2017 Message from the Director General

World Post Day is celebrated each year on 9 October. The event was originally created by the 1969 Universal Postal Congress in Tokyo as a means of marking the anniversary of the Universal Postal Union"s creation in 1874.
Today, the main purpose of World Post Day is to raise awareness of the Post"s role in the everyday lives of people and businesses, as well as its contribution to global social and economic development. The UPU"s member countries are encouraged to organize their own national activities to celebrate the event: everything from introducing or promoting new postal products and services, to holding open days at post offices, sorting centres or postal museums.
It is important to constantly remind ourselves of the role that Posts play in our societies today, because some key trends are turning our world upside down. I see four main developments in this regard: Firstly, Internet pervasiveness is growing year on year, transforming the ways in which citizens interact, communicate and do business; Secondly, customers in all industries are becoming ever more demanding: in this age of digital and mobile technology, we want things right here and right now, and we want choice and control; Thirdly, e-commerce and light logistics are exploding, growing at double-digit rates in most regions; And fourthly, after years of sluggish growth, the world economy and international trade are finally getting back on track.
In this context, Posts can only mitigate risks and seize opportunities if they engage in reform. They need to reinvent themselves, embrace digitalization, redefine their value proposition, and develop new products and services. They also require political support and investments, as well as an appropriate regulatory framework for their activities.
There is much to be gained from this transformation: more satisfied customers, stronger postal markets and, most importantly, more cohesive societies. With countries stepping up efforts to achieve the UN"s Sustainable Development Goals, we should not forget that the postal sector is an enabler of inclusive development and an essential component of the global economy. In the remotest and the most populated areas of our planet alike, it remains a key platform for delivering public services.
As an intergovernmental organization within the UN system, we at the UPU are very much concerned with the role of Posts as an element of public infrastructure. We strive to enable all the 192 national networks of our member countries to act as one. We offer platforms that let our members exchange views and find multilateral solutions to global issues. We provide affordable technical solutions and assistance to governments, regulators and postal operators wishing to upgrade their national postal infrastructure. And we are the only global knowledge centre for the sector, building on the power of postal big data to the benefit of all.
Faithful to its mission, the UPU has chosen two main highlights for this year’s World Post Day celebrations. Firstly, we will be recognizing the top-ranked countries in the newly released Integrated Index for Postal Development. Providing a snapshot of postal development in 170 countries, this new index is a powerful tool which governments, regulators and postal operators can use to promote postal excellence. This year’s global top three (Switzerland, France and Japan) and the regional champions (Brazil, Mauritius, Poland, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates) deserve to be congratulated on their outstanding performance.
We will also be celebrating the younger generation, who are not losing the habit of writing even in this age of new technology. This year’s winner of the UPU"s International Letter-Writing Competition is fourteen-year-old Eva Giordano Palacios from Togo, who has written a poignant letter to the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres, calling for increased efforts to help poor countries abolish old practices which persist because of a lack of socioeconomic development.

As these examples show, the postal world is very much alive. So let us adopt new technologies, and embrace transformation!
I wish you a happy World Post Day.
Bishar A. Hussein
UPU Director General
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