

Chapter X

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

In 2002, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) continued to promote an efficient and accessible universal postal service at affordable prices. It assisted postal administrations to improve the quality of their service and to stimulate growth in mail traffic.

UPU's 189 member countries remained the largest physical distribution network in the world, with more than 5 million postal employees in some 660,000 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] and was scheduled to meet next, in 2004, in Bucharest, Romania.

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 (1-8 November). It signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Atomic Energy Agency for ensuring the safe and secure transport of radioactive material, including nuclear material, through the mail, among other actions.

Postal Operations Council

The Postal Operations Council (POC) dealt with the operational, economic and commercial aspects of international postal services, promoted the introduction of new postal products and made recommendations on standards for technological, operational and other processes where uniformity was essential. POC, at its annual session (Berne, 8-19 April), decided to retain terminal dues rates and caps at current levels through 2006. Following

the sending of anthrax through the United States mail in 2001, the Postal Security Action Group held a bioterrorism seminar to find ways to prevent the occurrence of a similar incident. UPU's first Technical Cooperation Forum covered universal postal service, quality of service and postal development and reform. Technical cooperation was expanded to include emergency rehabilitation to ensure the provision of basic services in the wake of natural disasters and conflicts. In that regard, it embarked on a multi-year integrated project to help Afghanistan rebuild its postal service.

International Bureau

The International Bureau provided support, liaison, information and consultation to postal administrations of member countries. It studied developments in the postal environment, monitored postal service quality on a global scale, and published information and statistics on international postal services. In cooperation with the World Bank Group, it published the second edition of *The Postal Industry in an Internet Age*, case studies on postal reform. Its Postal Technology Centre managed the postal application of electronic data interchange.

As at 31 December 2002, the Bureau's permanent staff numbered 149, of whom 62 were in the Professional and higher categories and 87 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 2003-2004 biennium.

NOTE: For further details on the activities of UPU in 2002, see *Universal Postal Union Biennial Report 2001-2002*, published by UPU.

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