

General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union

(amended by the 2016 Istanbul, 2018 Addis Ababa and 2021 Abidjan Additional Protocols¹)

Table of contents

Chapter I

Organization, functions and operation of Congresses, the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the Consultative Committee

Section 1

Congress

Article

- 101 Organization and convening of Congresses and Extraordinary Congresses
- 102 Right to vote at Congresses
- 103 Functions of Congress
- 104 Rules of Procedure of Congresses
- 105 Observers to the Union's bodies

Section 2

Council of Administration (CA)

- 106 Composition and functioning of the CA
- 107 Functions of the CA
- 108 Organization of CA sessions
- 109 Observers
- 110 Reimbursement of travel expenses
- 111 Information on the activities of the CA

Section 3

Postal Operations Council (POC)

- 112 Composition and functioning of the POC
- 113 Functions of the POC
- 114 Organization of POC sessions
- 115 POC observers
- 116 Reimbursement of travel expenses
- 117 Information on the activities of the POC
- 118 Coordination Committee for the Permanent Bodies of the Union

¹ For the 2016 Istanbul Additional Protocol, see pages 33 to 43 of the brochure published in Berne in 2016.

For the Second Additional Protocol (Addis Ababa Extraordinary Congress 2018), see pages 9 to 25 of the brochure published in Berne in 2018.

For the Third Additional Protocol (Abidjan 2021), see pages 13 to 31 of the present brochure.

Section 4 Consultative Committee (CC)

- 119 Aim of the CC
- 120 Composition of the CC
- 121 Membership of the CC
- 122 Functions of the CC
- 123 Organization of the CC
- 124 Representatives of the Consultative Committee at the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and Congress
- 125 CC observers
- 126 Information on the activities of the CC

Chapter II International Bureau

Section 1 Election and duties of the Director General and Deputy Director General

- 127 Election of the Director General and Deputy Director General of the International Bureau
- 128 Duties of the Director General
- 129 Duties of the Deputy Director General

Section 2 Secretariat of the Union bodies and the Consultative Committee

- 130 General remarks
- 131 Preparation and distribution of documents of the Union bodies
- 132 List of member countries
- 133 Information. Opinions. Requests for explanation and amendment of the Acts. Inquiries. Role in the settlement of accounts
- 134 Technical cooperation
- 135 Forms supplied by the International Bureau
- 136 Acts of Restricted Unions and Special Agreements
- 137 Union periodical
- 138 Annual report on the work of the Union

Chapter III Submission, consideration of proposals, notification of decisions adopted and entry into force of the Regulations and other decisions adopted

- 139 Procedure for submitting proposals to Congress
- 140 Procedure for amending proposals submitted in accordance with article 139
- 141 Procedure for submitting proposals amending the Convention or the Agreements between Congresses
- 142 Consideration of proposals amending the Convention or the Agreements between Congresses
- 143 Amendment of the Regulations by the Postal Operations Council
- 144 Notification of decisions adopted between Congresses
- 145 Entry into force of the Regulations and of the other decisions adopted between Congresses

Chapter IV
Finance

- 146 Fixing of the expenditure of the Union
- 147 Regulation of member countries' contributions
- 148 Shortfalls in financing
- 149 Supervision of book-keeping and accounting
- 150 Automatic sanctions
- 151 Contribution classes
- 152 Payment for supplies from the International Bureau
- 153 Organization of user-funded subsidiary bodies

Chapter V
Arbitration

- 154 Arbitration procedure

Chapter VI
Use of languages within the Union

- 155 Working languages of the International Bureau
- 156 Languages used for documentation, for debates and for official correspondence

Chapter VII
Final provisions

- 157 Conditions for approval of proposals concerning the General Regulations
- 158 Proposals concerning the Agreements with the United Nations
- 159 **Entry into force and duration of the General Regulations**

General Regulations of the Universal Postal Union²

(amended by the 2016 Istanbul and 2018 Addis Ababa and 2021 Abidjan Additional Protocols)

The undersigned plenipotentiaries of the Governments of member countries of the **Universal Postal Union (hereinafter the "Union")**, having regard to article 21.2 of the Constitution of the **Union**, concluded at Vienna on 10 July 1964, have, by common consent, and subject to article 24.3 and 5 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

Organization, functions and operation of Congresses, the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the Consultative Committee

Section 1

Congress

Article 101

Organization and convening of Congresses and Extraordinary Congresses

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 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.

4 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.

5 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.

6 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.

² In line with Abidjan Congress–Doc 39, various changes have been made to the English version of the General Regulations to introduce gender-neutral language. As these editorial amendments do not affect the official French text, they are not marked as changes in this volume.

7 Paragraphs 2 to 5 and article 102 shall be applicable by analogy to Extraordinary Congresses.

Article 102

Right to vote at Congress

Each member country shall be entitled to one vote, subject to the sanctions provided for in article 150.

Article 103

Functions of Congress

1 On the basis of proposals by member countries, the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, Congress shall:

- 1.1 determine the general principles for achieving the object and purpose of the Union set out in the Preamble and article 1 of the Constitution;
- 1.2 consider and adopt, where appropriate, proposals for amendments to the Constitution, General Regulations, **Universal Postal Convention (hereinafter the "Convention")** and Agreements submitted by member countries and the Councils, in accordance with article 27 of the Constitution and article 139 of the General Regulations;
- 1.3 set the date for the entry into force of the Acts;
- 1.4 adopt its Rules of Procedure and the amendments to those Rules;
- 1.5 consider the comprehensive reports on the work of the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and the Consultative Committee, covering the period from the previous Congress, presented by these respective bodies in accordance with articles 111, 117 and 126 of the General Regulations;
- 1.6 adopt the Union's strategy;
- 1.7 approve the draft quadrennial **Union** business plan;
- 1.8 fix the maximum amount of the Union's expenditure, in accordance with article 20 of the Constitution;
- 1.9 elect the member countries to sit on the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, in accordance with, inter alia, the electoral procedures laid down in the Congress resolutions pertaining to this matter;
- 1.10 elect the Director General and Deputy Director General;
- 1.11 set in a Congress resolution the ceiling of the costs to be borne by the Union for the production of documents in Chinese, German, Portuguese and Russian.

2 Congress, as the supreme body of the Union, shall deal with such other questions concerning postal services.

Article 104

Rules of Procedure of Congresses

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

2 Each Congress may amend its Rules of Procedure under the conditions laid down in those Rules of Procedure.

3 Paragraphs 1 and 2 shall also be applicable by analogy to Extraordinary Congresses.

Article 105

Observers to the Union's bodies

1 The following entities shall be invited to participate in the plenary sessions and committee meetings of Congress, the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council as observers:

1.1 the United Nations;

1.2 Restricted Unions;

1.3 members of the Consultative Committee;

1.4 entities authorized to attend Union meetings as observers by virtue of a resolution or decision of Congress.

2 The following entities, if duly designated by the Council of Administration in accordance with article 107.1.12 shall be invited to attend specific meetings of Congress as ad hoc observers:

2.1 specialized agencies of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations;

2.2 any international body, any association or enterprise, or any qualified person.

3 In addition to the observers defined in paragraph 1 of this article, the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council may designate ad hoc observers to attend their meetings in accordance with their Rules of Procedure, when this is in the interests of the Union and its bodies.

Section 2

Council of Administration (CA)

Article 106

Composition and functioning of the CA

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 role of Chair shall devolve by right on the host member country of Congress. If that member 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 as Chair one of the members belonging to the geographical group of the host member 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 is renewed at each Congress; no member country may be chosen by three successive Congresses. **Without prejudice to the foregoing, one seat in the geographical group to which member countries defined as Pacific Island countries and territories (as per the relevant list established by the United Nations) belong shall be reserved for those member countries.**

4 Each member of the Council of Administration shall appoint its representative(s). The members of the Council of Administration shall take an active part in its work.

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 CA shall define, formalize and/or set up the standing groups and task forces or other bodies to be established within its structure, with due regard being paid to the Union's strategy and business plan adopted by Congress.

- 1 The Council of Administration shall have the following functions:
 - 1.1 Supervises all 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.
 - 1.2 Promotes, coordinates and supervises all forms of postal technical assistance within the framework of international technical cooperation.
 - 1.3 Examines the draft quadrennial **Union** business plan approved by Congress, and finalizes it by bringing the activities set out in the draft plan for the four-year period into line with the actual resources available. The plan should also, if appropriate, be in line with the results of the prioritization process carried out by Congress. The finalized version of the quadrennial **Union** business plan, completed and approved by the CA, will then form the basis for the preparation of the annual Programme and Budget as well as for the annual operating plans to be drawn up and implemented by the CA and POC.
 - 1.4 Considers and approves the annual programme and budget and the accounts of the Union, while taking into account the final version of the **Union** Business Plan, as described in article 107.1.3.
 - 1.5 Authorizes the ceiling of expenditure to be exceeded, if circumstances so require, in accordance with article 146.3 to 5.
 - 1.6 Authorizes election of a lower contribution class, if it is so requested, in accordance with the conditions set out in article 151.5.
 - 1.7 Authorizes a change of geographical group if it is so requested by a member country, taking into account the views expressed by the member countries which are members of the geographical groups concerned.
 - 1.8 Creates or abolishes International Bureau posts financed by the regular budget, taking into account the restrictions imposed by the expenditure ceiling fixed.
 - 1.9 Decides on the contacts to be established with member countries in order to carry out its functions.
 - 1.10 After consulting the Postal Operations Council, decides on the relations to be established with the organizations which are not observers within the meaning of article 105.1 and 105.2.1.
 - 1.11 Considers the reports by the International Bureau on UPU relations with other international bodies and takes the decisions which it considers appropriate on the conduct of such relations and the action to be taken on them.
 - 1.12 Designates in due course, after consulting the Postal Operations Council and the Secretary General, the specialized agencies of the United Nations, international organizations, associations, enterprises and qualified persons to be invited as ad hoc observers to specific meetings of Congress and its Committees when this is in the interest of the Union or the work of the Congress and instructs the Director General of the International Bureau to issue the necessary invitations.
 - 1.13 Designates the member country where the next Congress is to be held in the case provided for in article 101.3.
 - 1.14 Determines in due course and after consulting the Postal Operations Council the number of Committees required to carry out the work of Congress, and specifies their functions.
 - 1.15 Designates, after consulting the Postal Operations Council and subject to the approval of Congress, the member countries prepared:
 - 1.15.1 to assume the positions of Vice-Chairs of Congress and Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Committees, taking as much account as possible of the equitable geographical distribution of the member countries; and
 - 1.15.2 to sit on the Restricted Committees of the Congress.
 - 1.16 Designates those of its members that will serve as members of the Consultative Committee.

- 1.17 Considers and approves, within the framework of its competence, any action considered necessary to safeguard and enhance the quality of and to modernize the international postal service.
- 1.18 Studies, at the request of Congress, the Postal Operations Council or member countries, 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 member countries between Congresses.
- 1.19 Formulates proposals which shall be submitted for the approval either of Congress or of member countries in accordance with article 142.
- 1.20 Submits subjects for study to the Postal Operations Council for examination in accordance with article 113.1.6.
- 1.21 Reviews and approves, in consultation with the Postal Operations Council, the draft Strategy for presentation to Congress.
- 1.22 Receives and discusses reports and recommendations from the Consultative Committee and considers recommendations from the Consultative Committee for submission to Congress.
- 1.23 Provides control over the activities of the International Bureau.
- 1.24 Approves the annual report on the work of the Union and the annual Financial Operating Reports prepared by the International Bureau and, where appropriate, furnishes observations on them.
- 1.25 Establishes 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), follows closely the study of these questions, and reviews and approves, for conformity with the aforementioned principles, Postal Operations Council proposals relating to these questions.
- 1.26 Approves, 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.
- 1.27 Considers the annual report prepared by the Postal Operations Council and any proposals submitted by the Council.
- 1.28 Approves the four-yearly report prepared by the International Bureau in consultation with the Postal Operations Council, on the performance of member countries in respect of the execution of the Union Strategy approved by the preceding Congress, for submission to the following Congress.
- 1.29 Establishes the framework for the organization of the Consultative Committee and concurs in the organization of the Consultative Committee, in accordance with the provisions of article 123.
- 1.30 Establishes criteria for membership of the Consultative Committee and **revokes membership in accordance with those criteria, as further detailed in the relevant rules of procedure referred to in article 123.**
- 1.31 Lays down the Financial Regulations of the Union.
- 1.32 Lays down the rules governing the Reserve Fund.
- 1.33 Lays down the rules governing the Special Fund.
- 1.34 Lays down the rules governing the Special Activities Fund.
- 1.35 Lays down the rules governing the Voluntary Fund.
- 1.36 Lays down the Staff Regulations and the conditions of service of the elected officials.
- 1.37 Lays down the Regulations of the Social Fund.
- 1.38 Exercises, within the context of article 153, overall supervision of the creation and activities of user-funded subsidiary bodies.
- 1.39 Adopts its Rules of Procedure and the amendments to those Rules.

Article 108
Organization of CA sessions

- 1 At its constituent meeting, which shall be convened and opened by the Chair of Congress, the Council of Administration shall elect four Vice-Chairs from among its **members**. The Chair and four Vice-Chairs shall be member countries from each of the five geographical groups of the Union.
- 2 The Council of Administration shall meet twice a year, or additionally on an exceptional basis, at Union headquarters, in accordance with the relevant procedures set forth in its Rules of Procedure.
- 3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, of the Council of Administration 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.
- 4 The Chair of the Postal Operations Council shall represent that body at meetings of the Council of Administration when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Postal Operations Council.
- 5 The Chair of the Consultative Committee shall represent that organization at meetings of the Council of Administration when the agenda contains questions of interest to the Consultative Committee.

Article 109
Observers

- 1 Observers
 - 1.1 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.
 - 1.2 Member countries of the Union which are not members of the Council, as well as the observers and ad hoc observers referred to in article 105, may participate in the plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Council of Administration, without the right to vote.
- 2 Principles
 - 2.1 For logistical reasons, the Council of Administration may limit the number of attendees per observer and ad hoc observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.
 - 2.2 Observers and ad hoc 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 standing groups and task forces when their experience or expertise justifies it. The participation of observers and ad hoc observers shall be carried out without additional expense for the Union.
 - 2.3 In exceptional circumstances, members of the Consultative Committee and ad hoc 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 110
Reimbursement of travel expenses

The travel expenses of **representatives of members** of the Council of Administration participating in its meetings shall be borne by **their** member country. However, one representative of each of the member countries classified as developing or least developed countries according to the lists established, respectively, by the Council of Administration and 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 **and/or** first class return rail ticket, or expenses incurred for travel by any other means, **in the latter case** subject to the condition that the amount does not exceed the price of the economy class return air ticket. The same entitlement shall be granted to each member of its Committees or other bodies when these meet outside Congress and the sessions of the Council.

Article 111
Information on the activities of the CA

1 After each session, the Council of Administration shall inform the member countries and their designated operators, 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 the member countries of the Union, their designated operators and the members of the Consultative Committee at least two months before the opening of Congress.

Section 3
Postal Operations Council (POC)

Article 112
Composition and functioning of the POC

1 The Postal Operations Council shall consist of forty-eight 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. At least one third of the members of each geographical group shall be renewed at each Congress. **Without prejudice to the foregoing, one seat in the geographical group to which member countries defined as Pacific Island countries and territories (as per the relevant list established by the United Nations) belong shall be reserved for those member countries.**

3 Each member of the Postal Operations Council shall appoint its representative(s). The members of the Postal Operations Council shall take an active part in its work.

4 The operational expenses of the Postal Operations Council shall be borne by the Union. Its members shall not receive any payment.

5 The Postal Operations Council shall define, formalize and/or set up the standing groups, task forces, user-funded subsidiary bodies or other bodies to be established within its structure, with due regard being paid to the Union's strategy and business plan adopted by Congress.

Article 113
Functions of the POC

1 The Postal Operations Council shall have the following functions:

1.1 Coordinates practical measures for the development and improvement of international postal services.

- 1.2 Takes, 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.
- 1.3 Decides on the contacts to be established with member countries and their designated operators in order to carry out its functions.
- 1.4 Takes the necessary steps to study and publicize the experiments and progress made by certain member countries and their designated operators in the technical, operational, economic and vocational training fields of interest to other member countries and their designated operators.
- 1.5 Takes, in consultation with the Council of Administration, appropriate steps in the sphere of technical cooperation with all member countries of the Union and their designated operators and in particular with the new and developing countries and their designated operators.
- 1.6 Examines any other questions submitted to it by a member of the Postal Operations Council, by the Council of Administration or by any member country or designated operator.
- 1.7 Receives and discusses reports as well as recommendations from the Consultative Committee and, when matters of interest to the Postal Operations Council are involved, to examines and comments on recommendations from the Consultative Committee for submission to Congress.
- 1.8 Designates those of its members that will serve as members of the Consultative Committee.
- 1.9 Conducts the study of the most important operational, commercial, technical, economic and technical cooperation problems which are of interest to all member countries or their designated operators, 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 prepares information, opinions and recommendations for action on them.
- 1.10 Provides input to the Council of Administration for the development of the draft Union Strategy and draft quadrennial **Union** business plan to be submitted to Congress.
- 1.11 Studies teaching and vocational training problems of interest to member countries and their designated operators, as well as to the new and developing countries.
- 1.12 Studies the present position and needs of the new and developing countries and prepares appropriate recommendations on ways and means of improving their postal services.
- 1.13 Revises the Regulations of the **Union**; **in this regard**, the Postal Operations Council shall be subject to Council of Administration guidance on matters of fundamental policy and principle.
- 1.14 Formulates proposals which shall be submitted for the approval either of Congress or of member countries in accordance with article 142; the approval of the Council of Administration is required when these proposals concern questions within the latter's competence.
- 1.15 Examines, at the request of a member country, any proposal which that member country forwards to the International Bureau under article 141, prepares observations on it and instructs the International Bureau to annex these observations to the proposal before submitting it for approval to the member countries.
- 1.16 Recommends, if necessary, and where appropriate after approval by the Council of Administration and consultation of all the member countries, the adoption of regulations or of a new procedure until such time as Congress takes a decision in the matter.
- 1.17 Prepares and issues, in the form of recommendations to member countries and their designated operators (or as binding provisions if the Acts of the Union so provide), 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.
- 1.18 Establishes the framework for the organization of user-funded subsidiary bodies and concurs in the organization of these bodies in accordance with the provisions of article 153.
- 1.19 Receives and discusses reports from the user-funded subsidiary bodies on an annual basis.
- 1.20 Adopts its Rules of Procedure and the amendments to those Rules.

Organization of POC sessions

1 At its first meeting, which shall be convened and opened by the Chair of Congress, the Postal Operations Council shall choose from among its members a Chair and four Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs/Vice-Chairs/Co-Chairs. The Chair and four Vice-Chairs shall be member countries from each of the five geographical groups of the Union.

2 The Postal Operations Council shall meet twice a year, or additionally on an exceptional basis, at Union headquarters, in accordance with the relevant procedures set forth in its Rules of Procedure.

3 The Chair and Vice-Chairs, and the Committee Chairs, Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs, of the Postal Operations Council 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.

4 On the basis of the Union Strategy 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 session following Congress, prepare a basic work programme containing a number of tactics aimed at implementing the 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.

5 The Chair 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.

Article 115

Observers

1 Observers

1.1 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.

1.2 Member countries of the Union which are not members of the Council, as well as the observers and ad hoc observers referred to in article 105, may participate in the plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Postal Operations Council, without the right to vote.

2 Principles

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

2.2 Observers and ad hoc 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 standing groups and task forces when their experience or expertise justifies it. The participation of observers and ad hoc observers shall be carried out without additional expense for the Union.

2.3 In exceptional circumstances, members of the Consultative Committee and ad hoc 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.

The travel expenses of representatives of members of the Postal Operations Council participating in its meetings shall be borne by their member country. However, one representative of each of the member countries **classified as** least developed countries according to the list 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 **and/or** first class return rail ticket, or expenses incurred for travel by any other means, **in the latter case** subject to the condition that the amount does not exceed the price of the economy class return air ticket.

Article 117
Information on the activities of the POC

1 After each session, the Postal Operations Council shall inform the member countries and their designated operators, 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, including reports on user-funded subsidiary bodies as provided for in article 153, and send it to member countries of the Union, their designated operators and members of the Consultative Committee at least two months before the opening of Congress.

Article 118
Coordination Committee for the Permanent Bodies of the Union

1 The Chair of the CA, the Chair of the POC and the Director General of the International Bureau shall form the Coordination Committee for the Permanent Bodies of the Union (CCoord).

2 The CCoord shall have the following attributions and functions:

- 2.1 Contribute to the coordination of the work of the permanent bodies of the Union;
- 2.2 Meet, when needed, in order to discuss important questions relating to the Union and the postal service and provide the Union's bodies with an evaluation of such questions;
- 2.3 Ensure proper implementation of the strategic planning process so that all decisions on the Union's activities are taken by the appropriate bodies in accordance with their respective responsibilities as specified in the Acts of the Union.

3 On convocation by the Chair of the CA, the CCoord shall meet twice a year, at Union headquarters. The date and place of the meetings shall be fixed by the Chair of the CA in agreement with the Chair of the POC and the Director General of the International Bureau

Section 4
Consultative Committee (CC)

Article 119
Aim of the CC

The aim of the Consultative Committee is to represent the interests of the wider international postal sector, and to provide a framework for effective dialogue between stakeholders.

Article 120

Composition of the CC

- 1 The Consultative Committee shall consist of:
 - 1.1 non-governmental organizations (**including organizations** representing customers, delivery service providers, **postal employees or postal employers**); **philanthropic entities; standardization, financial and development organizations**; suppliers of goods and services to the postal services sector; **transportation entities and other private sector entities**; and like organizations of individuals and companies which have an interest in supporting the mission and objectives of the Union;
 - 1.2 high-level figures from the postal sector recommended by member countries or the bodies of the Union concerned, including the Consultative Committee.
- 2 **All members of the Consultative Committee shall be established (and, if so required by the member country concerned, duly registered) or, in the case of the high-level figures referred to in 1.2, have permanent residence, in a Union member country.**
- 3 The operational costs of the Consultative Committee shall be shared **by members** of the Consultative Committee, **except as otherwise** determined by the Council of Administration. **In this regard, and as further outlined in the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Committee, different membership fees may apply depending on the specific legal nature and financial capability of members of the Consultative Committee.**
- 4 The members of the Consultative Committee shall not receive remuneration or any other compensation.

Article 121

Membership of the CC

- 1 **Membership** of the Consultative Committee shall be determined through a process of application and acceptance established by the Council of Administration **and** carried out in accordance with article 107.1.30.
- 2 **Any requests for membership of the Consultative Committee as submitted by the entities or high-level figures referred to in article 120 shall be accompanied by the prior written authorization or recommendation of the corresponding Union member country, in accordance with article 120.2.**
- 3 Each member of the Consultative Committee shall appoint its own representative(s).

Article 122

Functions of the CC

- 1 The Consultative Committee shall have the following functions:
 - 1.2 Examines 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, **in accordance with articles 109.2.3 and 115.2.3.**
 - 1.2 Conducts and contributes to studies of issues of importance to the Consultative Committee's members.
 - 1.3 Considers issues affecting the postal services sector and issues reports on such issues.
 - 1.4 Provides input to the work of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council, including submitting reports and recommendations and giving **opinions to** the two Councils.
 - 1.5 Makes 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.

Article 123
Organization of the CC

- 1 The Consultative Committee shall reorganize itself after each Congress in accordance with the framework established by the Council of Administration. The Chair of the Council of Administration shall preside at the organizational meeting of the Consultative Committee, which shall elect its Chair at that meeting.
- 2 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.
- 3 The Consultative Committee shall meet once a year. In principle, the meetings will be held at Union headquarters at the same time as meetings of the Postal Operations Council. The date and location of each meeting shall be fixed by the Chair of the Consultative Committee, in agreement with the Chairs of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council and the Director General of the International Bureau.

Article 124
Representatives of the Consultative Committee at the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and Congress

- 1 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.
- 2 Members of the Consultative Committee are invited to plenary sessions and Committee meetings of the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council in accordance with article 105. They may also participate in the work of standing groups and task forces under terms established in articles 109.2.2 and 115.2.2.
- 3 The Chair of the Council of Administration and the Chair 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.

Article 125
CC observers

- 1 **Member** countries of the Union and the observers and ad hoc observers referred to in article 105 may participate in the sessions of the Consultative Committee, without the right to vote.
- 2 For logistical reasons, the Consultative Committee may limit the number of attendees per observer and ad hoc observer participating. It may also limit their right to speak during the debates.
- 3 In exceptional circumstances, observers and ad hoc 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 126
Information on the activities of the CC

- 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 Chairs 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 provided to member countries of the Union, to their designated operators and to the Restricted Unions, in accordance with article 111.

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

Chapter II International Bureau

Section 1 Election and duties of the Director General and Deputy Director General of the International Bureau

Article 127 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; the Deputy Director General shall be eligible for election to that post and shall automatically be accepted as a candidate, provided that the initial term of office as Deputy Director General has not already been renewed once by the preceding Congress and that the Deputy Director General declares 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 128 Duties of the Director General

1 The Director General shall be the legal representative of the Union.

2 The Director General shall organize, administer and direct the International Bureau.

- 3 Regarding the classification of posts, appointments and promotions:
 - 3.1 the Director General shall be empowered to classify posts in grades G 1 to D 2 and to appoint and promote officials in those grades.
 - 3.2 for appointments in grades P 1 to D 2, the Director General shall consider the professional qualifications of the candidates **who** are nationals of a member country or **who** exercise their professional activities in a member country, taking into account equitable geographical and language distribution, and gender balance. 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;
 - 3.3 the Director General 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;
 - 3.4 for the promotion of an official of the International Bureau to grades D 2, D 1 and P 5, the Director General shall not be bound to apply the same principle as under 3.3;
 - 3.5 the requirements of equitable geographical and language distribution and gender balance shall rank behind merit in the recruitment process;
 - 3.6 the Director General shall inform the Council of Administration once a year of appointments and promotions in grades P 4 to D 2.
- 4 Furthermore, the Director General shall have the following duties:
 - 4.1 acts as depositary of the Acts of the Union and as intermediary in the procedure of accession and admission to and withdrawal from the Union;
 - 4.2 notifies the decisions taken by Congress to all the Governments of member countries;
 - 4.3 notifies all member countries and their designated operators of the Regulations drawn up or revised by the Postal Operations Council;
 - 4.4 prepares the draft annual budget of the Union at the lowest possible level consistent with the requirements of the Union and submits it in due course to the Council of Administration for consideration; communicates the budget to the member countries of the Union after approval by the Council of Administration and executes it;
 - 4.5 executes the specific activities requested by the bodies of the Union and those assigned to the Director General by the Acts;
 - 4.6 takes action to achieve the objectives set by the bodies of the Union, within the framework of the established policy and the funds available;
 - 4.7 submits suggestions and proposals to the Council of Administration or to the Postal Operations Council;
 - 4.8 following the close of Congress, submits 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;
 - 4.9 prepares, for the Council of Administration and on the basis of directives issued by the Councils, the draft Union Strategy and draft quadrennial UPU business plan to be submitted to Congress;
 - 4.10 prepares, for approval by the Council of Administration, a four-yearly report on the member countries' performance in respect of the Union Strategy approved by the preceding Congress, which will be submitted to the following Congress;
 - 4.11 acts as an intermediary in relations between:
 - 4.11.1 the Union and the Restricted Unions;
 - 4.11.2 the Union and the United Nations;
 - 4.11.3 the Union and the international organizations whose activities are of interest to the Union;
 - 4.11.4 the Union and the international organizations or the associations or enterprises that the bodies of the Union wish to consult or associate with their work;

- 4.12 assumes the duties of Secretary General of the bodies of the Union and supervises in this capacity, taking into account the special provisions of these General Regulations, in particular:
- 4.12.1 the preparation and organization of the work of the Union's bodies;
 - 4.12.2 the preparation, production and distribution of documents, reports and minutes;
 - 4.12.3 the functioning of the secretariat at meetings of the Union's bodies;
- 4.13 attends the meetings of the bodies of the Union and takes part in the discussions without the right to vote, with the possibility of being represented.

Article 129

Duties of the Deputy Director General

- 1 The Deputy Director General shall assist the Director General and shall be responsible to the latter.
- 2 If the Director General is absent or prevented from discharging his or her duties, the Deputy Director General shall exercise those functions. The same shall apply in the case of a vacancy in the post of Director General as mentioned in article 127.3.

Section 2

Secretariat of the Union bodies and the Consultative Committee

Article 130

General remarks

The secretariat of the Union's bodies and the Consultative Committee shall be provided by the International Bureau under the responsibility of the Director General.

Article 131

Preparation and distribution of documents of the Union bodies

- 1 The International Bureau shall prepare and make available through the Union website all the documents published, in the language versions specified in article 156, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council. The International Bureau shall also indicate, to the representatives of member countries in particular, new e-document publications on the Union website by means of an efficient web-signalling system.
- 2 Furthermore, the International Bureau shall physically distribute Union publications, such as International Bureau circulars and CA and POC Summary Records, only at the request of an individual member country.

Article 132

List of member countries

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 133

Information. Opinions. Requests for explanation and amendment of the Acts. Inquiries. Role in the settlement of accounts

- 1 The International Bureau shall be at all times at the disposal of the Council of Administration, the Postal Operations Council and member countries and their designated operators 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 postal service; give an opinion or provide dispute settlement services (in the latter case on a paid basis and in accordance with the relevant procedures adopted by the Council of Administration), at the request of the parties involved, on questions in dispute; act on requests for explanation 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 member countries and their designated operators to obtain the views of other member countries and designated operators 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.

5 The International Bureau shall ensure the confidentiality and security of commercial data provided by member countries and/or their designated operators for the performance of its duties arising from the Acts or decisions of the Union.

Article 134

Technical cooperation

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

Article 135

Forms supplied by the International Bureau

The International Bureau shall be responsible for arranging the manufacture of international reply coupons and for supplying them, at cost, to member countries or their designated operators ordering them.

Article 136

Acts of Restricted Unions and Special Agreements

1 Two copies of the Acts of Restricted Unions and of Special Agreements concluded under article 9 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. It shall notify the Council of Administration of any irregularity discovered through applying this provision.

3 The International Bureau shall inform member countries and their designated operators of the existence of the Restricted Unions and the Special Agreements mentioned above.

Article 137

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 138

Annual report on the work of the Union

The International Bureau shall make an annual report on the work of the Union, which shall be sent, after approval by the Management Committee of the Council of Administration, to member countries and/or designated operators, the Restricted Unions and the United Nations.

Chapter III

Submission, consideration of proposals, notification of decisions adopted and entry into force of the Regulations and other decisions adopted

Article 139

Procedure for submitting proposals to Congress

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

- 1.1 proposals which reach the International Bureau at least **four** months before the date fixed for Congress shall be accepted;
- 1.2 no drafting proposal shall be accepted during the period of **four** months preceding the date fixed for Congress;
- 1.3 proposals of substance which reach the International Bureau in the interval between **four** and **three** months before the date fixed for Congress shall not be accepted unless they are supported by at least two member countries;
- 1.4 proposals of substance which reach the International Bureau in the interval between **three** and two months before the date fixed for Congress shall not be accepted unless they are supported by at least eight member countries; proposals which arrive after that time shall no longer be accepted;
- 1.5 declarations of support must reach the International Bureau within the same period of time as the proposal to which they refer.

2 Proposals concerning the Constitution or the General Regulations shall reach the International Bureau not later than **four** 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 member 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. Similarly, each proposal liable to lead to significant costs for the Union shall be accompanied by an indication of its financial impact, prepared by the member country submitting the proposal, in consultation with the International Bureau, so that the financial resources needed for its implementation can be determined.

4 Drafting proposals shall be headed "Drafting proposal" by the member countries 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 apply neither to proposals concerning the Rules of Procedure of Congresses, nor to proposals submitted by the Council of Administration or the Postal Operations Council.

Article 140

Procedure for amending proposals submitted in accordance with article 139

Amendments to proposals already made, **including** those submitted by the Council of Administration or the Postal Operations Council, **may be** presented to the International Bureau in accordance with the provisions of the Rules of Procedure of Congresses.

Article 141

Procedure for submitting proposals amending the Convention or the Agreements between Congresses

1 To be eligible for consideration, every proposal concerning the Convention or the Agreements submitted by a member country between Congresses shall be supported by at least two other member countries. 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 member countries through the intermediary of the International Bureau.

Article 142

Consideration of proposals amending the Convention or the Agreements between Congresses

1 Every proposal concerning the Convention, the Agreements and their Final Protocols shall be subject to the following procedure: where a member country has sent a proposal to the International Bureau, the latter shall forward it to all member countries for examination. They shall be allowed a period of 45 days in which to examine the proposal and forward any observations to the International Bureau. Amendments shall not be admissible. Once these 45 days have elapsed, the International Bureau shall forward to member countries all the observations it has received and invite each member country to vote for or against the proposal. Member countries **whose votes have not been received by the International Bureau** within a period of 45 days shall be considered **as having abstained**. The aforementioned periods shall be reckoned from the dates of the International Bureau circulars. **Any documentation and observations arising from the aforementioned procedure shall be submitted by physical or secure electronic means and, in the case of member country submissions to the International Bureau, be signed by a duly authorized representative of the governmental authority of the member country concerned. For the purposes of this paragraph, "secure electronic means" shall refer to any electronic means used for the processing, storage and transmission of data that ensure that the completeness, integrity and confidentiality of the data are maintained during the submission of the aforementioned documentation and observations by the International Bureau or a member country.**

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

Article 143

Amendment of the Regulations by the Postal Operations Council

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

2 The support of at least one member country shall be required for submitting any proposal to amend the Regulations.

Article 144

Notification of decisions adopted between Congresses

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 member countries and their designated operators by the International Bureau. The same shall apply to the interpretations referred to in article 39.3.2 of the Convention and in the corresponding provisions of the Agreements.

Article 145

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

1 The Regulations and any amendments thereto shall enter into force on the date specified therein as decided by the Postal Operations Council, and shall remain in force for an indefinite period.

2 Subject to the provisions of 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 146

Fixing of the expenditure of the Union

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 **38,890,030** Swiss francs for the years **2022 to 2025**. In the event that the Congress planned for **2025** is postponed, the same ceilings shall also apply to the post-**2025** period.

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.

Article 147

Regulation of member countries' contributions

1 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.

2 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 5% per annum from the fourth month.

3 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.

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

5 Other than in exceptional circumstances as decided by Congress or the Council of Administration, recovery of arrears of mandatory contributions owed to the Union may not extend over more than ten years. In cases where Congress or the Council of Administration approves a payment agreement longer than twenty years, the minimum amount of the annual arrears contribution should be at least equal to the annual contribution of the member country signatory to the agreement.

6 Also in exceptional circumstances, as decided by Congress or the Council of Administration, either body may release a member country from all or part of the interest owed if that country has paid the full principal amount of its debts in arrears.

7 In similarly exceptional circumstances, Congress or the Council of Administration may, upon written request of the member country concerned, decide to release that member country from its debts in arrears and immediately lift the automatic sanctions imposed against it, subject to payment of an amount at least equivalent to one half of the total amount of debts in arrears (excluding any interest incurred thereon) owed by that member country.

8 Congress or the Council of Administration may also, upon written request of a member country with long-standing debts in arrears, decide to exceptionally release that member country from its debts in arrears and immediately lift the automatic sanctions imposed against it, provided the member country concerned pays its last five years of mandatory contributions to the Union's annual expenditure (including the current financial year and excluding any interest incurred thereon).

8.1 For the purposes of paragraph 8, "long-standing debts in arrears" shall be defined as any amounts in arrears (including interest) pertaining to mandatory contributions to the Union's annual expenditure incurred over a period longer than the last five financial years.

8.2 Equally for the purposes of paragraph 8 and specifically in the case of least developed countries and small island developing states as defined in article 151.1, Congress or the Council of Administration may exceptionally determine that the "last five years of mandatory contributions" of the member country concerned shall be calculated on the basis of the current contribution class to which that member country belongs, in which case the relevant current contribution class amount shall be multiplied five times.

9 In the case of least developed countries and small island developing states, as defined in article 151.1, that are authorized to benefit from either of the exceptional payment arrangements outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of this article, at least 50% of the amounts paid by the member country concerned shall be earmarked for Union-led postal technical assistance projects aimed at benefiting that same member country.

10 Any principal or interest amounts released in the framework of the exceptional payment arrangements outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of this article shall not be cancelled, but set aside and provisioned by the Union in accordance with its relevant financial rules. In the event the member country concerned subsequently falls under automatic sanctions, the aforementioned amounts shall once more be registered by the Union, with immediate effect, as debts in arrears for the member country in question.

11 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.

12 The provisions under paragraphs 3 to 11 apply by analogy to the translation costs billed by the International Bureau to member countries belonging to the language groups.

13 The International Bureau shall send bills to member countries at least three months before their due date. The original bills shall be sent to the correct address provided by the member country concerned. Electronic copies of the bills shall be sent via e-mail as pre-advice or alerts.

14 Furthermore, the International Bureau shall provide member countries with clear information each time it charges them interest on overdue payment of particular bills, so that member countries can easily verify to which bills the interest corresponds.

Article 148

Shortfalls in financing

1 A Reserve Fund shall be established with the Union to cover shortfalls in financing. Its amount shall be fixed by the Council of Administration. The Fund shall be maintained primarily from budget surpluses, and may also be used to balance the budget or reduce the amount of member countries' contributions.

2 In case of temporary shortfalls in Union financing, the Government of the Swiss Confederation shall make the necessary short-term advances to the Union, on conditions fixed by mutual agreement.

Article 149

Supervision of book-keeping and accounting

The Government of the Swiss Confederation shall supervise, without charge, the book-keeping and accounting of the International Bureau within the limits of the credits fixed by Congress.

Article 150

Automatic sanctions

1 Any member country unable to make the assignment provided for in article 147.3 and which does not agree to submit to an amortization schedule proposed by the International Bureau in accordance with article 147.4, 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 with the Union to submit to a schedule for the amortization of the arrears.

Article 151

Contribution classes

1 Member countries shall contribute to defraying Union expenses according to the contribution class to which they belong. **The structure of the contribution classes shall commence at one unit and rise in incremental one-unit steps to a level defined with reference to the most recent scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. Member countries shall choose their contribution class on the basis of their economic capacity while considering the aforementioned scale of assessments. The member countries listed by the United Nations as the least developed countries shall pay half a contribution unit. Small island developing states with a population of less than 200,000 (as listed by the United Nations) shall pay one tenth of a contribution unit.**

2 Notwithstanding the contribution classes listed in paragraph 1, any member country may elect to contribute a higher number of units, for a minimum term equivalent to the period between Congresses. The announcement of a change shall be made at the latest at Congress. At the end of the period between Congresses, the member country shall return automatically to its original number of contribution units unless it decides to maintain its contribution of a higher number of units. The payment of additional contributions will increase the expenditure accordingly.

3 Member countries shall **choose their number of units** upon their admission or accession to the Union, **while considering the most recent scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations**, in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 20.4 of the Constitution.

4 Member countries paying above the economic capacities assessed through reference to the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations shall have the right to reduce their number of units by up to a maximum of two units per Congress cycle, provided that this does not result in a lower contribution than they would pay under the current scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations. The cost of any such reduction shall be borne in solidarity by all member countries in accordance with the procedure laid down in article 20.3 of the Constitution. Member countries paying at a level below their economic capacity, as assessed through reference to the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations, shall be invited to increase their number of units by at least two per Congress cycle until they have reached the level of the current scale of assessments referred to above. Those member countries that fail to do so shall not benefit from the reduction in the value of the contribution unit resulting from the increase in the overall number of contribution units.

5 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.

6 The temporary reduction in contribution class in application of paragraph 5 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.

7 Changes to a higher class shall not be subject to any restriction.

Article 152

Payment for supplies from the International Bureau

Supplies provided by the International Bureau to member countries and their designated operators 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.

Article 153

Organization of user-funded subsidiary bodies

1 Subject to the approval of the Council of Administration, the POC may establish a number of user-funded subsidiary bodies, funded by voluntary means, in order to organize operational, commercial, technical and economic activities which fall within its competence under article 18 of the Constitution, but which may not be financed by the regular budget.

2 Upon the creation of such a body under the POC, the POC shall decide on the basic framework of the rules of procedure of the body, taking due consideration of the fundamental rules and principles of the Union as an intergovernmental organization, and shall submit it to the CA for approval. The basic framework shall include the following elements:

- 2.1 the mandate;
- 2.2 the constituency, including the categories of members participating;
- 2.3 decision-making rules, including its internal structure and its relationship with other Union bodies;
- 2.4 voting and representation principles;
- 2.5 financing (subscription, usage fees, etc.);
- 2.6 composition of secretariat and management structure.

3 Each user-funded subsidiary body shall organize its activities in an autonomous manner within the basic framework decided by the POC and approved by the CA, and shall prepare an annual report on its activities for consideration by the POC.

4 The Council of Administration shall establish the rules concerning support costs that user-funded subsidiary bodies should contribute to the regular budget, and shall publish them in the UPU Financial Regulations.

5 The Director General of the International Bureau shall administer the secretariat of the user-funded subsidiary bodies in accordance with the relevant Staff Regulations and Rules, as applicable to the staff recruited for the user-funded subsidiary bodies. The secretariat of the subsidiary bodies shall be an integral part of the International Bureau.

6 Information concerning user-funded subsidiary bodies established in accordance with this article shall be reported to Congress following their establishment.

Chapter V Arbitration

Article 154 Arbitration procedure

1 If a dispute has to be settled by arbitration between member countries, each member country must advise the other party in writing of the subject of the dispute and inform it, by means of a notice to initiate arbitration, that it wishes to initiate arbitration.

2 If the dispute concerns questions of an operational or technical nature, each member country may ask its designated operator to act in accordance with the procedure provided for in the following paragraphs and delegate such power to its operator. The member country concerned shall be informed of the progress of the proceedings and of the result. The respective member countries or designated operators shall hereafter be referred to as "parties to the arbitration".

3 The parties to the arbitration shall appoint either one or three arbitrators.

4 Where the parties to the arbitration choose to appoint three arbitrators, each party shall, in accordance with paragraph 2, select a member country or designated operator not directly involved in the dispute, to act as an arbitrator. When several member countries and/or designated operators make common cause, they shall count only as a single party for the purposes of these provisions.

5 Where the parties agree to the appointment of three arbitrators, the third arbitrator shall be jointly agreed upon by the parties and shall not need to be from a member country or designated operator.

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

7 The parties to the arbitration may jointly agree to appoint a single arbitrator, who shall not need to be from a member country or designated operator.

8 If one or both parties to the arbitration do not, within a period of three months from the date of the notice to initiate arbitration, appoint an arbitrator or arbitrators the International Bureau shall, if so requested, itself call upon the defaulting member country to appoint an arbitrator, or shall itself appoint one automatically. The International Bureau **shall not be involved in the deliberations or act as arbitrator unless otherwise mutually requested by the parties. In the latter case, the International Bureau shall serve as an arbitrator on a paid basis and in accordance with the relevant dispute settlement procedures adopted by the Council of Administration.**

9 The parties to the arbitration may mutually agree to reconcile the dispute at any time before a ruling is delivered by the arbitrator or arbitrators. Notice of any withdrawal must be submitted in writing to the International Bureau within 10 days of the parties reaching such agreement. Where the parties agree to withdraw from the arbitration process, the arbitrator or arbitrators shall lose their authority to decide the matter.

10 The arbitrator or arbitrators shall be required to make a decision on the dispute based on the facts and evidence before them. All information regarding the dispute must be notified to both parties and the arbitrator or arbitrators.

11 The decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators shall be taken by a majority of votes, and notified to the International Bureau and the parties within six months of the date of the notice to initiate arbitration.

12 The arbitration proceedings shall be confidential, and only a brief description of the dispute and the decision shall be advised in writing to the International Bureau within 10 days of the decision being delivered to the parties.

13 The decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators shall be final and binding on the parties and not subject to appeal.

14 The parties to the arbitration shall implement the decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators without delay. Where a designated operator is delegated power by its member country to initiate and adhere to the arbitration procedure, the member country shall be responsible for ensuring that the designated operator implements the decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators.

Chapter VI Use of languages within the Union

Article 155 Working languages of the International Bureau

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

Article 156 Languages used for documentation, for debates and for official correspondence

1 In the documentation published by 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 bear all of the costs involved.

2 The member country or countries which have requested the use of 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 other 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 member countries or their designated operators of member countries 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 and article 137, 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 member 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, Russian and Arabic 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 Member countries and/or their designated operators 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 VII Final provisions

Article 157

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 158

Proposals concerning the Agreements with the United Nations

The conditions of approval referred to in article 157 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 159

Entry into force and duration of the General Regulations

These General Regulations shall come into force on 1 January 2014 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 **member country** by the International Bureau of the **Union**.

Done at Doha, 11 October 2012