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**REPORT OF THE 5TH POSTAL REGULATORS FORUM
HELD IN KINSHASA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
ON 8TH JULY 2022**

1.0 Introduction

The 5th Postal Regulators Forum took place on 8th July 2022 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the sidelines of the 40th Ordinary Session of the PAPU Administrative Council. It will be recalled that at the request of several Member States, the 9th Ordinary Plenipotentiary Conference of PAPU held in 2016 decided to include a Regulators Forum in its Plan of Action and to be implemented during the annual ordinary sessions of the Administrative Council.

2.0 Participation

The following Member States, Countries and Organizations participated:

Member States: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Congo Republic, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Other PAPU Partners : China Post Bureau and Groupe La Poste France

Organizations: CRASA, FRDPA, RCC, SAPOA and UPU.

3.0 Opening

During the opening ceremony, remarks/speeches were made by the following:

- a) Director General of the Regulatory Authority of the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- b) Chairman of Central African Regulators Association
- c) Secretary General of PAPU
- d) Chairperson of Postal Regulators Forum (Zimbabwe)

4.0 Sessions of the Forum

The Regulators Forum was organized in two sessions that were moderated by Mr. Idrissa Ly, Director of Postal Department of Telecommunications and Posts Regulatory Authority of Mali (AMRTP).

Session One featured the presentation by the Universal Postal Union (UPU), that has just completed digital transformation assessments in ten African countries namely Benin, Cameroon, Congo Republic, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritania, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The theme of the presentation was “Digitalization of African Postal Services in 2022 – Insights on Regulatory Issues”.

The Panelists were representatives of Regulators from the following countries:

- Congo Republic
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Tanzania

The UPU made the following recommendations to the Regulators in their presentation:

That policy makers should work together to ensure that there is a framework that:

- a) Provides flexibility to adapt to changing technology and evolving customer expectations
- b) Enable e-commerce to deliver benefits to consumers, society and the economy
- c) Have technology that is viable to implement in practice
- d) Provide clarity and reliability for consumers, citizens and Postal Operators.

The UPU noted that Regulators of the majority of the countries that were assessed are not yet ready for digitalization.

Session Two witnessed panelists discussions on the theme “Regulating the Post for Digital Transformation”. The panelists were drawn from Regulatory Authorities of the following Member States:

- Cote d’Ivoire
- Malawi
- Zimbabwe

5.0 Summary Take-aways from the Sessions

The summary outcome of the sessions are as follows:

- a) The Governments must take bold decisions and position the postal sector as part of its priority project. It is the Regulator who must speak to and convince the Government about the huge infrastructure at the disposal of the post that can be used for digitalization of postal services.
- b) Postal Operators must show readiness to digitalize by conducting surveys and deciding on services that shall be digitalized based on customers’ needs and expectations.
- c) Government through the Regulator must realize that the Universal Service Obligation places a huge burden on the Designated Postal Operator. Therefore, the Designated Postal Operators must be properly funded to ensure that they provide services at every nook and cranny of the country.

- d) Participants are invited to note that the purpose of the African Postal Regulators Forum is to identify those who have achieved higher level of digitalization so that they can be visited in order to benchmark and sell concrete ideas to the Government to embrace digitalization based on experience of other African countries.
- e) Regulators must assist Designated Postal Operators to deliver digital services and compete favourably with other players. Regulators should provide the necessary funds, where possible, to enable Operators to offer modern digital products and services.
- f) Regulators shall ensure that digital transformations are backed by appropriate legislation. In this regard Regulators shall ensure that there are national postal sector policies that are aligned to the digital services that will be provided to customers.
- g) Regulators shall work with various stakeholders to be able to operate in the digital space. Such stakeholders include Central Banks, Customs Authorities and Chambers of Commerce and they shall be involved as partners to ensure the development of digital postal services.
- h) Staff of the Postal Operators must buy into digitalization of products and services. The staff must be capacitated to ensure that they are part and parcel of digital transformation.

6.0 Conclusion

The Regulators Forum concluded as follows:

- a) Digitalization is very important and must be embraced by Postal Operators;
- b) Challenges are high for Operators and the Regulators have to spearhead the process of digitalization;
- c) In order to achieve digitalization, there must be political will and digital transformation strategies for Post Offices;
- d) There should be appropriate legal framework and existing ones shall be amended if they are deemed inappropriate;
- e) There should be sensitization of citizens to ensure that they are aware of digital services offered by the Post.
- f) Have working agreements with other Regulators such as Financial Services Regulators.

7.0 Closing

During the closing ceremony, the outgoing Chairperson of the Regulators Forum, Zimbabwe handed over the leadership of the Forum to the Democratic Republic of Congo. He congratulated and wished the new Chairperson of the forum well in running the affairs of the Forum.

Closing remarks were made by Zimbabwe the former Chairperson, the Chairman of Central African Regulators Association, Secretary General of PAPU and the Democratic Republic of Congo who is the new Chairperson of the Regulators Forum.

In his acceptance speech, the Chairperson, Mr. Christian Katende thanked the former Chairperson, Zimbabwe, who had wanted to hand over to him at the beginning of the Forum. He however emphasized that he preferred to take over at the end of the forum in order to become better acquainted with how the forum works. He thanked all the participants for their cooperation and declared the Forum closed.

Resolution No. ____/PAPU/AC/XL/2022

On postal regulation

The Administrative Council of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), meeting during its 40th Ordinary Session from 12th to 14th July 2022 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo;

Mindful of Resolution No.18 /PAPU/AC/XXXVI/2017 on postal regulation;

Acknowledging that regulating digital transformation of postal services is one of the primary missions of regulatory authorities,

Conscious from the outset that digital transformation is very important for the provision of modern services that Postal Operators can render to its teeming customers;

HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

1. Urges Member States to ensure that:

1.1 Postal operators embark on digital transformation of postal services:

1.2 Regulatory authorities:

- a) fund Universal Service Obligation for the Designated Postal Operator to ensure that they provide services at every nook and cranny of the country.
- b) Facilitate the Designated Postal Operators to deliver digital services and compete favourably with other Postal Operators.
- c) ensure that digital transformations are backed by appropriate legislation that are aligned to the digital services that will be provided to customers.
- d) work with various stakeholders such as Central Banks, Customs and Chambers of Commerce to be able to operate in the digital space.

1.3 Governments:

- a) must make decisive decisions that position the postal sector as part of its priority projects.
- b) enact appropriate legislation to ensure digitalization of postal services.

INSTRUCTS:

The General Secretariat to monitor the implementation of this Resolution

Done in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, on 14th July 2022