

Chapter X

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

In 2001, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) continued to promote a fast and reliable universal postal service at affordable prices through international collaboration among its member countries. Activities focused on postal reform and the future development of the Union, with special attention to the needs of developing countries.

UPU's 189 member countries remained the largest physical distribution network in the world, with more than 5 million postal employees working in some 600,000 post offices worldwide.

Activities of UPU organs

Universal Postal Congress

The Universal Postal Congress, UPU's supreme legislative authority, met every five years. It last convened in 1999 [YUN 1999, p. 1408]. In 2001, the High Level Group on the Future Development of UPU (HLG) presented a two-year study on the reform of UPU's structure and on its mission, decision-making process and financing. HLG concluded that a consultative committee should be created for private-sector postal stakeholders—private express couriers, international mailers, equipment manufacturers and suppliers, trade unions and non-governmental organizations—and that committee members should be permitted to participate in UPU's major governing bodies.

Council of Administration

The Council of Administration, which ensured the continuity of UPU's work between Congresses and studied regulatory, administrative and legal issues, held its annual session in Berne, Switzerland (18-26 October). It took action on HLG recommendations and on combating terrorism.

Postal Operations Council

The Postal Operations Council (POC) dealt with the operational, economic and commercial aspects of international postal services, assisting them to modernize and upgrade their products, including letter post, express mail service, postal parcels and postal financial services. At its annual session (Berne, 18-27 April), POC adopted decisions concerning amendments to the Letter Post and Parcel Post Regulations, the election of the new Quality of Service Fund Board of Trustees and the Fund's management and secretariat functions.

International Bureau

The International Bureau provided support, liaison, information and consultation to the postal administrations of member countries. It continued to act as a clearing house for the settlement of various inter-administration charges related to the exchange of postal items and international reply coupons and studied developments in the postal environment, monitored the global quality of postal service and published information and statistics on international postal services. Its Postal Technology Centre managed the postal application of electronic data interchange.

As at 31 December 2001, the permanent staff members of the Bureau numbered 170, of whom 78 were in the Professional and higher categories and 92 were in the General Service category.

Budget

Under UPU's self-financing system, contributions were payable in advance by member States based on the following year's budget. The Council of Administration approved a budget of 71.4 million Swiss francs for the 2001-2002 biennium.

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