Chapter X

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

In 2004, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) continued to promote an efficient and accessible universal postal service at affordable prices through international collaboration among its member countries. It assisted postal administrations to improve the quality of their service and to stimulate growth in mail traffic.

UPU’s 190 member countries remained the largest physical distribution network in the world, with more than 5 million postal employees in some 660,000 post offices.

Activities of UPU organs

Universal Postal Congress

The Universal Postal Congress, UPU’s supreme legislative authority, held its twenty-third session (Bucharest, Romania, 15 September–5 October). It adopted the Bucharest World Postal Strategy, a road map for action by Governments, postal administrations and UPU bodies. Related activities would focus on universal postal service and programmes to help member countries improve mail security, quality of service and the development of markets, including lettermail, parcels, postal financial services and philately. The Congress established a new UPU body—the Consultative Committee—to give postal stakeholders other than public postal operators and regulators a voice in the organization’s deliberations and to provide a framework for effective dialogue among those stakeholders.

The Congress decided that it would convene every four years instead of five.

Council of Administration

The Council of Administration, which ensured the continuity of the Union’s work between Congresses and studied regulatory, administrative, legislative and legal issues of concern to the Union, held its annual session (Berne, Switzerland, 10-13 February). It undertook, among other tasks, a study on extraterritorial offices of exchange and submitted several scenarios on that topic to the 2004 Bucharest Congress (see above).

Postal Operations Council

The Postal Operations Council, at its annual session (Berne, 29 January–9 February), endorsed the principles of the future terminal dues system (payments postal services made to each other for the delivery of inbound foreign mail) and finalized the quality link for industrialized countries, aimed at implementation of the country-specific terminal dues system adopted at the 2004 Bucharest Congress.

International Bureau

The UPU Bureau continued to provide support, liaison, information and consultation to the postal administrations of member countries. It studied developments in the postal environment, monitored the quality of global postal service and published information and statistics on international postal services. UPU’s Postal Technology Centre introduced new technology applications and information technology solutions aimed at improving the quality, reliability and speed of national and international postal services.

As at 31 December 2004, the Bureau’s permanent staff numbered 151, of whom 60 were in the Professional or higher categories and 91 were in the General Service category.

Budget

The Council of Administration approved a budget of 71.4 million Swiss francs for the 2005-2006 budget.

NOTE: For further details on UPU’s 2004 activities, see Universal Postal Union Biennial Report 2004-2005, published by UPU.