

**COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT (CTSD)**

**Sixteenth Session**

**Geneva, 3 to 7 June 2013**

**Submissions from entities in the United Nations system and elsewhere on their efforts in  
2012 to implement the outcome of the WSIS**

Submission by

**Universal Postal Union**

This submission was prepared as an input to the report of the UN Secretary-General on “Progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels” (to the 16th session of the CSTD), in response to the request by the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2006/46, to the UN Secretary-General to inform the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the implementation of the outcomes of the WSIS as part of his annual reporting to the Commission.

DISCLAIMER: The views presented here are the contributors' and do not necessarily reflect the views and position of the United Nations or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
---

## REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY OUTCOMES

BY UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU)  
Berne, December 2012

### I. Executive Summary

The outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) acknowledged the UPU and the worldwide postal network as an important asset in the development of the information society. The worldwide network of 660,000 post offices can connect the unconnected and increase e-inclusion for communication, commerce, trade, and important public services such as education, health and government services.

The mandate and specific actions to support the implementation of the programme of work for the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society are contained in UPU Congress Resolutions C 28/2008 and C 38/2008.

At the operational level, the UPU continues to carry out a number of actions that advance the information society and its benefits, in the areas of e-learning, e-government, e-inclusion, e-finance, and e-communication and support the reduction of the digital divide across its member countries.

This document provides a summary of the key activities undertaken in 2012 by the UPU in the context of the WSIS goals, highlighting innovative initiatives as well as planned activities to ensure the continued implementation of WSIS goals.

### II. Analytical Overview

Trends and experiences, in implementation at the national, regional and international level.

The post office network, covering 660,000 locations across the globe, plays an increasingly vital role in facilitating e-inclusion and bridging the digital divide in rural and remote communities.

During 2012, the UPU released a study entitled “Measuring Postal e-services: A global perspective”. (<http://www.upu.int/fileadmin/documentsFiles/activities/electronicServices/studyPostalEservicesEn.pdf>)  
The study’s major findings were:

- *Postal e-services are growing globally, but there is a divide between industrialized and developing countries*

The study evaluates the worldwide development of 55 postal e-services. The study shows that the number of new postal e-services introduced globally is increasing exponentially. The regional analysis of the development of these services shows that the industrialized countries provide, on average, twice as many e-services as developing countries. Special support is thus required from the UPU to developing countries to enable the implementation of the UPU strategy, based on the development of a worldwide network with three dimensions: physical, financial and digital.

- *The postal e-services index (PES) shows that not all developing countries are trailing*

The study develops a benchmark index for the development of e-services in UPU member countries. The countries’ ranking according to this PES index shows that some developing countries are global leaders in providing postal e-services and, hence, their cases can serve as models for others. The index will serve as a reference for implementing certain programmes of the UPU’s Doha Postal Strategy (2013-2016).

- *Innovation capability influences the development of postal e-services more than wealth does. The e-services strategy, management and profits are still not aligned*

The study shows that a country's innovation capability as well as the development of regulation and infrastructure related to ICTs are factors supporting the development of postal e-services. However, a country's or a Post's wealth, as well as the development of e-government nationally, do not determine the level of development of postal e-services. The study also indicates that 70 per cent of postal operators are strategically striving for the development of postal e-services. The transition, however, is far from being accomplished, and the impact of postal e-services on a Post's revenue is still modest.

The UPU intends to continue to monitor the development of e-business and publish an update to the database every 2 years.

### **III. Innovative policies, programmes and projects which have been undertaken**

As co-facilitator of Action Line C7: e-Business, the UPU continues to foster international and regional activities and cooperation in the development of e-Business – both at a national and international level.

The UPU encourages the use of interconnection technologies developed by its Postal Technology Centre, to develop e-business within the postal sector and bridge the digital divide. The UPU Post\*Net network now connects 163 countries for the exchange of electronic data on postal movements, supporting the development of e-commerce in these countries.

There are now over 28,885 post offices around the world providing public internet access points covering rural and underserved communities in urban centre. This number continues to increase as further technical cooperation projects are developed with other international organizations active in the field.

The UPU organised a series of E-Commerce Conferences “Fostering e-commerce for emerging markets” at which private sector, governments, and regulators exchanged views on the important elements necessary to support development of national and international e-commerce for emerging markets.

In the area of e-inclusion, the UPU continues to expand its International Financial System (IFS) network to enable secure and affordable electronic remittance services via national post offices throughout the world, enabling greater financial inclusion in underserved communities. Since the last report, 23 new countries have connected to the network bringing the total number of countries exchanging remittances electronically to 64.

A joint UPU – International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) project involving six West African countries was completed connecting post offices in rural areas of the six participating countries to the UPU's worldwide electronic payment network; ensuring the smooth functioning of the rural post offices through the provision of quality electronic payment services; and linking the UPU's electronic payment services with other postal financial services (giro accounts and savings accounts in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal), as well as non-postal financial services (banks, savings banks, etc., in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal). Currently, a total of 453 post offices in the six countries participating in the project offer e-fund transfer services (issuance and payment).

In the area of e-education, (Action Line C4, C7: E-Learning) at a global level, the UPU continues to expand uses of ICT to disseminate training programmes covering a large number of beneficiaries. Thanks to the UPU's e-learning platform, postal staff, particularly in developing countries, has permanent access to all training courses. Actions to develop regional and local capacities were put in place, including training of trainers and tutors. A total of 126 group training activities were organized in all regions for 2,070 postal managers. The Trainpost platform offers 42 online courses in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. Approximately 7,640 participants from 177 countries<sup>1</sup> have taken an online course developed by the UPU since 2009. The number of participants has increased significantly since the introduction of Spanish and the decentralization of the tutoring. [www.upu-trainpost.com/eng/trainpost\\_index.htm](http://www.upu-trainpost.com/eng/trainpost_index.htm).

In the area of building confidence and security in the use of ICTs (Action Line C5), The UPU is also overseeing a major strategic project to build a secure .post platform using the top-level sponsored domain name to provide a platform for secure and trusted domestic and cross border postal services, enhancing the possibilities for increased trust in E-commerce transaction in all countries. The UPU is the

first UN agency to launch and operate a sector specific top level domain. The .POST TLD is the first TLD to be 100% conformant to the latest DNSSEC security standards.

And finally, in relation to Action Line C2, Information and Communication Infrastructure, the UPU embarked on an ambitious project to facilitate access and usage of affordable Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology in developing countries. The project entailed working with postal sector members, private sector specialists, and UNDP to develop and deploy the technology, skills and capacity to run an affordable RFID based global monitoring system (GMS) for movement of mail throughout the international network of national postal operators.

To date, 50 countries have implemented the RFID technology including Aruba, Cayman Islands, Chile, Costa Rica, Curacao, Greece, India, Iran, Japan, Korea (Republic), Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova (Republic), Netherlands Antilles, Norway, Peru, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, and Zambia. At the completion of the first phase of the project, RFID affordability improved from 20.00 USD to 0.30 USD per item. The UPU expects to increase the reach the RFID based infrastructures in developing countries with additional countries indicate their willingness to join the project and gain access to the RFID technology within the UPU Global Monitoring System rollout in 2013.

#### **IV. Future actions or initiatives to be taken**

In 2013, as well as continuing most of the actions already outlined, some new activities are expected to be completed. At the 25<sup>th</sup> UPU Congress, approved its Doha Postal Strategy 2013-2016 which included several programmes of work dealing with facilitation of international e-commerce and stimulating market growth through the use of new technologies, in-line with WSIS goals.

In relation to Action Line C1 Promotion of ICT for Development, the UPU will again be collaborating with the ITU on the publication to showcase the utilization of ICT for the delivery of enhanced postal services and reduce the digital divide, especially in rural areas and underserved areas. This publication jointly financed by the ITU and UPU, will contain a set of best practices for the use of ICTs in the postal sector and provide guidelines for countries that are developing projects of this kind or wish to do so. The publication will help to promote the development of the information society.

In relation to Action Line C3, Access to Information and Knowledge, the UPU is expecting to coordinate new projects in Asia Pacific and Africa, in cooperation with other international organizations active in the field, to enhance the use of ICT within the postal network and establish telecentres for the use of the general public including school children and small and medium enterprises for accessing internet and related e-commerce services.

#### **Contact:**

Paul Donohoe, Programme Manager - Electronic Postal Services & E-Commerce.  
paul.donohoe@upu.int