What has Postal Liberalisation delivered?

The Case of Morocco

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A report for UNI Global Union

Written by FNPT-UMT

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Morocco
By the Fédération Nationale des Postes et Télécommunications - Union Marocaine du Travail (FNPT-UMT)

Liberalization process:

So far, “Poste Maroc” still remains a public State-dependent institution that is directed by a Governing Body (presided by the Prime Minister) and outlined by law # 24-96 (Annex 1).

However the market is open to some national or multinational private-sector companies in the field of mail and logistics such as Chronopost, TNT, CTM, DHL, Moroccan Transport Company.

Even with regards to financial services, it is semi-open where orders can be sent through Moroccan banks, whether inside Morocco or through those coming from abroad, in addition to the multinational companies that are operating in the field of money transfer at the international level such as Money Gram and Western Union. There is a dispute arising from bill # 07-08 which aims at transforming “Poste Maroc” from a public institution to a limited company. It is entitled “privatization in the horizon of liberalization” and is currently presented before the Committee on Finance, Equipment, Planning and Regional Development at the first chamber of the Moroccan Parliament – Advisory Board – (Annex 2).

A Ratification of the bill by both chambers of the Parliament – God forbid – is considered a great gateway towards liberalization and privatization.

Legally, “Poste Maroc” enjoys the monopoly of 1 kg with regards to normal letters and 5 kg with regards to parcels and logistics. However, this monopoly is being violated and assailed in various forms depending on the company concerned:

- Concerning CTM, the Moroccan Transport Company operating in the field of passenger transportation, which also operates in the field of logistics transportation, is swindling in the transportation and distribution of parcels - the weight of which is less than 1 kg - by increasing the weight of the parcel through the addition of salt for example (salt parcels) so as to exceed the weight of 1 kg. This is a swindling of the postal monopoly.

- With regards to REDAL, a water and electricity distributing company that is directed by VEOLIA, it directly distributes the monthly consumption invoices, the weight of which does not exceed 10 grams, in a manner that fully challenges the laws.

- As for DHL, it only has headquarters in the following big cities: 1) Casablanca, 2) Rabat, 3) Tangier, 4) Marrakesh, 5) Safi, 6) Agadir, 7) Fes/Meknes, i.e. in seven locations only and hence cheats by using the network of “Poste Maroc” to send parcels that are distributed inside Morocco in the midst of areas that are devoid of the company’s offices or in remote areas. This is also true for TNT.

- As for Chronopost, it is a subsidiary branch of “Poste Maroc”.
Regarding the current project, there is a clear intention to simultaneously liberalize and privatize “Poste Maroc”, especially if we take note of Article 4 of bill 07-08 (the same thing occurred with Morocco Telecommunications). During the negotiations that are currently taking place with the Moroccan government/Ministry of Industry, Trade and Modern Technologies/“Poste Maroc” and in light of the combative movement led by the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications and the Moroccan Labour Union which has taken various forms, we started to hear from the Director General of “Poste Maroc” and from the Minister of Industry, Trade and Modern Technologies that they are ready to sign with us a document indicating that the current bill 07-08 will be amended so as to formulate our claims in it such as having the Government/“Poste Maroc” Management commit themselves to maintaining all existing post offices and increasing their number so as to develop the network, preserve employment stability, guarantee the maintaining of public services, and preserve the social feature of “Poste Maroc”. So far this is only talk.

“Poste Maroc” Management restructured the institution without abiding by the Moroccan Labour Law which imposes on it to negotiate with us since we are trade union representatives. Following strikes we led, a common agreement was reached through which a programme was laid down to review the policy of a negotiated restructuring (Annexes 3 and 4).

**Employment level**

In view of the current phase through which “Poste Maroc” is going and considering that it is still a public institution, you will see in the memorandum issued by the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications/Moroccan Labour Union the stages through which the sector went since the first indications of the foundation of “Poste Maroc” (Annex 5).

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<th>06</th>
<th>07</th>
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<tr>
<td>Principle agencies</td>
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<td>680</td>
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<td>695</td>
<td>712</td>
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<td>Affiliated agencies</td>
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<td>151</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>172</td>
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<td>Village agencies (*)</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1595</td>
<td>1623</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>1673</td>
<td>1686</td>
<td>1726</td>
<td>1759</td>
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**Evolution of the number of employees**

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<th>2002</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8699</td>
<td>7843</td>
<td>7920</td>
<td>8032</td>
<td>8176</td>
<td>8393</td>
<td>8700</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Important note: Included in the network of “Poste Maroc” are the Rural Postal Agencies symbolized by (*) the number of which were “845” in 2008, i.e. 845 agency managers, and yet it does not count this number among the number of employees.

There is an important increase and evolution in postal services resulting in huge work pressure within all sectors (mail, logistics and financial services). In addition, the number of employees is very low in comparison with the population density which forces employees to work extra hours on a daily basis and without pay (a battle is currently taking place on this question) and to work on Saturdays and during annual holidays in a way that all post-
men and women and box office assistants in the four sectors especially in the production sites do not regularly benefit from these holidays.

As for the changes seen in the composition of employees, these are due to pensioning-off or voluntary departure or low job levels in comparison with the needs.

**Employment quality**

**Concerning wages:**

Managers of Postal Agencies, through whom “Poste Maroc” ensures providing public and universal services in remote areas, only receive 450 dirham (= 45 euro) which is a fifth of the minimum wage applied in Morocco. They are neither entitled to retire nor to enjoy holidays or health coverage. They have the right to no rights!!!

Combative struggles are taking place on this matter and there are promises to settle this case.

- Contractual frameworks benefit from very high imaginary wages in comparison to statutory frameworks.
- There have been general increases in wages due to combative struggles in 2004 and the increase was about:
  - 300 dirham (about 30 euro) for steps 1 to 12
  - 450 dirham (about 45 euro) for steps 13 to 16
  - 650 dirham (about 65 euro) for steps 17 to 20
  - 1100 dirham (about 110 euro) for steps 21 to 24
  - 1400 dirham (about 140 euro) for steps 25 to 28

In 2006, the employees benefited from a monthly increase of 150 dirham (about 15 euro) divided into three years, i.e. 50 dirham (about 5 euro) but it was refused by the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications/Moroccan Labour Union and we entered into combative battles for a year and a half after which an agreement was made with the Administration to another additional increase of 250 dirham which is about 25 euro (Annex 11). Negotiations are under way for another increase and we know that the intention of both the Administration and the Government is to grant this increase but in exchange of having the Federation ease up and allow for the acceptance of the bill 07-08 which aims at transforming “Poste Maroc” into a company.

The minimum and maximum wages in the “Poste Maroc” institution are:

Step 1: 2700 dirham (about 270 euro) \[ \text{step 28: 15'200 dirham (about 1520 euro).} \]

As for retirees, it is about 60’000 dirham (about 6000 euro).

There is no collective agreement within “Poste Maroc” because the Moroccan government has not ratified the international convention which allows for collective agreements in the public service and in public institutions. Because the sector is organized in the form of a public institution there is both:
- A common declaration that was signed on the 15th of February 2005 under the auspices of the government; and
- A common contract that was signed on the 19th of December 2007 (Annex 11).

Yes, subcontracting is taking place with regards to work that constitutes the core-speciality of “Poste Maroc”, i.e. the essence of the work carried out by postmen/women such as distribution and work within logistics and there is a strong fight to impose the respect of the law and we have confidence in our combative struggles and that we will impose it. This matter no doubt requires your solidarity and that of all those engaged in UNI Postale.

- There are Permanent Temporary Agents who are confirmed in their functions after seven years – the Moroccan Labour Code made an achievement which allows this category to be confirmed in their functions after only three months of work and we are fighting to ensure that the basic law of “Poste Maroc” is compatible with the Moroccan Legal Organization and international laws at the International Labour Organization (Annex 7).
- There are marginal temporaries and we have succeeded in confirming the functions of about thirty of them. However, there still remain about 150 of them. A struggle is being undertaken to settle this question from within the common contracting referred to above.

**Universal Service**

The basis of “Universal Service” is to provide postal services in their general form to all citizens within any population density and which are in need of more development by upgrading the Postal Network. Since the post office is the only gateway to benefit from the various services entrusted to “Post Maroc”, its domain comprises therefore all the regions within the national territory.

“Post Maroc” is currently the institution entrusted with providing “Universal Service” since it is the historical operator and hence the only one that finances this service.

The quality of “Universal Service” is currently ranked as “B” according to the international standards of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) after having been ranked as “C” and we are exerting pressure today and there is also a desire by “Poste Maroc” to upgrade it to the level of “A”.

**Regulation**

Liberalization/Privatization has not taken place yet and therefore there is no regulating authority so far such as that found in the field of telecommunications at the National Agency for the Regulation of Telecommunications (ANRT).

**Role of Trade Unions**

Since 2004, we have started to perceive - through some discussions and expressions voiced by certain responsible officers of the institution or by certain ministers - that something is secretly in the making for the institution. We have started to try and predict the events by provoking the officers for example to say that “we are against privatization or liberalization” especially during the official occasions which brought us together with them (on the 15th of
February 2005 and on the 19th of December 2007 or during the Parties’ meetings). We have issued statements in this regard and also during gatherings at local/regional branches or during national meetings … national councils.

We also provide organizational platforms with internal bulletins and similarly the whole sector with notifications/statements, press articles and all documents we obtain from UNI Post & Logistics or through research on websites. We have also made use of some study and research centres such as the Aziz Bilal Centre for Studies and Research (CERAB) and benefited from some former postal authoritative persons such as Professor Mourad Aklai who was a central Director at the Post’s administration (Annex 6). In addition, we have proposed to establish a national front to face the privatization of the institution and to preserve public, social and universal services through the memorandum we presented to the Moroccan government and to the management of “Poste Maroc” (Annex 5). And this is a matter in which we have been successful since a national instance for the defence of public services was established. The first case it will be working on is the “Post Maroc” case in view of bill # 07-08. This instance includes, in addition to the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications and the Moroccan Labour Union, legal and civil associations (ATTAC Maroc, associations to protect the consumer, associations to combat expensive living standards, associations to combat the increase in prices) as well as five political parties and institutes for studies. We are still working on widening the scope of this front.

This came as a result of a continuous campaign undertaken by both the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications and the Moroccan Labour Union among all the components of the Moroccan political, legal and academic spheres and which culminated in the Study Day organized on the 24th of January 2009 by the Progress and Socialist Party and by the Aziz Bilal Centre for Studies and Research with the active participation of the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications/Moroccan Labour Union. One of the recommendations that came out of that Day was an invitation to establish this front/instance and to work on preparing the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications/Moroccan Labour Union platform/memorandum.

We exerted strong pressure on the government and the parliament through a national strike which led to the halting of the discussion on the bill no 07-08 in the parliament and to the organization of a national dialogue – for which we are still preparing – in addition to the letter that was addressed by UNI post & Logistics to the Moroccan Prime Minister.

As for the obstacles, there is a governmental intention to bypass the content of the national dialogue which opposes the attendance of international experts on our side and refuses to open the dialogue to Moroccan parties and associations of the civil society and seeks first to secretly discuss bill no 07-08 in the parliament. But we are standing against it with determination from within the parliament.

As for DHL, it has been organized within the Moroccan Labour Union and we are now in the process of attracting the workers of TNT and Chronopost for example.

As a result of this pressure, which we will no doubt need to increase at the national level, we are in this regard seeking to expand it to the international level through you and through UNI Post & Logistics. No doubt we might be able to make a model out of the Moroccan experience in order to:

- preserve public services that have a social character;
- preserve the universal service;
- strengthen civil rights as well as social, economic and cultural rights for both employees and users;
- preserve State monopoly through “Poste Maroc” in terms of current mail and parcel weight sizes, internal financial transfers and the development of international financial transfers by expanding the network of international postal contracting in the context of the IFS.
Matters related to gender and anti-discrimination

Concerning gender relatedness with regards to the daily struggle carried out by the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications/Moroccan Labour Union:

at the organizational level of the National Federation of Posts and Telecommunications/ Moroccan Labour Union:

We have important percentages of sisters at the national leadership level of the National Federation and at the level of regional and local branch offices;

Five General-Secretaries for five local branches (1- Ben Jarir branch, 2-Satat, 3-Tamarra, 4- Azro, 5-Midelt).

We are in the process of establishing a forum for post-women.

at the level of demands, there are professional requests purely related to post women some of which we have achieved and others we are in the process of achieving;

At the professional structural level, there are post women who occupy positions of responsibility at the level of Directors of post offices including the main offices and they are also heads of services or sections and there is a head of one sector but at a contractual basis and we have our positions with regards to this last category because they enjoy special prerogatives in comparison with the rest of the statutory employees.

Observations:

“Post Maroc” has obtained a limited banking authorization called “Al Barid Bank” with a capital of 200 million dirham through the decree no 2.08.258 issued on the 5th of June 2008 and published in the official paper (issue 5640 dated 19th of June 2008) despite the fact that “Poste Maroc” is still a public institution that is organized by law 24-96 (legislative text).

Among the challenges we face is the acute lack of equipment and of logistic and material means which limits our continuous and combative movements (till this hour we have no site on the internet for example).

The management officials in “Poste Maroc” are still restricting trade union rights and freedoms.
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