

SECTORAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAMME

Seminar Report Series No. 1

Social Dialogue in Postal Services in Asia and the Pacific

Final report of the ILO-UPU Joint Regional Seminar, Bangkok, 23-26 May 2000

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Working papers are preliminary documents intended to stimulate discussion and comment



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE . GENEVA

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First published 2001

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ISBN 92-2-112324-3

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Printed by the International Labour Office, Geneva, Switzerland

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Foreword

An ILO Tripartite Meeting, on the Human Resources Dimension of Structural and Regulatory Changes and Globalization in Postal and Telecommunications Services (20-24 April 1998, Geneva) concluded that “The ILO has an important role to play in the promotion of sound labour relations and of the Organization’s values in the work of other international agencies.” It also adopted a Resolution on future ILO activities in the field of postal services in which it invited the Governing Body of the ILO “to organize or support, at the regional or subregional levels, tripartite seminars or workshops with the participation of the Universal Postal Union (...) and the World Bank to consider structural and regulatory changes in the postal services of the regions or subregions concerned and to propose measures in the light of ILO standards, including measures to improve labour relations.”

The ILO-UPU Joint Regional Seminar on Social Dialogue in Postal Services for selected Asian and Pacific countries, organized in cooperation with UNI-Postal, was held from 23 to 26 May 2000 in Bangkok, Thailand, as a follow-up activity to the above Meeting. This corresponds to one of the ILO’s strategic objectives: *to strengthen social dialogue*; and to objective 6 of the UPU’s Beijing Postal Strategy: *cooperation and interaction among stakeholders*.

The main aim of the seminar was to examine experiences with reforms in the postal sector of Asian and Pacific countries, and to create/enhance awareness about the need for social dialogue in the context of postal service reforms in the region and about the role of social partners in the processes of restructuring and globalization. It aimed to assist this process by providing a forum to discuss current challenges, problems and opportunities for human resource development and strategies to ensure effective social dialogue and participation of workers and their unions. The seminar provided an opportunity to examine recent international instances of consensus-building on a framework for action and the latest ILO and UPU policy orientations and guidelines.

The seminar covered the following themes: *Postal modernization in Asia and the Pacific: the impact of the structural and legal reform on postal workers; The impact of growth in electronic communications on employment and working conditions; Managing change in the postal sector: the Asian experience; Finance and development in the postal services; The universal postal service in 2000: country studies and the role of the UPU; Social dialogue and the role of the ILO; The role of trade unions: towards improved labour management-relations?; and Perspectives for the future.*

The participants included Government representatives from Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand; workers’ representatives from Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand; an employers’ representative from Malaysia; resource persons and support staff from the ILO, the UPU and UNI-Postal; and observers.

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Report of the discussion

1. Opening speeches

Mr. de Vries (Director of the Sectoral Activities Department, ILO, Geneva) opened the seminar, apologizing for the absence of Ms. Hagen, Executive Director of the ILO's Social Dialogue Sector, and conveying her best wishes for a successful seminar. He expressed his satisfaction that this seminar was a joint activity of the International Labour Office, the Universal Postal Union and Union Network International. The Seminar was a direct follow-up to the ILO's Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resources Dimension of Structural and Regulatory Changes and Globalization in Postal and Telecommunications Services (Geneva, 20-24 April 1998). He gave a brief introduction to the ILO as the unique tripartite agency of the United Nations system, to its consensus-building activities through meetings, and to the work of the Sectoral Activities Department in 22 sectors, of which postal and other communication services was one. The postal industry was facing problems of adapting to the new economic environment, while maintaining the universal postal service and assisting national social cohesion. In this context social dialogue, as one of the four strategic objectives of the ILO, was an essential means to obtain social justice, echoing the ILO's motto "If you want peace, cultivate justice".

Mr. Gheorghiev (Assistant Director-General, UPU, Berne) presented an introduction to the Universal Postal Union, which had been founded in 1874 to establish a global postal network. This network now employed six million workers, handling 1.1 billion letters per day, through 700,000 post offices. The UPU aimed at international harmonization, standardization and cooperation on delivery and payment. The Beijing Congress in 1999 unanimously adopted the Beijing Postal Strategy which would ensure the provision of a universal postal service; strengthen the quality of the international postal network; increase its cost-effectiveness; respond effectively to the needs of customers; enable customers to maximize benefit from technological, economic and regulatory changes in the postal environment; and *strengthen and broaden cooperation and interaction among the stakeholders of the postal industry*. An Advisory Group had been established after Beijing, open to regional postal unions, private operators, trade union groups, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Mr. Derek Hodgson (President of UNI-Postal, London) outlined the origins of Union Network International's Postal Industry Sector in the PTTI and Communications International, which had enjoyed 30 years of close collaboration with the ILO and several years of work with the Universal Postal Union. He was the President of the Communications Workers of the United Kingdom. He remarked that technological changes had improved the postal services, but had also reduced labour requirements in many cases. The technologies offered an opportunity for workers if these were properly embraced, but would otherwise pose a serious threat. In the context of reorganization, privatization and other changes in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Singapore, there was still good dialogue between workers and employers. Liberalization could be influenced by dialogue between workers, employers, governments and supranational bodies such as the European Union. In the context of globalization, multinational postal companies could now often be universal service providers across several countries, rather than national private companies — British, Dutch and German postal companies could be seen to be involved in this global expansion. It was not possible to stop such changes, but they could be slowed down or controlled in ways that could bring benefits to all concerned. There was no point in trying to defend old ways of working — workers had to campaign in order to obtain dialogue based on trust, understanding and respect. In some cases, unions had fought governments head on in other sectors, but they had often lost their struggles and seen their industry shattered. As a boxer in his youth, Mr Hodgson was used to the conflictual approach, but had learnt to see the advantages of dialogue and consensus compared to adversarial industrial relations. It was important to try to avoid open industrial conflict, in order to prevent competitors from taking away their business. Staff were the finest asset of the postal sector, and this should be stressed vigorously.

Ms. Horiuchi (Regional Director of the ILO for the Asia-Pacific Region, Bangkok) welcomed the delegates to Bangkok, and recalled that postal services had started in Asia several thousand years ago, but had only begun to be formalized at the end of the nineteenth century. She noted that globalization and liberalization were far advanced in much of the region, and that one lesson of the Asian financial crisis was the lack of social protection for workers in most countries except the Republic of Korea, and the lack of free collective bargaining or freedom of association in general. The World Summit for Social Development

(Copenhagen, 1995) had paved the way for the International Labour Conference to adopt the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in June 1998 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Indonesia was the first country in the region to ratify all the core Conventions, followed by Cambodia and the Republic of Korea. The Tripartite Advisory Committee in the Republic of Korea was a good example of social dialogue, providing a forum to forge understanding and reduce conflict. Globalization and information technology posed great challenges in a rapidly changing society, especially in the area of human resources development. She trusted that the seminar would be of benefit to all participants.

2. Introductory statements and national and international reports

Moderator: Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne)

Mr. Sayeed Uddin Mahmud (Director, Bangladesh Post Office) noted that his was a government service department aimed at providing universal post at the lowest possible cost. As there were two million expatriate Bangladeshis sending remittances and so on via postal services, it could be seen as a major industry. The Post Office was trying to compete with private couriers — this had been successful so far, but they were sometimes providing services below cost.

Mr. G.K. Padmanabhan (Secretary General of the Federation of National Postal Organizations (FNPO) of India) saw some threats from private companies. Some changes were needed in terms of the tariff structure in order to be able to cover the service financially. The corporate sector could afford to pay more, but the post office would have to offer a higher quality service.

Mr. Li Xue Dong (Director of Management Research and Consult Centre, Shijiazhuang Postal College, State Postal Bureau, Hebei, China) referred to some recent changes in China Post — in March 1998, the State Postal Bureau had been established, and commercialization in 1999 was a further milestone. They had fulfilled their planned goals of efficiency, development, control and quality. Using air, train and lorry transport, their computerized mail processing system had developed greatly. With regard to training, this was offered for all categories of staff, through his college, or UPU training centres elsewhere. Mr. Eiichi Ito, Director for UNI-Apro Tokyo Office and Postal and Allied Services Sector asked

whether all employees of the Chinese State Postal Bureau were members of one trade union, or whether membership was differentiated by employee category. Mr. Li Xue Dong replied that there was one union for all postal workers in China, and that the programme for human resources development was now on stream.

Ms. Wang Xuemei (Section Chief, International Liaison Department of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, Beijing) explained that Chinese workers were regionally based affiliates of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, with one union for postal and telecommunications workers. Since 1998, they had been carrying out a division between the postal and telecommunications members in order to establish separate unions. There were 7,000 grass-roots union sections, and there was 83% union membership in China.

Mr. S. Samant (Deputy Director-General (Personnel) of the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications of India) referred to the country paper he had distributed, which noted that India's postal service was one of the largest networks in the world — 154,000 post offices, covering one billion people, providing mail, savings, life insurance and other services. Private couriers currently represented 30,000 million rupees of business, not far behind the post office. The Indian Government was considering the establishment of a regulatory framework in this regard. The convergence of communications technology had made a major impact, including slowing the growth of personal written communication. The Indian Post Office was an equal opportunity employer. It was currently reorganizing its job descriptions to cover computer operations. In addition to the country paper, Mr. Samant observed that the future of the postal service in India was not in doubt, but that the future of the existing players was not clear. Universal postal services needed to adapt to survive. The market had been segmented, and the Indian Post Office had opened up Speedpost to combat the services of private couriers. Private operators were less legally restricted than the Indian Post Office, so the legal framework needed to be changed. More interchangeability of staff in Indian Post Office employment was required — multiskilling of government employees was necessary to challenge the couriers' competition. There had to be a reduction in excessive job demarcation among government employees, compared to the multiskilled workers working in private courier firms.

Ms. Sook-yeon Lee (Manager, International Postal Division, Bureau of Posts, Ministry of Information and Communication of the Republic of Korea) presented some

highlights of her country paper. In 1997 there had been substantial developments in flexibility, merit systems, performance evaluation and technological change. There were 37,000 employees in 1999, divided into administrative and technical staff, skilled workers and “other staff” (e.g. part-time and subcontracted workers), two-thirds of whom were male. There had been a staff reduction of 1,600 posts, and 4,000 jobs were likely to disappear in the next three years. Early retirement was the main method of staff reduction. Their training policy to develop existing workers’ skills was very important — 7,500 staff had been trained in the postal service’s own training centre in 1998, while 50 went overseas for training each year. The main communication channel for labour-management relations was through local and regional offices, with two meetings per year between the union and the management. Only the skilled staff were members of the Korean Communication Workers’ Union.

Mr. D.C. Gamalath (Controller of Operations in the Sri Lankan Postmaster-General’s Office) observed that the postal service was a closely guarded monopoly of central government via the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and the Media. They had 23,600 employees. Recent changes included the establishment of their “essential service” status, World Bank assistance for privatization and restructuring, and expansion of their trust fund, pension, post fax and e-commerce services.

Ms. Maziah Che Yusoff (Assistant Director of the Postal Department, Malaysian Ministry of Energy, Communications and Multimedia) discussed the new regulatory framework that had been set up to govern the privatization process since 1992. More recently they had developed a multimedia super-corridor, allowing for digital signatures in e-commerce transactions through the postal service. Malaysia Post had 30,600 employees.

Ms. Elizabeth Tungol (Director of the Human Resource Management Department of the Philippine Postal Corporation) observed that they had recently completed computerization of sorting and introduction of automated postal counters. Two-thirds of the workforce were male. Training and induction courses were organized for all employees. The service was venturing into new product areas. Thirty or so courier companies were operating in her country.

Ms. Thientip Chaichit (Director of the Postal Planning and Development Department, Communications Authority of Thailand) noted that the CAT remained state-owned but was now being liberalized and oriented towards self-sufficiency. Telecommunications was to be

spun off soon, while the postal service would remain state-run. Of the 14,600 staff, 94% were male; the 6% who were female were all in the administrative and clerical category. There was an in-house training department, and some staff were trained in the Asia-Pacific Training Centre or through overseas agreements. The State Enterprise Workers' Union (SEWU-CAT) was the postal trade union for Thailand, and there was social dialogue on a regular basis. There was a Plan to achieve full mechanization of post offices in Thailand by the end of 2002.

3. Panel discussion on postal modernization

Moderator: Mr. Raghwan (Regional Specialist in Workers' Education, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok)

Mr. Basil de Silva (Executive Assistant Regional Secretary of the UNI-APRO Colombo Office, Sri Lanka) welcomed the holding of this important seminar, and recalled the establishment of the Joint Committee on Posts and Telecommunications by the ILO in 1976, in which PTTI had participated. More recent links had been forged with the UPU. He wanted to consolidate these relationships in order to assist good, efficient and affordable postal services, to which UNI-Postal subscribed very forcefully. UNI had organized important postal missions to various Asian countries concerning postal workers and working conditions, including Nepal, India, Thailand, Sri Lanka and the Philippines. He noted that the Sri Lankan reforms had ignored the role of the trade unions, and the whole exercise had therefore become deadlocked because the postal and telecommunications industry, the World Bank and the Ministry were pushing for bureaucratic-style changes without consultation. They were now paving the way for a fifteen-member National Committee for Postal Reforms (six trade union members plus one UNI representative, three from the relevant ministries, two for consumers' groups, one from the World Bank, the Postmaster-General and one from the Treasury). Legislation on postal reform would come before the Sri Lankan Parliament on 6 June 2000, and a similar proposal was in the air for the Philippines as well.

Mr. de Silva argued that all educational programmes of UNI took into account the reform context prevailing in the region. He felt that reforms could only be effective if workers had already accepted the general idea of change. He was going to organize a Symposium to examine the World Bank approach and to confirm the full association of postal union

members to the reform process, and he hoped that such a process could be a model for other countries.

Mr. Samant (Government, India) pointed out that modernization was not the same thing as computerization. It was a much broader concept, including reassessing products and services, using a strategic vision traditionally associated with governments. It was important to establish the core activities of the post office of the future. The universal service was essential, and often required subsidies. Computerization was one element of modernization, work organization was another (for example the mismatch between normal working hours and customer requirements or traffic flow in postal services). The structural framework needed to be changed to take account of the increasing segmentation of the market, the changing business environment and so on — it should aim to ensure fair competition, and to control the context of privatization in certain countries. The role of women in the postal service was bound to increase — they represented around 10% of the workforce at present, but improved education for girls, reduced gender segregation or monopolization of jobs in the postal sector, and technological developments that had favoured female employment would all tend to promote women's participation.

Mr. Raghwan (Regional Specialist in Workers' Education, ILO, Bangkok) noted that Mr. de Silva had stressed the importance of collective bargaining and social dialogue in the modernization process, while Mr. Samant had looked at the role of women and their participation in the postal workforce. He asked whether specific measures should be taken to promote female employment, for example by offering part-time jobs.

Ms. Elizabeth Tungol (Government, Philippines) talked of the recent computerization and mechanization of the Philippine Postal Corporation, and of its failure ten years ago when the process was characterized by its lack of worker participation and support. The management had learnt that lesson, and were trying to involve the union in the changes — who was to be offered early retirement, how to implement privatization, how to ensure that the employees' welfare was taken care of.

Mr. Sayeed Uddin Mahmud (Director, Bangladesh Post Office) argued that modernization of the posts was essential and unavoidable, but that management must try to avoid making redundancies. In many countries, privatization was not an option — Bangladesh and India would never be able to find buyers for their universal postal service.

Private couriers could sponsor some changes, but the government could not control or regulate Federal Express, United Parcel Services and the like with regard to prices.

Mr. Sahalmi Saib (President of the Malaysian Union of Postal Clerical Workers) argued that reorganization that led to workforce reductions would have to be based on voluntary and negotiated retrenchments. Governments would have to find solutions that did not involve the demolition of workers' livelihoods.

Mr. Wan Sulong bin Wan Yaacob (Manager of Pos Malaysia Berhad — private employer) considered that the objective of modernization was increased efficiency. Jobs had not been slashed in Malaysia. The aim was to help workers in order to allow them to become more productive. In eight years of privatization, there had been no redundancies.

Mr. G.K. Padmanabhan (Worker, India) remarked that the Department of Posts had wanted courier services to pay a licence fee before being allowed to operate on Indian soil, but the foreign companies' corporate strength had allowed them to avoid this. In the telecommunications industry, however, the licence arrangement had worked. He referred to the ILO Meetings of 1992 and 1998 with regard to automatic mail processing, the importance of training and retraining, and the idea of technology and training incentives. He noted that women were proportionately more likely to accede to managerial positions in the postal industry these days, and that they were more effective in their use of computer equipment.

Mr. Edmundo I. Estavillo (President of the KKKP trade union, Philippines) argued that the privatization of the Philippines Postal Corporation was aimed at profit, and that a previous government had got rid of many employees in the postal services already some ten to fifteen years ago. If privatization developed in his country, it would curtail the universal service, close post offices in far-flung places, and cause redundancies among the workforce.

Mr. Gamalath (Government, Sri Lanka) noted that modernization and mechanization often led to stability or growth in jobs. Trade unions tended to fear that structural and legal changes would lead to job losses and privatization. However, governments should encourage UNI and local trade unions to see that structural and legal reforms were necessities — workers needed to be educated on this, just as government bureaucrats had learnt of the benefits of markets and reform.

Mr. A.K.M. Mahabubul Alam (Secretary General of the Bangladesh Post Office Union) noted that his union and organization were trying to encourage customers not to use

courier services, and to stress the improved services provided by the Bangladesh Post Office.

Ms. Maziah (Government, Malaysia) referred to the necessity of reform in postal services. Malaysia Pos had offered its network to help for example in paying bills for electricity and other utilities. This had helped to make the company more effective, using the public service network and so on to make the business grow, rather than simply trying to defend one's own job. It was looking at ways of taking advantage of the worldwide postal network and administration. It was looking together with the trade unions at increasing its business opportunities and making the postal service more relevant to the people.

Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne) noted that the volume of postal traffic was likely to continue to grow at around 2.5% per year until 2005 — direct mail and small parcel delivery were sectors experiencing continuing growth. The postal network offered the cheapest and most efficient service for many companies, and should continue to promote its quality. The postal services might seek additional resources from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. The UPU had established a joint committee of developing and industrialized country members for requesting external finance. The financial autonomy of the postal service was very important.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) felt that modernization was a necessity for the trade unions. They had gone away from a conflictual, strike-oriented approach in Japan since the 1970s towards a more cooperative attitude to management, aiming at the best postal services in the world while developing their own union strength. However, managements could be secretive and arrogant, and he asked why employers could not be more conciliatory and open to change. Unions were now more respected, and wanted management to work with them to modernize industrial relations. Many managers had stuck to their old lines in reform, technological change and labour-management relations — they needed to modernize themselves and to stop being so secretive, in order to help change to come about. Unions could accept privatization in such circumstances, but not in contexts where there was a lack of mutual trust.

Mr. Pedersen (Assistant General Secretary, UNI-Postal, Geneva) suggested that there were good and bad ways to achieve the objective of a better, more efficient postal service. Privatization was a religion, whereas modernization was a process. In many countries, postal services were highly profitable before privatization was talked about. He endorsed greater

commercial freedom that was customer-driven. Training, retraining and skills development were all necessary in the context of modernization, new technology and privatization.

Mr. de Silva (UNI-APRO, Colombo) observed that labour-management consultation was strong in India, but not so in other countries in the region. He agreed with Ms. Maziah that modernization was essential, and endorsed the approach to collective bargaining in Malaysia. Private courier companies were the most effective at violating national postal ordinances. EMS in India had been very effective against the couriers, but was less successful in many other Asian countries.

Mr. Samant (Government, India) remarked that transitional problems were possible in any country undergoing major change, but job reductions could help the future of the service in some places, while creating new profit centres and competing against private couriers could change the balance. Regulation of private courier services was essential, to bring fairness into the business environment. The employees of private courier services should have trade union rights, their employers should not be allowed to undercut wages and working conditions of national postal services, and they should operate under the same rules. With regard to the position of women in the process of modernization and restructuring, he argued that this had opened many doors to women, because they were often more productive than men in certain areas.

4. Panel discussion on the impact of growth in electronic communications on employment and working conditions

Moderator: Mr. John Myers (Industry Specialist in Postal and communications services and Media, culture and graphical industries, Sectoral Activities Department, ILO, Geneva)

Mr. Myers noted that information and communications technologies were helping to create a truly global “information society”, making countries more interdependent and transforming the postal sector in Asian and Pacific countries very substantially. They had brought income, employment and economic growth for some, a favourable climate for investment and increased openness of societies. However, they had also been blamed for job losses, “information overload” and reinforcement of the “digital divide” or technological gap between rich and poor countries. Electronic communications could clearly be seen as a threat to the postal industry in general, but also offered new opportunities for those who could turn

them to their advantage. At the same time, lack of internet connectivity or technological capability among sections of the population meant that postal services continued to have great importance, especially in poorer areas of the Asian region. Information technologies were being used to streamline postal sorting and delivery to increase its speed, efficiency and reliability. New features enhanced security and tracking. Hybrid mail or “ePost” was growing rapidly. Such changes clearly affected employment and working conditions, as postal services around the world attracted new business that could partly compensate for the employment impact of other changes.

It was difficult to separate the impact of the technologies from that of privatization and reorganization, but technological and related synergy effects and increased efficiency had influenced the quantity and quality of jobs in the postal service and the structure of the workforce, and affected working conditions, safety and health, especially in recent years.

Training in information technologies was crucial for the future of postal services. Equitable training and employment opportunities for men and women should be promoted, regardless of age or contractual status. Training must be appropriate and adequately funded. Technological developments demanded new skill requirements for postal workers, and new training initiatives were underway to equip them for the 21st century, but it was difficult to forecast training needs for new technologies even three years from now.

With regard to new occupations and changing work organization, the technologies had brought profound effects. For example, some work now performed by postal services might previously have been done by printers, banks and others. A major challenge for workers was to adapt to new equipment, new forms of ownership and new ways of working. A consequence of IT and privatization was that they promote “multiskilling”, sometimes impairing job quality and employment. Improvements in safety and health brought about by information technologies had been substantial, but there were also problems with “technostress”, repetitive strain injury and computer-related hazards. Traditional industrial relations had difficulty coping with technological and other developments, such as workforce fragmentation and subcontracting. Thus, *social dialogue* was considered essential by the ILO, and could assist the sector at all levels — addressing the impact of the technologies and issues relating to social protection and employment status, and promoting training as being central to the interests of all stakeholders. The Internet offered increased scope for dialogue within

and across enterprises, sectors and countries. The ILO considered that technological change should be matched by social dialogue to ensure decent work for all. That dialogue could expand towards new employers, and encourage social dialogue at the international level. In summary, technological developments could offer *enormous opportunities* and *new employment* in postal services, often different in nature and quality from previous work. They helped create new products, new forms of work and new occupations, while increasing productivity. At the same time, these technologies were also a *threat*, and *cut jobs, displaced workers and replaced older skills and technologies*. *Older workers* seemed to have been the group most affected by job losses resulting from the technologies, alongside those lacking qualifications, geographical mobility or adaptability. It was important that the impact of IT should be as equitable as possible, and that the rights, responsibilities and interests of governments and employers' and workers' organizations were taken into account. He stressed the importance of social dialogue and of continuing training as keys to the future in the context of technological change, restructuring and privatization in postal services.

Mr. Tong Kok Yeo (General Secretary of the Union of Telecommunications Employees of Singapore (UTES)) confirmed many of the above points regarding the growth of electronic communications, and the impact of technologies on working conditions. He emphasized that workers must see new technology as an opportunity rather than a threat. For example, television had supplanted radio, and faxes had challenged the post, but such changes had not been the end of jobs in the old sectors. The death of distance was a reality thanks to the ICTs, but we had not yet faced the full impact of technological change. It was not just a matter of staying competitive, but also of remaining relevant. Banks were offering "virtual techno-banking", and computer manufacturers had real-time information on orders so as to produce only on demand. E-commerce was based on the ability to handle information, redefine business relationships, improve service and so on. Business-to-customer and business-to-business e-commerce were already worth billions if not trillions of dollars. The hardest-hit industries were commerce, travel agencies, banking and financial services, but the postal industry would also be greatly affected. Ordering goods over the Internet, through companies like Amazon.com, was of ever-greater importance, but the impact on postal services was uncertain. Technology would destroy millions of jobs, but would be offset by employment growth in other fields. OECD data showed little correlation between technology

and unemployment, but there was a time-lag between losses and gains, and there would be a mismatch between labour supply and demand, especially for those who were skilled in the new technologies. Information and communications technologies tended to reinforce the position of highly skilled workers. Trade unions could not oppose technological change, but must strive to enhance employability.

Ms. Sook-yeon Lee (Manager, International Postal Division, Bureau of Posts, Ministry of Information and Communication of the Republic of Korea) noted that the paradigm in the postal industry had changed. The postal service used to be a labour-intensive reflection of national pride, efficiency and sovereignty. There had been a large shift from letter- to parcel-oriented activity, with a much greater emphasis on logistics. Technology had also created more competitors and urged more mechanization and reorganization. Workers required more computer-related skills and training. These had become essential for survival. Korea Post had trained more than 30% of its workforce in computer-related fields. The postal service needed more specialists, and an inevitable consequence of the technological change would be an increase in early retirements.

Ms. Thientip Chaichit (Director of the Postal Planning and Development Department, Communications Authority of Thailand) clearly saw the technologies as a great opportunity rather than a threat. The postal services could play a growing role in e-commerce and information and communications technologies in general, which would help to ensure their future and to promote national economic growth.

Mr. Samant (Government, India) agreed that the technologies should not be seen as a threat — virtual transactions were usually transformed into physical products, delivered in the majority of cases by mail, because the postal services possessed great comparative advantage in this area. The Indian Business Management Directorate had looked carefully at this field, which was especially important. Export business in particular was likely to grow, and these trends would help new businesses of a different type — however, the postal services would have to change their ways of working in order to reap the benefits of these developments.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) informed the participants that the development of e-commerce had been the subject of an important recent UNI regional meeting in Singapore for financial and postal workers. As Mr. Samant had said, deliveries had to be physical in the end, so postal services had an important role in parts of e-commerce and

information and communications technologies. Summarizing Japanese experience, he noted that e-commerce had initially relied largely on private couriers, so Japanese Post had to catch up fast. He referred to a paper from UNI-APRO that provided the results of a questionnaire on e-commerce and the postal services in Asia and the Pacific. Korea Post had developed a separate company for e-commerce, while Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, China had developed similar approaches, as had Australia. The union side had been encouraging change, but management strategy often lagged behind, according to the questionnaire results. This was a crucial issue for management, and they should not follow Japan's lead.

Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne) was very impressed with the paper from UNI-APRO on the results of a questionnaire on e-commerce and the postal services in Asia and the Pacific. The panellists from Singapore and the Republic of Korea had given excellent presentations. UPU was well aware of this issue, and had asked for a combined strategy using e-mail, ICTs and hybrid mail that dated back more than a year. Many industrialized and developing countries wanted an e-business specialist to participate in their UPU working group. Postal services needed to develop their information and communications technologies and logistics capabilities and their electronic networks – if they did not, they would lose their market share, profitability and relevance. They must focus on customer service and on ways to prevent loss of mail, as well as on cost reduction and timeliness of information. The UPU was looking at standard postal solutions on an international scale for e-payments and e-logistics, providing multi-layered support to national postal services. At “World Business Day” during the Beijing Congress, a representative of a Swiss multinational company had stated that private couriers were too expensive and that the Swiss postal service was the natural partner for e-commerce businesses. Amazon.co.uk had expressed their satisfaction with the services of the British postal service.

Mr. Li (Government, China) noted that the growth in e-commerce and information and communications technologies could bring much growth in the postal services, in networks and in providing technological support. China Post had established new divisions for technological support and for strategy and logistics. Through e-commerce, China Post had expanded into financial and commercial services. Postal workers who were previously involved only in the delivery of mail were now also working in sales and public relations as part of their jobs.

Mr. Pedersen (Assistant General Secretary, UNI-Postal, Geneva) observed that there would still be growth in certain areas of the postal service as a result of technology, especially related to the opportunities offered by e-commerce and the active approach of the UPU in this regard. Customers had faith in the quality, reliability and price of the postal services — however, they did not trust e-banking, for example. In relation to training, it was very important for workers to know how to use computer equipment, but also all other relevant aspects, including picking, packing and sorting products being ordered via e-commerce.

Mr. Hodgson (President of UNI-Postal, London) considered that there were great opportunities from information and communications technologies in relation to large business users and private customers. There had been a threat to the post office counter network in the United Kingdom through cost-cutting proposals, suggesting that social security benefit payments should be paid through banks, but the public had made it clear that this was unacceptable — the counter service could not be replaced by electronic transactions through the banking system, which offered a less than universal service. On the contrary, there were suggestions about making greater use of the post office counter network for other services (e.g. “virtual” health checks of people in rural areas where there was no doctor, using a post office’s electronic and video facilities to connect with a doctor elsewhere who could deliver prescription medicines via the post). Unions had authority, but they also had responsibilities, including to help their membership to adapt to technological changes.

Mr. G.K. Padmanabhan (Worker, India) remarked that there were several categories of mail that were affected by the information and communications technologies — person-to-person mail was declining, especially because of e-mail, fax services and so on, but many other areas were growing through e-commerce. Postal services needed to look to new strategies, such as taking new non-postal work, agency work for other organizations and so on.

Mr. Sahalmi Saib (Worker, Malaysia) noted that bills might be sent by e-mail in the future, and that electronic smart cards for paying electricity costs could lessen the postal traffic, but he also stressed the opportunities that were being created, through digital signature work and the like.

Ms. Sofi Soeria Atmadja (Head of the Postal Affairs Division of the Ministry of Communications, Indonesia) noted that the Ministries of Communications and Technology

had brought legislation through in 1999 in the form of a Telecommunications Law to cover e-commerce. The postal industry had been closely involved in the development of electronic commerce for several years.

Mr. Wan Sulong bin Wan Yaacob (Employer, Malaysia) observed that Pos Malaysia held the sole right to digital signatures in his country. They had also developed systems for the electronic payment of bills, as referred to by Mr. Saib. The Ministry of Education approached Pos Malaysia to develop an electronic form for university applications — applicants had to buy a money order at the post office and to key in their data there in order to send it through to the Ministry of Education; this system was working effectively.

Ms. Maziah (Government, Malaysia) felt that trust and confidence had developed with the implementation of the digital signature system, and she noted the close correlation between the postal networks and e-commerce. Pos Malaysia had a good reputation in physical delivery, but not in information technology. Pos Malaysia had set up an IT subsidiary which seemed to have been very successful, but difficulties should also be recognized.

Ms. Tungol (Government, Philippines) echoed the views of previous speakers on the importance of seeing the opportunities offered by information and communications technologies. The Philippines had cultivated e-commerce in a country which was poorly covered by information and communications infrastructure. Telegraphy had once been seen as a threat to the postal industry, but posts had outlived that technology.

In concluding the debate, Mr. Tong Kok Yeo (Worker, Singapore) warned against killing the golden goose of e-commerce, while Ms. Sook-yeon Lee (Government, Republic of Korea) argued that the post office must develop the logistics side as one of its main focuses, with full networking across the country.

5. Panel discussion on managing change in the postal sector: The Asian experience

Moderator: Mr. Qureshi (Regional Adviser for Asia and the Pacific, UPU, Bangkok)

Mr. Qureshi gave an overview of the past 30 years of the Asian postal industry, shifting from a public service monopoly that might be characterized as rather slow, inefficient and loss-making to one which was much more commercial, adapting to changing customer needs, a more competitive, globalized, liberalized and technological environment. Postal services were having to decide how to meet their competition, and how to reconcile

commercial requirements and imperatives with the universal service. They were facing a new array of choices involving international alliances, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions. The postal service was a necessity, but it still required clear and up-to-date definitions of its scope, and specific measures were required to ensure the universal service. Structural and legal reforms in the sector had generally brought about a separation of the postal and telecommunications services and the establishment of autonomous national postal enterprises; in some cases, this had been or was being followed by privatization.

Mr. Gamalath (Government, Sri Lanka) observed that most postal services in Asia had started under colonial rule, and were not aimed at making a profit, but rather at serving the requirements of the imperial power. Private competition had begun to creep into the industry some 20 years ago, and in the ensuing years there had been structural and legal reform as well as changes in service provision. He stressed the importance of maintaining the workforce's support for change, which had worked very effectively in the privatization process in Malaysia.

Mr. Sahalmi Saib (Worker, Malaysia) looked at the success story of Malaysia Post Limited (Pos Malaysia Berhad) — 98% of employees of the state-owned postal service had opted to join Pos Malaysia rather than remain government employees; the workforce had grown from 11,000 to 13,000 over the eight years since privatization. There had been a policy of no terminations of workers, and they had not followed New Zealand's example of reorganization with office closures and redundancies. In fact, they had expanded their network, improved their facilities and services and created new business in areas such as data post, printing, corporate mail management and express delivery. They had developed drive-in counters, extended opening hours to suit customer needs, established computerized post offices and mini counters, and started joint ventures.

Mr. Wan Sulong bin Wan Yaacob (Employer, Malaysia) remarked that the Malaysian Post Office had been given financial autonomy very early, so that when they were corporatized, this did not have a great impact on the staff. There had been a 16% growth in profits from 1998-99, and they had redefined their business through market segmentation studies in the context of open competition with foreign and local couriers. The Malaysian Trade Union Congress organized the workers, while the Malaysian Employers' Federation organized the employers. Both federations gave excellent advice to the social partners. Pos

Malaysia invested heavily in human resources development, recognizing that their workers were their most valuable assets.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) observed that the key factor was the workers' involvement in the changes. Everybody wanted to maintain the popularity of the universal service in a context of competition. Thus, the content of the universal service would have to be redefined.

Mr. de Silva (UNI-APRO, Colombo) disagreed with Mr. Qureshi's view that the traditional postal services were slow and inefficient. He pointed out that an important problem in Pakistan was that after the status of collective bargaining agent had been agreed, no agreements had been reached under it. He emphasized that in order to make reform and changes work, it was essential to have a respectable and open human resources environment, characterized by trust and confidence.

6. Panel discussion on finance and development in the postal services, and postal banking services

Moderator: Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne)

Mr. Gheorghiev congratulated Mr. Ito for his paper on postal financial services. He noted that governments were no longer willing to subsidize the postal sector, and they were prioritizing, health, education and welfare services, among others. Many governments saw multinational operators as a way to make the postal sector viable at no public cost, but this was unlikely to cover the whole of the universal service. There was increased pressure for reform to make postal services self-sufficient, autonomous and profitable. External financing for the development of the postal services had grown considerably in recent years, but mainly for Latin America, via the Inter-American Development Bank.

Mr. de Silva (UNI-APRO, Colombo) remarked that the World Bank's greatest involvement in the postal sector in Asia was in Sri Lanka. Sensitization of the postal management and the authorities had been carried through. Kumar Ranganathan's study *Redirecting Mail: Postal Sector Reform* (Washington, DC, World Bank, 1996), on the reform of the postal service was very unconvincing from the union's point of view. There had been exhaustive discussions in Trinidad and Tobago concerning postal reform in island states. However, there had been a very poor link between the World Bank and trade unions in the

1990s until the World Bank realized that it needed union support to ensure implementation. They had completely alienated the trade unions and fostered confrontation and adversarial collective bargaining in Sri Lanka. The proposed Postal Bill in Sri Lanka had to be passed in June 2000 or the World Bank would withdraw its US\$49 million programme — there had been many problems with the original draft legislation, but union lobbying and negotiation had brought many favourable amendments. The Bill would probably pass, but the unions were unable to make their voice heard easily because the state of emergency prevented any trade union demonstrations. He therefore requested international support for the amended Bill's passage through Parliament and the World Bank's acceptance of that. Malaysia could be used as a good example of a privatization process, with its three-year transition period rather than the “indecent rush” displayed in Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

Mr. Sayeed Uddin Mahmud (Government, Bangladesh) observed that donors were much less favourable towards funding the postal industry than education, health, water, gas, telecommunications and microcredit, for example. It was not considered a viable area for investment or poverty alleviation. There was a commitment by the Bangladesh Post Office to developing its services, for instance by mechanizing sorting to speeding up the process.

Mr. Pedersen (Assistant General Secretary, UNI-Postal, Geneva) observed that there had been US\$3 million in UNI-Postal spending on union education in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal to complement UPU's work. Postal missions or symposia were being organized in countries that required them, such as Sri Lanka and the Philippines. Training was being carried out in Sabah, Sarawak and the Philippines.

Mr. Samant (Government, India) felt that discussing the finance question in the postal services without the World Bank was like *Hamlet* without the prince. It was impossible for a universal service to be run in a country like India without a monopoly and/or a cross subsidy. He had no quarrel with the World Bank, but wondered how far they would become involved in postal service finance, especially if there was no financial return from it. In Malaysia there had been three to four years of preparing the way for the transition to privatization, but this did not seem to be contemplated elsewhere. However, training and preparation were essential for such situations.

Mr. de Silva (UNI-APRO, Colombo) recalled that the New Zealand model (which had included closing 125 post offices overnight) was meant to have been transplanted to

Malaysia, but the reality had turned out to be better. The removal of subsidies was fundamental to the New Zealand model, but this suggested the death of the universal service.

Mr. Estavillo (Worker, Philippines) informed participants that the Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission was preparing a draft for the privatization of the post office, but she had underlined that there should be no reduction in employees in that process.

Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne) remarked that the UPU, UNI, the ILO and other organizations were unable to block the wishes of sovereign governments in such matters. Privatization, job reductions and so on could not be opposed *en bloc*. External financing and development sometimes came with specific conditions in this regard.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) indicated that UNI was promoting postal financial services in the Asia-Pacific region, and encouraging its involvement in microfinance. Postal financial services were vital for maintaining the universal service, and attempts by the World Bank to split the two services and to privatize postal financial services were not acceptable. The World Bank would have to change its mind.

Mr. de Vries (ILO, Geneva) compared the World Bank's position on postal financial services to that of the World Bank's stance on pension reform in Central and Eastern Europe, where they had recognized the flaws in their previous ways of thinking. The ILO's work was based on internationally agreed standards, negotiated between Governments, employers and trade unions, whereas the Bank's policies were based on the advice of specific experts to a great extent. There was a clear definition of the supremacy of the International Labour Conference in policy-setting. Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne) agreed — the UPU Congress also had supremacy on policy matters, and had for example promoted the extension of postal financial services to the whole world.

7. Panel discussion on the universal postal service in 2000: Country studies and the role of the UPU

Moderator: Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne)

Mr. Gheorghiev presented an introduction on the universal postal service in the 21st century, and looked at the impact of globalization, competition from the private sector and liberalization. Private couriers had developed “track and trace” systems of tracking, which postal services would now have to copy. There had been a difficult debate about reconciling

public service obligations with the need to pursue profits. Governments had now adopted a more neutral position, which could therefore be interpreted as being one of tacit disinterest in the postal industry. Liberalization was underway in many parts of the world. Some postal administrations were seeking alliances with other operators around the world, and offering or requesting consultancy services.

He explained that the Beijing Congress in 1999 revised the wording of article 1 of the UPU's Universal Postal Convention on the universal postal service, and adopted a Resolution on quality of service which focuses on measurable standards for: access to services; users'/customers' satisfaction; speed and reliability; security; and liability, treatment of inquiries.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) described the structure of UNI and of UNI-Postal in it — 15.5 million workers in 800 unions in 140 countries, covering four regions and 14 industrial sectors. UNI-APRO-Postal covered 0.5 million workers in 31 unions in 20 countries, out of 2.5 million unionized postal workers worldwide. Their objectives were to develop and implement regional postal industrial policy based on universal service and union participation; and promote broad dialogue with global planning bodies, their regional organizations, and postal operators in the region. Their activities were mainly educational, but also included advice, research and social dialogue. UNI-Postal's policies related to the universal service, reserved area (i.e. monopoly), community-oriented one-stop services, strengthening postal financial services and the international postal network, developing hybrid mail, human resource development, improving labour-management relations, maintaining nationwide post office networks, and international cooperation.

Ms. Maziah (Government, Malaysia) noted that there were certain countries that subsidized their universal service (by price subsidies or operating subsidies), while others had to cross-subsidize to survive, or get private operators to pay for or cover part of the universal service. Perhaps the solution lay in creating new and more profitable services to cover such costs — the Malaysian Government did not provide subsidies. Users had the right to basic postal services through the Malaysian Postal Act, with a guarantee of universal service for all deliveries up to 2 kg - but Malaysia Post did not hold a monopoly below that weight.

In response to a question from Mr. de Vries (ILO, Geneva), Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne) looked at the scope of the universal service, to see whether there was a quantity limit

to postal deliveries. It did appear to be up to the individual country to define those.

Ms. Sofi Soeria Atmadja (Government, Indonesia) stated that the Indonesian Post Office had a universal service obligation to remote rural areas — it had been redefined in a way that differed from that of UPU Congress, and the Indonesian Government had looked at ways of offering options whereby couriers could cover part of the service, either financially or through service provision.

Mr. Hodgson (President of UNI-Postal, London) noted that the pace of change in Europe in postal and courier delivery had been very fast, and Asia was likely to follow those developments — the industry was much less labour-intensive than before. The British Post Office had been highly profitable, and very popular with the public, receiving no subsidy, but experiencing a great increase in volume. A previous government had sold Girobank at a knock-down price, and split the post office into counter services, letter delivery and the parcels business, in preparation for privatization — which had not in fact happened. In Europe, the postal industry was being liberalized through the European Union — in 1987 the European Commission reduced the monopoly to 350 grams maximum or five times the first-class stamp on posts. Now the Dutch European Commissioner responsible for this was trying to reduce the monopoly to 50 grams or twice the basic rate, and German, Dutch, British and Scandinavian postal operators wished to liberalize and globalize — KPN of the Netherlands had bought TNT, Deutsche Post had bought DHL, the British Post Office had joined with Dutch and Singaporean postal services for other expansion, to test the water. The Post Office Bill going through UK Parliament at the present demanded that women and trade unionists should sit on the Post Office's board of directors, and ensured that profits could be reinvested or that borrowings on the market were facilitated — it also gave a licence to ensure that workers and employers ensure that the service is maintained, or else alternative suppliers could step in. Mr. Hodgson predicted that there would be only five major postal administrators within five years — German, Dutch, Scandinavian and British postal operators were looking to grow, in the same way as phone companies had expanded in the past few years, to Asia and elsewhere. Argentina and Malaysia were perhaps acting as the test-beds for privatization. There was a need to enshrine a universal service that covered letters, parcels and counter services — this would not be a monopoly, because couriers could play the trick of asking Post Offices to deliver to rural areas, while they themselves were delivering in the

more lucrative urban areas. Courier employees were mostly not union members, but unions needed to try to find ways into organizing there, given the growth of that sector. Stock exchanges around the world were getting more interested in postal industry because it was ripe for growth in certain areas, but not throughout — cream-skimming/cherry-picking were the order of the day, not universal service provision.

Mr. Gheorghiev (UPU, Berne) remarked that terminal dues payments from industrialized countries to developing countries would be likely to decline — this fund could help to pay for training etc., but its value would fall if industrialized-to-developing country mail was reduced. It was important to show just how efficient postal services were — for example, the Czech Republic was shifting international mail very quickly and joining the UPU system of diagnostic control of mail deliveries, achieving an average of two days from Prague to Zurich, according to preliminary diagnostic control data.

Mr. de Silva (UNI-APRO, Colombo) suggested that the UPU should publish statistical indicators on post offices and postal workers per capita, in the same way as other UN bodies quoted data on teachers or doctors per capita. Personal mail remained in high demand, especially among migrant workers from Asian countries.

Ms. Sofi Soeria Atmadja (Government, Indonesia) confirmed the involvement of the Dutch company TPG (KPN and TNT combined) in private courier services and logistics in the country, negotiated with the Government and without consultation with the Post Office — thus they were a UPU member and a competitor at the same time.

Mr. Pedersen (Assistant General Secretary, UNI-Postal, Geneva) noted that there was now a Dutch presence in 50 postal markets through TPG, with partnerships being negotiated outside the UPU ambit in some cases.

Mr. Duchemin (Industry specialist, postal sector and banking and financial services, ILO, Geneva) referred to paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 of the conclusions from 1998 Tripartite Meeting, which offered a global consensus on this topic. This text covered the maintenance and guarantee of a universal service in different national contexts, the responsibility of governments and regulatory authorities with regard to the framework for providing and funding such a service, and the potential role of multinational enterprises in contributing towards its development. It was up to governments and unions to pursue these issues relating to the universal service, ensuring that multinationals play (or pay!) their part.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) noted that UPU's role was likely to be more limited in the future, given the growing importance of multinational companies, and the weakness of the UPU compared with the World Bank and the IMF.

Ms. Maziah (Government, Malaysia) suggested that economic, demographic and geographical differences between countries, as well as political stability and so on, showed that the UPU could not do more than provide guidelines on the universal service.

8. Panel discussion on the role of trade unions: Towards improved labour-management relations?

Moderator: Mr. Ito, Director of UNI-APRO Postal, Tokyo

The discussion began with a brief presentation from Ms. Elisabeth Tungol (Government, Philippines), who requested a more discreet approach by both employers and workers in relation to the public and the Government. This would help the social partners to find solutions in a more amicable environment.

Mr. G.K. Padmanabhan (Worker, India) was impressed by the labour-management relations context in Malaysia, and believed that all post offices had to be sound and healthy in order for labour-management relations to work properly, but “five plus five” must equal ten for both workers and management. An equitable approach would prevent the need for strikes, but the Indian Post Office had experienced seven strikes in 30 years. The government was keen to avert strikes, so strike threats were sometimes effective — 1960, 1987, 1993, 1997, 1998 and 2000 (satisfactory settlements were sometimes reached before a strike was launched). Strike action should be sparingly used. In India, strike participation was around 98%, and had to be organized around reasonable and achievable results. He wanted to place on record his appreciation of the ILO's standard-setting and other work — for example, the standard established in the Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 (No. 127) for carrying loads by postal workers; and the Joint Committee recommendations on new technology and on working time and rest periods. He also commended the UPU's work on encouraging the recognition of postal trade unions in recent years, especially at the Beijing Congress in 1999.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) noted that postal services were labour-intensive organizations, with customer service being a key factor. Frontline workers were the most

important element. In countries of high corruption and poor pay, sometimes poor service was caused by lack of motivation/pay etc. Post deliverers who were not given tips might return mail to the sender, for example. There was a real need for labour-management relations systems and machinery, in the context of ILO conventions and the national legal framework, e.g. postal reorganization law. Trade unions might be in-house, or craft, or amalgamated industrial or political and ideological unions — most were affiliated to a national trade union centre and to UNI-Postal. UNI-APRO had offices in Tokyo, Auckland, Singapore, Jakarta, Seoul, Colombo, Kuala Lumpur. Japan had two postal unions — Zentei and Zenyusei.

He outlined country/area information for the region, given in more detail in a paper distributed to participants. The Republic of Korea had the Korean Postal Workers' Union, but unionization was limited to technical grades. China and Hong Kong, China had the Chinese Post and Telecommunications Workers' Union, with around 1 million members — facing state enterprise reform; the Union of Hong Kong Post Office Employees had around 1,500 members. Taiwan, China had 27,000 members in the CPWU. Malaysia had two unions — the UPUS with 4,500 and the UPMBCW with 3,250 members, etc. — craft-based and region-based unions — there needed to be more unity. Two unions existed in the Philippines — the KKKP and the PEUP both had 5,000 members, etc. Singapore had 6,000 members in the UTES, Thailand 7,000 in SEWU-CAT (including Telecommunications) Australia 68,649 members in CEPU, and New Zealand Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union had 5,000 members. India had 12,500 members in the FNPO, Pakistan had 12,000 in the NOPE - they were the recognized bargaining agent, but there was very poor social dialogue in the Pakistani postal service. Sri Lanka had 5,000 in the UPTO, Nepal 500 in the NECSEA, Bangladesh 2,000 in the BPOU and 3,000 in the BPLGSU. There was a very poor status for postal workers in Nepal — a job in the postal service was often considered merely as a stepping stone to a career in the civil service, rather than as a real career in itself, so labour-management relations were poor. Uzbekistan (56,000 members in the Communication Workers' Union), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Siberia (Russian Federation) were also covered by APRO, but there was not much information on them.

Ms. Sofi Soeria Atmadja (Government, Indonesia) was open to setting up a trade union, but presumed that the low educational level and geographical and religious, political and other divisions would make this difficult. Mr. Ito was helping to set up Indonesian

National Postal Workers' Union at present, with assistance from Ministry of Information and Communications — trying to avoid division and fanaticism.

Ms. Thientip Chaichit (Government, Thailand) noted that since 8 April 2000, the union structure had been changed and there would be a new name for the postal union — the labour union now had a better image with the public, postal workers and management, and enjoyed good relations with management.

Mr. Sayeed Uddin Mahmud (Government, Bangladesh) noted that management and unions could have good relations, but the government might have different views and constraints, and might therefore be unable to comply with the concessions made.

Mr. de Silva (UNI-APRO, Colombo) covered attempts by UNI-Postal to improve relations with Governments and postal administrations — they had run extensive programmes in ASEAN countries, organized missions to Vietnam and Cambodia, and were ardent supporters of trade union rights in Indonesia. Educational programmes were one of the most constructive elements of promoting social dialogue in the region.

Ms. Tungol (Government, Philippines) talked of transparency and partnership as key factors, which should feed into social dialogue — she suggested that labour-management relations could be renamed partnership, if that would help thinking to evolve in this context.

Mr. G.K. Padmanabhan (Worker, India) noted that before entering into agreements, management needed to be sure that they had Government backing — they must not hide behind lack of this. When the postal administration recommended solutions to the Government, they must ensure that they were feasible.

9. Panel discussion on social dialogue and the role of the ILO

Moderator: Mr. de Vries (Director of the Sectoral Activities Department, ILO, Geneva)

Mr. de Vries noted that the ILO had formally recognized social dialogue as one of its four strategic objectives, and as a means towards achieving the other three objectives. It covered any formalized systems of discussion, consultation and negotiation between the tripartite social partners, and also extended to certain civil society organizations such as consumers, pensioners and other stakeholders. It included freedom of association, protection of the right to organize, collective bargaining, the settlement of labour conflicts and the promotion of workers' participation in the enterprise. The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to

Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), were all of great importance for the postal industry in this regard, as were the Recommendations on consultations at the national and industry levels, grievances and mechanisms for conciliation, mediation and arbitration. Seven countries present at the seminar had ratified Convention No. 98, but none had ratified No. 151. The Declaration of 1998 was very relevant for all countries in the region, irrespective of whether they had ratified the fundamental Conventions. Mr. de Vries explained the supervisory mechanism for ILO standards — in particular the Freedom of Association Committee, the Committee of Experts and the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards. The right to strike was an essential means for workers to defend their social and economic interests, but governments had the right to impose restrictions on public servants engaged in the administration of the State, or in “essential services”, from which postal services were, however, excluded by case law. When the right to strike was prohibited, governments had to offer alternative means for conflict resolution, such as conciliation, mediation and arbitration. These mechanisms should be impartial, speedy and have the confidence of the parties. If a minimum service had to be defined, this should be done in consultation with the trade union(s) concerned.

Ms. Elisabeth Tungol (Government, Philippines) considered that managers needed to know more about the ILO and to find solutions through the ILO for dispute resolution and so on. She stressed communication with the trade unions and other stakeholders, partnerships between employers, trade unions and stakeholders, and collective support across the organization. Social dialogue was not limited to the negotiating table, but was a means to empower the workforce, offering solutions and alternatives for business strategies. Philippine employers were listening to all four trade unions operating in the postal service. Social dialogue could help in overcoming disappointments and anxieties in the context of possible privatization, assisting in many fields.

Mr. Pedersen (Assistant General Secretary, UNI-Postal, Geneva) noted that social dialogue at the international level was very important — and invited participants to examine the UNI-Postal action programme. The ILO was not mentioned in the action programme, nor were the ICFTU and ETUC — but all were incorporated in UNI’s statutes, because the ILO (and notably SECTOR) was deemed to be fundamental to their work. The ILO was vital for UNI, and they participated in the International Labour Conference, found the Conventions and

Recommendations were essential tools for their work, and had very intensive cooperation with the Workers' Group, ACTRAV and SECTOR. SECTOR was the driving force for this event, the first of a series of seminars, if this one was successful — they could continue in other regions. UNI's predecessor federations had actively participated in the 1992 and 1998 Meetings; and the ILO's tripartite constituents in the sector were examining splitting it into two — posts and telecommunications. The levels of social dialogue were local, national, regional and international, but there was also dialogue with supranational bodies (e.g. the European Union) and multinational operators. It was important to have an international trade secretariat to be present at the international or supranational level — the Joint Committee between PostEurop and UNI-Postal had been meeting for several years, where they could take decisions and negotiate at that level. This was likely to be more prevalent in the future, e.g. in MERCOSUR and ASEAN. Dialogue could take different shapes — works' councils were a mixed bag around the world, but there was a better model in Europe than outside. They were setting up works' councils in Deutsche Post and TPG in their national and subsidiary set-ups, and would look at their multinational links and alliances. The UPU Advisory Group was another level, in association with consumers, private postal operators, mail users and high-level members of the UPU. UNI-Postal also had representation with the international regulators and PostEurop (the employers' organization of postal operators in Europe). He believed in the importance of the right to strike and the ability to use it, but also wanted to promote social dialogue as a means to solve problems. Trade unions could help to establish lobbying with friends of the postal sector, among those involved in the Council of Europe and the European Commission, with a range of political parties, and could do this in conjunction with postal service operators, looking specifically at working conditions and employment. The employers and trade unions had established a clear separation between post and telecommunications services, and a definition of universal service for the postal industry, but UNI-Postal was concerned that the European Commission on liberalization was going too far in reform — these proposals were being fought by UNI-Postal, which had lobbied MEPs, Commissioners and postal authorities to contest this. After adoption, the next stage would be adoption by the Council of Ministers — where they would again interfere, before final consultation between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. They had agreed on a joint platform with postal operators on what they wanted to achieve and how to approach it.

Mr. de Vries (ILO, Geneva) noted that the Joint Committee on Social Dialogue in the postal industry of the European Union had already brought out 18 joint recommendations since 1994, including one on employment promotion. The system of works councils, whether national or European, worked best when the council worked closely with the trade unions or when the trade unions were represented on the works council. He informed participants that there were planned to be three working groups on conclusions for the Thursday afternoon session. The groups should all cover the whole agenda, rather than having a division of labour on specific topics. The composition of the groups had been based on trying to avoid having more than one representative from a country, and mixing unions and governments — there would be three groups of six participants each, with three government/operator members and three worker members per group. UNI, UPU and ILO staff were available as resource people.

Mr. Wan Sulong bin Wan Yaacob (Employer, Malaysia) felt that the social partners had to share common views on the mission and goals of the postal service. It was very important for there to be good communication, and failure in this regard by the employers would be a major problem. For both parties to prosper, their relationship had to be based on clear principles such as Malaysia's Employment Act, the UPU Convention and ILO Conventions, Recommendations and principles. Misunderstanding between workers and employers could be very costly. What platform was there for communication? Management had to recognize trade unions and accept the legal basis of collective bargaining. Employers had to recognize the unions' functions of organizing the workers, while workers had to acknowledge that employers had the right to manage. Grievance arbitration and conciliation were important. The third collective agreement in Malaysia was to be signed on 30 May, having been negotiated since October 1999 with 7 unions and one association (representing different regional groupings etc.). Management had to be efficient and well informed about the financial aspects of the business — though Malaysia Pos was highly profitable, the unions recognized the limits to their bargaining scope, and noted the importance of human resource development in the firm. The management always tried to brief the unions on developments, and provided computer and information training to union leaders, who were encouraged to participate in international seminars and such like to be better informed about UPU, social dialogue and so on. Both parties would accept the decisions of arbitrators and the grievance procedures. It was important to have a constructive attitude on the part of both sides of social dialogue, or both parties would lose.

Ms. Wang Xuemei (All-China Federation of Trade Unions, Beijing) noted that her main experience in this field related to the ILO, and since 1983 the ACFTU had participated in the ILO, thanks to the reform and opening-up policy in her country since 1979 — which had previously been strongly centrally planned. Until then, the interests of workers and employers were seen as virtually identical, and there were no employers' organizations. After the reforms, it was realized that the reorganization of state-owned enterprise and the diverging interests of workers and employers necessitated a system for defending workers' rights and interests. The ILO provided more opportunities for the three parties to meet each other, and to attend the ILC. Tripartism at the national level had developed considerably, including legislation giving workers the right to participate in decision- and policy-making at various levels. The most important form of participation was the Workers' Congress, and other forms of democratic participation and grievance settlement. The right to strike was not envisaged in the Export Processing Zones, but did happen in practice in some cases. The union had developed its capacity to protect its workers' rights and interests, having gone beyond only the protection of welfare, thanks to assistance from the ILO. This seminar had been a rare opportunity for Chinese workers to be represented at such a Meeting, and her union would welcome the opportunity to expand this cooperation to ILO, UNI and UPU meetings in the future. With regard to contracts and collective bargaining, she hoped for growing cooperation with management in the postal industry. There would be some redundancies in the postal industry in the future, but there had not been any so far — she hoped that the international organizations would be able to help in training for union officers in the new context of separate unions for the postal industry, and given that staff may have to be reduced.

Mr. de Vries (ILO, Geneva) noted that the spirit of compromise was essential for effective social dialogue, and considered that when there was no effective prohibition of strikes, it was permitted, although there was no obligation to use it.

Mr. Pedersen (Assistant General Secretary, UNI-Postal, Geneva) welcomed the entry of 700,000 postal workers from the Russian Federation into UNI (news of this had just reached Bangkok), and the growing cooperation that the Chinese workers represented by Ms. Wang had wished for. He hoped that this could develop much further in the future.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) suggested that social dialogue could cover some regional or subregional zones, including Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, China, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives,

Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and so on. UNI could promote this dialogue throughout the region, expand union influence, prepare for globalization and regional integration, and perhaps develop an Asian Works' Council within the APPU region. With regard to the APPU, UNI wanted more cooperation, observer status in their meetings, and they had included a target to establish a labour-management consultative mechanism in the APPU Action Plan. UNI-APRO had growing links with the APPTC and the APPU. According to the rules of procedure for the APPU, there was no room for NGOs or international (other than UN) organizations, but international organizations that had a vital interest could be invited to the Congress. However, objective 6 of the Beijing Strategy, the UPU high-level strategy meeting, the UPU and PostEurop all allowed UNI as an observer. UNI-APRO was still excluded from the APPU.

Mr. Qureshi (Regional Adviser for Asia and the Pacific, UPU, Bangkok) noted some of the constraints against UNI-APRO participation as an observer, for a number of reasons. Mr. de Silva (UNI-APRO, Colombo) noted that part of the problem related to the Sri Lankan situation at the time. Private couriers and unions were part of the consultative council. The United States delegation had once had a United Parcels Service delegate for a UPU meeting, so private couriers could be participants already. Reaching out to stakeholders including unions and private couriers was confirmed by Mr. Gheorghiev.

Mr. Samant (Government, India) confirmed his country's respect for ILO standards, but noted their inability to accept all of them. They needed collegial professionalism in social dialogue, with ups and downs, as in all relationships — he would like to salute UNI's role in helping that to happen. So long as the postal administration remained part of government administration, with the advantages and restrictions of civil service conditions and sometimes the risk of setting a precedent for other parts of the civil service, it had to remain partly under national budgetary restrictions. However, this would not be true in the case of privatized companies — for better or worse. Postal administrations could try to improve the situation for their workers, and could open up more to unions, but also had to recognize that they must open up to technological change.

Mr. G.K. Padmanabhan (Worker, India) considered that on the introduction of new technology, the Indian Government had chosen the postal administration as the model department for new technology, and welcomed that decision.

Ms. Tungol (Government, Philippines) believed that the common goals of the organization should be disseminated to the membership. She expressed her support for UNI participation in the APPU, and thanked the ILO and the UPU for organizing this seminar in a spirit of social dialogue.

Mr. Wan Sulong bin Wan Yaacob (Employer, Malaysia) welcomed the platform that social dialogue offered, so long as it was not representing a political stance, but ensuring that appropriate attention was paid to human resource development — training etc. The regulator would keep track of the scope and platform of social dialogue.

Ms. Wang Xuemei (All-China Federation of Trade Unions, Beijing) agreed about the important issue of human resource development, and for the future she stressed the improvement of social dialogue facilities in China and particularly in its postal industry. She expressed her appreciation for the learning experience of the week's seminar among experts and specialists, and looked forward to further cooperation in the future.

Mr. Pedersen (Assistant General Secretary, UNI-Postal, Geneva) felt that participants should create a platform for bringing together workers, employers and governments and then preparing a common programme — a compendium of best practices in training, human resource development, safety and health and so on. He noted the importance of the General Agreement on Trade in Services of the World Trade Organization with regard to the postal sector, which reinforced the issue of covering a world considerably wider than the European Union. Faster and more aggressive liberalization could be on the cards if the European Union liberalization process went too far.

10. Conclusions and closing speeches

Mr. de Vries (Director of the Sectoral Activities Department, ILO, Geneva) called for the proposed conclusions from the rapporteurs of the working groups (*see Annex 1 - Conclusions*). Group 1's rapporteurs were Mr. Samant (Government, India), with Ms. Chaichit (Government, Thailand), thanked the ILO and the UPU for the seminar and the consensus was the need for social dialogue, universal postal service and so on. UNI-Postal would endeavour to promote social dialogue around the region, with support from the ILO and the UPU. Structured dialogue with all stakeholders was required, and there should be, no reform without consultation between them.

Mr. Ito (Worker, UNI-APRO, Tokyo) was the spokesman for Group 2. He applauded the fact that the government and employer participants were now “brothers and sisters” to him, as a result of social dialogue over the course of the week. The group’s brainstorming had resulted in a common view — the seminar had deepened the participants’ knowledge of the topics and also helped them to see their social partners in a more positive light. The management aims — to improve customer service and increase profit — fitted reasonably well with the workers’ aims of continuity of employment and improving pay and conditions. Human resource development was the key to successful postal services. Their conclusions with regard to structural reform did note that UNI, the ILO and the UPU should make greater efforts to encourage female representation in such seminars. Workers should be better trained for the new technological environment. The Malaysia model might be taken as a basis for social dialogue and communications in the process of change. Finance and development should be based on raising internal financing, and external donors should take into account local conditions, and governments should consult with workers before accepting specific conditionalities. Universal postal services might be ensured by subsidies, reserved monopolies and the like. Unions should be conscious of their power, and avoid confrontational approaches in the context of globalization, technological change and reorganization. Management, trade unions and employers greatly appreciated the joint ILO/UPU organization of the seminar, and urge that the APPU accept UNI-APRO participation in its future meetings.

Mr. Tong Kok Yeo (Worker, Singapore) reported on Group 3’s views, which covered very similar points to the other two groups, noting in particular the pace of change and the process of managing change in different contexts — participants had particularly benefited from knowledge of the Malaysian experience in this regard. Postal modernization through structural and legal reforms required consultation and information before the changes took place, in order for them to be acceptable to workers and more successful for management. Such reforms must also take account of women postal workers in particular. Training was crucial in the information technology field — and the ultimate aim was to enhance the workers’ employability. All parties wanted to avoid retrenchment and worker dissatisfaction, and they therefore tried to have better trained workers who would be more motivated and productive, therefore ensuring a more profitable workforce. Restructuring affected the employment patterns, and the workforce could benefit from more flexible working time — especially women workers. Firms would be in a

better position to provide improved pay and conditions in an atmosphere of cooperation with regard to change. Governments should also try to introduce legislation that made private courier services share the responsibility or burden of the universal postal service. The social partners should promote a culture of partnership, for which Malaysia provides an interesting model. The seminar was a very good example of social dialogue, and his group hoped that there would be more seminars in the future, and an attempt to institutionalize a system of social dialogue, observing Beijing objective No. 6 to ensure a better future for postal workers around the world, and ensuring the APPU would invite UNI-APRO as a fully-fledged member in future meetings.

Mr. Gheorghiev noted that the views expressed in the conclusions would be examined carefully over the next couple of weeks, in order to distill the final text. Mr. de Vries noted that the three sets of conclusions should be considered in terms of the gist of their general acceptability.

The seminar considered the draft conclusions and adopted a number of changes which were included in the final consolidated text (see Annex).

In conclusion, Mr. Gheorghiev promised that a report of the meeting would be available by the end of August, and applauded the strong and full involvement of the ILO and UNI. The ILO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific had been very supportive, and the seminar was honoured to have had the presence of the President of UNI-Postal and the ILO's Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific.

Mr. de Vries thanked the UPU and especially Mr. Gheorghiev, Ms. Horiuchi (the ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific), his ILO colleagues and the ILO's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for their preparatory work and running the seminar, and UNI-Postal for their very valuable support. They had all played a very important role. He had been impressed by the very useful conclusions and the seriousness and high level of debate. He restated the importance of communication by letter and parcel for people throughout the world, in spite of the growth in communication by electronic means. In conclusion, he looked forward to a continuing cooperation with the UPU and UNI-Postal for the organization of similar regional seminars in the future.

Mr. Pedersen (Assistant General Secretary, UNI-Postal, Geneva) thanked the ILO and the UPU for their excellent cooperation, and hoped for similar seminars in other regions — this would mark clear progress in social dialogue at the international level, with the assistance of the

ILO and the UPU. He acknowledged the role of UNI office holders and staff in the region for their support and assistance. He expressed special thanks to the employer and administration representatives for their cooperative spirit, which was quite unlike the hostility of many employers in other industries.

Annex 1 - Conclusions of the ILO-UPU Joint Regional Seminar on Social Dialogue in Postal Services (Bangkok, 23-26 May 2000)

This Seminar has arrived at consensus on: (a) the need for social dialogue in the postal sector; (b) the need for postal modernization and reform; and (c) the need to provide and maintain the universal postal service. The Seminar recognizes that the above objectives should be pursued and the social dialogue initiated by the UPU, the ILO and UNI at this seminar should be further strengthened. Both management and trade unions have deepened their mutual understanding at the regional level. In particular, the management representatives recognize the responsibilities and contribution of trade unions in the attainment of better service standards and the development of postal services.

Theme 1: Postal modernization in Asia and the Pacific: the impact of the structural and legal reform on postal workers

There is a consensus on the urgency of postal modernization and reform. The postal industry is undergoing changes worldwide, and countries are at a variety of stages in this process, but whatever their stage, the challenge facing stakeholders is managing the process. The key factor is union-management involvement. In view of technological and economic changes, the modernization of the postal sector has become imperative, if this sector is to remain relevant for society and to serve customers effectively.

The Seminar recognizes the requirement to fulfil the obligations set out in the Washington, Seoul and Beijing Congress Acts and Decisions of the UPU. The achievement of this should be the responsibility of all the stakeholders concerned, i.e. Governments, postal administrations, trade unions — and in this effort, the committed participation of all relevant international bodies must be ensured. The stakeholders need to recognize and address the concerns of postal workers — information-sharing and consultation should be carried out before changes are instituted. Legal reforms should also be taken into account, and protect the interest of workers, especially women. Postal administrations and unions should put great efforts into increasing female participation in their administrations. The Seminar notes that the employment of women in the postal sector is numerically low and requires specific initiatives to encourage better female participation, including job redesign for this purpose. Employment patterns and

trends will improve the possibility of more flexible working hours to suit women workers. The ILO, the UPU and UNI should promote women's attendance of their meetings and seminars. Women's issues should be discussed more at the next regional seminar of this nature.

Theme 2: The impact of growth in electronic communications on employment and working conditions

With new technology, electronic communications and new products, there are new areas of growth, and the position of employers and the postal operator could be more viable and better placed to provide improved terms and conditions of employment. The UPU and postal administrations, in cooperation with the trade unions, should design a strategy to pursue fully the opportunities that are provided by the development of e-commerce and other technological innovations. With technology making inroads into the postal industry, training and retraining must be carried out to enhance the employability of postal workers, to improve productivity and to redeploy workers in accordance with their skill sets.

Theme 3: Managing change in the postal sector: the Asian experience

The Malaysian model and experience may be taken as a way to encourage better industrial relations, especially in overcoming the negative impact of change. Social dialogue in various forms, such as collective bargaining, information, informal and formal consultations must be well designed, and management and trade unions should cooperate for the development of postal services within this framework.

Theme 4: Finance and development in the postal services and the World Bank

Postal administrations should try to raise internal financing for postal development. In the case of external financing, the conditionalities should take local conditions into account. Unions should be informed and consulted in either case, in order to ensure the cooperation of workers with regard to the change.

Theme 5: The universal postal service in 2000: country studies and the role of the UPU

The universal postal service is essential for balanced economic development, and this principle must not be lost sight of in the process of postal reform. It should be defined in the law and

implemented in all Asian countries, as far as possible, taking into account the conditions in each country. Some sorts of assistance – in the form of reserved areas or monopolies on certain segments of the service, of subsidies and of the universal service fund – may be provided for maintaining the universal postal service. The question of commercial objectives (profitability) versus the provision of the universal postal service is indeed intricate to balance. Nonetheless, we recognize that the postal administration/company has an obligation to society to be a good corporate citizen by providing the universal postal service. When possible, the universal service should be regulated, and have a provision that ensures that the private couriers discharge their social obligation as well.

Theme 6: The role of trade unions: towards improved labour management-relations?

Management and unions should regard each other as partners in educating workers in the postal services' business, and in resolving issues raised by postal administrations and unions. Unions should show responsibility in the use of their power. We need to have good labour-management relations to ensure that the mutual interests of workers and employers are taken care of. We must cultivate a culture of partnership. For this to be achieved there is a need for management to be open-minded and for the trade unions to operate responsibly.

Theme 7: Social dialogue and the role of the ILO

Management and unions appreciate the ILO, the UPU and UNI for designing this seminar in order to promote social dialogue at the national and regional levels. Both sides will promote social dialogue. In this regard, formal relations between the APPU and UNI-APRO Postal should be established. In accordance with the Beijing Postal Strategy, we look forward to the APPU extending the status of observer to UNI-APRO in APPU meetings, so that we can leverage on the strengths of each other to bring a better future for postal workers and services around the world, and promote social dialogue in the sector in Asia and the Pacific. UNI will take all possible initiatives to educate its affiliates and postal workers in achieving these objectives. In this endeavour, UPU and ILO cooperation should be available at all times.

Final remarks

This seminar is a good manifestation of social dialogue at the international/regional level.

Participants are pleased that the ILO, the UPU and UNI have taken the first steps towards such a discussion, and encourage them to take further initiatives to institutionalize or formalize a machinery for social dialogue and to extend it to other regions of the world.

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Annex 3 Results of questionnaire for delegates and observers

An evaluation questionnaire for participants distributed at the end of the seminar provided the following results and comments. The response rate was 88%. The most popular panel discussions were on *Managing change in the postal sector: the Asian experience* and on *Social dialogue and the role of the ILO*.

1. How do you rate the meeting as regards the following?

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>No reply</i>	<i>Average score</i>
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)		
The choice of the agenda item (subject of the meeting)	10	10	1			1	4.4
The proposed themes	6	13	2			1	4.2
The quality of the discussion	7	12	2			1	4.2
The seminar's benefits to the sector	8	12	1			1	4.3
The conclusions	5	15	1			1	4.2
The draft plans for future action	1	13	5			3	3.8
Discussion on International and national reports	2	13	5	1		1	3.8
Discussion on Postal modernization in Asia and the Pacific: the impact of the structural and legal reform on postal workers, with special reference to women	6	9	6			1	4.0
Discussion on The impact of growth in electronic communications on employment and working conditions	3	14	4			1	4.0
Discussion on Managing change in the postal sector: the Asian experience	5	15	1			1	4.2
Discussion on Finance and development in the postal services and the World Bank	2	11	5	2		2	3.5
Discussion on The universal postal service in 2000: country studies and the role of the UPU	4	15	2			1	4.1
Discussion on Social dialogue and the role of the ILO	4	17				1	4.2
Discussion on The role of trade unions: towards improved labour-management relations?	5	12	4			1	4.0
Discussion on Perspectives for the future (deregulation, electronic mail and employment...)	4	13	3			2	4.1
Opportunity for networking	4	15	2			1	4.1
Quality of social dialogue	5	13	3			1	4.1

2. How do you rate the quality of the seminar in terms of the following?

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>No reply</i>	<i>Average score</i>
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)		
Quality of analysis contained in the presentations	3	16	3				4.0
Amount and relevance of information	4	15	2			1	4.1

3. How do you consider the time allotted for discussion?

	<i>Too much</i>	<i>Enough</i>	<i>Too little</i>	<i>No reply</i>
General discussions	2	20		
Thematic discussions	1	20		1
Working groups		18	3	1

4. How do you rate the practical and administrative arrangements (secretariat, document services, other)?

<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Average score</i>
(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	
10	9	3			4.7

5. Respondents to the questionnaire:

Government/regulator	9
Private employer	1
Worker	9
Observer	3

6. Participants at the Meeting:

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	
Government	4	5	9	56% women
Worker	8	1	9	11% women
Employer	1	0	1	—
Observer	2	4	6	67% women
Resource people	4	0	4	—
ILO	4	2	6	33% women
Total	23	12	35	34% women

7. Other observations:

- Flexibility: if representatives from one country don't come, switch to another country
- Information: more background information is necessary
- Organization: good
- Secretariat: well done, thank you
- Quality of presentations could be enhanced if ILO/UPU sent out a checklist with issues
- Discussion could be improved by using some black-and-white discussion points, to which people can react
- Policymakers on the various sides could have had a meaningful discussion with a productive output, but only a few of the participants were of that level
- Lunch arrangements caused some embarrassment, because not all participants were treated the same
- The discussion on finance did not have World Bank or ADB input, that on the universal postal service had no country studies, that on postal modernization hardly discussed women
- Such dialogue is of great importance to develop mutual understanding
- Wider participation including all sides would be of benefit, such as representatives of society and customers
- Well organized and well deliberated
- The UPU and the ILO should provide and explain thoroughly the legislation, resolutions and conclusions taken by international and regional conferences regarding the framework for social dialogue
- Theme 1 lacked discussion on women workers, but some details are available in the country reports
- Theme 6 should have been the "role of trade unions and management: towards improved labour-management relations"
- Postal services should continue to be the sovereign function of the state. There should be legislation to register the courier companies with the Department of Posts, collecting a licence fee. A percentage of the courier's receipts should also be transferred to the government, as was the case with telecom liberalization.