targets, costs, benefits and deadlines	Adm
<b>E. Human resources</b>		
E.1 To modernize staff recruitment, employment and management systems	E1.1 Recruit and employ staff on similar terms to those in industry generally	Adm, Gov
	E1.2 Pay staff on a level comparable with similar sectors of the country's or region's economic activity	Adm, Gov
	E1.3 Introduce incentive and motivational machinery, eg promotion, productivity bonuses	Adm
	E1.4 Make a point of establishing good relations with the trade unions	Adm
E.2 To adapt training to the needs of users bearing in mind, in particular, the commercial function of the Post	E2.1 Provide permanent training	Adm
	E2.2 Introduce a targeted training plan, particularly for operations, administrative and financial management, market research and marketing	Adm
E.3 To strengthen the internal communications system in the business	E3.1 Introduce information machinery which is constantly monitored so as to change behaviour, create team spirit and strengthen staff support for the action taken	Adm



Objectives	Actions	Responsibility
<b>F. Increased role of UPU permanent bodies</b>		
<b>F.1</b> To ensure implementation of the Action Plan bearing in mind the authority assigned and the resources available	<p>F1.1 Clearly allocate between the EC, the CCPS and the IB responsibilities and procedures for implementing and monitoring progress of the Action Plan</p> <p>F1.2 Adopt an international decision-making procedure ensuring fast reaction capability</p> <p>F1.3 Urge administrations to take all necessary measures to obtain from their Governments corporate legal status and management independence</p> <p>F1.4 Create a data base of market information at the International Bureau</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>EC, IB, RU</p> <p>EC, RU</p> <p>CCPS, EC, IB</p>
<b>F.2</b> To take, as required, urgent measures between Congresses in relation to commercial and technical developments and to make international postal legislation and regulations more flexible	<p>F2.1 Draw up and implement procedures for urgent measures</p> <p>F2.2 Have international postal legislation and regulations modernized and made more flexible</p>	<p>CCPS, EC</p> <p>CCPS, EC</p>
<b>F.3</b> Technical cooperation:		
- to have a technical assistance programme in training, operations, commercial activities and management systems	F3.1 Set up an integrated network for exchange of information by telematics	CCPS, EC
- to strengthen and develop technical cooperation	F3.2 Support and provide technical cooperation activities aimed at assisting administrations to achieve the objectives and implement the actions of the Plan	CCPS, EC, IB, RU



## **Washington General Action Plan**

### **Priority actions suggested to postal administrations**

- 1 Exhort Governments to grant the Post sufficient organic autonomy and financial independence to enable it to manage its affairs in a commercially-oriented way.
- 2 Reorganize the internal postal operational services in such a way as to reduce or even eliminate bureaucracy and to maximize management flexibility in order to adapt quickly to customer demands and competitor reactions. Institutionalize this reorganization within the framework of a five-year overall development plan and accompany it with financial and quality-of-service targets.
- 3 Acquire accurate knowledge of the postal market (especially of the biggest customers) and, in particular, keep informed about services that are needed by customers but are not provided to them or are currently provided to them only by the competitors.
- 4 Establish within the postal administration a separate unit entirely dedicated to marketing and customer service affairs, staffed by properly trained and motivated personnel.
- 5 Based on the above-mentioned marketing knowledge and the skills acquired in this area, restructure operations wherever necessary in the light of new services and products. Wherever possible, use current technology to improve services.
- 6 Domestically, provide high-quality postal services for all categories of mail in order to meet customer demands as regards reliability, regularity and value for money.
- 7 Aim, as a matter of priority, at ongoing improvement of quality standards so that the customer has confidence in the basic services and enthusiastically welcomes new services offered.
- 8 Ensure that all domestic and international services and products conform to international quality standards in order to facilitate the transmission of mail throughout the world.



## RESOLUTION 1

### The Legal Status of the Post

The Conference of Ministers responsible for postal services in African countries South of the Sahara held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 17 - 18 November 1988 at the initiative of the Universal Postal Union.

#### In view of

the results of consultancy missions carried out in the African postal administrations under the aegis of the Universal Postal Union for the improvement and rationalization of management in accordance with the 1984 Declaration of Hamburg and within the framework of UNDP/UPU project RAF/87/018 "Improvement and Rationalization of Management in Postal Administrations;"

#### Recognising

that the Post is and will continue to be a fundamental means of communication between people, and is an essential ingredient to national unity, economic, social and cultural development;

#### Considering

the rapid technological changes taking place in the communications market and their impact on postal services and the developing needs of customers;

#### Aware

of the urgent need to redefine the status of the Post, its place in the national priorities, its relationship with the state, its mode of organisation, working and management;

#### Conscious

of the intense and growing competition facing the Administrations from private courier companies and the need to provide more efficient country-wide postal services, to adopt appropriate commercial strategies



to meet competition and other market challenges by providing services which satisfy customer needs, protects the business from decline and heavy financial losses

Noting

findings made in many African countries testifying to the critical state of postal services and their vulnerability to further competitive attack

Taking into account

the conclusions drawn from the work of the symposium of Directors General of Posts of African countries held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 14 to 16 November 1988;

Recommends to the Governments in African countries

- that they urgently review and revise their postal structures to equip their postal managements to respond more effectively to competition, to develop new services and to improve the quality of service to meet the social and commercial needs of the country and specifically within a legal framework approved by Government; the top postal management should be given greater freedom and flexibility to manage the postal business within agreed targets;
- that in principle there should be separation of Posts from Telecommunications at the earliest opportunity, each with its own financial accounts, objectives and targets with the aim to separate the two operations within a specified timescale;
- that specifically greater flexibility should be given to postal administrations to fix realistic tariffs and provide new services to meet customer needs in order to operate postal services profitably within a specified timescale; where postal administrations are required to provide loss-making services in the national interest, they should receive corresponding subventions from Government to be shown explicitly in the annual postal accounts.



Management of Postal Services

The Conference of Ministers responsible for postal services in African countries South of the Sahara, held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 17 - 18 November 1988 at the initiative of the Universal Postal Union;

Aware of the serious problems facing many African Posts, such as deficits, traffic decline, loss of market shares and unreliable service;

Recognising the industrial and commercial nature of the Post, which has to cover its expenditure through revenue from sale of services to the public;

Considering that a sound economic base is a prerequisite for effective participation of the Post in the development of rural areas;

Considering the urgent need to contain postal expenditure within its revenue;

1. Recommends to the Governments in African countries

- that they endeavour to give the Post operational conditions similar to those of industrial and commercial ventures;
- by not imposing on the Post, public service charges without an adequate financial compensation;
- by giving Postal Administrations the freedom to set tariff rates that are sufficient to cover operating costs and generate the revenue required for capital development;
- by ensuring that Administrations and public services pay the Post for its services, such as full payment for official mail, and by remunerating correctly funds remitted to it by financial services of the Post;
- by letting the Post use all the financial resources obtained from its operations including terminal dues.

2. Urges African Postal Administrations

- to establish as an immediate priority staffing levels in accordance with postal traffic, namely in post offices, delivery services and management.



RESOLUTION: 3

Management of Human Resources and Productivity

The Conference of Ministers responsible for postal services in African countries south of the Sahara held in Nairobi, Kenya from 17th to 18th November, 1988 at the initiative of the UPU;

Considering the rapid evolution of the communication market, the need to increase the productivity of postal services and consequently modernise them by adopting an efficient management system;

Noting that there is scope for improving performance in the Post by amongst other things;

- i) increasing the utilisation of all human and other resources;
- ii) improving working methods to enhance productivity;
- iii) improving quality of service to meet customer needs;
- iv) improving the effectiveness of training by embracing modern management techniques.

1. Recommends to the Governments in African countries

- i) to increase efficiency of the Post by abolishing bureaucratic constraints;
- ii) to do everything possible to provide the Post with the means to modernise its management techniques and transport deployment;
- iii) to ensure that the Postal business has adequate capital investment, reviewed on an annual basis, to support its profitable expansion and efficiency;
- iv) to authorise the introduction of a simple, efficient and comprehensive statistical system that will make it possible to assess all relevant management information data;
- v) to develop a human resource management policy taking into account the need for recruitment adapted to job specialisations within the Post and training oriented towards the future of the enterprise and organise a system of transfer and promotion connected to the needs of the enterprise and the respect for equal rights and duties for all ;
- vi) to do everything to develop a sense of belonging and spirit of enterprise of postal employees.



The Future of the Post in Africa.(Monopoly, Quality of Service,  
Competition and New Products)

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The Conference of Ministers responsible for Postal Services in African countries South of the Sahara, held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 17 - 18 November 1988 at the Initiative of the Universal Postal Union;

Aware of the serious operational and management problems faced by Postal Services in Africa;

Recognising that deterioration in the quality of service generally and in Inter African relations in particular and absence of new products are responsible for their present problems;

Considering that the communications needs are increasing very rapidly and that the market has become more demanding and the competition more aggressive, notwithstanding the existence of postal monopoly;

Considering the urgent need to provide to the public high quality services as regards reliability, regularity and speed so that they can utilise postal services;

Urges African Postal Administrations

- To improve the quality of service of mail and financial services as regards reliability, regularity and speed, focussing primarily on capital city, big towns and important customers,

(a) by reducing substantially the time required for mail circulation and delivery, incidence of losses, damage and theft of postal articles as well as different types of embezzlements in the postal financial services,

(b) by instituting a monitoring and quality control system,

(c) by providing services at competitive rates:

- To introduce and develop new postal and financial services particularly EMS, electronic mail, giro, savings bank, etc.



- to introduce as rapidly as possible the International EMS service, at least in the capital city and major towns,

- define for each product performance standards to be expected by clients, maintain and improve these standards to win the confidence of the Public,

undertake continuous action to commercialise products, make them known to the Public and receive their suggestions.



UNITED NATIONS  
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)



UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION  
(UPU)



Final Act of the Conference

NAIROBI, KENYA  
14-18 NOVEMBER 1988



Recognising

- that the Post is and will continue to be a fundamental means of communication between people, and is an essential ingredient to national unity, economic, social and cultural development;
- the industrial and commercial nature of the Post, which has to cover its expenditure through revenue from sale of services to the public;
- that deterioration in the quality of service generally, and in intra African relations in particular, and absence of new products are responsible for their present crisis;

Considering

- the rapid technological changes taking place in the communications market and their impact on postal services and the increasing needs of customers;
- the need to increase the productivity of postal services and consequently modernise them by adopting an efficient management system;
- that a sound economic base is a prerequisite for effective participation of the Post in the development of rural areas;
- that the market has become more demanding and the competition more aggressive, notwithstanding the existence of postal monopoly;
- the urgent need to provide to the public high quality services as regards reliability, regularity and speed so that they can utilise postal services;
- the urgent need to contain postal expenditure within its revenue.



FINAL ACT OF NAIROBI

We, the Ministers responsible for Postal Services in African countries South of the Sahara, meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, on 17 to 18th November, 1988 at the initiative of the Universal Postal Union (UPU):

In view of

- the results of consultancy missions carried out in the African Postal Administrations under the aegis of Universal Postal Union for improvement and rationalisation of management in accordance with the 1984 Declaration of Hamburg and within the framework of UNDP/UPU project RAF/87/018 "Improvement and rationalisation of management in Postal Administration",
- the serious problems facing many African Posts such as deficits, traffic decline, loss of market shares, unreliable service,
- the serious operational and management problems faced by Postal Services in Africa,
- the urgent need to redefine the status of the Post, its place in the national priorities, its relationship with the state, its mode of organisation, working and management;



Noting

- the findings made in many African countries testifying to the critical state of postal services and their vulnerability to further competitive attack;
- that there is scope for improving performance in the Post among other things:
  - (i) increasing the utilisation of all human and other resources,
  - (ii) improving working methods to enhance productivity,
  - (iii) improving quality of service to meet customer needs,
  - (iv) improving the effectiveness of training by embracing modern management techniques;
- the intense and growing competition facing the Administrations from private courier companies and the need to provide more efficient country-wide postal services to adopt appropriate commercial strategies to meet competition and other market challenges by providing services which satisfy customer needs, protects the business from decline and heavy losses;



- Urges the African Postal Administrations;
- to improve the quality of service of mail and financial services as regards reliability, regularity and speed, focussing primarily on capital cities, big towns and important customers,
  - i) by reducing substantially the time required for mail circulation and delivery, incidence of losses, damage and theft of postal articles as well as different types of embezzlements in the postal financial services,
  - ii) by instituting a monitoring and quality control system,
  - iii) by providing services at competitive rates;
- To introduce and develop new postal and financial services, particularly EMS, electronic mail, giro, savings bank, etc., and to give priority to the urgent introduction of the International EMS service, at least in the capital city and major towns;
- To define for each product performance standards to be expected by clients, maintain and improve these standards to win the confidence of the Public;
- To undertake continuous action to commercialise products, make them known to the Public and receive their suggestions;
- To establish as an immediate priority staffing levels in accordance with postal traffic, namely in post offices, delivery services and management;



Recommends to the Governments in African countries,

- that they urgently review and revise their postal structures to equip their postal managements to respond more effectively to competition, to develop new services and to improve the quality of service to meet the social and commercial needs of the country and specifically within a legal framework approved by Government, the top postal management should be given greater freedom and flexibility to manage the postal business within agreed targets.;
- that in principle there should be separation of Posts from Telecommunications at the earliest opportunity, each with its own financial accounts, objectives and targets with the aim to separate the two operations within a specified timetable;
- that specifically greater flexibility should be given to postal administrations to fix tariffs and provide new services to meet customer needs in order to generate sufficient capital investment, to operate postal services profitably within a specified timetable and where postal administrations are required to provide loss-making services in the national interest, they should receive corresponding subventions from Government to be shown explicitly in the annual postal accounts;
- that they endeavour to give the Post operational conditions similar to those of industrial and commercial ventures;
- that they do not impose on the Post uneconomic public charges without an adequate financial compensation.
- that they ensure that other departments and administrations and public services pay the Post for its services, such as full payment of official mail, and by remunerating correctly funds remitted to it by financial services of the Post.



- to increase efficiency by abolishing bureaucratic constraints,
- to provide the Post with the means to enable it to modernise its management techniques and transport development;
- to ensure that the Postal business has adequate capital investment, reviewed on an annual basis, to support its profitable expansion and efficiency;
- to authorise the introduction of a simple, efficient and comprehensive statistical system that will make it possible to assess all relevant management information data;
- to develop a human resource management policy taking into account the need for recruitment adapted to job specialisations within the Post and organise a system of transfer and promotion connected to the needs of the enterprise and the respect for equal rights and duties for all;
- to do everything possible to develop a sense of belonging and spirit of enterprise of postal employees.



- that they let the Post use all the financial resources obtained from its operations including terminal dues.

We request the Pan African Postal Union with the assistance of the UPU to undertake the follow up of decisions contained herein this final act to take the necessary initiatives thereupon.

Done at Nairobi, 18th November, 1988