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General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

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General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

The undersigned plenipotentiaries of the Governments of member countries of the Union, having regard to article 22.2, of the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union, concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have, by common consent, and subject to article 25.4, of the Constitution, drawn up in these General Regulations the following provisions securing the application of the Constitution and the functioning of the Union.

Chapter I

Functioning of the Union's bodies

Article 101
Organization and convening of Congresses and Extraordinary Congresses (Const. 14, 15)

1 The representatives of member countries shall meet in Congress not later than **four** years after the **end of the year during which** the preceding Congress **took place.**

2 Each member country shall arrange for its representation at Congress by one or more plenipotentiaries furnished by their Government with the necessary powers. It may, if need be, arrange to be represented by the delegation of another member country. Nevertheless it shall be understood that a delegation may represent only one member country other than its own.

3 In debates, each country shall be entitled to one vote, subject to the sanctions provided for in article **129.**

4 In principle, each Congress shall designate the country in which the next Congress will be held. If that designation proves inapplicable, the Council of Administration shall be authorized to designate the country where Congress is to meet, after consultation with the latter country.

5 After consultation with the International Bureau, the host Government shall fix the definitive date and the precise locality of Congress. In principle one year before that date the host Government shall send an invitation to the Government of each member country of the Union. This invitation may be sent direct or through the intermediary of another Government or through the Director-General of the International Bureau.

6 When a Congress has to be convened without a host Government, the International Bureau, with the agreement of the Council of Administration and after consultation with the Government of the Swiss Confederation, shall take the necessary steps to convene and organize the Congress in the country in which the seat of the Union is situated. In this event the International Bureau shall perform the functions of the host Government.

7 The meeting place of an Extraordinary Congress shall be fixed, after consultation with the International Bureau, by the member countries which have initiated that Congress.

8 Paragraphs 2 to 6 shall be applicable by analogy to Extraordinary Congresses.

Article 102
Composition, functioning and meetings of the Council of Administration (Const. 17)

1 The Council of Administration shall consist of forty-one members who shall exercise their functions during the period between two successive Congresses.

2 The chairmanship shall devolve by right on the host country of Congress. If that country waives this right, it shall become a de jure member and, as a result, the geographical group to which it belongs shall have at its disposal an additional seat, to which the restrictive provisions of paragraph 3 shall not apply. In that case, the Council of Administration shall elect to the chairmanship one of the member countries belonging to the geographical group of the host country.

3 The forty other members of the Council of Administration shall be elected by Congress on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution. At least a half of the membership shall be renewed at each Congress; no member may be chosen by three successive Congresses.

4 Each member of the Council of Administration shall appoint its representative, who shall be competent in postal matters.

5 The office of member of the Council of Administration shall be unpaid. The operational expenses of this Council shall be borne by the Union.

6 The Council of Administration shall have the following functions:

6.1 to supervise the activities of the Union between Congresses, ensuring compliance with the decisions of Congress, studying questions with respect to governmental policies on postal issues, and taking account of international regulatory developments such as those relating to trade in services and to competition;

6.2 to consider and approve, within the framework of its competence, any action considered necessary to safeguard and enhance the quality of and to modernize the international postal service;

6.3 to promote, coordinate and supervise all forms of postal technical assistance within the framework of international technical cooperation;

6.4 to consider and approve the annual budget and accounts of the Union;

6.5 to authorize the ceiling of expenditure to be exceeded, if circumstances so require, in accordance with article **128.3 to 5**;

6.6 to lay down the Financial Regulations of the UPU;

6.7 to lay down the rules governing the Reserve Fund;

6.8 to lay down the rules governing the Special Fund;

6.9 to lay down the rules governing the Special Activities Fund;

6.10 to lay down the rules governing the Voluntary Fund;

6.11 to provide control over the activities of the International Bureau;

6.12 to authorize election of a lower contribution class, if it is so requested, in accordance with the conditions set out in article **130.6**;

6.13 to authorize a change of geographical group if it is so requested, taking into account the views expressed by the countries which are members of the geographical groups concerned;

6.14 to lay down the Staff Regulations and the conditions of service of the elected officials;

6.15 to create or abolish International Bureau posts taking into account the restrictions imposed by the expenditure ceiling fixed;

6.16 to lay down the Regulations of the Social Fund;

6.17 to approve the **biennial** report and the Financial Operating Report on the work of the Union prepared by the International Bureau and where appropriate to furnish observations on them;

6.18 to decide on the contacts to be established with postal administrations in order to carry out its functions;

6.19 after consulting the Postal Operations Council, to decide on the contacts to be established with the organizations which are not de jure observers, to consider and approve the reports by the International Bureau on UPU relations with other international bodies and to take the decisions which it considers appropriate on the conduct of such relations and the action to be taken on them; to designate in due course, **after consulting the Postal Operations Council and the Secretary General, the** international organizations, **associations, enterprises and qualified persons to** be invited to be represented **at specific meetings of Congress and its Committees when this is in the interest of the Union or the work of Congress** and to instruct the Director-General to issue the necessary invitations;

6.20 to establish principles, as may be considered necessary, for the Postal Operations Council to take into account in its study of questions with major financial repercussions (charges, terminal dues, transit charges, basic airmail conveyance rates and the posting abroad of letter-post items), to follow closely the study of these questions, and to review and approve, for conformity with the aforementioned principles, Postal Operations Council proposals relating to these questions;

6.21 to study, at the request of Congress, the Postal Operations Council or postal administrations, administrative, legislative and legal problems concerning the Union or the international postal service; it shall be for the Council of Administration to decide, in the above-mentioned fields, whether it is expedient to undertake the studies requested by postal administrations between Congresses;

6.22 to formulate proposals which shall be submitted for the approval either of Congress or of postal administrations in accordance with article **124**;

6.23 to approve, within the framework of its competence, the recommendations of the Postal Operations Council for the adoption, if necessary, of regulations or of a new procedure until such time as Congress takes a decision in the matter;

6.24 to consider the annual report prepared by the Postal Operations Council and any proposals submitted by the Council;

6.25 to submit subjects for study to the Postal Operations Council for examination in accordance with article 104, paragraph 9.16;

6.26 to designate the country where the next Congress is to be held in the case provided for in article 101, paragraph 4;

6.27 to determine in due course and after consulting the Postal Operations Council, the number of Committees required to carry out the work of Congress and to specify their functions;

6.28 to designate, after consulting the Postal Operations Council and subject to the approval of Congress, the member countries prepared:

- to assume the vice-chairmanships of Congress and the chairman-ships and vice-chairmanships of the Committees, taking as much account as possible of the equitable geographical distribution of the member countries; and
- to sit on the restricted Committees of Congress;

6.29 to review and approve the draft Strategic Plan for presentation to Congress developed by the Postal Operations Council with the support of the International Bureau; to review and approve annual revisions of the Plan approved by Congress on the basis of

recommendations from the Postal Operations Council, and to consult with the Postal Operations Council on the development and annual updating of the Plan;

6.30 to establish the framework for the organization of the Consultative Committee and concur in the organization of the Consultative Committee in accordance with the provisions of article 106;

6.31 to establish criteria for membership of the Consultative Committee and to approve or reject applications for membership in accordance with those criteria, ensuring that action on the applications is accomplished through an expedited process between meetings of the Council of Administration;

6.32 to designate the members that will serve as members of the Consultative Committee;

6.33 to receive and discuss reports and recommendations from the Consultative Committee and to consider recommendations from the Consultative Committee for submission to Congress.

7 At its first meeting, which shall be convened by the Chairman of Congress, the Council of Administration shall elect four Vice-Chairmen from among its members and draw up its Rules of Procedure.

8 On convocation by its Chairman, the Council of Administration shall meet in principle once a year, at Union headquarters.

9 The Chairman, the Vice-Chairmen and the Committee Chairmen of the Council of Administration and the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Working Party shall form the Management Committee. This Committee shall prepare and direct the work of each session of the Council of Administration. It shall approve, on behalf of the Council of Administration, the annual report prepared by the International Bureau on the work of the Union and it shall take on any other task which the Council of Administration decides to assign to it or the need for which arises in the course of the strategic planning process.

10 The representative of each of the members of the Council of Administration participating in its meetings, except for meetings which take place during Congress, shall be entitled to reimbursement of the cost of either an economy class return air ticket or first class return rail ticket, or expenses incurred for travel by any other means subject to the condition that the amount does not exceed the price of the economy class return ticket. The same entitlement shall be granted to each member of its Committees, Working Parties or other bodies when these meet outside Congress and the sessions of the Council.

11 The Chairman of the Postal Operations Council shall represent that body at meetings of the Council of Administration on the agenda of which there are questions of interest to the body which he directs.

12 The Chairman of the Consultative Committee shall represent it at meetings of the Council of Administration when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Consultative Committee.

13 To ensure effective liaison between the work of the two bodies, the Postal Operations Council may designate representatives to attend Council of Administration meetings as observers.

14 The postal administration of the country in which the Council of Administration meets shall be invited to take part in the meetings in the capacity of observer, if that country is not a member of the Council of Administration.

15 The Council of Administration may invite any international body, any representative of an association or enterprise, or any qualified person whom it wishes to associate with its work to its meetings, without the right to vote. It may also invite, under the same conditions, one or more postal administrations of member countries concerned with questions on its agenda.

16 If they so request, the following observers may participate in the plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Council of Administration, without the right to vote:

16.1 members of the Postal Operations Council;

16.2 members of the Consultative Committee;

16.3 intergovernmental organizations interested in the work of the Council of Administration;

16.4 other member countries of the Union.

17 For logistical reasons, the Council of Administration may limit the number of attendees per observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.

18 The members of the Council of Administration shall take an active part in its work. **Observers** may, at their request, **be allowed to** cooperate in the studies undertaken, subject to such conditions as the Council may establish to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its work. They may also be invited to chair Working Parties **and Project Teams** when their experience or expertise justifies it. The participation of **observers** shall be carried out without additional expense for the Union.

19 In exceptional circumstances, observers may be excluded from a meeting or a portion of a meeting or may have their right to receive documents restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chair. The case-by-case situations shall be reported to the Council of Administration and to the Postal Operations Council when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are concerned. If it considers this necessary, the Council of Administration may subsequently review restrictions, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council where appropriate.

Article 103
Information on the activities of the Council of Administration

1 After each session, the Council of Administration shall inform the member countries of the Union, the Restricted Unions **and the members of the Consultative Committee** about its activities by sending them, inter alia, a summary record and its resolutions and decisions.

2 The Council of Administration shall make to Congress a comprehensive report on its work and send it to postal administrations **of the member countries of the Union and the members of the Consultative Committee** at least two months before the opening of Congress.

Article 104
Composition, functioning and meetings of the Postal Operations Council (Const. 18)

1 The Postal Operations Council shall consist of forty members who shall exercise their functions during the period between successive Congresses.

2 The members of the Postal Operations Council shall be elected by Congress on the basis of qualified geographical distribution. Twenty-four seats shall be reserved for developing countries and sixteen seats for developed countries. At least one third of the members shall be renewed at each Congress.

3 Each member of the Postal Operations Council shall appoint its representative, who shall have responsibilities for delivering services mentioned in the Acts of the Union.

4 The operational expenses of the Postal Operations Council shall be borne by the Union. Its members shall not receive any payment. Travelling and living expenses incurred by represen-tatives of postal administrations participating in the Postal Operations Council shall be borne by those administrations. However, the representative of each of the countries considered to be disadvantaged according to the lists established by the United Nations shall, except for meetings which take place during Congress, be entitled to reimbursement of the price of an economy class return air ticket or first class return rail ticket, or expenses incurred for travel by any other means, subject to the condition that the amount does not exceed the price of the economy class return air ticket.

5 At its first meeting, which shall be convened and opened by the Chairman of Congress, the Postal Operations Council shall choose from among its members a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, the Committee Chairmen and the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Working Party.

6 The Postal Operations Council shall draw up its Rules of Procedure.

7 In principle, the Postal Operations Council shall meet every year at Union headquarters. The date and place of the meeting shall be fixed by its Chairman in agreement with the Chairman of the Council of Administration and the Director-General of the International Bureau.

8 The Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Committee Chairmen of the Postal Operations Council and the Chairman of the Strategic Planning Working Party shall form the Management Committee. This Committee shall prepare and direct the work of each meeting of the Postal Operations Council and take on all the tasks which the latter decides to assign to it or the need for which arises in the course of the strategic planning process.

9 The functions of the Postal Operations Council shall be the following:

9.1 to conduct the study of the most important operational, commercial, technical, economic and technical cooperation problems which are of interest to postal administrations of all member countries, including questions with major financial repercussions (charges, terminal dues, transit charges, airmail conveyance rates, parcel-post rates, and the posting abroad of letter-post items), and to prepare information, opinions and recommendations for action on them;

9.2 to revise the Regulations of the Union within six months following the end of the Congress unless the latter decides otherwise; in case of urgent necessity, the Postal Operations Council may also amend the said Regulations at other sessions; in both cases, the Operations Council shall be subject to Council of Administration guidance on matters of fundamental policy and principle;

9.3 to coordinate practical measures for the development and improvement of international postal services;

9.4 to take, subject to Council of Administration approval within the framework of the latter's competence, any action considered necessary to safeguard and enhance the quality of and to modernize the international postal service;

9.5 to formulate proposals which shall be submitted for the approval either of Congress or of postal administrations in accordance with article **125**; the approval of the Council of Administration is required when these proposals concern questions within the latter's competence;

9.6 to examine, at the request of the postal administration of a member country, any proposal which that postal administration forwards to the International Bureau under article **124**, to prepare observations on it and to instruct the International Bureau to annex these observations to the proposal before submitting it for approval to the postal administrations of member countries;

9.7 to recommend, if necessary, and where appropriate after approval by the Council of Administration and consultation of all the postal administrations, the adoption of regulations or of a new procedure until such time as Congress takes a decision in the matter;

9.8 to prepare and issue, in the form of recommendations to postal administrations, standards for technological, operational and other processes within its competence where uniformity of practice is essential; it shall similarly issue, as required, amendments to standards it has already set;

9.9 to examine in consultation with and with the approval of the Council of Administration, the draft Strategic Plan drawn up by the International Bureau for consideration by Congress; to revise each year the Plan approved by Congress with the assistance of the Strategic Planning Working Party and of the International Bureau as well as with the approval of the Council of Administration;

9.10 to approve those parts of the annual report on the work of the Union prepared by the International Bureau which concern the responsibilities and functions of the Postal Operations Council;

9.11 to decide on the contacts to be established with postal administrations in order to carry out its functions;

9.12 to study teaching and vocational training problems of interest to the new and developing countries;

9.13 to take the necessary steps to study and publicize the experiments and progress made by certain countries in the technical, operational, economic and vocational training fields of interest to the postal services;

9.14 to study the present position and needs of the postal services in the new and developing countries and to prepare appropriate recommendations on ways and means of improving the postal services in those countries;

9.15 to take, in consultation with the Council of Administration, appropriate steps in the sphere of technical cooperation with all member countries of the Union and in particular with the new and developing countries;

9.16 to examine any other questions submitted to it by a member of the Postal Operations Council, by the Council of Administration or by any postal administration of a member country;

9.17 to receive and discuss reports as well as recommendations from the Consultative Committee and, when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are involved, to examine and comment on recommendations from the Consultative Committee for submission to Congress;

9.18 to designate the members that will serve as members of the Consultative Committee.

10 On the basis of the UPU Strategic Plan adopted by Congress and, in particular the part relating to the strategies of the Permanent Bodies of the Union, the Postal Operations Council shall, at its first session after Congress, prepare a draft basic work programme, containing a number of tactics aimed at implementing strategies. This basic work programme, which shall include a limited number of projects on topical subjects of common interest, shall be revised annually in the light of new realities and priorities, as well as of changes made to the Strategic Plan.

11 In order to ensure effective liaison between the work of the two bodies, the Council of Administration may designate representatives to attend Postal Operations Council meetings as observers.

12 If they so request, the following observers may participate in the plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Postal Operations Council, without the right to vote:

12.1 members of the Council of Administration;

12.2 members of the Consultative Committee;

12.3 intergovernmental organizations interested in the work of the Postal Operations Council;

12.4 other member countries of the Union.

13 For logistical reasons, the Postal Operations Council may limit the number of attendees per observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.

14 The members of the Postal Operations Council shall take an active part in its work. **Observers** may, at their request, **be allowed to** cooperate in the studies undertaken, subject to such conditions as the Council may establish to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its work. **They** may also be **invited** to chair Working Parties **and Project Teams when** their **experience** or **expertise** justifies it. **The participation of observers shall be carried out without additional expense for the Union.**

15 In exceptional circumstances observers may be excluded from a meeting or a portion of a meeting or may have their right to receive documents restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chair. The case-by-case situations shall be reported to the Council of Administration and to the Postal Operations Council. If it considers this necessary, the Council of Administration may, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council, subsequently review restrictions where appropriate.

16 The Chairman of the Consultative Committee shall represent that organization at meetings of the Postal Operations Council when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Consultative Committee.

17 The Postal Operations Council may invite the following to take part in its meetings without the right to vote:

17.1 any international body or any qualified person whom it wishes to associate with its work;

17.2 postal administrations of member countries not belonging to the Postal Operations Council;

17.3 any association or enterprise that it wishes to consult with respect to its work.

Article 105
Information on the activities of the Postal Operations Council

1 After each session, the Postal Operations Council shall inform the member countries of the Union, the Restricted Unions **and the members of the Consultative Committee** about its activities by sending them, inter alia, a summary record and its resolutions and decisions.

2 The Postal Operations Council shall prepare for the Council of Administration an annual report on its work.

3 The Postal Operations Council shall **make to** Congress a comprehensive report on its work and send it to the postal administrations of the member countries **of the Union and the members of the Consultative Committee** at least two months before the opening of Congress.

Article 106
Composition, functioning and meetings of the Consultative Committee

1 The aim of the Consultative Committee shall be to represent the interests of the wider international postal sector, and to provide a framework for effective dialogue between stakeholders. It shall consist of non-governmental organizations representing customers, delivery service providers, organizations of workers, suppliers of goods and services to the postal services sector and like organizations of individuals and companies which have an interest in international postal services. Where such organizations are registered, they must be registered in a member country of the Union. The Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council shall designate the members of their respective Councils as

members of the Consultative Committee. Apart from members designated by the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, membership in the Consultative Committee shall be determined through a process of application and acceptance established by the Council of Administration, carried out in accordance with article 102.6.31.

2 Each member of the Consultative Committee shall appoint its own representative.

3 The operational costs of the Consultative Committee shall be shared by the Union and members of the Committee as determined by the Council of Administration.

4 The members of the Consultative Committee shall not receive remuneration or any other compensation.

5 The Consultative Committee shall reorganize itself after each Congress in accordance with the framework established by the Council of Administration. The Chairman of the Council of Administration shall preside at the organizational meeting of the Consultative Committee, which shall elect its Chairman at that meeting.

6 The Consultative Committee shall determine its internal organization and shall draw up its own rules of procedure, taking into account the general principles of the Union and subject to the concurrence of the Council of Administration after having consulted the Postal Operations Council.

7 The Consultative Committee shall meet twice annually. In principle, the meetings will be held at Union headquarters at the same time as meetings of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council. The date and location of each meeting shall be fixed by the Chairman of the Consultative Committee in agreement with the Chairmen of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council and the Director-General of the International Bureau.

8 The Consultative Committee shall establish its own programme within the framework of the following functions:

8.1 to examine documents and reports of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council. In exceptional circumstances, the right to receive certain texts and documents may be restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chairman. The case-by-case situations shall be reported to the Council of Administration, and to the Postal Operations Council when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are concerned. If it considers this necessary, the Council of Administration may subsequently review restrictions, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council, where appropriate;

8.2 to conduct studies of and debate issues of importance to the Consultative Committee's members;

8.3 to consider issues affecting the postal services sector and issue reports on such issues;

8.4 to provide input to the work of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, including submitting reports and recommendations and giving opinions at the request of the two Councils;

8.5 to make recommendations to Congress, subject to the approval of the Council of Administration and, when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are involved, subject to examination and comment by the Postal Operations Council.

9 The Chairman of the Council of Administration and the Chairman of the Postal Operations Council shall represent those bodies at meetings of the Consultative Committee when the agenda of such meetings contains questions of interest to those bodies.

10 In order to ensure effective liaison with the bodies of the Union, the Consultative Committee may designate representatives to attend meetings of Congress, the Council of

Administration, and the Postal Operations Council, and their respective Committees, as observers without the right to vote.

11 If they so request, members of the Consultative Committee may attend plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council in accordance with articles 102.16 and 104.12. They may also participate in the work of project teams and working groups under terms established under articles 102.18 and 104.14. Members of the Consultative Committee may attend Congress as observers without the right to vote.

12 If they so request, the following observers may participate in the sessions of the Consultative Committee, without the right to vote:

12.1 members of the Postal Operations Council and the Council of Administration;

12.2 intergovernmental organizations interested in the work of the Consultative Committee;

12.3 Restricted Unions;

12.4 other member countries of the Union.

13 For logistical reasons, the Consultative Committee may limit the number of attendees per observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.

14 In exceptional circumstances observers may be excluded from a meeting or a portion of a meeting or may have their right to receive documents restricted if the confidentiality of the subject of the meeting or document so requires. This restriction may be decided on a case-by-case basis by any body concerned or its Chair. The case-by-case situations shall be reported to the Council of Administration and to the Postal Operations Council when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are concerned. If it considers this necessary, the Council of Administration may subsequently review restrictions, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council where appropriate.

15 The International Bureau, under the responsibility of the Director-General, shall provide the secretariat for the Consultative Committee.

Article 107
Information on the activities of the Consultative Committee

1 After each session, the Consultative Committee shall inform the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council of its activities by sending to the Chairmen of those bodies, inter alia, a summary record of its meetings and its recommendations and views.

2 The Consultative Committee shall make to the Council of Administration an annual activity report, with a copy to the Postal Operations Council. This report shall be included in the documentation of the Council of Administration that is provided to member countries of the Union and Restricted Unions, in accordance with article 103.

3 The Consultative Committee shall make to Congress a comprehensive report on its work and send it to postal administrations of the member countries of the Union at least two months before the opening of Congress.

Article **108**
Rules of Procedure of Congresses (Const. 14)

1 For the organization of its work and the conduct of its debates, Congress shall apply the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

2 Each Congress may amend these Rules under the conditions laid down in the Rules of Procedure themselves.

Article **109**
Working languages of the International Bureau

The working languages of the International Bureau shall be French and English.

Article **110**
Languages used for documentation, for debates and for official correspondence

1 For the documentation of the Union, the French, English, Arabic and Spanish languages shall be used. The Chinese, German, Portuguese and Russian languages shall also be used provided that only the most important basic documentation is produced in these languages. Other languages may also be used on condition that the member countries which have made the request shall bear all of the costs involved.

2 The member country or countries which have requested a language other than the official language constitute a language group.

3 Documentation shall be published by the International Bureau in the official language and in the languages of the duly constituted language groups, either directly or through the intermediary of the regional offices of those groups in conformity with the procedures agreed with the International Bureau. Publication in the different languages shall be effected in accordance with a common standard.

4 Documentation published directly by the International Bureau shall, as far as possible, be distributed simultaneously in the different languages requested.

5 Correspondence between the postal administrations and the International Bureau and between the latter and outside entities may be exchanged in any language for which the International Bureau has available a translation service.

6 The costs of translation into any language, including those resulting from the application of paragraph 5, shall be borne by the language group which has asked for that language. The member countries using the official language shall pay, in respect of the translation of non-official documents, a lump-sum contribution, the amount of which per contribution unit shall be the same as that borne by the member countries using the other International Bureau working language. All other costs involved in the supply of documents shall be borne by the Union. The ceiling of the costs to be borne by the Union for the production of documents in Chinese, German, Portuguese and Russian shall be fixed by a Congress resolution.

7 The costs to be borne by a language group shall be divided among the members of that group in proportion to their contributions to the expenses of the Union. These costs may be divided among the members of the language group according to another system, provided that the countries concerned agree to it and inform the International Bureau of their decision through the intermediary of the spokesman of the group.

8 The International Bureau shall give effect to any change in the choice of language requested by a member country after a period which shall not exceed two years.

9 For the discussions at meetings of the Union's bodies, the French, English, Spanish and Russian languages shall be admissible, by means of a system of interpretation – with or without electronic equipment – the choice being left to the judgment of the organizers of the meeting after consultation with the Director-General of the International Bureau and the member countries concerned.

10 Other languages shall likewise be admissible for the discussions and meetings mentioned in paragraph 9.

11 Delegations using other languages shall arrange for simultaneous interpretation into one of the languages mentioned in paragraph 9, either by the system indicated in the same paragraph, when the necessary technical modifications can be made, or by individual interpreters.

12 The costs of the interpretation services shall be shared among the member countries using the same language in proportion to their contributions to the expenses of the Union. However, the costs of installing and maintaining the technical equipment shall be borne by the Union.

13 Postal administrations may come to an understanding about the language to be used for official correspondence in their relations with one another. In the absence of such an understanding the language to be used shall be French.

Chapter II

International Bureau

Article **111**
Election of the Director-General and Deputy Director-General of the International Bureau

1 The Director-General and the Deputy Director-General of the International Bureau shall be elected by Congress for the period between two successive Congresses, the minimum duration of their term of office being **four** years. Their term of office shall be renewable once only. Unless Congress decides otherwise, the date on which they take up their duties shall be fixed at 1 January of the year following that in which Congress is held.

2 At least seven months before the opening of Congress, the Director-General of the International Bureau shall send a memorandum to the Governments of member countries inviting them to submit their applications, if any, for the posts of Director-General and Deputy Director-General and indicating at the same time whether the Director-General and Deputy Director-General in office are interested in a renewal of their initial term of office. The applications, accompanied by a curriculum vitae, must reach the International Bureau at least two months before the opening of Congress. The candidates must be nationals of the member countries which put them forward. The International Bureau shall prepare the election documents for Congress. The election of the Director-General and that of the Deputy Director-General shall take place by secret ballot, the first election being for the post of Director-General.

3 If the post of Director-General falls vacant, the Deputy Director-General shall take over the functions of Director-General until the expiry of the latter's term of office; he shall be eligible for election to that post and shall automatically be accepted as a candidate, provided that his initial term of office as Deputy Director-General has not already been renewed once by the preceding Congress and that he declares his interest in being considered as a candidate for the post of Director-General.

4 If the posts of Director-General and Deputy Director-General fall vacant at the same time, the Council of Administration shall elect, on the basis of the applications received following notification of the vacancies, a Deputy Director-General for the period extending up to the next Congress. With regard to the submission of applications, paragraph 2 shall apply by analogy.

5 If the post of Deputy Director-General falls vacant, the Council of Administration shall, on the proposal of the Director-General, instruct one of the **grade D 2 Directors** at the International Bureau to take over the functions of Deputy Director-General until the following Congress.

Article **112**
Duties of the Director-General

1 The Director-General shall organize, administer and direct the International Bureau, of which he is the legal representative. He shall be empowered to classify posts in grades G 1 to D 2 and to appoint and promote officials in those grades. For appointments in grades P 1 to D 2, he shall consider the professional qualifications of the candidates recommended by the postal administrations of the member countries of which the candidates are nationals or in which they exercise their professional activities, taking into account equitable geographical distribution with respect to continents and languages. **D 2** posts shall as far as possible be filled by candidates from different regions and from regions other than those from which the Director-General and Deputy Director-General originate, bearing in mind the paramount consideration of the efficiency of the International Bureau. In the case of posts requiring special qualifications, the Director-General may seek applications from outside. He shall also consider, for the appointment of a new official, that, in principle, persons occupying grade D 2, D 1 and P 5 posts must be nationals of different member countries of the Union. For the promotion of an official of the International Bureau to grades D 2, D 1 and P 5, he shall not be bound to apply that principle. Moreover, the requirements of equitable geographical and language distribution shall rank behind merit in the recruitment process. The Director-General shall inform the Council of Administration once a year of appointments and promotions in grades P 4 to D 2.

2 The Director-General shall have the following duties:

2.1 to act as depositary of the Acts of the Union and as intermediary in the procedure of accession and admission to and withdrawal from the Union;

2.2 to notify the decisions taken by Congress to all the Governments of member countries;

2.3 to notify all postal administrations of the Regulations drawn up or revised by the Postal Operations Council;

2.4 to prepare the draft annual budget of the Union at the lowest possible level consistent with the requirements of the Union and to submit it in due course to the Council of Administration for consideration; to communicate the budget to the member countries of the Union after approval by the Council of Administration and to execute it;

2.5 to execute the specific activities requested by the bodies of the Union and those assigned to him by the Acts;

2.6 to take action to achieve the objectives set by the bodies of the Union, within the framework of the established policy and the funds available;

2.7 to submit suggestions and proposals to the Council of Administration or to the Postal Operations Council;

2.8 following the close of Congress, to submit proposals to the Postal Operations Council concerning changes to the Regulations required as a result of Congress decisions, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Postal Operations Council;

2.9 to prepare, for the Postal Operations Council and on the basis of directives issued by the latter, the draft Strategic Plan to be submitted to Congress and the draft annual revision;

2.10 to ensure the representation of the Union;

2.11 to act as an intermediary in relations between:

- the UPU and the Restricted Unions;
- the UPU and the United Nations;
- the UPU and the international organizations whose activities are of interest to the Union;
- the UPU and the international organizations or the associations or enterprises that the bodies of the Union wish to consult or associate with their work;

2.12 to assume the duties of Secretary-General of the bodies of the Union and supervise in this capacity and taking into account the special provisions of these General Regulations, in particular:

- the preparation and organization of the work of the Union's bodies;
- the preparation, production and distribution of documents, reports and minutes;
- the functioning of the secretariat at meetings of the Union's bodies;

2.13 to attend the meetings of the bodies of the Union and take part in the discussions without the right to vote, with the possibility of being represented.

Article **113**
Duties of the Deputy Director-General

1 The Deputy Director-General shall assist the Director-General and shall be responsible to him.

2 If the Director-General is absent or prevented from discharging his duties, the Deputy Director-General shall exercise his functions. The same shall apply in the case of a vacancy in the post of Director-General as mentioned in article **111.3**.

Article **114**
Secretariat of the Union's bodies (Const. 14, 15, 17, 18)

The secretariat of the Union's bodies shall be provided by the International Bureau under the responsibility of the Director-General. It shall send all the documents published on the occasion of each session to the postal administrations of the members of the body, to the postal administrations of countries which, while not members of the body, cooperate in the studies undertaken, to the Restricted Unions and to postal administrations of other member countries which ask for them.

Article **115**
List of member countries (Const. 2)

The International Bureau shall prepare and keep up to date the list of member countries of the Union showing therein their contribution class, their geographical group and their position with respect to the Acts of the Union.

Article **116**
Information. Opinions. Requests for interpretation and amendment of the Acts. Inquiries. Role in the settlement of accounts (Const. 20; Gen Regs **124**, **125**, **126**)

1 The International Bureau shall be at all times at the disposal of the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and postal administrations for the purpose of supplying them with any necessary information on questions relating to the service.

2 In particular it shall collect, collate, publish and distribute all kinds of information of interest to the international postal service, give an opinion, at the request of the parties involved, on questions in dispute, act on requests for interpretation and amendment of the Acts of the Union and, in general, carry out such studies and editorial or documentary work as are assigned to it by those Acts or as may be referred to it in the interest of the Union.

3 It shall also conduct inquiries requested by postal administrations to obtain the views of other postal administrations on a particular question. The result of an inquiry shall not have the status of a vote and shall not be formally binding.

4 It may act as a clearing house in the settlement of accounts of all kinds relating to the postal service.

Article **117**
Technical cooperation (Const. 1)

The International Bureau shall develop postal technical assistance in all its forms within the framework of international technical cooperation.

Article **118**
Forms supplied by the International Bureau (Const. 20)

The International Bureau shall be responsible for arranging the manufacture of international reply coupons and for supplying them, at cost, to postal administrations ordering them.

Article **119**
Acts of Restricted Unions and Special Agreements (Const. 8)

1 Two copies of the Acts of Restricted Unions and of Special Agreements concluded under article 8 of the Constitution shall be sent to the International Bureau by the offices of such Unions, or failing that, by one of the contracting parties.

2 The International Bureau shall see that the Acts of Restricted Unions and Special Agreements do not include conditions less favourable to the public than those which are provided for in the Acts of the Union and shall inform postal administrations of the existence of such Unions and Agreements. The International Bureau shall notify the Council of Administration of any irregularity discovered through applying this provision.

Article **120**
Union periodical

The International Bureau shall publish, with the aid of the documents made available to it, a periodical in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

Article **121** (Const. 20; Gen Regs 102.6.17)
Biennial report on the work of the Union

The International Bureau shall make **a biennial** report on the work of the Union, which shall be sent, after approval by the Council of Administration, to postal administrations, the Restricted Unions and the United Nations.

Chapter III

Procedure for the submission and consideration of proposals

Article **122**
Procedure for submitting proposals to Congress (Const. 29)

1 Subject to the exceptions provided for in paragraphs 2 and 5, the following procedure shall govern the submission of proposals of all kinds to Congress by postal administrations of member countries:

a proposals which reach the International Bureau at least six months before the date fixed for Congress shall be accepted;

b no drafting proposal shall be accepted during the period of six months preceding the date fixed for Congress;

c proposals of substance which reach the International Bureau in the interval between six and four months before the date fixed for Congress shall not be accepted unless they are supported by at least two postal administrations;

d proposals of substance which reach the International Bureau in the interval between four and two months preceding the date fixed for Congress shall not be accepted unless they are supported by at least eight postal administrations; proposals which arrive after that time shall no longer be accepted;

e declarations of support shall reach the International Bureau within the same period as the proposals to which they refer.

2 Proposals concerning the Constitution or the General Regulations shall reach the International Bureau not later than six months before the opening of Congress; any received after that date but before the opening of Congress shall not be considered unless Congress so decides by a majority of two thirds of the countries represented at Congress and unless the conditions laid down in paragraph 1 are fulfilled.

3 Every proposal must, as a rule, have only one aim and contain only the changes justified by that aim.

4 Drafting proposals shall be headed "Drafting proposal" by the postal administrations which submit them and shall be published by the International Bureau under a number followed by the letter R. Proposals which do not bear this indication but which, in the opinion of the International Bureau, deal only with drafting points shall be published with an appropriate annotation; the International Bureau shall draw up a list of these proposals for Congress.

5 The procedure prescribed in paragraphs 1 and 4 shall not apply either to proposals concerning the Rules of Prdcedure of Congresses or to amendments to proposals already made.

Article 123
Procedure for submitting proposals to the Postal Operations Council concerning the preparation of new Regulations in the light of decisions taken by Congress

1 The Regulations of the Universal Postal Convention and the Postal Payment Services Agreement shall be drawn up by the Postal Operations Council in the light of the decisions taken by Congress.

2 Proposals that are consequential on proposed amendments to the Convention or Postal Payment Services Agreement shall be submitted to the International Bureau simultaneously with the Congress proposals to which they relate. They may be submitted by a single postal administration of a member country without the support of other postal

administrations of member countries. Such proposals shall be distributed to all member countries no later than one month prior to Congress.

3 **Other proposals concerning the Regulations for consideration by the Postal Operations Council in its preparation of the new Regulations within the six months following Congress shall be submitted to the International Bureau at least two months prior to Congress.**

4 **Proposals concerning changes to the Regulations required as a result of Congress decisions that are submitted by postal administrations of member countries must reach the International Bureau no later than two months before the opening of the Postal Operations Council. Such proposals shall be distributed to all member countries no later than one month prior to the opening of the Postal Operations Council.**

Article **124**
Procedure for submitting proposals between Congresses (Const. 29; Gen Regs **116**)

1 To be eligible for consideration every proposal concerning the Convention or the Agreements submitted by a postal administration between Congresses shall be supported by at least two other postal administrations. Such proposals shall lapse if the International Bureau does not receive, at the same time, the necessary number of declarations of support.

2 These proposals shall be sent to other postal administrations through the intermediary of the International Bureau.

3 Proposals concerning the Regulations shall not require support but shall not be considered by the Postal Operations Council unless the latter agrees to the urgent necessity.

Article **125**
Consideration of proposals between Congresses (Const. 29; Gen Regs **116**, **124**)

1 Every proposal concerning the Convention, the Agreements and their Final Protocols shall be subject to the following procedure: **where a postal administration of a member country has sent a proposal to the International Bureau, the latter shall forward it to all postal administrations of member countries for examination. They shall be allowed a period of two months in which to examine the proposal and forward any observations to the International Bureau.** Amendments shall not be admissible. **Once these two months have elapsed, the International Bureau shall forward to postal administrations of member countries all the observations it has received and invite each postal administration of a member country to vote for or against the proposal. Postal administrations of member countries that have** not sent in their vote within a period of two months shall be considered to **have abstained.** The aforementioned periods shall be reckoned from the dates of the International Bureau circulars.

2 Proposals for amending the Regulations shall be dealt with by the Postal Operations Council.

3 If the proposal relates to an Agreement or its Final Protocol, only the postal administrations of member countries which are parties to that Agreement may take part in the procedure described in paragraph 1.

Article **126**
Notification of decisions adopted between Congresses (Const. 29; Gen Regs **124**, **125**)

1 Amendments made to the Convention, the Agreements and the Final Protocols to those Acts shall be sanctioned by notification thereof to the Governments of member countries by the Director-General of the International Bureau.

2 Amendments made to the Regulations and their Final Protocols by the Postal Operations Council shall be communicated to postal administrations by the International Bureau. The same shall apply to the interpretations referred to in article **36.3.2** of the Convention and in the corresponding provisions of the Agreements.

Article **127**
Entry into force of the Regulations and of the other decisions adopted between Congresses

1 The Regulations shall come into force on the same date and shall have the same duration as the Acts laid down by Congress.

2 Subject to paragraph 1, decisions on amending the Acts of the Union which are adopted between Congresses shall not take effect until at least three months after their notification.

Chapter IV

Finance

Article **128**
Fixing and regulation of the expenditure of the Union (Const. **22**)

1 Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 2 to 6, the annual expenditure relating to the activities of bodies of the Union may not exceed the following sums for **2005** and subsequent years: 37,000,000 Swiss francs for the years **2005** to **2008**. The basic limit for **2008** shall also apply to the following years in case the Congress scheduled for **2008** is postponed.

2 The expenditure relating to the convening of the next Congress (travelling expenses of the secretariat, transport charges, cost of installing simultaneous interpretation equipment, cost of reproducing documents during the Congress, etc.) shall not exceed the limit of **2,900,000** Swiss francs.

3 The Council of Administration shall be authorized to exceed the limits laid down in paragraphs 1 and 2 to take account of increases in salary scales, pension contributions or allowances, including post adjustments, approved by the United Nations for application to its staff working in Geneva.

4 The Council of Administration shall also be authorized to adjust, each year, the amount of expenditure other than that relating to staff on the basis of the Swiss consumer price index.

5 Notwithstanding paragraph 1, the Council of Administration, or in case of extreme urgency, the Director-General, may authorize the prescribed limits to be exceeded to meet the cost of major and unforeseen repairs to the International Bureau building, provided however that the amount of the increase does not exceed 125,000 Swiss francs per annum.

6 If the credits authorized in paragraphs 1 and 2 prove inadequate to ensure the smooth running of the Union, these limits may only be exceeded with the approval of the majority of the

member countries of the Union. Any consultation shall include a complete description of the facts justifying such a request.

7 Countries which accede to the Union or are admitted to the status of members of the Union as well as those which leave the Union shall pay their contributions for the whole of the year during which their admission or withdrawal becomes effective.

8 Member countries shall pay their contributions to the Union's annual expenditure in advance on the basis of the budget laid down by the Council of Administration. These contributions shall be paid not later than the first day of the financial year to which the budget refers. After that date, the sums due shall be chargeable with interest in favour of the Union at the rate of 3% per annum for the first six months and of 6% per annum from the seventh month.

9 Where the arrears of mandatory contributions, not including interest, owed to the Union by a member country are equal to or more than the amount of the contributions of that member country for the preceding two financial years, such member country may irrevocably assign to the Union all or part of the credits owed it by other member countries, in accordance with the arrangements laid down by the Council of Administration. The conditions of this assignment of credit shall be determined by agreement reached between the member country, its debtors/creditors and the Union.

10 A member country which, for legal or other reasons, cannot make such assignment shall undertake to conclude a schedule for the amortization of its arrears.

11 Other than in exceptional circumstances, recovery of arrears of mandatory contributions owed to the Union may not extend over more than ten years.

12 In exceptional circumstances, the Council of Administration may release a member country from all or part of the interest owed if that country has paid the full capital amount of its debts in arrears.

13 A member country may also be released, within the framework of an amortization schedule approved by the Council of Administration for its accounts in arrears, from all or part of the interest accumulated or to accrue; such release shall, however, be subject to the full and punctual execution of the amortization schedule within an agreed period of ten years at most.

14 To cover shortfalls in Union financing, a Reserve Fund shall be established the amount of which shall be fixed by the Council of Administration. This Fund shall be maintained primarily from budget surpluses. It may also be used to balance the budget or to reduce the amount of member countries' contributions.

15 As regards temporary financing shortfalls, the Government of the Swiss Confederation shall make the necessary short-term advances, on conditions which are to be fixed by mutual agreement. That Government shall supervise, without charge, book-keeping and accounting of the International Bureau within the limits of the credits fixed by Congress.

Article **129**
Automatic sanctions

1 Any member country unable to make the assignment provided for in article **128.9** and which does not agree to submit to an amortization schedule proposed by the International Bureau in accordance with article **128.10**, or which does not comply with such a schedule shall automatically lose its right to vote at Congress and at meetings of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council and shall no longer be eligible for membership of these two Councils.

2 Automatic sanctions shall be lifted as a matter of course and with immediate effect as soon as the member country concerned has paid its arrears of mandatory contributions owed to

the Union, in capital and interest, or has agreed to submit to a schedule for the amortization of the arrears.

Article **130**
Contribution classes (Const. 21; Gen Regs **115, 128**)

1 Member countries shall contribute to defraying Union expenses according to the contribution class to which they belong. These classes shall be the following:

class of 50 units;
class of 45 units;
class of 40 units;
class of 35 units;
class of 30 units;
class of 25 units;
class of 20 units;
class of 15 units;
class of 10 units;
class of 5 units;
class of 3 units;
class of 1 unit;
class of 0.5 unit, reserved for the least advanced countries as listed by the United Nations and for other countries designated by the Council of Administration.

2 Notwithstanding the contribution classes listed in paragraph 1, any member country may elect to contribute more than 50 units.

3 Member countries shall be included in one of the above-mentioned contribution classes upon their admission or accession to the Union in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 21.4, of the Constitution.

4 Member countries may subsequently change contribution class on condition that this change is communicated to the International Bureau at least two months before the opening of Congress. This notification, which shall be brought to the attention of Congress, shall take effect on the date of the entry into force of the financial provisions drawn up by Congress. Member countries that have not made known their wish to change contribution class within the required time shall remain in the class to which they belonged up to that time.

5 Member countries may not insist on being lowered more than one class at a time.

6 Nevertheless, in exceptional circumstances such as natural disasters necessitating international aid programmes, the Council of Administration may authorize a temporary reduction in contribution class once between two Congresses when so requested by a member country if the said member establishes that it can no longer maintain its contribution at the class originally chosen. In the same circumstances, the Council of Administration may also authorize a temporary reduction for the non-least developed countries already in the class of 1 unit by placing them in the class of 0.5 unit.

7 The temporary reduction in contribution class in application of paragraph 6 may be authorized by the Council of Administration for a maximum period of two years or up to the next Congress, whichever is earlier. On expiry of the specified period, the country concerned shall automatically revert to its original contribution class.

8 Notwithstanding paragraphs 4 and 5, changes to a higher class shall not be subject to any restriction.

Article **131**
Payment for supplies from the International Bureau (Gen Regs **118**)

Supplies provided by the International Bureau to postal administrations against payment shall be paid for in the shortest possible time and at the latest within six months from the first day of the month following that in which the account is sent by the Bureau. After that period the sums due shall be chargeable with interest in favour of the Union at the rate of 5% per annum reckoned from the date of expiry of that period.

Chapter V

Arbitration

Article **132**
Arbitration procedure (Const. 32)

1 If a dispute has to be settled by arbitration, each of the postal administrations party to the case shall select a postal administration of a member country not directly involved in the dispute. When several postal administrations make common cause, they shall count only as a single administration for the purposes of this provision.

2 If one of the postal administrations party to the case does not act on a proposal for arbitration within a period of six months, the International Bureau, if so requested, shall itself call upon the defaulting postal administration to appoint an arbitrator or shall itself appoint one ex officio.

3 The parties to the case may agree to appoint a single arbitrator which may be the International Bureau.

4 The decision of the arbitrators shall be taken by a majority of votes.

5 In the event of a tie the arbitrators shall select another postal administration, not involved in the dispute either, to settle the matter. Should they fail to agree on the choice, this postal administration shall be appointed by the International Bureau from among postal administrations not proposed by the arbitrators.

6 If the dispute concerns one of the Agreements, the arbitrators may be appointed only from among the postal administrations that are parties to that Agreement.

Chapter VI

Final provisions

Article **133**
Conditions for approval of proposals concerning the General Regulations

To become effective, proposals submitted to Congress relating to these General Regulations shall be approved by a majority of the member countries represented at Congress **and having the right to vote**. At least two thirds of the member countries of the Union **having the right to vote** shall be present at the time of voting.

Article **134**
Proposals concerning the Agreements with the United Nations (Const. 9)

The conditions of approval referred to in article **133** shall apply equally to proposals designed to amend the Agreements concluded between the Universal Postal Union and the United Nations, in so far as those Agreements do not lay down conditions for the amendment of the provisions they contain.

Article **135**
Entry into force and duration of the General Regulations

These General Regulations shall come into force on 1 January **2006** and shall remain in **force for an indefinite period.**

In witness whereof the plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the member countries have signed these General Regulations in a single original which shall be deposited with the Director-General of the International Bureau. A copy thereof shall be delivered to each party by the **International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union.**

Done at **Bucharest, 5 October 2004.**