Universal Postal Union

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**Introduction**

Emerging as a specialized agency of United Nations was formed in 1874 with the help of Treaty of Bern. Universal Postal Union (UPU) was made for the purpose of coordination of postal policies among all the members of United Nations apart from worldwide postal system. The headquarters of Universal Postal Union is located in the Swiss capital Berne which making it the second oldest international organization of the world.

Separate postal treaty was needed to be formed by every country before establishing the Universal postal Union if they wanted to send international mails to or from other countries. In particular cases, estimated calculations were required to be done by the senders for every leg of the travel. They usually tried to search for mail forwarders in a third country if there was no direct channel of delivery was possible. This organization was formed to solve this issue of postal communication when United States of America eventually took step to arrange an International Postal Congress in 1863. This initiative was forwarded further by Heinrich von Stephan, Royal Prussian and German minister for posts to form the Universal Postal Union. Initially this International Postal organization was originally created under the label of General Postal from the result of the Treaty of Bern that was signed in 0ctober 9, 1874. After four years’ span, the name of this international organization was changed to Universal Postal Union. Soon after the creation of United Nations, Universal Postal Union became a part of the United Nations as one of its specialized agencies in 1948.

Universal Postal Union serves three main purposes. They are:

1. Even and constant flat rate should be provided to send the postal around the world
2. Equal treatment should be given to foreign and domestic postal from the postal authorities.
3. There should a proper preservation of the money by every country that is collected for the e international postal services.

**Discussion**

**Comparison and contrast with International Fund**

Universal Postal Union possesses sharp differences with the International Monetary Fund although both claimed to be international agencies. International Monetary Fund is famously regarded as one of the two Bretton Wood Institutions which was established back in 1944 with the collaboration and agreement of 43 countries in Bretton Woods that time. International Monetary Fund was established for the sole purpose of financial system regulation and stabilization in its member countries. Universal Postal is much older than International Monetary Fund due to its fundamental role in postal deliverance from 1874 (Lyall, 2016). This is because at that time, there was no important considerations were towards financial matters of the countries but postal service was important to send official letters (John, 2018). One of the other essential differences between both the organizations is that, although Universal Postal Union was previously formed to be independent; but it is now regarded as a specialized agency of United Nations which means it is not fully autonomous anymore (Crew & Kleindorfer, 2012). On the other hand, International Monetary fund was built to be an international cooperation and it still functions independently without relying on any other international corporation for any kind of assistance.

*Structure*

Structurally both the international organizations are also very different than each other as both have different departments that handle activities which are dissimilar with each other. Universal Postal Union has four main leading bodies that consists of the congress, the postal operations council (POC), the council of administration (CA) and the international Bureau (IB) (Kilfoyle & Richardson, 2015).

The specialized agency also directs the Telematics and Express Mail Service (EMS) cooperatives. Each member settles to the same terms and conditions for undertaking postal responsibilities (Shulman, 2015). The congress also known as the Universal Postal Congress is the largest and most important body of the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The main function the Congress is to investigate and analyze the proposals to bring some changes in the acts of Universal Postal Union (Menon, 1963). The responsibility to examine these changes also includes the Universal Postal Union constitution, General Regulations, Postal Payment Services Agreement and Convention.

International Monetary Fund is very different when it comes to the structure of the organization. International Monetary Fund has no properly organized departments like UPU due to its diverse functionality. International Monetary fund however has some key areas on which it works on and has hired a separate team of experts and analysts for these areas (Kentikelenis et al., 2016). The areas on which International Monetary FUND’s staff works are, the supervision of monetary and financial policies, management of fiscal policy, regulating the e economic and financial legislation and the maintenance of statistical records of the member countries.

In IMF, all the powers are given to its Board of Governors that represent the member states. A governor and an alternate governor is appointed by each member country who can be able to vote when the principal governor is not present. Each member’s government appoint its minister of finance, the president of its central bank or any other high ranking officer to cooperate with the international cooperation on the financial performance of the country. There is one rule of thumb for most of the international entities, it is one nation casting one vote but IMF is not same in this regard. In IMF there is no concept of a member casting a single vote rather multiple votes are provided to IMF member countries. More votes are given to those that finance the resources for IMF. The reason why IMF does not have many bodies like UPU is because IMF’s structure is quite small consisting of only 2,300 employees for this international cooperation. There is an executive board in IMF that consists of 24 executive directors, managing director and staff.

*Language*

Another prominent difference between both of these organizations are, the official language of UPU is French and English was later added as a working language in 1994. But the official language of IMF was English from the start, although it has interpretations for Arabic, French, Chinese, Russian, Spanish and Japanese. UPU also facilitates its member countries by providing documentation in six of these languages mentioned in IMF’s case.

*Functions*

Functionally, both the organizations are very deviating but there is one thing that makes them come on the same platform and that is, they both functions to facilitate their member countries. UPU serves as a primary forum for postal matters of the member states whereas IMF facilitates the member countries by providing loans and financial stability in the world (Lievrouw,2000). UPU has 192 countries as its member states and IMF has 182 countries as its member states (Falch & Henten, 2018). But the similarity they have is that, they both are internationally connected with their member countries.

**Conclusion**

Established as one of the oldest international organizations in the world, UPU is recently facing many issues with its conventional methodology and strategies to cooperate with the international world. The sole purpose for which it was formed is becoming a faded necessity for the countries as there are many alternates available for them now. However, UPU still matters in today’s world as it regulates the international communication between countries through its authentic and confidential postal service (Crew & Brennn, 2016). USA is recently trying to exit from UPU and if that happens, UPU will face serious issues as many more countries will withdraw too. This is why strategic management is very important at this point to restructure the organization according to the needs and requirements of today’s word.

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