

**REPORT OF THE 19TH EAST AFRICAN COMMUNICATIONS ORGANISATION
(EACO) POSTAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI
28TH MAY – 1ST JUNE 2012**

Executive summary

The 19th Assembly of Designated Postal Operators in the East African Region was held from 28th May to 1st June 2012. It was opened by the Representative of the outgoing Chairman of the Assembly.

This report highlights areas that require the attention of the regulators, governments and other stakeholders.

1. Attendance

The meeting was attended by members from National Post of Burundi, Postal Corporation of Kenya (PCK), Tanzania Posts Corporation (TPC), Posta Uganda, Burundi Telecommunication Control Regulatory Agency (ARCT), Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Agency (RURA), Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA), Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK), AFRALTI and Multimedia University.

1.1: Absent with apologies

Rwanda Post CEO sent his apologies to the assembly.

2. Election of the Bureau

The following were elected on the bureau:

Chairman : Burundi,
1st Rapporteur : Burundi,
2nd Rapporteur : Uganda.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted with a few amendments.

Amended agenda attached in **Annex I**.

4. Presentation and Review of the 18th EACO Report

The outgoing Chairman presented a report on the status of implementation of the Report of the 18th Postal Operators Assembly. Report attached in **Annex II**.

4.1. Matters arising

Uganda presented its concern on Rwanda's absence in the meeting and its consistent non participation in EACO taskforce meetings on Quality of Service, Joint Inspections of airports and offices of exchange; and IFS.

Recommendation

Rwanda should actively participate in postal meetings and activities; and being the host of the EACO Secretariat; it should assure members that it will follow up actively on postal matters in the organisation.

Kenya made observations and the following were noted;

- Regulators were not invited to joint inspections as agreed in the last Congress.
- A Forum on postal and couriers was held in Kenya and the Ministry was represented by the Permanent Secretary; various issues were discussed.
- In regard to Security issues; an audit was made by the regulator at the borders; and it was discovered that in the region, cross border postal traffic is not checked.

Recommendation

Members should purchase scanning machines or detectors and install them at borders.

Burundi requested for an update on its inclusion in the UPU Road Transport project which was to be followed up by Rwanda as former chair.

Uganda gave an update; and reported that the Project was proposed for English speaking countries; however it was clarified that Burundi will be included in the project as its a member of EACO. The UPU Consultant completed his studies and presented the report during the last UPU regional quality of service workshop held in Sudan; which highlighted that the project was feasible and countries should go ahead and implement it.

Recommendation

- PAPU should forward the report to member countries and engage them in implementing the project.

5. Status of implementation the 18th EACO action matrix

The Designated Operators of Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda presented the status of the implementation of the action matrix in their respective operations.

The following issues were extensively discussed:

5.1. Joint Inspection of Airports and Offices of Exchange

Regulators were concerned that they were not involved in the inspection of offices of exchange, airports, borders and ports of entry as agreed in the last Congress.

Agreed

- Designated Operators should invite Regulators in the next joint inspections.
- Burundi will host the next joint inspection and quality of service task forces in October 2012.

5.2: IFS Tests between Burundi and Uganda

Burundi was concerned with the persistent problems faced while testing with Uganda since February 2012.

Agreed

- Uganda and Burundi agreed to liaise with PTC's Kapinga to follow up and solve the problems.
- The proposed IEMO Project training for IT and IFS staff of IEMO members should be held as soon as possible.

5.3: Quality of service

Burundi cited the concern of delayed mail delivery from Kampala to Burundi; an example given was an item that was delivered after 17 days from Kampala to Burundi.

Agreed

- Members to monitor and improve on mail processes at the sorting centres and airports following the set UPU quality standards.

- Sign contracts with other carriers besides KQ; such as Air Uganda, Air Rwanda to carry mails.

The Assembly then went into sessions where presentations and discussions were conducted. The following is a summary of what was noted and agreed upon as a way forward for the Designated Postal Operators.

6. PRESENTATION ON FINANCIAL INCLUSION – BURUNDI EXPERIENCE

The presentation was noted; Kenya and Tanzania shared with members the experiences in their countries in embracing financial inclusion.

7. PRESENTATION ON QUALITY OF SERVICE – BURUNDI EXPERIENCE

The presentation was noted; Kenya and Tanzania shared with members the experiences in their countries.

Kenya requested members that provide post bus services to advise them on how they handle security matters in the buses as the region was facing terrorism threats. Burundi shared its experience.

8. PRESENTATION ON ROAD TRANSPORT PROJECT BY UGANDA

Noted

- The UPU Consultant's report on the feasibility study on the road transport project is ready for members to implement.
- 19th EACO Congress needs to follow-up and implement the project.
- All 5 countries use air transport; which is costly and unreliable; due to cancelled flights, downloading of mail.
- All 5 countries are connected by reliable roads across borders; like in Europe where they deliver mails using vans and they do Trans-night.
- Limited mail exchange at Kenya-Uganda border (1 or 2 per week).
- Options such as outsourcing dedicated trucks (mail vans) or passenger buses; however; there is need to consider issues such as the mail volumes, cancelled trips, running costs vs revenues, sufficient clientele, assured dispatch.

UPU Consultancy

- The report was presented in Khartoum Quality of Service workshop.
- Findings; the project is feasible.
- The Consultant cautioned members that; for the project to be successful there is need for cooperation.
- Project failed in South Africa region and trucks are now idle.

Agreed/Way forward

- EACO Chair should contact PAPU and request it to forward the consultant's report to members.
- CEOs will meet in July 2012 to discuss way forward (funding, implementation, ownership, expenses, security, routings, connectivity, responsibilities, accountability, disciplinary etc.) and sign agreements; guided by the Consultant's research and costing done by professionals.
- Members need to agree on funding the project using the individual members' Quality of Service Fund.
- Engage at a professional level gathering of data from all 5 countries to establish Mails volume carried out in the region and expected monthly revenues accrued to member countries.
- Lessons to learn; from the South Africa region experience.
- EACO Chair to follow up Burundi's inclusion in the Project.
- Kenya to forward the proposal to its Management before the July meeting.

9. REGIONAL POSTAL COOPERATION BY USING QUALITY OF SERVICE FUND (QSF)

Noted

- Need to set up another joint regional project to be funded by QSF;
- Need to encourage EACO postal member states to have viable projects to utilize the fund.

Agreed/Way forward

- A regional project that can be funded by the QSF should be developed. "Road Transport Network" is retained as a regional project.

10. ACCOUNTS SETTLEMENT BETWEEN DESIGNATED OPERATORS OF EACO

Noted

- There is need to separate settling of accounts statements for IFS and terminal dues.
- Uganda and Tanzania still owe Kenya some money.
- Burundi to be informed on settlement of accounts and signing of bilateral agreements.
- In regard to opening an escrow account; the IFS task force met in Dar es Salaam and agreed that it is not possible to open an Escrow account due to the huge management costs involved.

Agreed

- Each country to ring fence their customer accounts.
- Burundi to sign bilateral agreement with Kenya.
- Accounts to be separately settled and reconciled at bilateral level.

11. REPORTS ON POSTAL REGULATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

Burundi

The creation of a postal regulatory authority is in progress. A draft decree was prepared and submitted to the responsible party; to be analysed by the cabinet.

Rwanda

The postal sector is not regulated. The Cabinet approved that RURA will regulate the postal sector; progress being discussed at parliament level.

Tanzania

The postal sector is regulated by TCRA. A national postal policy is in place; and there is good cooperation between the regulator and postal authority.

Kenya

The postal sector is regulated by CCK. A national postal communication policy is in place and was last revised in 2006. The act also created a universal service fund under this regulation.

The benefits from regulators in Kenya include; value for money tariffs, provision of accurate data which informs policy decisions, continuous consultations, innovations, and increased choices for the consumers.

Uganda

The postal sector is regulated by UCC. A law is in place under the Communication Act of 1997; which created a postal policy. Posta Uganda works collaboratively with UCC.

12. TRAINPOST PROGRAMME – BURUNDI EXPERIENCE

Noted

- Burundi has a national centre for postal training which is managed by the national postal Board.
- Trainings are done by experienced postal staff/experts; and the courses range from relevant needs.
- There is need for capacity building in member countries to improve on staff's postal skills.
- The governments of India and Pakistan sponsor trainings in different postal back grounds at the Raki National Postal Academy and Pakistan Postal College.

Agreed/Way forward

- Member countries that do not have training facilities should consider establishing centres; and also benchmark with Burundi.
- Member countries are encouraged to take advantage of the UPU on-line TRAINPOST Programme.
- For the TRAINPOST programme; members should consider motivating participants through promotions.
- Members should take advantage of sponsored trainings from India and Pakistan to meet customer needs.

13. STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF NAIROBI POSTAL STRATEGY (NPS) BY KENYA

Noted

Kenya's implementation status was noted by the assembly.

Agreed

Member countries were urged to evaluate the status of implementation of the NPS in their countries using Kenya's model before the PAPU Plenipotentiary session in July 2012 and Doha Congress in September/October 2012.

14: PRESENTATION ON PROPOSED UPU TERMINAL DUES SYSTEM 2014 - 2017

Noted

- The 24th Congress instructed the UPU Council of Administration (CA) to ensure that, to the great extent possible; there is a gradual transition of all countries not presently applying country-specific, cost-based remuneration to the target system during 2014-2017.
- Members were concerned that if this recommendation is implemented; it may lead to significant loss of revenue and yet TDs amount to 40% of annual revenue in Africa.
- PAPU driven initiative results were communicated to members after the African Support Committee (ASC) meeting last year.
- Members were to study the relevant proposals from the UPU as circulated in final proposals and seek consensus at Africa level.
- The position was to be circulated to other PAPU member countries.
- Members' considerations were to be forwarded to PAPU ahead of the meeting in July 2012.

Agreed

- EACO and PAPU should coordinate with other regions particularly the Asia pacific and other developing countries to advocate for delayed implementation of the recommendation.
- A proposal from EACO presenting its concerns on the proposed transition system with the support of UPU and countries will be presented by Kenya.
- Member countries should commit to supporting Kenya's proposal and acquire the nine signatures. Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi already committed to supporting Kenya.
- EACO to engage PAPU to sensitise all members on EACO's position.

- Members were advised to visit the UPU website to access the TDs proposals for their understanding and information.

15. MEMBERSHIP OF CA AND POC UPU BODIES BY EACO MEMBERS

Noted

- Elections of members to CA and POC UPU bodies will be held during Doha Congress in September/October 2012.
- African countries should have as much presentation on bodies as possible.
- Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania are seeking CA membership.

Agreed

- PAPU should coordinate the harmonisation of positions and members should agree on a strategy to secure Africa's interest.
- Members were encouraged to seek nomination and be voted on either or both seats.
- CEOs of EACO to harmonise positions for UPU membership.
- Members requested to support Kenya for the position of UPU Director General.

16. PRESENTATION ON NEW ADDRESSING SYSTEM STANDARDS – TANZANIA AND KENYA

Noted

- Tanzania and Kenya's presentation on new addressing standards were noted by the assembly.
- A Consultant will carry out a study in Burundi on developing addressing and postcode in June 2012.
- All members are at different levels of implementing addressing systems.
- The development of an Addressing system and Postcode is in the interest of many including governments, regulators, economic operators and indeed all the citizens of the country.

Agreed

- Member countries are encouraged to involve and liaise with other stakeholders in order to develop the national Addressing and Postcode systems.

17: PRESENTATION ON ICT – BURUNDI EXPERIENCE

Noted

The presentation was noted by the assembly. It was observed that Burundi is advancing in ICT developments.

18: PRESENTATION ON POSTAL/COURIER CURRICULUM-AFRALTI, KENYA

Noted

- The assembly took note of the presentation.
- Uganda and Kenya are members of AFRALTI.
- AFRALTI trains in postal and courier regulation.
- It identified challenges that face the postal and courier sector in Kenya.
- AFRALTI courses to be offered after conducting needs analysis with stakeholders; such as interconnection among operators, postal security and postal regulation.

Agreed

- Member countries who are not members of AFRALTI should consider joining.
- Members to contact AFRALTI to take up trainings in the various courses provided to build capacity and enhance efficiency in the sector.

CONCLUSION

The Assembly of Designated Postal Operators requests that the above concerns and recommendations in this report be considered and approved by the 19th EACO Congress for the improvement of Postal Services in the EACO region.

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Gilbert Baranyizigiye

CHAIRMAN (BURUNDI)

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1st RAPPORTEUR (BURUNDI)

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Jessica Uwera
2nd RAPPORTEUR (UGANDA)