



## **World Post Day, 9 October 2023**

### **Statement by the Director General of the UPU International Bureau: "Together for trust: Collaborating for a safe and connected future"**

Post offices serve as essential hubs for cohesive, inclusive, connected communities.

They provide access to vital communication, commercial, social, financial and digital services, and are often the only public service provider in remote regions. Throughout history, postal workers have been the friendly faces greeting people at their doorsteps every day, building trust with communities over generations.

The foundation of the Post's success as a service provider lies in the trust it has earned from people across the globe down the centuries. Today, more than five million postal employees are entrusted with a variety of essential and personal items, from messages, gifts and goods, to money and medicines.

This trust has been cultivated through a steadfast commitment to safety and security. Posts have tirelessly worked to improve the safety of roads, providing training programmes for delivery drivers, and implementing security measures to keep dangerous goods out of the supply chain, safeguarding workers and customers alike. Furthermore, during times of disasters or conflicts, Posts have extended a helping hand, organizing supplies and emergency services for those in need; often, they are the first to assist in these situations.

Posts can leverage this existing trust-based relationship to help bridge a gap facing billions: the digital divide. By connecting their expansive physical network to the digital sphere, Posts are embarking on a massive digital transformation to offer secure online services in this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The UPU has been a dedicated partner in building a safe and connected global network that serves nearly eight billion people each day with modern and secure services, and it is a key part of this transformation.

However, close to 100,000 of the world's 650,000 post offices lack adequate Internet infrastructure, limiting the services they can provide through digital channels. This means 100,000 communities missing out on a wide range of digital, financial and social inclusion services that these Posts could offer. We should ensure that all citizens and businesses have access to the full range of benefits offered by the digital economy. So, through its connect.post initiative, the UPU has set an ambitious target: ensuring that every post office has sufficient access to the Internet by 2030, to enhance digital inclusion of these underserved communities.

Not only does the UPU strive to ensure that all Posts have sufficient access to the Internet, it is also working to do so securely by ensuring that Posts, big and small, can access affordable, state-of-the-art tools and technologies to support e-commerce, e-government and e-finance services.

"Together for trust" is a call to action for all governments and their postal operators to support the development of a digital single postal territory to match the physical network built over centuries.

This World Post Day, I urge you to work together with the UPU to ensure that people everywhere need look no further than their local post office to find access to the digital economy. Let us work hand in hand to create a world where everyone can benefit from the secure digital and physical services that our global postal network can offer.

Happy World Post Day!