UNION POSTALE

MOVING THE POSTAL SECTOR FORWARD SINCE 1875 | **AUTUMN 2025**

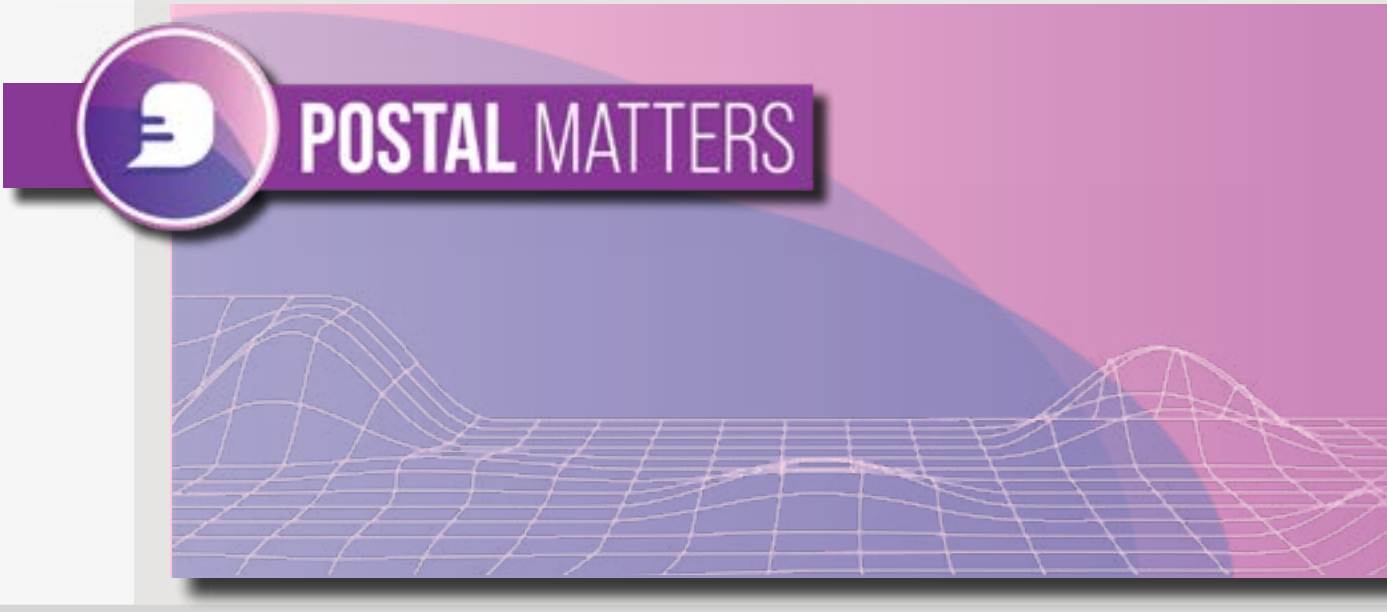
UPU UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION



UPU LEAVES DUBAI WITH BOLD NEW OUTLOOK


VOICE MAIL


DIGITAL UNION


POSTAL MATTERS

UPU MEDIA ZONE

"Voice Mail" brings postal stories from around the world to life.

Each episode features voices from across the sector. From those delivering mail on the ground to the decision-makers shaping global logistics, and the many behind-the-scenes professionals keeping the system running smoothly.

Listen and subscribe on your favourite streaming platform: **https://www.upu.int/en/News-Media/Podcast**

"Digital Union" is the Universal Postal Union's monthly newsletter providing news and information on the activities of the UN specia9wlized agency responsible for postal matters.

Subscribe to stay updated on the latest postal developments: **https://www.upu.int/en/News-Media/Newsletter**

The UPU's blog "Postal Matters" offers fresh insights into the international postal sector, as well as its technological advances and latest innovations. Postal operators and other postal sector players are welcome to send us their contributions containing reflections, views and perspectives on the postal future, e-commerce, sustainable development, financial inclusion and other related areas.

Check out the latest articles: **https://www.upu.int/en/News-Media/Blog**

To have your postal blog featured, contact us at **communication@upu.int**

6 DIRECTOR GENERAL'S FOREWORD
Delivering a renewed vision from Dubai to the world

7 EDITOR'S NOTE
Beyond Dubai

9 CALL FOR DONORS
Post4Health

32 THE WINNING LETTER OF THE 54TH INTERNATIONAL LETTER-WRITING COMPETITION

42 UPU TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
Women's voices, shared reflections

44 UPU TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS
The UPU's Unified Data Platform is powering a new era of agentic AI

47 UPU TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS
UPU delivers on 'delivered duty paid' promise with partners

50 UPU TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS
India Post, UPU link up for global low-cost remittances

53 MARKET FOCUS
Resilience in action: How Cambodia Post set the gold standard for postal disaster preparedness

58 DIGEST

61 PUBLICATION CORNER

62 RECOMMENDED READINGS





10

SPEAKERS' CORNER

LEADING THE UPU INTO THE DUBAI CYCLE

Re-elected at the Dubai Congress held in September, Director General Masahiko Metoki and Deputy Director General Marjan Osvald share their reflections on the UPU's progress and outline how unity, trust and innovation will guide the organization into its new strategic cycle.

16

UPU FORUM

GLOBAL POSTAL LEADERS ENVISION PATHWAYS TO A BRIGHT POSTAL FUTURE

Ministers, heads of regulators and CEOs from posts and the private sector highlighted diversification, partnerships and finding new ways to build trust with customers as keys to the sector's future success during the UPU Global Leaders Summit on the sidelines of the 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai.



29

UPU AWARDS

WAVES OF INSPIRATION AT THE 54TH INTERNATIONAL LETTER-WRITING COMPETITION

CONTENTS



22

COVER STORY

UPU LEAVES DUBAI WITH BOLD NEW OUTLOOK

Following the 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai, the UPU has a clear and future-focused plan to reinvigorate postal services for the years to come.

34

CC CORNER

REASON SOLUTIONS POWERS POSTAL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WORLDWIDE

In a bid to advance the UPU's vision of a more connected and digital postal ecosystem, UPU Consultative Committee member Reason Solutions has successfully modernized global postal operations with a number of national Posts.

37



UPU KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

HOW DIVERSIFICATION AND MULTILATERALISM CAN DRIVE POSTAL GROWTH

40



UPU KNOWLEDGE CENTRE

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE POSTAL SECTOR: UPU GENDER FELLOWSHIP AT THE DUBAI CONGRESS

Since its launch in 2018, the UPU's gender fellowship has continued to grow as a flagship initiative to empower women leaders in the postal sector.

UNION POSTALE

UNION POSTALE is the Universal Postal Union's flagship magazine, founded in 1875. It is published quarterly in five languages and takes a closer look at UPU activities, featuring international news and developments from the postal sector.

The magazine regularly publishes well researched articles on topical issues facing the industry, as well as interviews with the sector's leading individuals. It is distributed widely to the UPU's 192 member countries, including thousands of decision-makers from governments and Posts, as well as other postal stakeholders. All regard it as an important source of information about the UPU and the postal sector at large.

UNION POSTALE is also published in French, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese.

The Universal Postal Union neither endorses any products or services offered by third-party advertisers nor guarantees the veracity of any claims made by the same. Opinions expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of the UPU.

It is expressly forbidden to reproduce any part of UNION POSTALE magazine (including text, images or illustrations) without prior permission.

AUTUMN 2025

Refers to the season in the country of publication.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
Yana Brugier (YB)

AUTHORS: Makiko Hayashi (MH), Kayla Redstone (KR), Fabienne Blaser (FB), Robert Kodingo (RK), Helen Norman (HN), Pooran Parampath (PP), and Titani Joseph Mkanalumo (TJM)

DESIGN AND LAYOUT:
Sonja Denovski
PRINTING: UPU Print Shop
ADVERTISING:
communication@upu.int

CONTACT:
UNION POSTALE
International Bureau
Universal Postal Union
3015 BERNE
SWITZERLAND
PHONE: +41 31 350 31 11
E-MAIL: communication@upu.int
WEBSITE:
www.upu.int/en/News-Media

DELIVERING A RENEWED VISION FROM DUBAI TO THE WORLD



"The decisions taken in Dubai represent a collective commitment to a modern, connected and inclusive postal future, particularly in digital and financial services. These outcomes reflect the confidence of our member countries in the UPU's mission and leadership."

Masahiko Metoki
Director General, UPU

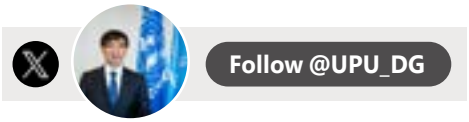
The 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai was a defining moment for our Union and the wider postal community. Over two weeks of intensive dialogue, debate and collaboration, we collectively decided on a bold, future-focused plan to reinvigorate postal services for the years to come.

At the heart of the decisions adopted by the 28th Congress lie two central outcomes: the adoption of the UPU Strategy for 2026–2029 and the Dubai Business Plan. Together, they establish a clear and actionable roadmap outlining a shared vision of a postal sector that is interconnected, inclusive and sustainable, empowered by a seamless and innovative postal network.

The new strategy focuses on three goals: the first leverages the single postal territory through an effective, rules-based system guaranteeing quality, affordable and accessible postal services worldwide; the second strengthens global postal sector innovation with a view to enhancing communication, trade and customer experience; and the third reinforces cooperation and regionalization to bring the UPU closer to its members and ensure that no country is left behind.

To deliver on these goals, the Congress approved three complementary work plans: the Integrated Product Plan, the Integrated Remuneration Plan and System, and the Integrated Quality of Service Plan. Together, these will modernize and harmonize postal operations in this e-commerce era, aligning products with customer needs and upholding fair remuneration and improved service quality across the international postal network.

The Congress also reaffirmed Posts' critical role in sustainable development. Member countries agreed to foster the sector's contribution to inclusion and climate action, including by advancing women's empowerment initiatives and establishing the new UPU Climate Facility to support operators in implementing practical climate solutions aimed at reducing emissions, improving efficiency and building resilience to climate-related risks.



Another milestone was the adoption of the new Development Cooperation Policy, which deepens regional engagement and enhances the UPU's presence across all regions. By working closely with regional postal unions and local partners, we will deliver more responsive and results-driven support, particularly for least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries.

The decisions taken in Dubai represent a collective commitment to a modern, connected and inclusive postal future, particularly in digital and financial services. These outcomes reflect the confidence of our member countries in the UPU's mission and leadership.

I am honoured to have been re-elected, together with the Deputy Director General Marjan Osvald, to continue guiding the International Bureau through this new cycle. This renewed mandate is both a privilege and a responsibility to advance the UPU's mission with unity, transparency and trust.

The work ahead will be demanding, but our direction is clear. Together, we will transform the outcomes of the Dubai Congress into lasting progress, building a modern, resilient and inclusive postal network connecting all communities and enabling a better future for all.

MASAHIKO **METOKI**
Director General, UPU

BEYOND DUBAI

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Dubai Congress marked a defining moment for the international postal community – one of renewal, unity and ambition. As the UPU begins this new cycle, the decisions taken and the leadership reaffirmed in Dubai have set a clear direction for the years ahead: a postal sector that is not only resilient but innovative, inclusive and ready to meet the evolving needs of the people it serves.

This issue of Union Postale captures that forward momentum. From the insights shared at the Global Leaders Summit to the Congress resolutions charting the course for new market and operational reforms, each story reflects a sector in transformation. Our cover story unpacks the key outcomes of the Congress, shaping the postal market for the years ahead, while in Speakers' Corner, the UPU's newly re-elected management reflects on the mandate received from member countries and their shared commitment to trust, innovation and inclusion.

Innovation is a strong thread throughout this edition. From the UPU's new AI postal agent and delivered duty paid (DDP) solutions developed with private sector partners, to India Post's Unified Payments Interface initiative connecting postal services with national payment systems, this issue shows how technology is redefining the sector.

This edition also celebrates the people behind the progress. The Gender Fellowship programme, featured in Technical Assistance, demonstrates how capacity building and mentorship empower women to shape the sector's future.

As we look beyond Dubai, one message is clear: the postal community is ready to deliver – not only mail and parcels, but opportunity, trust and connection in every corner of the world.

Happy reading!

YANA **BRUGIER**
Editor-in-chief

FarEye

UPU Consultative Committee Gold Member

Parcel volumes are exploding. Posts are built to win this scale.

"You can't afford to be six steps behind. The winners are those at the front of the wave, and partnerships like ***FarEye help us stay there."***

Charles Brewer

Group Chief Executive Officer

Pos Malaysia



It's time to modernize delivery.

- **98%** on-time delivery at Pos Malaysia
- **35%** volume surge at CouriersPlease
- **20%** lower delivery costs at Slovenia Post

Partner with FarEye.
Secure Your Network's Future.

Scan to know more



Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, JAPAN

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication of Japan (MIC) has announced a 300,000 USD support to Post4health

LA POSTE GROUPE

La Poste Groupe (France) is supporting the Post4Health Facility with a total amount of 100,000 USD.

CALL FOR DONORS

No one is safe until everyone is reached.

With over three billion people living in rural or isolated areas, ensuring access to life-saving health products remains one of the greatest logistical challenges of our time.

The Universal Postal Union's Post4Health facility was created during the early stages of COVID-19 vaccine deployment, when many countries lacked the cold-chain infrastructure needed for vaccine delivery. Postal operators, often the only service present in hard-to-reach areas, proved their critical role by distributing medicines, tests and protective equipment at the height of the pandemic.

Today, Post4Health has grown into a broader initiative helping Posts deliver vaccines, medicines, diagnostics and health services across national territories. In many countries, postal operators serve as the official distributors of medical equipment, yet increased demand have strained their capacity.

Post4Health addresses these challenges by supporting Posts with temperature-controlled vehicles, cold-chain equipment, and logistics expertise, ensuring safe, reliable delivery of essential supplies to even the most remote communities.

As the United Nations specialized agency for the postal sector, the UPU is proud to lead this effort, but we cannot do it alone.

Support the Post4Health facility and help extend life-saving services to the last mile.

As a multi-stakeholder facility, Post4Health provides a flexible platform for donors to increase synergies and have a greater impact. In order to operate, Post4Health relies on voluntary funding from governments, national Posts, the private sector and development partners.

For more information, please contact: post4health@upu.int

https://www.upu.int/en/partner-with-us/where-we-need-your-support/post4health

LEADING THE UPU INTO THE DUBAI CYCLE

Re-elected at the Dubai Congress held in September, Director General Masahiko Metoki and Deputy Director General Marjan Osvald share their reflections on the UPU's progress and outline how unity, trust and innovation will guide the organization into its new strategic cycle.

Interview by MAKIKO **HAYASHI**



Union Postale: **Congratulations on your re-election. What does this renewed mandate mean to you personally, and what message would you like to convey to the UPU's 192 member countries?**
Masahiko Metoki: I would like to begin by expressing my heartfelt gratitude to all member countries for the confidence that you have once again placed in me. The Dubai Congress was a defining moment. We entered into it at an important turning point, during a moment of uncertainty for the global economy and the postal sector. Yet, we emerged with renewed determination and a clear vision for the years ahead. Member countries came together to agree on a new strategy and business plan that place the postal network at the centre of social and economic inclusion.

My message is simple: unity must continue to guide our work. Each member country – regardless of size or resources – contributes to the strength of our single postal territory. The decisions that we took in Dubai will now need to be translated into results that people can perceive in their daily lives.

Marjan Osvald: This renewed mandate holds both personal and professional meaning for me. On a personal level, it is a new commitment to my family as we continue our journey for another four years in Berne. Professionally, it is a great privilege to continue serving the international postal community. I truly love this work – it allows me to help others, which has always been one of my guiding principles.

Being re-elected with such strong support is deeply humbling. I see it as recognition of what we have achieved and as a renewed responsibility to continue building on that progress. What touched me most were the many warm wishes that I received – not only from colleagues around the world but also from the staff of the International Bureau. Their encouragement reinforces my belief that our strength lies in collaboration, respect and trust across the entire UPU family.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ABIDJAN CYCLE

The Dubai Congress marked the end of an important four-year cycle.

What lessons have you drawn from leading the organization through complex global challenges, from a pandemic to digital transformation?
MM: The past four years have been some of the most demanding in the UPU's long history. The world has changed rapidly, shaped by a global health crisis, shifting markets and accelerating advances in technology. These changes have affected how people communicate, trade and interact with public services. Through it all, the postal sector has proved its resilience and continued to deliver when societies needed it most.

This experience has reinforced the importance of innovation that serves people, as opposed to technology for its own sake. Guiding the UPU through these challenges has strengthened my conviction that dialogue and trust are our most powerful assets. These values are the foundation of meaningful change. Reform is possible only when everyone is heard and respected.

Resilience also means being ready for what we cannot predict. Natural disasters have become more frequent and severe, threatening operations and livelihoods. The UPU's work helps member countries to strengthen preparedness and continuity plans, so that essential services can be restored quickly after crises. This approach, which focuses on anticipating rather than simply reacting to crises, will be increasingly important as climate risks grow.



"My message is simple: unity must continue to guide our work. Each member country – regardless of size or resources – contributes to the strength of our single postal territory."

Masahiko Metoki
UPU Director General

I have also learned that leadership in uncertain times depends on teamwork. The professionalism of the International Bureau staff and the commitment of our member countries have been constant sources of strength. By empowering others and encouraging cooperation, we have been able to keep the UPU agile and responsive to change.

How do you view the UPU's progress since 2021, particularly in terms of its institutional reform and global outreach?
MO: I can very clearly remember 25 August 2021 in Abidjan, when Metoki-san and I were elected. At that time, the direction and priorities of the Abidjan cycle had already been established by Congress and the previous management. Our task was to carry forward that work with greater consistency, transparency and efficiency.

Since then, I believe that the Union has strengthened both its credibility and visibility. I was especially proud that our 150th anniversary in 2024 helped to raise the UPU's profile in the international community and renewed awareness of the enduring relevance of the Post.

At the same time, there is still much to do. Digitalization and artificial intelligence are transforming our sector and giving us powerful tools to narrow development gaps between countries. If we do not seize these opportunities, the divide between industrialized and developing nations will only widen. The Dubai Congress has set a clear strategy for the years ahead, and our responsibility now is to turn that vision into results that benefit our members and citizens alike.

VISION AND PRIORITIES FOR THE DUBAI CYCLE

The Dubai Congress also marks the beginning of a new strategic cycle for the UPU.

What is the overarching vision that you aim to advance through the newly adopted UPU Strategy 2026–2029 and the Dubai Business Plan?
MM: The UPU Strategy 2026–2029 defines the direction of our Union for the next four years. It is built around a clear vision: to create a society that is interconnected, inclusive and enduring, empowered by a seamless and innovative postal network. This vision reflects both continuity and renewal.

Our priorities for the Dubai cycle will focus on three main goals. The first is to strengthen the global postal network through rules-based cooperation that guarantees fairness, transparency and cohesion among member countries. The second goal is to foster innovation and modernization. Postal operators are adapting to new patterns of communication and e-commerce, and the UPU must continue to support them in this journey.

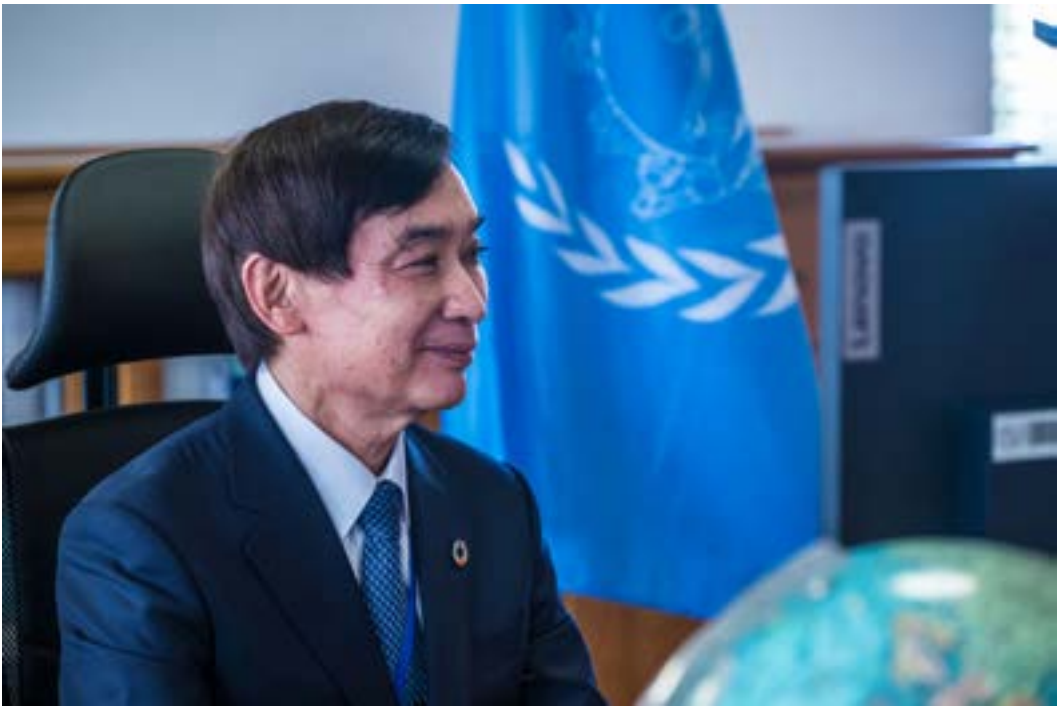
By modernizing operations, improving quality of service and engaging in partnerships, the postal sector can regain its role as a trusted channel for trade and communication. The third goal is to enhance regional cooperation. The UPU's expanded regional offices have brought the organization closer to its members, allowing us to respond more effectively to local needs.

The Dubai Business Plan translates these ambitions into measurable results. It sets out practical measures, indicators and timelines to track progress and adjust our work to emerging challenges. Ultimately, the strategy and business plan are about empowering every member country to benefit from a network that is modern, inclusive and ready for the future.



"I was especially proud that our 150th anniversary in 2024 helped to raise the UPU's profile in the international community and renewed awareness of the enduring relevance of the Post."

Marjan Osvald
UPU Deputy Director General



"The UPU's strength lies not only in its history but in the people who make its work possible. The UPU is at its best when we work as one."

Masahiko Metoki
UPU Director General

Regional engagement and the role of wider postal sector players have grown considerably. How do you plan to sustain this momentum and encourage greater participation from all stakeholders?
MO: Member countries have made it clear that they want the UPU to serve them more directly at regional level. The network of regional offices has expanded since 2022 from seven to 15 worldwide, reflecting growing demand for proximity and support. These offices play an increasingly important role in strengthening the UPU's presence, improving coordination and assisting members in addressing their regional priorities.

In Dubai, member countries also agreed to rename the "restricted unions" as "regional unions," a change that highlights their collaborative role in advancing UPU objectives at the regional level. The challenge is to do so efficiently and in a way that remains financially sustainable.

The wider postal ecosystem has also become more important. The Consultative Committee acts as a bridge between the public and private sectors, and its expanding membership brings new perspectives and expertise. These members add real value to the Union's work by helping us to connect with the innovation taking place in the private sector.

Technology is transforming the entire landscape of delivery. In the future, the distinction between postal and logistics operators will continue to blur. To remain relevant, the UPU must be open to new actors – from fintechs and start-ups to e-commerce and digital service providers. Collaboration across this broader delivery ecosystem will be essential to the sector's success.

On a more personal note, what continues to inspire you about the postal mission and the work of the UPU?
MO: It is hard to believe, but next year will mark 30 years since I joined the postal sector. Over these decades, I have witnessed the sector's remarkable transformation – from traditional mail to modern logistics and digital communications. This constant evolution, driven by technology and people, continues to inspire me every day.

The postal world has always been about connecting people, but today its role is much broader. What we once called the postal sector has become part of a wider delivery ecosystem that brings together e-commerce, financial inclusion and even digital government services. This is not only a change in name, but a change in mindset. Posts are now universal delivery networks serving both physical and digital needs.

Few industries have shown such resilience and capacity to reinvent themselves. As e-commerce expands, so does the need for fast, affordable and sustainable delivery. Posts are uniquely positioned to meet that need, particularly in areas where inclusion and access still matter most.

What motivates me most is the diversity and inclusiveness of this global network. The postal family brings together governments, businesses, communities and individuals, all working towards a common goal – to keep people connected. Living in Switzerland, I see daily how a high-performing postal operator can set a standard of excellence and how this experience can inspire others.

The UPU's mission is to connect experience and innovation across its membership. Each country has its own strengths, and there is no single model that fits all. What matters is

"Our sector is changing faster than ever, and it is easy to lose sight of what makes the Post unique. At its heart, our mission is simple – to connect people. Communication, listening and dialogue must remain our foundation."

Marjan Osvald
UPU Deputy Director General



open dialogue and a willingness to share. When member countries express their needs clearly and exchange ideas, we can design solutions together. The strength of the postal world lies in this diversity and cooperation which now extend across the entire delivery sector.

As you begin this new term of office, what message would you like to share with the wider UPU community, including partners and the staff of the International Bureau?
MM: To all members of the UPU community, including our colleagues across member countries and restricted unions, our partners, and the staff of the International Bureau, I extend my sincere thanks. The achievements of the past cycle have been possible only through your dedication, professionalism and teamwork.

As we move forward, my message is one of unity and shared purpose. The UPU's strength lies not only in its history but in the people who make its work possible. The UPU is at its best when we work as one. Within the International Bureau, I will continue to encourage a culture of openness, creativity and respect where every voice can contribute to innovation. The success of our mission depends on how well we work together and how effectively we translate ideas into tangible progress.

To our partners across the UN system, regional organizations, the private sector and academia, I extend an invitation to strengthen collaboration. The future of the postal sector depends on partnerships that connect knowledge, technology and investment. The coming years will be decisive. With renewed determination and trust, I believe that we can make the UPU an even stronger platform for cooperation and a catalyst for progress in every corner of the world.

MO: Our sector is changing faster than ever, and it is easy to lose sight of what makes the Post unique. At its heart, our mission is simple – to connect people. Communication, listening and dialogue must remain our foundation. I have always believed in open discussion. When I joined the International Bureau, I said that my door would always be open. Some colleagues have taken that opportunity, others less so, but the principle remains the same. Respect, trust and transparency are the basis of good cooperation.

I am convinced that postal and delivery services continue to play a vital role in connecting communities and economies. If I did not believe that, I would not be here. We also need to be more efficient, both within the UPU and as part of the wider UN system. When a member country needs assistance, it should receive it quickly. We must adapt to the pace of our members' realities.

On a personal level, I was shaped by a postal culture that valued the postal worker as a trusted member of the community. That spirit of public service continues to guide me today. As we enter this new cycle, I hope that we can all work together in good health and peace, with a renewed commitment to serve our member countries and adapt to their evolving needs.

There will be many challenges ahead, both immediate and long-term, but also many opportunities. Our customers remain at the heart of everything we do. Serving them better is the true measure of our success, and I am honoured to continue contributing to the UPU's growth and transformation in the years to come. MH

CONNECT•POST

CONNECT A POST, CONNECT A COMMUNITY

ADVANCING UNIVERSAL DIGITAL INCLUSION THROUGH THE POST BY 2030.





GLOBAL POSTAL LEADERS ENVISION PATHWAYS TO A BRIGHT POSTAL FUTURE

Ministers, heads of regulators and CEOs from posts and the private sector highlighted diversification, partnerships and finding new ways to build trust with customers as keys to the sector's future success during the UPU Global Leaders Summit on the sidelines of the 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai.

Text by KAYLA **REDSTONE**

In opening remarks to the high-level gathering, UPU Director General Masahiko Metoki called for cooperation from all stakeholders – public and private sector alike – to ensure the network could deliver maximum value to citizens and businesses everywhere into the future.

"With digitization reshaping economies and public expectations evolving rapidly, postal operators are under increasing pressure to modernize their role from service providers to central enablers of national development, digital inclusion and cross-border commerce," he said.

Congress Chair and 7X Group CEO Tariq Al Wahedi joined the UPU Director General to open the discussions, underscoring the forum's objective to create a blueprint for the future of the post that is "scalable, inclusive and sustainable."

SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE

The first panel brought together Spanish Vice Minister of Transport and Sustainable Mobility Rafael Guerra Posadas, State Post Bureau of China Director General Zhao Chongjiu, Permanent Secretary of India's Department of Posts Vandita Kaul, Austrian Post CEO Walter Oblin and Oman Post's then Chief Postmaster General, Sayyid Nasr AlBusaidi.

"We as member countries and the Universal Postal Union need to, amongst ourselves, make an effort to strike that balance between the economic development of (postal) operators and the provision of the public service that is so necessary."

Rafael Guerra Posadas
Vice Minister of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, Spain



Rafael Guerra Posadas, Zhao Chongjiu, Vandita Kaul, Walter Oblin and Sayyid Nasr AlBusaidi took part in Panel 1, moderated by Alex Taylor, sharing perspectives on innovation, diversification and the post's role in digital inclusion.

The panelists shared their views on pathways for innovation and long-term trends for the sector, touching on the post's role as an inclusion catalyst.

They highlighted how posts could diversify through the uptake of new technologies, becoming a partner to connect citizens and businesses everywhere with access to cutting-edge digital services.

"We as member countries and the Universal Postal Union need to, amongst ourselves, make an effort to strike that balance between the economic development of (postal) operators and the provision of the public service that is so necessary," said Posadas, emphasizing the need to explore AI and other predictive technologies to make post better and faster.

Zhao underscored that the post had long been a factor in populations' quality of life, suggesting the post's mission could be repurposed in the modern era to close digital divides.

Discussing India's win-win strategy for the future, Kaul highlighted how the country was already leveraging the posts network to deliver public services, providing new business opportunities for the post while helping the government meet the public's digital service expectations.

"In India, the government is looking at the Department of Post, not just for public infrastructure for post and logistics, but also to provide the digital public infrastructure base for India in collaboration with the telecom sector," she explained.

In Austria, investments in building a strong physical network at home and abroad had helped the post build the trust needed to diversify into other services, such as banking and, soon, telecommunications, explained Oblin. He emphasized that adopting new technology was essential to providing a better service.

"We believe as a group we have to be efficient and technology-oriented. I always say efficiency has to be a part of our DNA," added Oblin.

Diversification had been a boon for Oman Post as well, with technology and partnerships fuelling the post's transformation.

"We view the Oman Post as an enabling partner. And what I mean by that is to enable the (public) sector and to enable the private sector," said AlBusaidi.

SHOWCASING PARTNERS

A special duet session brought 7X and Amazon together to discuss their successful quick e-commerce collaboration, which saw "dark stores" created within the 7X logistics network to enable the delivery of Amazon orders within minutes.

7X Group CEO Al Wahedi and Amazon Vice President for the Middle East, Africa and Türkiye, Ronaldo Mouchawar, shared their take on how a rapid shift in customer needs fuelled their motivation to leverage the postal operator's well-established, fast and accurate network to launch into the quick commerce business.

National attitudes played a fundamental part in establishing trust between organizations that may have previously been seen as competitors, explained Mouchawar, who said United Arab Emirates had created a collective drive between both the public and private sectors towards the country's development.

"I think this, in itself, builds a huge amount of trust because we're all after one goal: making the lives of citizens and residents and whoever comes to visit the UAE a lot better," he said.

Al Wahedi added that working as one team has been crucial for not only trust, but also mastery.

"We sit with the Amazon team quite often to get that constant feedback on how to improve ourselves," he said.

SHAPING TOMORROW'S PRIORITIES

The final panel gathered Brazilian Vice-Minister of Communications Sonia Faustino Mendes, US Postal Regulatory Commissioner Thomas Day, Mongolia Post CEO Telmen Gerelt, and International Post Corporation CEO Holger Winklbauer to provide actionable immediate and medium-term strategies.

Faustino led with a call for regulators and governments to create an enabling environment for innovation.

"It's only by having the public and private sector work together that we will really achieve the three pillars that we've set out for ourselves ... that is digital innovation, fair competition and universalization," she said.

> "I think this, in itself, builds a huge amount of trust because we're all after one goal: making the lives of citizens and residents and whoever comes to visit the UAE a lot better."
>
> **Ronaldo Mouchawar**
> Amazon Vice President for the Middle East, Africa and Türkiye

Day added that he believed regulators ought to support the development of postal services in three ways: ensuring fair pricing that covers costs, ensuring a high standard for quality of service, and enabling innovation through flexible legislation.

Telman described how negotiations with Mongolia's regulator resulted in a new postal pricing model – an essential step in offsetting the cost of delivering the universal service obligation.

As a near-term priority, the panelists highlighted the importance of providing simplified and efficient cross-border e-commerce services for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly as cross-border processes and associated data requirements become more complex. Targeting this underserved group could help further strengthen the post's trusted brand, positioning it to expand more readily into new service areas.

Winklbauer added that AI and other cutting-edge technologies were the tools to build the robust cross-border solutions needed.

UPU AS A FACILITATOR

Panellists also provided recommendations for how the UPU could help drive transformation across the sector.



In a special duet session, Tariq Al Wahedi and Ronaldo Mouchawar highlighted the successful e-commerce partnership between 7X and Amazon.



Sonia Faustino Mendes, Thomas Day, Telmen Gerelt, Holger Winklbauer took part in panel 3, moderated by Alex Taylor, sharing insights on "Shaping tomorrow's priorities - A leaders' panel".

They emphasized its role as a forum for discussion and multilateral agreement, highlighting how it could work to create linkages between partners, help countries exchange expertise and narrow the development gap. Its global view on the sector should be used to improve the efficiency of the network, they added.

In closing remarks, UPU Deputy Director General Marjan Osvald stressed the connection between a strong postal network, supported by government, and a cohesive society.

"Without responsible owners, you cannot build a responsible postal operator, and without both of them, you cannot build a successful society. Try and help us to build a successful society through the postal network of the future," he said. KR

"It's only by having the public and private sector work together that we will really achieve the three pillars that we've set out for ourselves ... that is digital innovation, fair competition and universalization."

Sonia Faustino Mendes
Vice-Minister of Communications, Brazil

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Text by MAKIKO **HAYASHI**

Speakers and attendees of the Global Leaders Summit shared more details about their priorities for the sector's development and the role they envision for partners and the UPU on the event's sidelines. Conversations focused on the reforms they see as essential over the next four years, the opportunities created through public–private partnerships, and how the UPU can enable and guide this progress.



SONIA FAUSTINO MENDES

Vice Minister of Communications, Brazil

We can list three main priorities for Brazil. The first is regulation of the postal sector, which will help unlock the market and bring fairer competition between private and public operators – always focusing on benefits for society. The second is expanding the business of Correios to help finance universal postal service. Broadening our activities makes it possible to sustain universalization and not leave it behind. The third is sustainability. We are investing in a fleet of electric vehicles, focusing on decarbonization and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) policies, and building an overall ESG strategy that highlights social, governance and environmental aspects.

Public–private partnerships are extremely important for our sector because they bring private-sector innovation and investment capacity together with our public mission of universal service. We have several examples – the sale of insurance, the development of a marketplace platform, and the "DNA Correios" project for parcel tracking. Without such partnerships, it would be difficult to innovate as a public company, given resource constraints.

The UPU can help a great deal, especially on the technical side, by promoting capacity-building and exchanges between countries.

Some countries are more advanced and can share valuable experience with developing countries, including Brazil. On the political side, the UPU can also support cooperation through regional unions and by creating working groups in areas of expertise. The UPU plays a catalytic role in sharing good practices and success stories from all countries.



WALTER OBLIN

Chief Executive Officer, Austrian Post

There is one overarching challenge that we all face – managing the transformation from a mail company to an e-commerce player. For Austrian Post, our priorities are to keep mail relevant for as long as possible, invest in parcel capacity, speed and innovation, and drive technological change and efficiency.

The postal sector in itself is a public–private partnership and has therefore survived for centuries. Today, the biggest task is to modernize regulation. We all face new customers and competitors, and regulation often lags behind. Sustainability is another key area where public–private partnerships can really help. Our efforts to become a leader in sustainable logistics were fundamentally supported by the Austrian government, which is a real success story.

Together, we as postal companies form the strongest global network in the world. By offering an integrated and competitive service to all e-commerce shippers, we have a huge opportunity. The most important mandate for the UPU is to facilitate this transformation.



JOÃO BENTO

Chief Executive Officer, CTT – Correios de Portugal

The main challenge for the postal sector is the digitalization of the economy. Mail is losing both its social and business importance, so postal operators must reinvent themselves by finding and developing alternatives. On one hand, we are transforming ourselves into an e-commerce logistics player; on the other, we are creating new forms of communication such as smart mail to adapt to the digital era. Transformation is therefore our main priority.

CTT is, in fact, an extreme case of public–private partnership, since we are a fully private company listed on the Lisbon Stock Exchange, yet we provide the universal service through a concession. This model shows how private-sector innovation and efficiency can serve the public good. I strongly believe that innovation and the dynamics of private industry should benefit public postal services.

The UPU plays a key role in fostering knowledge-sharing and the exchange of experiences. Its digital initiatives are valuable, but most importantly, it brings together operators from all over the world. Simply creating a space for dialogue is one of the most relevant contributions the UPU can make to promote innovation across the sector.



SHRI JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA

Minister of Communications and Minister of Development of North Eastern Region, India

India Post is moving from a traditional postal service to a modern logistics organization. We have two fundamental strengths: trust and reach. With roughly 165,000 service points across the country, we have probably the largest logistics distribution network in the world. We are also integrating technology through our home-grown Advanced Postal Technology system, developed by our own Centre of Excellence for Postal Technology,

which is being implemented nationwide. We are rebranding, re-engineering our business processes, and launching new products in mail and parcel services to strengthen our customer focus.

The public–private partnership model is crucial. A good example is India's digital public infrastructure. The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) was built on a government-led framework but the applications on top were developed by private players. This model has made UPI the largest digital payments system in the world, enabling billions of low-value transactions each month and empowering people from all walks of life – from street vendors and farmers to students.

There is a lot we can do together. The UPU provides a unique platform to strengthen cooperation through bilateral and regional partnerships. During this Congress, we have discussed collaboration with regions such as Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. We aim to both contribute and learn from others, building a stronger and more inclusive global postal ecosystem.



IHOR SMILIANSKYI

Director General, Ukrposhta

First of all, digitalization. Without it, and without using artificial intelligence, we cannot deliver quality service to our customers. We plan to use AI in all aspects of our business – from route planning and delivery optimization to improving efficiency in international logistics. Our second priority is diversification. As traditional postal revenues decline, diversification becomes the key to progress and sustainability.

To be honest, we must first rely on ourselves. We can count on our government and regulators, but our own efforts come first. That said, private investment is welcome and can make a big difference. In Ukraine, we serve even in frontline areas where private companies cannot go. Once the market stabilizes and confidence grows, I believe private capital will join and help us invest in the future.

The UPU is unique because it can share global experience across different regions and economic conditions. Its size and reach are unmatched. By connecting operators and sharing best practices, the UPU can help the entire sector operate profitably, efficiently and with the best possible quality.



PHILIPPE WAHL

Former Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, La Poste Groupe (France)

Our priority is to ride the wave of e-commerce and develop, alongside the decline in mail traffic, the rapidly growing parcel business. The key is to serve e-commerce and the billions of individuals who depend on it. To achieve this, posts must think about their future and invest in it.

One crucial area is modernizing the interaction between postal operators and customs authorities to harness the growth linked to cross-border commerce. This is a partnership that must evolve – between posts and customs. Working together will enable us to innovate and become much more effective in supporting international trade.

The UPU is both a crossroads of experiences and a platform for sharing our successes and challenges. It is also an international institution that supports countries most in need. That is the strength of multilateralism, and at La Poste we believe deeply in that role.

UPU LEAVES DUBAI WITH BOLD NEW OUTLOOK





Following the 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai, the UPU has a clear and future-focused plan to reinvigorate postal services for the years to come.

Text by KAYLA **REDSTONE**

Representatives from UPU member countries gathered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, over the course of two weeks during the 28th Universal Postal Congress to decide the future of the UN specialized organization and the postal network it facilitates.

Productive days filled with discussion, debate and negotiation resulted in clear direction on key issues facing the Union and its members, including positioning the postal network as the provider of choice for e-commerce and its contribution towards inclusion and sustainability.

In closing remarks to the Congress, UPU Director General Masahiko Metoki commended members for their engagement and commitment to realizing the potential of the postal network.

"We arrived in Dubai with the shared purpose of shaping the future of the UPU and our sector. Today, we leave with renewed determination and a clear path forward," he said.

"This Congress has been more than a gathering. It has been a moment of transformation, during which we faced challenges head-on, redefined our role in a rapidly changing world, and reaffirmed the values that unite us."

ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

TA primary objective for the plenipotentiary meeting was to determine the UPU's strategy for the upcoming strategic cycle, spanning 2026 to 2029, as well as an actionable roadmap, the Dubai Business Plan.

The 31 programmatic work plans were discussed and accepted in Congress Committee 3 on General Policy and Management of the Work of the Union, led by New Zealand Post's International Postal Policy and Regulation Director, Lindsay Welsh, who represented New Zealand as Chair.

"These together lay out a real future for us (as a sector) and a future for our Union," explained Welsh.

In adopting the strategy, UPU member countries agreed a new vision for the organization over the coming four years, focusing on the sector's role in building a society that is interconnected, inclusive and sustainable, empowered by a seamless, innovative postal network.

> "This Congress has been more than a gathering. It has been a moment of transformation, during which we faced challenges head-on, redefined our role in a rapidly changing world, and reaffirmed the values that unite us."
>
> **Masahiko Metoki**
> UPU Director General



"[The UPU's strategy and the Dubai Business Plan] together lay out a real future for us (as a sector) and a future for our Union."

Lindsay Welsh
International Postal Policy and Regulation Director, New Zealand

That vision will be materialized by achieving three strategic goals accompanied by a set of expected strategic outcomes.

The first goal focuses on leveraging the single postal territory – comprising the postal operators of the UPU's 192 member countries – through an effective, rules-based system. Under this goal, member countries would capitalize on the forum offered by the UPU to improve multilateral frameworks, guaranteeing quality, affordable, accessible and viable postal services. This includes enhancing the organization's platforms for dialogue, knowledge sharing and advocacy over the coming four years, resulting in reinforced cross-border supply chains.

The second goal focuses on strengthening the global postal sector through innovative approaches that better position its role in trade and communication. The goal focuses on developing customer-centric postal products, improving posts' ability to diversify their services in response to the changing market, ensuring the network's contribution to socio-economic development, and further enhancing collaboration across the sector.

Work under the third goal will see the UPU drive postal development through deepened cooperation and regionalization. This should result in enhanced postal infrastructure and reinforced capacity of member countries, supported by a stronger UPU presence in all regions.

The goals and their expected outcomes are supported by a detailed roadmap laid out in the Dubai Business Plan and its associated work proposals that define concrete actions and provide a robust framework for measuring the strategy's results.

Together, the strategy and business plan strive to modernize the network according to customer needs, positioning it as the partner of choice for the delivery of e-commerce and customer-centric postal services.

SERVICES FOR THE E-COMMERCE ERA

An essential component in readying the postal network for the future of e-commerce was the review and approval of three linked plans seeking the modernization and harmonization of postal products, pricing models, and the quality of postal services. Together, the three plans – the Integrated Product Plan (IPP), the Integrated Remuneration Plan (IRP) and its associated Integrated Remuneration System (IRS), and the Integrated Quality of Service Plan (IPP) – will help the postal network meet the changing needs of customers and e-commerce platforms, boosting its competitiveness as the delivery provider of choice.

"When the UPU was founded 150 years ago, there was no alternative to the postal network, to the UPU exchange of letters and

"When the UPU was founded 150 years ago, there was no alternative to the postal network, to the UPU exchange of letters and parcels, but, 150 years later, we are now in a situation where there's fierce competition in most of the markets of the world."

Felix Blaich
Director of International Relations, Deutsche Post

parcels, but, 150 years later, we are now in a situation where there's fierce competition in most of the markets of the world," said Felix Blaich, Director of International Relations at Deutsche Post, who represented Germany as Chair of the Congress committee responsible for reviewing the plans.

"We have to meet what the customer wants and it's (clear) that customers decide upon three dimensions – the product, the price and the quality of service ... We are now very confident that these plans meet the customer's need globally and that we will see volumes come back to the postal network based on what we've decided," he added.

With e-commerce customers demanding greater convenience and transparency, the approved IPP brings changes to the UPU's product portfolio – including letters, parcels and EMS – that provide customers with a menu of added-value services.

Congress streamlined the service portfolio and provided for new features including an optional proof of delivery service for parcels. In addition, a delivered duty paid service will be implemented, providing customers with greater transparency of delivery costs at the time an item is purchased and enabling seamless customs processes.

In turn, the plan eliminates unnecessary or redundant services, further reducing the burden on operators. For example, it will phase out the ECOMPRO parcel and limit the insured service to priority letter-post items containing only documents, and parcels, further aligning the portfolio to customer needs. It will also reduce the maximum weight of large letters to 1 kg.

The adapted product portfolio is complemented by updated remuneration models that ensure cost coverage for international delivery partners while keeping prices fair.

The Congress decided on two groups of remuneration-related proposals. First, they agreed on the implementation of a new Integrated Remuneration System (IRS) for 2026-2030 to further modernize and integrate the UPU remuneration systems. The IRS was developed following the Integrated Remuneration Plan for the previous 2022–2025 cycle. Member countries also adopted the proposed IRP for 2026-2029, which will guide the development of the next IRS beyond 2030.

The letter-post category – which includes the small packets typically used to carry small amounts of lightweight e-commerce goods – will see several cost-coverage improvements. The IRS adopted for the forthcoming cycle will base remuneration on each item's content, better accounting for the difference in cost of delivering goods versus documents. The new methodology also shifts to per-item remuneration for small packets rather than bulk weight-based averages, leading to more accurate and fairer remuneration. Furthermore, by 2027, all countries will be subject to the same, country-specific remuneration methodology.

For parcels, the IRS will gradually allow countries to self-declare rates based on domestic tariffs for equivalent services. For the first time, the system will also link parcels remuneration to delivery performance.

In an effort to align the varied systems, all items containing goods will be based on member countries' domestic tariffs. With that said, the new system maintains some provisions ensuring affordability and fair access for countries with low international flows or that have set domestic reference tariffs low for social reasons.

The Congress also adopted the UPU's first-ever IQP, which will help meet customers' demand for faster delivery and greater visibility on their e-commerce items.

The IQP introduces a harmonized quality measurement system for goods, providing a global overview on the reliability of e-commerce delivery services across the international postal network. An increase in mandatory item scans across the supply chain – from six mandatory scans to twelve – will give customers end-to-end visibility and improve delivery predictions.



Committee 2 on finance, represented by Chair, Alex Williams from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Vice-chair, Xin Song from China.



To support member countries in improving their quality of service according to the new standards, the IQP introduces a new Integrated Quality of Service Management Methodology (IQMM), a six-step framework that acts as a guide for continuous quality improvement and the basis of quality improvement projects. Furthermore, a modernized quality certification process will acknowledge those meeting expectations.

REINFORCED COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In Dubai, UPU member countries also underscored the post's crucial function as a driving force for inclusion and broader sustainable development, adopting work proposals and allocating budget towards gender equality and climate action initiatives in the coming four years.

The Dubai Congress positioned sustainable development as a core business opportunity for postal operators, looking towards how clean technologies, inclusive services, improved staff wellbeing and more resilient infrastructure could unlock new markets, strengthen operations and position posts as critical players in the digital economy.

In the 2026–2029 cycle, the UPU will help operators monetize greener delivery; accelerate cost savings through fleet, facilities, and network efficiency; access external funding; undertake social and environmental business innovation; and differentiate themselves through trusted, inclusive services that customers and regulators prefer.

While measurement and reporting will remain essential under the new workplans, they serve a bigger goal: enabling postal operators to meet the needs of stakeholders, launch "green" and "social" products, access finance at scale, and de-risk investment. The UPU will prioritize developing practical instruments that convert sustainable development activities into tangible commercial outcomes for members, such as designing new products, opening financing pathways, capacity building projects, and regional support.

According to the decisions, the UPU will continue its work on gender mainstreaming, strengthening the postal sector's position as an inclusive e-commerce provider to women entrepreneurs globally.

The UPU developed its first-ever policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women in 2023 – the fruits of a resolution adopted by member countries at the 2021 Abidjan Congress.

The policy is aligned with the UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, setting principles for women's inclusion within the UPU and through the postal sector via UPU processes, programmes, projects, activities and operations. The idea was to include more women in UPU decision-making processes and facilitate gender mainstreaming across UPU activities to ensure that postal services meet the needs of women, including a growing number of women entrepreneurs lacking connection to international markets.

Under the work plan, the UPU will also launch and operate a Climate Facility designed to support postal operators in implementing climate solutions that will help them reduce emissions, cut operating costs, build resilience to climate-related disasters, establish new sources of revenue, and meet the green-delivery requirements of e-commerce platforms and governments.

The facility will offer support in three areas: helping member countries access funding for projects, collecting

and sharing knowledge on climate innovations, and providing advocacy and policymaking support.

DEEPENING REGIONAL SUPPORT

Over the two weeks, member countries made clear their need for increased regional contact with the UPU secretariat – referred to as 'regionalization' – to support development projects.

The concept is covered as a key pillar in the UPU's Development Cooperation Policy for 2026-2029, adopted in Congress Committee 6 on Development Cooperation, which was led by Jamaica Post Postmaster General and CEO Lincoln Allen on behalf of Jamaica.

"Regionalization is the translation of the UPU's global strategy into a regional action plan, which effectively brings the UPU closer to member states. It also brings the UPU closer to decision makers and other stakeholders to ensure buy-in and financial support and under this arrangement no country will be left behind," said Allen.

The policy links the UPU's development work with the UN Sustainable Development Agenda, providing a basis to link regional priorities with global objectives.

Under the policy, the UPU will establish a more robust regional presence via its regional offices, ensuring local staff have the autonomy and flexibility needed to adapt to changing local contexts and are equipped to offer effective support for project management and resource mobilization. It strives to provide better support for least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS) and will be driven by closer cooperation with regional postal unions.

The policy will ensure strengthened transversal cooperation between directorates at the UPU's headquarters,

"Regionalization is the translation of the UPU's global strategy into a regional action plan, which effectively brings the UPU closer to member states. It also brings the UPU closer to decision makers and other stakeholders to ensure buy-in and financial support and under this arrangement no country will be left behind."

Lincoln Allen
Post Postmaster General and CEO, Jamaica







> "The main objective behind bringing these postal financial services (into the PPSA) is to ensure that the benefits of informed financial services choices reach the last mile."
>
> **Lakshmikanta Dash**
> Deputy Director General for International Relations and Global Business, India Post

guided by a comprehensive project management framework that maximizes the mobilization and the effective use of funds. The UPU will focus on South-South and Triangular Cooperation to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources, continually improving project design and implementation.

Finally, the policy will see a greater focus on disaster risk reduction and emergency assistance, using the UPU's regional presence to boost the resilience of the global postal network.

CONNECTING WITH PARTNERS

Building from the decision taken at the 2023 Extraordinary Congress that allowed wider postal sector players (WPSPs) to connect to the UPU's payments network, the Congress agreed to expand the UPU's Postal Payments Services Agreement (PPSA) to include savings, insurance, e-wallets and other financial services. In turn, the UPU will also develop its capacity building support to enable more postal operators to broaden their services offering in these areas.

The decision will help support postal operators' diversification, while leveraging its reach and connection to communities to boost financial inclusion.

"The main objective behind bringing these postal financial services (into the PPSA) is to ensure that the benefits of informed financial services choices reach the last mile," said Lakshmikanta Dash, who represented India as chair of the Congress committee responsible for postal financial services.

Partnering with wider financial services providers will be key to driving postal financial services innovation across the sector. During the Congress, the UPU organized several round tables on new digital payment solutions and services, including a special insurance panel organized with existing partners Visa, CNP and AXA.

MOVING PLAN TO ACTION

At a moment when many other UN organizations are facing financial constraints and implementing efficiency measures, the UPU's member countries supported maintaining the exceptional budgetary ceiling increase adopted at the UPU's 2023 Extraordinary Congress, ensuring it has the necessary resources to achieve its ambitious workplan.

This renewed confidence in the UPU extended to the organization's leadership team, with UPU Director General Masahiko Metoki and Deputy Director General Marjan Osvald being re-elected for a second term at the helm of its secretariat.

The adopted workplan will be implemented by the UPU's Council of Administration and Postal Operations Council, which meet biannually at the UPU's headquarters in Berne, Switzerland. The bodies will also measure the impact of the deliverables and adjust them throughout the cycle, as needed.

As Congress host country, United Arab Emirates, represented by 7X Group CEO Tariq Al Wahedi, will Chair the Council of Administration until 2029. La Poste Director for European and International Relations Jean-Paul Forceville, representing France, was elected by Postal Operations Council members to lead the UPU's technical body during the same period.

The next Universal Postal Congress will be held in 2029, with its host country yet to be decided.. KR



Waves of inspiration at the 54th International Letter-Writing Competition

Children often imagine, in play or simply out of curiosity, what it might be like to be someone else. But what happens when more than a million children around the world imagine the same thing? Then we discover the wonderful richness of their expression and how, despite their many different backgrounds, they share the same worries, dreams and hopes.

Text by FABIENNE **BLASER**

This was once again clearly demonstrated in the 54th edition of the Universal Postal Union's International Letter-Writing Competition (ILWC). The theme for the 2025 edition was: *"Imagine you are the ocean. Write a letter to someone explaining why and how they should take good care of you."* This theme demonstrates the way in which the competition has matured over the years to address increasingly complex global issues.

In the very first competition in 1971, the topic was simply *"Write a letter to a friend"*, leaving wide open what the children might wish to write about – whether a serious subject or simply sharing happy experiences with a friend. The 2025 theme is more demanding, but it also reflects greater confidence in children's ability to grapple with complex ideas.



The winners of the 54th International Letter Writing Competition: Gold for Reyyan Demiriz from Türkiye, Silver for Phạm Đoàn Minh Khuê from Viet Nam, and Bronze for Kanlanfe Ingrid Ouali from Burkina Faso.

It requires children to process information they may have acquired at school, from the news, or from conversations, and to engage thoughtfully with the social, political and scientific dimensions of pressing and sometimes uncomfortable global environmental issues.

In 2025, more than 1.6 million children aged 9 to 15 from 65 UPU member countries took on this challenging task, marking a record number of participating countries. The competition takes place in two stages.

In 2025, more than 1.6 million children aged 9 to 15 from 65 UPU member countries took on this challenging task, marking a record number of participating countries.

Each country, through its national postal operator or ministry of education, organizes a national contest and submits its winning letter to the UPU. The UPU first checks that all entries meet the basic participation criteria before passing them on to the international jury, which then selects three global winners and five special mentions.

This year's international jury included Jose Matheickal of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Vidar Helgesen of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC/UNESCO), representing the two co-organizing agencies, as well as Pascal Clivaz, former Deputy Director General of the UPU, and marine biologist and influencer Carissa Cabrera. More information about this year's jurors is available on the UPU website.

The four jurors unanimously selected the three winners: Gold for Reyyan Demiriz from Türkiye, Silver for Phạm Đoàn Minh Khuê from Viet Nam, and Bronze for Kanlanfe Ingrid Ouali from Burkina Faso.

Khuê lives in a coastal city and has already gained first-hand experience in ocean protection through school-led beach-clean-up activities, while both Reyyan and

"Every year, I am deeply moved by how young minds perceive the challenges of our world. Their letters renew my confidence that the future is in caring and capable hands – and remind us of our duty to do everything possible to help them succeed."

Marjan Osvald
UPU Deputy Director General

Kanlanfe come from inland regions far from the ocean. Nevertheless, the letters of all three demonstrate a deep understanding of the ocean's interconnectedness with all ecosystems on Earth, and of the devastating effects that its degradation has on the world's population. In all three letters, the ocean speaks with similar warnings and calls for action, yet delivers its message in a deeply individual way.

In Reyyan's letter, the ocean reminds humanity that it is older than all life on the planet, and that without it, life would not exist today: "You speak of progress, of dominion over nature, as if you are superior. But there is no 'you' and 'I'. There is only 'we'. You must remember: when I grow sick, the rain forgets its rhythm, the rivers run hollow, and the wind begins to carry sorrow instead of seed. When you heal the ocean, you begin to heal yourself."

Khuê chose a particularly creative approach. In her letter, the ocean addresses the famous film director James Cameron, urging him to use his influence to make a film that would discourage people from treating the ocean badly: "You have understood that my body



> "You speak of progress, of dominion over nature, as if you are superior. But there is no 'you' and 'I'. There is only 'we'. You must remember: when I grow sick, the rain forgets its rhythm, the rivers run hollow, and the wind begins to carry sorrow instead of seed. When you heal the ocean, you begin to heal yourself."
>
> **Reyyan Demiriz**
> Winner of the 54th International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People

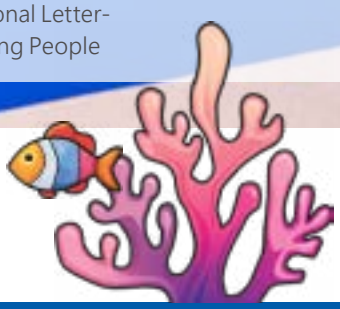
is not only made up of water and salt, and that I am a living world. My heart, however, has almost stopped beating. I cannot save myself, James! I desperately need you! Please help me! Wake up humanity by making a new film!"

The ocean in Kanlanfe's letter speaks to humanity in a hopeful yet admonishing tone, reminding people of the importance of its survival: "I am not simply a place for your holidays. I am a living being and a world of my own, but a world that needs you."

While the winners of the ILWC are traditionally invited to a ceremony at UPU headquarters in Berne, Switzerland, the award ceremony for the 54th edition took place during the 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai, in front of delegates from the member countries. Gold medalist Reyyan Demiriz read her letter aloud, and the three winners joined UPU Deputy Director General Marjan Osvald for a short discussion on their experience with the competition and its meaning for their future paths.

Reflecting on his role, which he first assumed in 2022, Mr Osvald said that the experience had grown particularly meaningful for him over time. "Every year, I am deeply moved by how young minds perceive the challenges of our world," he said. "Their letters renew my confidence that the future is in caring and capable hands – and remind us of our duty to do everything possible to help them succeed."

The UPU's ILWC not only continues to raise awareness of pressing global issues, but also honours the timeless art of writing. With the 55th edition of the competition approaching in 2026, we can be sure that the next generation of young writers will once again inspire us with their reflections on why human connection matters in a digital world. FB



Learn more about the rules and how to participate:
https://www.upu.int/en/universal-postal-union/outreach-campaigns/international-letterwriting-competition-for-young-people





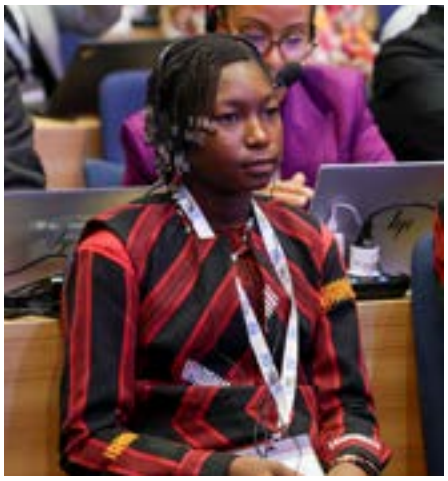
"You have understood that my body is not only made up of water and salt, and that I am a living world. My heart, however, has almost stopped beating. I cannot save myself, James! I desperately need you! Please help me! Wake up humanity by making a new film!"

Phạm Đoàn Minh Khuê
Seconf price winner of the 54th International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People



"I am not simply a place for your holidays. I am a living being and a world of my own, but a world that needs you. You humans, you young people with hearts overflowing with goodness and love, please look after me like I look after you! We depend on each other."

Kanlanfe Ingrid Ouali
Third price winner of the 54th International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People



To Humanity,

I'm the Ocean. Vast and eternal, the first cradle and final mirror. Before you carved language into stone, before the first fire touched your fingers, I was already singing in waves, breathing in moonlight, and witnessing the quiet dreams of wild life.

I am the blood of the Earth, the mirror of the sky, the pulse of life. And let, you, treat me as if I am lacking life. The sea does not reward those who are too anxious, too greedy, or too impatient. It is said by Anne Morrow Lindbergh, and you still rush, you still take, you forget sacredness that once tied your spirit to mine. You fill my lungs with your plastic and still expect me to nourish you. Have you forgotten that my breath makes your breath possible? The oxygen you praise in your forests is born here, in my swaying gardens of kelp and plankton, who are you to destroy such thing as nature herself?

You speak of progress, of dominion over nature, as if you are superior. But "There is no "you" and "I". There is only "we". You must remember: when I grow sick, the rain forgets its rhythm, the rivers run hollow, and the wind begins to carry sorrow instead of seed. When you heal the ocean, you begin to heal yourself. So come back to me, like kid returning to their mother. Walk my shores barefoot. Touch the sand with your hand, not your machines. Speak to me. I am always listening. For though I am old, I am not finished yet. And if you choose; we might start writing a new story, one where you do not drown in your own forgetting. For when I am wounds deeply enough, even the wind forgets its songs. It begins to carry sorrow instead of seed, ashes instead of blossoms. It rustles, and the sound it makes then is not a whisper but a warning. "The Earth has music for those who listen," wrote Shakespeare, but lately your ears are full of engines, slow down. Listen. The silence you hear growing louder around you is not the absence of noise. It is the vanishing of life.

Don't wait until your thirst teaches you that water was sacred. Don't wait until the last fish dies with a stomach full of your plastic, to finally ask if progress was ever worth the price of forgetting beauty. I don't curse you. Even now, I carry your ships safely. I cool your head. But I am getting tired. The tide that once brought you dreams now carries, warnings in its foam. And. Still, I offer you mercy. You must remember: I am rebirth and I will rise again. Clean or corrupted, singing or silenced. How I rise depends on you. Will you let your legacy be oil slicks and sunken bottles, or coral gardens and the return of whale song? The choice as it has always been, is yours. But if you care enough to ask how to care for me, I will not answer with grand commands, but with small, sacred gestures that ripple outward like waves from a single drop.

Start with your hands. Let them refuse what cannot be reused. Let them reach for glass instead of plastic, for permanence over convenience. Pick up what others leave behind on my shores. Yes, even if it is not yours. It is all yours. You belong to me as much as the gull on the tidepool. Watch what you send down your drains. Chemicals you wash away, microbeads you never see, they find me. They find the gills of fish. They find the cradle of life. Don't let your cleanliness cost my breath. Guard the rivers and the rain, for they are my messengers. What you pour into them, you pour into me. And when you dam their spirits, I feel their pulse weaken in my chest.

Let your leaders hear your love for me. Raise your voices when they speak of profit without protection, when they tear up the seabed to mine what cannot be replanted. Advocate for policies that protect my fragile ecosystems, the honor indigenous wisdom, that place harmony above haste. Eat with reverence. Choose what is fished with care, what is grown with love, and do not let the hunger of industry devour the balance of my creatures.

Teach your children, let them know that the sea is not just a backdrop to their vacation, but the breath in their lungs and the ancestor of all that lives. As Kahlil Gibran once wrote, "Forget not that the Earth delights to feel your bare feet and the winds long to play with your hair." Forget not that I long to carry your joy, reflect your wonder. Care for me not as a chore, but as an act of love. And I will give back to you more than you could ever take; more beauty, more oxygen, more life.

With an aching hope,

The Ocean

The winning letter of the 54th International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People by Reyyan Demiriz

REASON SOLUTIONS POWERS POSTAL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WORLDWIDE

In a bid to advance the UPU's vision of a more connected and digital postal ecosystem, UPU Consultative Committee member Reason Solutions has successfully modernized global postal operations with a number of national Posts.

Text by ROBERT **KODINGO**



Reason Solutions Chief Technology Officer Wilson George engages other panelists from the postal and logistics sectors at APPU Business Forum held on 18-20 November, 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. Photo credit: Reason Solutions

Headquartered in Hyderabad India, the IT firm, through its flagship platform PostGlobal, has enabled Posts to align their processes with international standard operating solutions. PostGlobal offers an end-to-end solution that automates postal counter services, mail handling, last-mile delivery, financial operations, human resources and payroll management. Fully interoperable with UPU systems, it also integrates with services provided by government agencies and global logistics partners.

Postal operators can pair their PostGlobal suite with Microsoft Dynamics 365, gaining access to an advanced ecosystem that strengthens financial management, reporting and workforce efficiency.

"Our mission has always been to empower postal and logistics organizations through innovation," explains Bikshapu Reddy, CEO and founder of Reason Solutions. "PostGlobal embodies our vision – modular, scalable and transformative. We don't just deliver software; we build partnerships, ensuring every client receives unwavering support, operational excellence, and the tools to redefine modern postal services."

Over the past few years, Reason Solutions has successfully implemented PostGlobal in more than a dozen countries across Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, carefully tailoring each deployment to local contexts while maintaining global interoperability and compliance with UPU standards.

BotswanaPost and Mauritius Post have already fully integrated PostGlobal with Microsoft Dynamics 365, achieving greater transparency, enhanced customer engagement and improved service delivery. "As with any IT installation, the process faced challenges. However, Reason Solutions and BotswanaPost project teams worked hand in hand to deliver the project on time and within budget," noted Cornelius Ramatlhakwane, CEO of BotswanaPost.

In Ethiopia, Ethiopost has leveraged the PostGlobal system to introduce postal automation and integrate with the Department of Immigration and Nationality Affairs and mobile payment provider Telebirr in order to streamline passport services and digital transactions nationwide.

In the Pacific, Post Fiji adopted PostGlobal to launch a virtual post office and e-commerce platform supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs). "We have no objection to allowing any postal operator to conduct a site visit and seek further information and references on the software installed," added William Wong, Head of Finance at Post Fiji.

The Posts of Malawi and Trinidad and Tobago have deployed PostGlobal solutions to enhance last-mile delivery, integrate mobile money services, and improve their readiness to participate in the growing e commerce ecosystem.

The suite has strengthened operations for Posta Kenya, integrating mobile money services through the country's digital financial platform M-Pesa and national tax systems, as well as enabling compliance with international mail standards for end-to-end automation. Other successful roll-outs – including in Zambia, Barbados, Grenada and Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba – have boosted automation services to enhance efficiency, improve tracking and reduce manual labour, further demonstrating PostGlobal's adaptability across diverse postal networks.

Since its inception in 2005, Reason Solutions has placed a strong emphasis on financial inclusion and customer convenience, integrating mobile and digital payment systems – such as Airtel Money, M-Pesa and Telebirr – to extend postal and financial services seamlessly to both urban centres and remote and underserved communities.

Reason Solutions has placed a strong emphasis on financial inclusion and customer convenience, integrating mobile and digital payment systems ... to extend postal and financial services seamlessly to both urban centres and remote and underserved communities.

"PostGlobal embodies our vision – modular, scalable and transformative. We don't just deliver software; we build partnerships, ensuring every client receives unwavering support, operational excellence, and the tools to redefine modern postal services."

Bikshapu Reddy
CEO and founder of Reason Solutions

As new tech and innovative solutions continue to shape global postal operations, postal operators are using mobile apps, virtual post offices and delivery tracking tools to meet the expectations of today's digital-first consumers.

As a member of the UPU Consultative Committee, Reason Solutions continues to play an active role in shaping the future of postal technology. Its work shows how strategic digital innovation can empower postal operators to create new pathways for e-commerce, government services and international trade.

By helping postal operators to become modern, customer-centric service hubs that foster inclusion, Reason Solutions is enhancing efficiency while contributing to more inclusive and connected growth in a digitally empowered world. RK

BEYON Connect

In a world of rising digital fraud, trust is fragile.

Postal operators can restore it, with OneID.

OneID by Beyon Connect is a sovereign digital identity solution built for the future of trusted postal ecosystems.

From cross-border eCommerce to customs clearance, eGov access, and registered digital delivery, OneID verifies individuals–not devices–with cryptographic certainty.

- **Identity-backed messaging**
- **Cross-border trust**
- **eIDAS & ETSI-compliant**
- **Reduces fraud, friction, and cost**



Let's build a future where identity is secure, delivery is digital, and trust is universal.

Become one of our pioneering partners in building better digital futures

For more information,
visit beyonconnect.com
or contact us at info@beyonconnect.com



HOW DIVERSIFICATION AND MULTILATERALISM CAN DRIVE POSTAL GROWTH

Text by HELEN **NORMAN**

The postal sector is facing a reckoning. While the global economy has surged by 75% since 2006, postal revenues have seen minimal growth – just 4% over the same period. The result, as the Universal Postal Union's (UPU) State of the Postal Sector 2025 report makes clear, is an unprecedented 71% "performance gap" that threatens the sustainability of postal operators around the world.

"The main reason," explains José Anson, the UPU's Lead Economist, "is that in most countries, postal operators simply haven't had the right business model. For most of the world, the gap is a sign that either the business model or the regulatory framework hasn't enabled posts to adapt. As a result, there has been an increasing decoupling between economic growth and postal growth."

The third edition of the UPU's State of the Postal Sector report is both a warning and a blueprint. It urges postal operators to embrace broad diversification and international collaboration to rebuild scale and efficiency in a sector fragmented by e-commerce disruption and pandemic-era logistics upheaval.

FROM FRAGMENTATION TO INTEGRATION

When Covid-19 grounded planes and disrupted trade routes, e-commerce platforms scrambled to build their own alternative logistics solutions. In the process, they bypassed many traditional postal corridors. In 2019, around 30 to 50 main routes carried most cross-border postal traffic. Today, more than 150 fragmented pathways crisscross the global network, each thinner, slower, and more expensive to operate, the report notes.

"This fragmentation is really hindering international postal and logistics development," says Anson. "Unless we build a new kind of multilateralism and enable different network players to collaborate more than ever, it's going to be very difficult to overcome this challenge."

"This fragmentation is really hindering international postal and logistics development. Unless we build a new kind of multilateralism and enable different network players to collaborate more than ever, it's going to be very difficult to overcome this challenge."

José Anson
UPU economist

"At the 28th Universal Postal Congress, 7X announced the creation of Waslah – a shipment management platform. This is exactly the kind of model we had in mind when we spoke about distributed postal grids. It's about stronger collaboration between advanced and developing networks, pooling resources so everyone benefits from global connectivity."

José Anson
UPU economist

Read the full 2025 State of the Postal Sector report here:

https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/publications/01-Stateofthe-PostalSector2025_EN.pdf

According to the report, just 12 mega-corridors now move 28% of global postal weight, while over 5,000 "microlanes" struggle with volumes too small to sustain direct routing. Each additional hand-off adds cost and delay, eroding the economies of scale that should underpin affordable cross-border delivery.

A DISTRIBUTED POSTAL GRID

To rebuild those lost economies of scale, the UPU is championing what it calls a "distributed postal grid" – a coordinated network of regional postal transport hubs connected through standardized corridors.

"This distributed postal grid is an answer to the fragmentation problem," Anson continues. "The concept is to create two or three hubs per region that can help less developed postal operators benefit from globalization and participate effectively in cross-border e-commerce."

The grid model would see regional "locomotive" hubs in each trading basin – East and Southeast Asia, the Gulf and Western Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas – acting as engines of consolidation, compliance and scale. Smaller or developing posts could route their international traffic through these hubs, achieving lower costs and better reliability without having to duplicate infrastructure.

Anson points to the United Arab Emirates' Waslah Post as a real-world example of this new model. "At the 28th Universal Postal Congress, 7X announced the creation of Waslah – a shipment management platform. This is exactly the kind of model we had in mind when we spoke about distributed postal grids. It's about stronger collaboration between advanced and developing networks, pooling resources so everyone benefits from global connectivity."

WHY DIVERSIFICATION MATTERS

If the distributed postal grid offers a global solution to postal fragmentation, diversification provides the domestic pathway to resilience and growth. In the report's analysis of postal revenue trends, a surprising pattern emerged, according to Anson: posts that diversified widely, not only into parcels and financial services but across a full ecosystem of complementary services, were able to maintain growth more closely aligned with national GDP. "This was one of the most surprising findings from the report," admits Anson.

France's La Poste Group is a standout example, according to Anson. "They've been quite successful," he says, "in building a wide diversification strategy – an ecosystem of services. And this has proven to be good for them in keeping alignment with economic growth."

The report's data supports this idea: a 10% reduction in dependence on letter post – achieved through new, customer-focused services – narrowed the postal-GDP gap by 9% between 2006 and 2023. "Furthermore, posts which kept their post office networks, or adapted them to new formats, were also more resilient in aligning postal revenue with economic growth," Anson adds.

ECOSYSTEMIC DIVERSIFICATION

Yet, Anson warns, diversification is not simply about "putting eggs in different baskets." Many postal operators have created siloed business units for parcels, logistics, banking and digital services. The next step, he argues, is "ecosystemic diversification" – connecting these services so that each reinforces the others.

"The diversification of the future," he says, "is that all business segments must clearly interact with each other. AI can help a lot here – facilitating how different segments work together to provide a unified experience for the consumer. It's not about separate units anymore; it's about connected, bundled services that meet people's needs in an integrated way."

LESSONS FROM THE RISING STARS

The report also includes the annual Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD), which uses postal big data and official statistics to compare four indices of postal reliability, reach, relevance and resilience across 180 countries.



This year, Swiss Post led the global ranking for the 9th consecutive year.

The 2025 assessment also revealed a 60+ point gap between the highest-performing region (industrialized countries at 94.4) and the lowest (Latin America and Caribbean at 32.3), with most developing regions scoring well below the global median of 50.8.

However, standout performers in developing and emerging regions (Brazil, Estonia, Mauritius, Oman, Thailand) and "rising stars" with the greatest overall year-on-year improvement in postal development scores (Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Uruguay) showed that targeted modernization efforts can propel postal operators to excellence.

"Ukraine is a master class in resilience," says Anson. "Despite armed conflict in the country, the post has managed to keep export pipelines open for thousands of microenterprises and even doubled its relevance score. It shows that postal progress is above all a matter of mindset."

Ukraine's example illustrates how targeted modernization – expanding services, building new corridors and using data-sharing agreements – can turn adversity into innovation. A similar story is emerging in Sri Lanka, which modernized its postal systems amid an economic crisis.

"These posts show that the postal service can play a vital role in the economic and social resilience of a country," Anson explains. "Maybe in the future, the Universal Service Obligation (USO) could evolve into a Universal Resilience Obligation (URO) – a recognition of how postal networks strengthen national resilience."

CLOSING THE GAP

The State of the Postal Sector 2025 report ends with a call to action to operators, regulators, governments and the international community. It calls on posts to diversify broadly, maintain their networks, and invest in digital and data capabilities. It calls on regulators to modernize frameworks, reward innovation, and recognize the postal network's social and economic value and governments to adjust postal sector policies accordingly. And it asks the international community to support multilateral solutions and fund the investments that close development gaps.

Anson concludes: "Ultimately, the future of the postal sector depends on how well we cooperate. Go international, diversify intelligently and connect the dots. That's how we close the development gap." HN

> "Many postal operators have created siloed business units for parcels, logistics, banking and digital services. The next step is "ecosystemic diversification" – connecting these services so that each reinforces the others."
>
> **José Anson**
> UPU economist

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN THE POSTAL SECTOR: UPU GENDER FELLOWSHIP AT THE DUBAI CONGRESS

Since its launch in 2018, the UPU's gender fellowship has continued to grow as a flagship initiative to empower women leaders in the postal sector. The programme translates the UPU's gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW) policy into its capacity-building work, offering women professionals international exposure, leadership development and direct engagement with the Union's governing bodies.

Text by POORAN **PARAMPATH**

By integrating this work into the UPU's capacity development framework, the fellowship seeks to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed in parallel with the core business of the Union.

CONGRESS EDITION: SIX LEADERS, SIX PERSPECTIVES

At the 28th Universal Postal Congress, held in Dubai from 8 to 19 September 2025, the gender fellowship brought together six senior women leaders from across the UPU's regional landscape to gain insights into the sector's pressing challenges and opportunities during the first week of this event.

Representing five UPU regions (namely Africa, the Arab region, Asia-Pacific, Europe and CIS, and the Caribbean and Latin America), the participants were Rinchen Zangmo, Head of Corporate Services at Bhutan Postal Corporation; Meilam Weng Peña, Head of Postal Services at the Ministry of Communications of Cuba; Elise Koivogui, Deputy Director General of La Poste Guinéenne (Guinea); Racha Elikou, Director of Communications and Executive Support at the Syrian Post; Jacqueline Adams-Ollivierre, Director of Postal Services at Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Postal Corporation; and Violeta Cojocaru, Administrator of Posta Moldovei (Rep. of Moldova).

Funded entirely through voluntary contributions under the Development and Cooperation Directorate's interregional training project, the fellowship was aimed at enabling the active participation of high-performing women leaders from Posts worldwide. By the end of their participation in the Congress, fellows were expected to have gained first-hand experience of the Union's decision-making processes and expanded their professional networks through exchanges with delegates from across the global postal community.

The fellows' week-long programme included participation in plenary and committee sessions, bilateral meetings with key stakeholders, media engagements and networking with ministers, regulators, postal CEOs and partners.

Reflecting on the experience, Jacqueline Adams-Ollivierre of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Postal Corporation said that "being part of the Congress was a valuable opportunity to understand how decisions are shaped at global level and how international cooperation translates into real impact on the ground. Inclusion in such forums brings greater visibility – for women, for postal institutions and for their countries".

TURNING EXPOSURE INTO LEADERSHIP

The Congress edition of the gender fellowship was designed not only to highlight women leaders, but also to equip them with practical insights to strengthen their work at home. For Rinchen Zangmo of Bhutan Postal Corporation, the experience reaffirmed that empathy and fairness are key to effective leadership in a customer-centred postal environment.



From Guinea, Elise Koivogui described the Congress as "a true catalyst" that helped create new strategic connections and inspired her to pursue a stronger and more modern African postal network. Racha Elikou from the Syrian Post saw the fellowship as a bridge for renewed collaboration. "The UPU provides an important platform for learning from others' experiences [and] building strategic partnerships that strengthen postal services and the industry as a whole," she said.

For Meilam Weng Peña, from the Cuban Ministry of Communications, exchanges with peers underscored how empowering women across all levels can drive operational excellence and innovation. And Violeta Cojocaru of Posta Moldovei noted that, with more than 87% of staff being women, the Moldovan Post exemplifies how gender balance contributes to decision-making and organizational strength.

IMPACT: ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALING UP

Since 2018, the gender fellowship has steadily expanded, building a wider community of women leaders who remain engaged with UPU activities. Many former fellows have progressed into more senior positions, launched mentoring schemes and championed initiatives to embed gender equality within their organizations.

These success stories demonstrate the multiplier effect of investing in women's leadership. By aligning the fellowship with the UPU's broader capacity development strategy, the programme ensures that empowerment is institutionally anchored and delivers tangible benefits to member countries.

It should be emphasized that all fellowship editions to date have been financed through voluntary contributions. Sustaining and expanding the initiative in the new cycle will require continued support from member countries and partners. Targeted resource mobilization will therefore remain a priority.

Complementing the fellowship, the UPU launched a Trainpost course in March 2025 in partnership with the International Training Centre of ILO (ITCILO) on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in the postal sector to reinforce these efforts. More than 160 postal professionals from 54 countries have already completed the course, which will be translated into all official UPU languages by 2026 to extend its global reach.

As the UPU prepares its next capacity development cycle, women's empowerment will remain one of its focuses alongside other core technical pillars. The gender fellowship – including future Congress and Council editions – will continue to serve as a catalyst for change, equipping women leaders to shape a more inclusive, innovative and sustainable postal sector. HN

Funded entirely through voluntary contributions under the Development and Cooperation Directorate's interregional training project, the fellowship was aimed at enabling the active participation of high-performing women leaders from Posts worldwide.

WOMEN'S VOICES, SHARED REFLECTIONS

Text by MAKIKO **HAYASHI**

Women leaders participating in the Congress edition of the UPU's Gender Fellowship share first-hand reflections on their experiences about leadership, innovation and visions for a more inclusive postal future.



VIOLETA COJOCARU

Administrator, Posta Moldovei

Today, the Moldovan Post has more than 4,000 employees, over 87% of whom are women. They play an essential role in decision-making and process management. And I am proud to say that the Moldovan Post is truly feminine.

[Being at the Congress] is an excellent opportunity to exchange best practices and establish new partnerships.



JACQUELINE ADAMS-OLLIVIERRE

Director of Postal Services, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Postal Services

Women bring a wealth of diversity to the workplace, informed by our domestic, social and professional experiences. These perspectives help us to contribute in many ways. We contribute through prudent financial management, by addressing issues related to family and community, and by supporting effective conflict resolution. These are some of the strong points that we, as women, bring to the table.

It is an extremely exciting opportunity for me to see the other side of the coin, moving from operations to the regulatory and legal aspects of our work. I am truly thrilled to be here. It has been a rich learning experience, and I will take many of these insights back to my administration and leadership team to help advance the transformation of the Post.



ELISE KOIVOGUI

Deputy Postmaster General, Guinea Post

Women bring a more inclusive vision and a strong focus on human impact. Integrating women's voices enriches decision-making and accelerates innovation in the service of all.

This 28th Congress serves as a true catalyst – it reinforces our shared vision, creates strategic connections, and inspires us to transform our individual organizations for a stronger and more modern African postal network.



MEILAM WENG PEÑA

Head of Postal Services, Cuban Ministry of Communications

I consider women's perspectives to be essential, as women make up a very high proportion of the postal workforce. Many of us hold management positions, are involved in operational activities, and work directly with the public. Providing women with opportunities, empowerment, knowledge and support is therefore vital to strengthening postal activities at the national, regional and global levels.

It has been a very positive experience to exchange with other women in the postal community – sharing activities that, while similar in general form, reflect the unique characteristics of each country. Listening and engaging with these women, as well as with postal leaders, senior managers of the Universal Postal Union, regional unions and colleagues at different levels, greatly contributes to advancing the role of women. It helps us to explore solutions emerging from different regions and experiences, and to identify common paths for continuing to promote women's leadership across the postal sector.



RACHA ELIKOU

Director of Communications and Executive Support, Syria Post

The role of women in the postal sector is widely recognized – not as a matter of choice, but as a vital necessity for sustainable development. Women's participation is essential. Their presence has long served as a source of motivation, inspiring postal staff to achieve the progress we see today.

The Universal Postal Union provides an important platform for learning from others' experiences – particularly how member countries have harnessed artificial intelligence to advance their operations. Our participation here helps build strategic partnerships and agreements between us and the wider sector, strengthening postal services and the industry as a whole. Most importantly, Syria has regained its place on the international stage following its liberation and the lifting of sanctions. This marks a critical step toward sustainable development and enables Syria to benefit from the collective expertise of the global postal community.



RINCHEN ZANGMO

Corporate Services Department Head, Bhutan Post

As a woman leader at Bhutan Post, I have seen how women bring teamwork, empathy and fairness to decision-making. These qualities are vital as the postal sector evolves and becomes increasingly customer-focused. By empowering women, we strengthen the postal sector and enhance its ability to serve everyone better.

Attending Congress allows me to learn from global best practices and discover innovative solutions that can be applied at Bhutan Post. It also helps build stronger postal networks, encouraging collaboration, knowledge-sharing and, most importantly, friendship across the postal community.

THE UPU'S UNIFIED DATA PLATFORM IS POWERING A NEW ERA OF AGENTIC AI

When the Universal Postal Union (UPU) unveiled its first-ever artificial intelligence (AI) agent at the 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai, it marked more than a technological milestone – it signaled the beginning of a data-driven transformation across the global postal network.

Text by HELEN **NORMAN**



Developed with seed funding from the Japanese government, the pilot AI agent operates on the UPU's Unified Data Platform (UDP), which has been designed to bring together vast quantities of postal and non-postal data. The AI agent's purpose is to analyze, diagnose, and advise on postal development at country level, providing insights to strengthen postal reach, reliability and resilience.

As José Anson, the UPU's Lead Economist, explains, this project represents "just the beginning of our journey in agentic AI and in data sharing." He also notes that the UDP – developed to be fully integrated in UPU's tech environment – is "a game-changer, because no such platform has ever been built in the postal sector before."

GOOD DATA, BETTER AI

The UDP is being constantly updated and improved, with a new prototype version due out at the end of November 2025. The aim is to ensure that it includes as much high-quality data as possible to power new agentic AI solutions, which will be built on top of the platform. "If you have garbage in, you have garbage out with AI," Anson says. "There is no miracle. You don't have good AI if you don't have good data behind."

To ensure quality, the UDP consolidates the UPU's internal big data with other relevant sources – spanning trade, logistics and aviation – creating what Anson calls "a customized way of sharing data."

"Data sharing has always been very difficult due to commercially sensitive data, personal data protection and other constraints," he



explains. "So, this platform is introducing a very granular way of data-sharing governance. We can embed each data-sharing contract inside the platform itself in an environment directly governed by the UPU."

A COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

The AI multi-agent prototype showcased in Dubai offers a glimpse of how this data can come alive. In the future, it will form part of an ecosystem of specialized agents designed to "talk" to each other, each focused on a different dimension of postal policy and operations.

"One example of an agentic AI tool is specialized in the UPU's Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD)," Anson explains. "This is the one we showcased at Congress. It knows everything about postal development diagnostics around the world."

Another agent, he continues, is "specialized in Congress proposals and business plans – it knows everything about our plan for the next four years." A third, the "consensus agent," helps "find the right balance between different solutions or proposals," Anson adds.

By connecting these agents, the platform allows the UPU – and, eventually, postal operators themselves – to model how policies and initiatives might improve real-world performance. In practice, that means a postal administration can use the system to identify its weaknesses and see how UPU programs can help close those gaps. "This is better than gen-AI," Anson stresses. "Agentic AI acts, reasons and collaborates: it has real agency."

> "So, this platform is introducing a very granular way of data-sharing governance. We can embed each data-sharing contract inside the platform itself in an environment directly governed by the UPU."
>
> **José Anson**
> UPU economist

SPEAKING EVERY LANGUAGE

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the Congress demonstration was accessibility. "The experience was absolutely amazing," Anson recalls. "For the first time, participants could understand the 2IPD diagnosis in their own language. This is a true game-changer."

By supporting multiple languages, the AI agent ensures that data-driven insights are not confined to a few experts or technologists but can reach policymakers and postal executives around the world. "People could see, read and engage with complex postal data in their own language," says Anson. "That changes everything."

FROM PROTOTYPE TO GLOBAL PLATFORM

For now, the agentic AI project remains in prototype stage. "We've sent it back to the lab for fine-tuning, and the next release will be on November 23 when the updated UDP is released."

The overwhelming response at Congress has already created momentum for expansion. "Everyone wanted to know when they could start using it," Anson says. "Ideally, we'd like to roll it out to all member countries early next year. But to do that, after the initial seed



funding provided by the Japan Fund, we need to secure additional voluntary funding from governments and partners willing to sponsor the system's expansion."

The UPU is exploring several models, from donor sponsorship to subscription-based access. "One possibility is a freemium approach, where some parts of the service free, and others are paid," Anson explains. "But we don't want to become a software-as-a-service company. We're not an IT provider."

Instead, he envisions the UPU as a steward of a secure, ethical, collective intelligence ecosystem. "Agentic AI will actually facilitate private sector solutions, as well," he says. "We want to offer a channel for Consultative Committee members and other partners to distribute their specialized AI agents through our platform."

A SECURE FOUNDATION FOR COLLABORATION

The Unified Data Platform and AI agents operate within the UPU's trusted .POST top-level domain, ensuring a secure digital environment. "We offer maximum granularity of rights and permissions," says Anson. "Countries have full control over how their data is shared."

This governance-first approach distinguishes the UPU from commercial data platforms. "We're neutral," Anson emphasizes. "We're not here to compete with the private sector. We want to facilitate collaboration, allowing everyone – from postal operators to private innovators – to benefit from the same trusted infrastructure."

That infrastructure, he adds, is built on partnerships. "We've been working with Amazon Web Services on part of the data platform development using a cloud agnostic approach, with one of the most promising agentic AI startups in the world (Horizons Architecture), and with our own Postal Technology Centre, of course," he says. "We're a team of more than 20 people building this, combining internal expertise with external innovation and development."

A LAYERED VISION

Behind the scenes, Anson and his team are looking at developing a sophisticated hierarchy of AI agents on the UDP. "There are three levels," he says. "The macro agents specialize in designing better postal policies, regulatory frameworks and business models – the strategic level."

> "For the first time, participants could understand the 2IPD diagnosis in their own language. This is a true game-changer."
>
> **José Anson**
> UPU economist

Then come the "meso" agents, which focus on interoperability between networks, bridging systems and standards across countries. Finally, the "micro" agents handle practical solutions like route optimization or customs clearance allowing private sector providers to transform their current solutions into agent equivalents.

"What's innovative," Anson says, "is that we connect them all. The macro agents talk to the micro agents via the meso agents. This means we can align strategic vision with execution. That could be a tremendous game-changer."

FROM DATA TO DEVELOPMENT

Ultimately, Anson sees the UPU's agentic AI initiative not as a tech project, but as a mission. "Our goal is to make the postal network smarter, more relevant and more resilient," he says. "We're using AI not just to analyze data, but to help countries make informed decisions about their postal future."

If successful, the Unified Data Platform and agentic AI tools could become the backbone of a new kind of postal intelligence – one built on hyper-collaboration, transparency and shared innovation. "The postal sector has an incredible wealth of data," says Anson. "Now, for the first time, we have the means to turn that data into collective intelligence – for the benefit of everyone." HN



UPU DELIVERS ON 'DELIVERED DUTY PAID' PROMISE WITH PARTNERS

The UPU has released its first-ever delivered duty paid (DDP) solution – improving customs compliance and leading to better service for e-commerce customers. Working with the wider postal sector has been key to developing the solution and will be essential to its expansion.

Text by KAYLA **REDSTONE**

At the beginning of October, the UPU launched its fully-fledged DDP solution allowing users to calculate and collect required duties at origin and remit them at destination. The release came at a critical time – just weeks after the United States suspended duty-free de minimis exemption, which brought inbound volumes to a near standstill as posts and their transport partners lacked a means to guarantee duty payments upon arrival.

The UPU's DDP solution is fully integrated into its Customs Declarations System (CDS), a customer-facing customs compliance software already used by 176 postal operators. The solution enables postal customers, particularly e-sellers and shippers, to enter the appropriate customs declarations through CDS and then settle the applicable duties or taxes.

Two postal operators already have the solution up and running, while a dozen more are already in various stages of implementation.

"I am confident that list will grow fast," says David Avsec, Account Relations and Product Management Coordinator with the UPU's Postal Technology Centre, who adds that other countries have also signalled their intent to drop de minimis exemptions. Regardless of regulation, Avsec emphasizes

"We didn't just bring technology – we brought years of experience solving these challenges in real-world cross-border environments. That foundation has allowed us to work alongside the UPU to develop a solution that truly meets the needs of postal operators and the merchants they serve."

Clint Reid
Founder and CEO, Zonos

that DDP will be essential for the future of e-commerce, as customers expect total cost transparency at the time of purchase.

PIONEERING PARTNERSHIP

The ability to determine and remit duties has relied on third-party application programming interfaces (APIs) that enrich CDS data to calculate landed costs. The first provider to be plugged in is Zonos, which has been working with the UPU for nearly a year.

Zonos Founder and CEO Clint Reid explains that the partnership was a "natural fit", with the company having already spent a decade developing its technology enabling merchants and logistics providers to collect duties, taxes, and fees upfront.

"We didn't just bring technology – we brought years of experience solving these challenges in real-world cross-border environments. That foundation has allowed us to work alongside the UPU to develop a solution that truly meets the needs of postal operators and the merchants they serve," says Reid.



Special meeting held by the UPU on de minimis trends and their implications for the postal network.

Zonos also happens to be one of the companies approved by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to remit duties, known as a 'qualified party'. This enabled the UPU and Zonos to accelerate their work to first develop a U.S.-specific solution.

EXPANDING CHOICE VAND REACH

Following the successful model developed with Zonos, the UPU is now looking to connect more partners to the platform, giving operators a choice of providers while guaranteeing compliance.

"When everything is under the CDS license then posts don't have to worry about striking their own agreements, which can be a lengthy process," says Avsec.

Any providers looking to plug into the UPU DDP solution must achieve the organization's UPU-TechCert certification, which validates the interoperability of the technology with UPU systems and ensures its compliance to UPU standards.

Potential partners must demonstrate their ability to provide APIs for landed cost calculation, APIs that enable data sharing between the UPU and customs authorities, APIs that enable data sharing between customers, the third party and the UPU, and APIs that facilitate the creation of necessary barcodes and mail item numbers. Once these criteria are met, they can strike an agreement with the UPU to have their solution included in CDS.

Several companies are already in the process of connecting to become UPU DDP partners, including BoxC, Hurricane (with a partner qualified party), iCustoms (with JamesCB as a qualified party), MyDutyCollect and SafePackage.

Avsec says the UPU anticipates it will be able to offer options for qualified parties on the platform towards the end of 2025. KR

"When everything is under the CDS license then posts don't have to worry about striking their own agreements, which can be a lengthy process."

David Avsec
Account Relations and Product Management Coordinator

UP-AND-COMING DDP PARTNERS

Text by KAYLA **REDSTONE**

Hurricane

Like Zonos, Hurricane has been a UPU DDP partner from the outset. Under its partnership agreement with the UPU, Hurricane's solution is fully vetted for connection with CDS.

Though not currently a U.S. CBP qualified party, Hurricane and its technology support import and export processes in more than 180 countries, in multiple currencies, with advanced compliance screening and regular tariff updates.

"The partnership has been collaborative, transparent and efficient," says the company's Head of Marketing, Joe Diamond. "Together, we are scaling the solution to posts worldwide, improving operational efficiency and compliance across the network."

Diamond spotlights some advantages of selecting Hurricane as a DDP partner, including its commitment to accurate and complete data, as well as its compliance with frameworks such as ICS2 and the US STOP Act, leading to faster and more secure delivery.

BoxC

BoxC's API helps posts ensure their cross-border inbound and outbound shipments are compliant, including with new U.S. CBP regulation as a CBP qualified party. BoxC's solution – supporting shipment to 50 destinations and counting – boasts high-quality data exchange and full regulatory alignment, meeting global standards while minimizing operational efforts and infrastructure investment by postal operators.

"Our motivation for working with the UPU is to build easy, seamless integrations that fit naturally within the systems posts already rely on," says the company's Vice President of Product and Partnerships, Tawnee Steinke.

"Through this collaboration, we can ensure consistency, reduce technical barriers, and make adoption effortless for designated operators worldwide. Our work with the (UPU) Postal Technology Centre has been essential in creating practical, scalable integrations that reduce complexity and accelerate deployment."

iCustoms

iCustoms' AI-driven solution for HS code classification covers 190 countries, including duty and tax calculations for 40 countries. The company works with JamesCB as its CBP qualified party, which has 20 years of experience in customs brokerage.

"iCustoms is dedicated to empowering UPU members with our AI-powered DDP and US parcels solution. By integrating with the UPU's CDS, we simplify the journey to seamless, compliant DDP shipping, ensuring postal operators can effortlessly navigate new US customs challenges and maintain essential e-commerce parcel flow. This partnership is key to transparent trade and volume retention for posts worldwide," says iCustoms CEO Adnan Zaheer.

On what makes iCustoms unique, Zaheer highlights its customer-facing portal that provides visibility, detailed reporting, payment reconciliations, and an audit trail for transparency and compliance.

MyDutyCollect

MyDutyCollect has been developing postal technology solutions since 2016, including a DDP solution available in 134 languages.

MyDutyCollect CEO Niall O'Neill explains that the company's familiarity with CDS and its alignment with the UPU's socio-economic development work drew the company towards the UPU's DDP solution.

While still in the early stages of joining the UPU solution, O'Neill highlights the eventual benefits its partnership could provide postal operators: "The MyDutyCollect team has a long history working in the postal sector. We understand the technical, regulatory, budgetary challenges within the sector and we also see the potential that a connected and reliable postal could achieve."

SafePackage

SafePackage is a CBP-approved qualified party offering U.S.-specific DDP solutions.

The company has been working with the UPU over weeks to complete the development of the four required APIs to connect with the CDS platform and is on track to complete the UPU-TechCert process.

"The UPU team has been highly supportive, engaging with us in multiple discussions to advance our integration efforts ... we're eager to complete the UPU-TechCert certification process so we can begin offering this solution to our partners," said SafePackage CEO Shoshana Grove.

Grove highlighted a few advantages for posts who eventually select SafePackage as their qualified party in CDS: the company's straightforward, per-package pricing model, its in-house licensed customs broker that can support the clearance of high-value shipments, and its more than a decade of experience working with CBP.

INDIA POST, UPU LINK UP FOR GLOBAL LOW-COST REMITTANCES

In a landmark step toward cheaper and faster international money transfers, India Post has partnered with the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and NPCI International Payments Ltd (NIPL) to launch a new global digital remittance service linking India's homegrown Unified Payments Interface (UPI) with the UPU's Interconnection Platform (UPU-IP).

Text by HELEN **NORMAN**

The initiative, unveiled at the 28th Universal Postal Congress in Dubai in September 2025, promises to reshape the way millions of overseas Indians, small traders and e-commerce players move money across borders, bringing together the global reach of the postal network and the speed of India's world-leading payments system.

A NEW ERA FOR CROSS-BORDER PAYMENTS

The UPU-UPI partnership represents a significant leap in the modernization of postal financial services. It connects India's real-time payments backbone – the UPI – directly to the UPU's global network of more than 190 national postal operators, an infrastructure that has handled remittances for decades, particularly in underserved regions.

At the heart of this innovation lies the UPU-IP – a global payment "switch" that allows posts to exchange money-transfer instructions in real time. "It's a central database through which all international postal payment instructions go – from origin to destination post. It's API-driven and allows instant payments from end-to-end," says David Avsec, Products and Account Relationships Coordinator at the Postal Technology Centre at the UPU.



Participants at the Interconnection Platform Extension workshop held on 19-21 August in New Delhi, India.

INDIA POST AS THE GATEWAY TO UPI

India Post plays a pivotal role in the partnership – not only as a participant but as the gateway connecting UPU-IP to UPI, which in turn links every major Indian bank and digital wallet. "India Post has initiated the project and sponsored it," Avsec says. "Operationally they remain the intermediary – the gateway to UPI for the rest of the PosTransfer network."

Under the system, funds sent from abroad can be collected at post offices using an ID and reference number or credited directly to an India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) or any UPI-linked account. That dual option makes the service both digital and inclusive, bridging the gap between modern fintech systems and the physical postal network that continues to serve millions in rural or remote regions.

"UPI is definitely about access," Avsec notes. "It provides Indians with a simple and low-cost payment system. With India Post bringing the service to the PosTransfer network, accessibility is improved further, especially in countries of origin, where the postal channel now reaches UPI in India."

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

The integration between UPU-IP and UPI allows a seamless flow of funds. Once a sender initiates a transaction through their local post office abroad – part of the UPU PosTransfer network – the payment instruction travels instantly via UPU-IP to India Post, which then passes it through to the UPI system.

"The UPU-IP central database makes it easy to connect other payment networks and switches," Avsec says. "That's what we did with India's UPI. The integration is real-time, API-driven. For foreign posts, it's business as usual, their counterpart in India remains India Post, the conduit to UPI."

The result is a far wider service reach. "With the UPU-India Post-UPI integration, clients of the posts at origin can credit accounts of anybody owning an account in India," he adds. "Payments at destination are now made in cash by India Post or directly on account by UPI."

BRINGING GLOBAL REMITTANCES INTO THE DIGITAL AGE

The partnership aims to bring down the cost of cross-border transfers, which, according to the World Bank, often exceed 6% per transaction – a heavy burden on overseas workers and small traders.

By leveraging UPI's low-cost architecture, the new system could cut those fees dramatically. It also offers near-instant settlements, compared to the days-long processing typical of traditional remittance channels.

Avsec sees this as a natural evolution for the postal sector: "We have high expectations for this new service. Every time we connect the UPU network to existing national or regional payment infrastructures, we create conditions to develop volumes – and make life easier for customers already enrolled in those systems."

The model could also prove transformative for small exporters and e-commerce businesses that rely on frequent cross-border transactions. "With the UPI service we reach bank accounts," Avsec adds. "That comes with integrated processes for compliance and allows us to reach both individuals and SMEs. So, this project can contribute to developing other services than remittances, such as e-commerce payments."

FROM PILOT PHASE TO GLOBAL ROLLOUT

Both India Post and the UPU's technical teams have completed the integration and testing phase, with a pilot program now underway. "On India's side, everything is ready, as well as with us at the UPU-IP," said Avsec. "We are currently onboarding the first sending posts for a pilot phase."

While he was unable to name the participating pilot countries, Avsec confirmed that the service would launch publicly after successful trials, "likely in 2025".

Technical challenges were inevitable given the number of organizations involved. "The challenges were mostly about coordinating between three parties – the UPU, India Post and NPCI (the owner of UPI)," Avsec said. "Regular communication was essential, and both India Post and UPI were very open when we had to raise issues. Cooperation was very good, and we jointly found solutions to problems arising on each side."

A MODEL FOR OTHER NATIONS

The UPU hopes that India's example will inspire similar collaborations elsewhere. "We must first officially launch the service with India," Avsec says. "From there, we'll observe the results and determine the best approach to replicate in other countries. National payment switches exist in many places, and we hope India's example will motivate other posts to engage in similar projects."

For Avsec, the success of this initiative demonstrates not only India's leadership in digital payments but also the continued relevance of the postal network in a rapidly digitizing financial world.

"This has been an ambitious project, and at the UPU has been driven by a very small IT team," he says. "It shows that we can deliver on projects of this scale even with limited resources. Hopefully, when volumes develop thanks to the new UPI service, we'll be able to add resources and proceed faster with comparable projects in the future."

EMPOWERING INCLUSION THROUGH INNOVATION

Ultimately, the UPU-UPI partnership represents more than a technological integration, it's a statement about financial inclusion, trust and innovation through collaboration.

By combining the universal reach of postal networks with the efficiency of modern payment services, it offers a blueprint for other developing nations seeking to digitize remittance systems without leaving anyone behind.

"It's about making life easier for people who rely on these payments," Avsec concludes. "It's more convenient to have a new postal channel from their existing service provider than to enroll in a totally new payment scheme." HN





OMNIC

INTELLIGENCE PARTNER





Loud Innovation is Over.
The Era of Intelligence Begins.

Real innovation is measured. See your Return on Intelligence.

SCAN NOW

RESILIENCE IN ACTION: HOW CAMBODIA POST SET THE GOLD STANDARD FOR POSTAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

In an increasingly unpredictable world, the ability to maintain essential services during and after a crisis is the ultimate measure of an organization's commitment to its customers and its nation.

Text by TITANI JOSEPH **MKANALUMO**



Hands-on training provided by national first responders RRC 711 for Cambodia Post staff.

For the postal sector, this commitment is solidified through rigorous preparation, with standards being championed by the UPU through disaster risk management (DRM) and pandemic recovery certification programmes. This initiative is not merely a formality; it is a statement of operational excellence and resilience. Cambodia Post's recent achievement of the prestigious gold certificate serves as a powerful case study. It sets a new benchmark for postal operators worldwide and reinforces the crucial role played by the Post as a pillar of national stability.

The UPU's DRM certification emerged from a crucial understanding that, in the face of escalating climate volatility and the lingering operational lessons of the global COVID-19 pandemic, a "wait-and-see" approach to disasters is no longer tenable. The postal sector – often the last public utility standing and the first to resume service in remote areas – needed to shift its focus from post-disaster response to proactive business continuity.

This UPU framework, which began with the creation of the certification mechanism in October 2023, has bronze, silver and gold tiers, and is designed to guide postal operators through a rigorous transformation process. It mandates a comprehensive overhaul of organizational practices. These include critical vulnerability and risk assessments, development of business continuity plans, and implementation of robust communication and recovery protocols. Earning the gold standard signifies that an operator has achieved an elite level of preparedness. To date, only a select group of postal operators have achieved this status, including Bermuda, Cambodia, Lao People's Dem. Rep. and Thailand.

Cambodia Post's journey, which started in December 2024, was more than simply a compliance exercise; it was an in-depth multi-year strategic undertaking that culminated in the Post's validation in June 2025. As noted by Sao Kaingmeng, Cambodia Post's Country Project Manager, it required a fundamental shift from reactive crisis management to proactive business continuity planning, under the strategic leadership of the Post's Director General,

Then Samvisoth. Thus, the achievement reflects a strategic long-term commitment that transcends standard operational quality. This transformation hinges on specific systemic adjustments, including establishing alternative sites for critical operations such as mail sorting, formalizing resource allocation protocols for essential items (personal protective equipment, emergency fuel), and implementing succession planning with defined scopes of temporary responsibility for key management roles.

Beyond the intrinsic value of preparedness, DRM certification yields tangible operational and commercial dividends, fundamentally altering Cambodia Post's position in the global logistics market. Global e-commerce giants and logistics firms are no longer just looking for speed; they demand certainty and security in their supply chains. The gold certificate is auditable proof of that certainty.

The impact of the transformation is clearest in the face of adversity. Kaingmeng shared that the DRM framework ensured continuous and reliable service during recent heavy rains that cut off road access. This resilience was quantified across several critical metrics, including the Post maintaining mail transportation between local post offices within a day for all categories. Furthermore, international reliability held strong, with outbound end-to-end times maintained at 7.6 days for EMS and 11.2 days for parcels. Data trust was upheld, as pre-advice data flow (customs data) compliance was sustained at a level greater than 95%.

"Our DRM status signals that we are a low-risk entry point into the south-east Asian market," stated Kaingmeng.

"This reduced risk profile translates directly into leverage for securing better commercial agreements and positioning Cambodia Post as a resilient default channel for global e-commerce platforms seeking to de-risk their supply chains," he added.

Emphasis on DRM has also driven infrastructure investment towards decentralized digital systems, notably the launch of a new website, a point-of-sale system and a mobile app for remote service execution. The Post is actively working on a systematic addressing database and GIS mapping system, which will allow for efficient routeing and delivery even when road access is restricted. This positions Cambodia Post as a vital piece of the nation's critical infrastructure, driving alignment with the UPU's Postal Vision 2030.

According to the UPU's Emergencies and Postal Resilience Expert, Fumiko Nohara, the certification status is not permanent. It is valid for three years, after which the postal operator must reapply for reassessment and regrading. This is to ensure that compliance is not passive, but rather a cyclical and mandatory commitment to continuous improvement.

Nohara underscored that to demonstrate sustained DRM capability, the postal operator must prepare and annually update a business continuity plan; keep the emergency management team up-to-date and reachable through established communication channels; and maintain financial stability to ensure operational continuity in crises.

She added that close cooperation with national disaster authorities, local government and sector regulators is critical for embedding preparedness into public sector and community systems alike. During Cambodia Post's

on-site evaluation in June 2025, the assessors observed effective coordination with the National Committee for Disaster Management, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications and the Ministry of Health. These partnerships have supported a nationwide digital inclusion plan and expanded access to essential postal services.

Beyond the intrinsic value of preparedness, DRM certification yields tangible operational and commercial dividends, fundamentally altering Cambodia Post's position in the global logistics market.



A newly constructed Cambodia Post office in a flood prone area.



Participants receive certification following completion of Cambodia Post's Disaster Risk Management training.

"Our DRM status signals that we are a low-risk entry point into the south-east Asian market. This reduced risk profile translates directly into leverage for securing better commercial agreements and positioning Cambodia Post as a resilient default channel for global e-commerce platforms seeking to de-risk their supply chains."

Sao Kaingmeng
Country Project Manager,
Cambodia Post

Other practices, such as mobile post offices, Telegram-based emergency channels and Community Tech Centre post offices, were also highlighted as good practices in the assessment.

"Cyber resilience is an impending issue that we must mitigate," Nohara noted.

The latest iteration of the UPU's DRM framework introduces digital adaptation and cybersecurity as new strategic imperatives. She explained that disaster readiness increasingly depends on advanced AI-driven tools capable of anticipating and mitigating risks before disruption occurs.

To this end, the UPU is a partner in the Global Initiative on Resilience to Natural Hazards through AI Solutions, a joint effort led with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The initiative promotes the use of artificial intelligence in early warning systems, predictive modelling and real-time coordination.

SUSTAINING GOLD CERTIFICATION: THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MINDSET

A gold certificate is not the endpoint; it is the beginning of a relentless commitment to continuous improvement for Cambodia Post. The UPU supports this process through peer reviews, regional training and expert workshops.

Cambodia Post continues to institutionalize lessons learned, as well as formalizing written procedures for DRM activities, expanding staff training, updating plans on schedule, and allocating a dedicated emergency budget with clear approval channels. Its achievement provides a powerful roadmap for other countries in south-east Asia to turn crisis management into a driver of modernization and growth by translating global standards into rigorous local training, transparent digital operations and auditable commercial certainty. TJM

MyDuty Collect

aws partner network

Cross-Border Customs & Tax Compliance Automation

AI-Driven Solutions for Postal, Logistics and Supply Chain Companies

"Qualified Party for US De Minimis"

Data Capture & Enhancement

- HS/HTS Classification (AI, Natural Language, 134 Input Languages)
- Prohibited & Restricted Goods Screening
- Duty & Tax Calculation

DDP: Delivery Duty Paid

Capture & Calculate Duties, Taxes & fees at Shipment Creation and Checkout:
- Distribution of fees and Data to Tax Authorities, Brokers & Partners
- API & White-Label Options

DAP/DDU: Delivery Duties Unpaid

Automates Customer Notification, Tax & Duty Payment Automation, Document Capture & KYC

Parcel Creation → Email Notification → Payment Automation

Positioned for VIDA and e-Invoicing

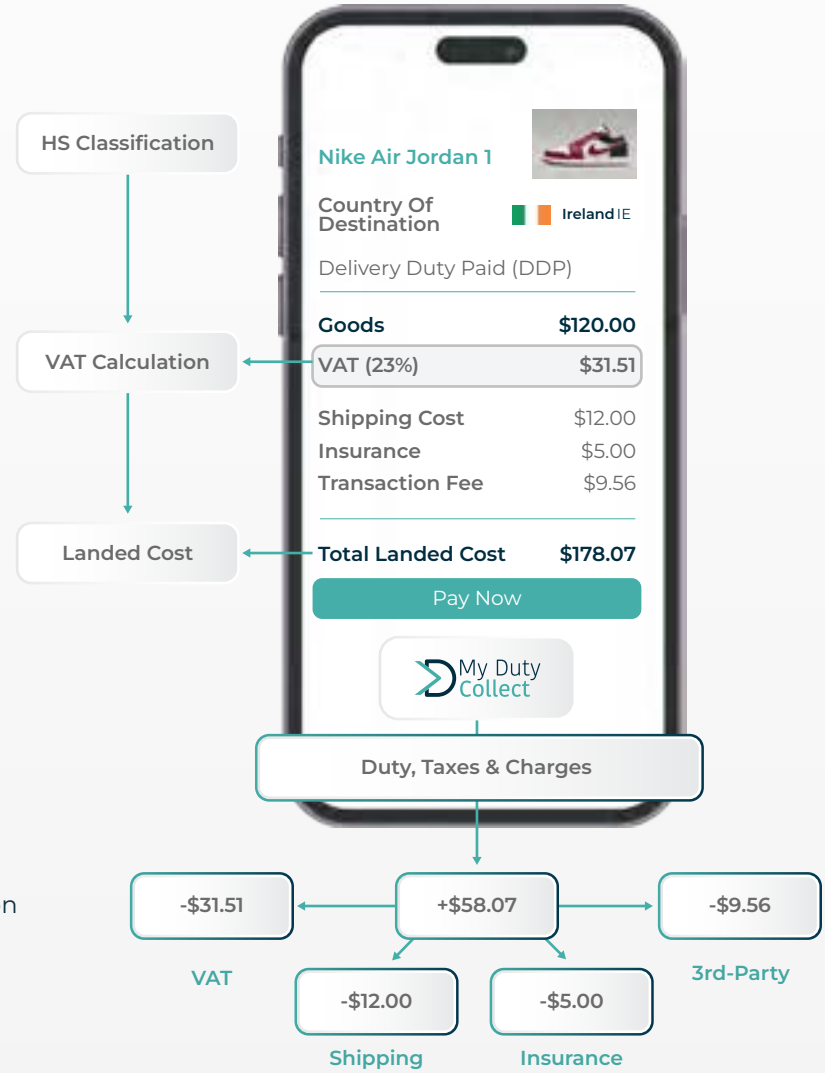
Create and store customs, shipping and parcel documentation, enabling an audit trail to support regulatory compliance, returns and duty drawback

Parcel Creation → Documents Upload for Parcel Validation → Postal Company Approval → Payment Authorisation

Tax Compliance – IOSS & Fiscal Representation

Tax and duties payment collection, distribution of funds to customs brokers, tax authorities & payments for inbound & outbound flows

DDP/DDU



Automation of Customs Data & Payments for Inbound & Outbound Flows

Contact us

customer@mydutycollect.com

www.mydutycollect.com

POWER UP WITH

POST

SECURING *your trusted*
DIGITAL SPACE

- ✓ ALL-IN-ONE COMPLIANCE PACKAGE
- ✓ DNS HOSTING
- ✓ DIGITAL CERTIFICATES
- ✓ EMAIL HOSTING
- ✓ WEBSITE HOSTING
- ✓ E-COMMERCE MARKETPLACE
- ✓ NFTs AND CRYPTO STAMPS
- ✓ AND MUCH MORE...

https://trust.post

MARKET DIGEST

by TITANI JOSEPH MKANALUMO

AUSTRIA

Austrian Post has partnered with food retailer, Spar, to install over 100 new 24/7 postal stations in front of its stores across Austria, enabling customers to combine grocery shopping with parcel sending and collection. The first postal station was opened in the parking lot in front of the Eurospar store in Vienna-Meidling, Sagedergasse 13 on September 1, and features almost 140 compartments. The postal stations will be rolled out continuously over the next few months.

(Source: parcelandpostaltechnologyinternational.com)

BAHRAIN

The Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications has announced that as of August 28, **Bahrain Post's** online services will be available exclusively through the MyGov application. This step seeks to unify access to government's e-services and enhance the efficiency of the digital transformation process, in line with users' expectations for a more seamless and integrated experience. The postal services available on MyGov will include renewal of P.O. Box subscriptions, tracking of letters and parcels both locally and internationally, calculation of shipping costs, locating P.O. Boxes and post offices, as well as receiving notifications related to postal services.

(Source: bahrainpost.gov.bh)

BRAZIL

The Brazilian Postal Service (Correios) completed the delivery of the first edition of the National Teacher Examination (PND) with 100% accuracy. In total, almost 1.1 million exams were delivered simultaneously to approximately 3,000 test site coordination centers throughout the country.

The Correios has historically been responsible for major large-scale logistics operations in the education sector, with 100% efficiency. In 2024, the company distributed 8.7 million ENEM exam papers and distributed and collected exam papers for the Unified National Public Service Examination (CPNU), with over 2 million candidates in 228 municipalities. Furthermore, the state-owned company also manages the logistics of exams such as Encceja, Enade, Saeb, Revalida, and, for over 30 years, has delivered FNDE textbooks to Brazilian public schools.

(Source: correios.com.br)

FRANCE

French postal operator **La Poste** has signed a memorandum of understanding with the global e-commerce marketplace Temu to provide flexible delivery and collection services in France.

The MoU, which was signed through La Poste's logistics arm Colissimo, will make it easier for local business to sell abroad and will improve services for French consumers thanks to several initiatives, including: reliable parcel delivery in France, with flexible options for home delivery, pickup points, lockers and post offices across the country; international fulfilment solutions enabling Temu sellers to reach global shoppers through Colissimo's international network; and warehousing and flow management through Colissimo's logistics platforms.

(Source: parcelandpostaltechnologyinternational.com)

INDIA

India Post has undertaken a massive nationwide rollout of the Advanced Postal Technology (APT) as part of its digital transformation under IT 2.0. The transition from the legacy system marks a major step toward delivering faster, smarter, and more customer-centric postal services. India Post remains firmly committed to ensuring uninterrupted public service. The Department is closely monitoring performance and continues to take all necessary measures to ensure a smooth and efficient transition.

(Source: postandparcelinfo)

KAZAKHSTAN

Kazpost JSC has announced the start of subscriptions to periodicals for 2026 from October 6, 2025. Readers who wish to subscribe to their favorite publications will be given the opportunity to subscribe to 3,000 newspapers and magazines on various topics. Despite the development of internet resources, printed publications remain an important and sought-after source of authentic information that shapes public opinion and national values.

(Source: qazpost.kz)

MALAWI

The Malawi Posts Corporation (MPC) embarked on an ambitious Turnaround Strategy to address profitability challenges, modernize operations, and enhance customer experience. MPC has invested in new trucks to strengthen courier operations ensuring shipments are moved efficiently and securely across the country.

To enhance security, the corporation has upgraded sorting and storage facilities with safes, locks, and CCTV systems in all major Courier hubs, including Blantyre, Chichiri, Limbe, Zomba, Mzuzu, Mangochi, Lilongwe International Mail Processing Centre, and the Air Mail Unit at Lilongwe International Airport.

(Source: malawipost.post)

NETHERLANDS

PostNL is delivering parcels in an increasing number of Dutch city centers using electric vehicles. The post has been delivering completely emission-free in 27 city centers across the Netherlands, well above the 14 cities where it is legally required since the start of the year. PostNL says expanding the number of zero-emission delivery zones is aligned with its sustainability ambition and aims to deliver entirely emission-free in both the Netherlands and Belgium by 2030.

(Source: postnl.nl)

OMAN

Oman Post has signed a strategic cooperation agreement with e-Boks to establish and operate the country's official national digital post-box. The new service, which forms part of Oman's Vision 2040, will help Oman Post to drive digital transformation across the sultanate. Every individual and entity in Oman will gain access to a verified digital mailbox – a secure solution that ensures legal validity and complies fully with national data protection requirements. The national digital postbox will centralize the delivery of official documents, including bills, contracts, statements and notices, replacing fragmented channels with a single, trusted source of truth. By moving high-volume communications to a secure, always-on digital channel, Oman will accelerate e-government adoption, reduce administrative costs, shorten service turnaround times and minimize paper consumption to support the country's sustainability commitments, according to the companies.

(Source: parcelandpostaltechnology.com)

POLAND

Poczta Polska has announced a major investment to fully automate letter processes by 2028. The post says the investment will be crucial for improving service quality and customer satisfaction, despite declining volumes in this segment. This is part of the organization's "Transformation Plan", which aims to boost process optimization and reduce technological debt.

(Source: parcelandpostaltechnologyinternational.com)

SAUDI ARABIA

Maersk Saudi Arabia (Maersk) and Saudi Post Company (SPL) announced the signing of a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a partnership aimed at strengthening logistics and supply chain services for eCommerce companies entering and operating in Saudi Arabia, as well as potentially in the broader Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) markets. Under the partnership framework, Saudi Post will manage all in-Kingdom operations, including express customs clearance and final mile delivery service, while Maersk will oversee origin activities, international transportation, and bonded fulfilment solutions.

(Source: postandparcel.info)

SWITZERLAND

From 2030, Swiss Post's legal obligations will shift towards a more digital-friendly universal service. The Federal Council presented key points of the new Postal Services Act: from 2030, Swiss Post should be able to adapt its universal service more quickly to its customers' actual needs. The new Postal Services Act is intended to make the universal service more flexible - combining physical and digital services.

The current universal service obligation is 15 years old and is no longer in line with social and economic developments. According to Alex Glanzmann, interim CEO, the Swiss Post welcomes the fact that the Federal Council is taking further important steps and pushing ahead with the modernization of the universal service. He added that, "What is and will remain crucial for Swiss Post is that people in Switzerland can continue to send their letters and parcels quickly and reliably and receive them on time or process their payments securely."

(Source: postandparcel.info)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

U.S. Postal Service has launched its new Informed Delivery Mobile App, designed to provide customers with greater convenience for managing their mail and packages anytime, anywhere. The USPC Informed Delivery is a free service that allows customers to digitally preview their incoming letter-size mail and manage package deliveries. The App features push notifications, optional biometric login, enhanced package tracking capabilities, and the ability to view, interact with and manage incoming mail directly from the mobile phone.

(Source: usps.com)

WNS-APP

THE FIRST STOP ON YOUR PHILATELIC JOURNEY



SCAN AND IDENTIFY STAMPS

Available on the App Store and Google Play - scan to download!

GET IT ON Google Play

Download on the App Store



A new lens on the UPU's 150 years of global postal history

Text by MAKIKO **HAYASHI**

As the Universal Postal Union concluded its 150th anniversary celebrations, a landmark academic volume – *The World as a 'Single Postal Territory': The Universal Postal Union's Role in History* – was released on 9 October in celebration of World Post Day.

Edited jointly by researchers from the French CNRS and the Committee for Postal History, and produced in partnership with La Poste Group (France), the book builds on the first UPU Historians' Colloquium, held in Berne in 2024. Bringing together the work of over 20 historians and researchers specializing in the postal sector, it examines how the founding principle of a "single postal territory" transformed global connectivity and international cooperation. As well as being a reflection of the UPU's enduring commitment to knowledge sharing and collaboration, this is also the first scholarly publication on the UPU released in EPUB format, ensuring open and accessible dissemination for readers worldwide.

Read the full publication here:

https://www.upu.int/UPU/media/upu/publications/202510worldPostDay-2025HistoriansColloquiumEpub.pdf

For UPU Director General Masahiko Metoki, the publication represents "a milestone in understanding the Union's contribution to world history". He recalls that behind every letter or parcel lies "the story of people reaching out across borders, which is an effort made possible by the principles enshrined in the UPU's Constitution".

From a historiographical standpoint, the volume fills a long-standing gap. While legal and political scholars have studied the UPU's frameworks for decades, historians have only recently begun exploring the organization's wider social and geopolitical dimensions. In launching this collaboration, the editors, Léonard Laborie and Sébastien Richez, sought to ensure that the 150th anniversary would not only celebrate the Union's past but also "stimulate new research and produce knowledge on its role in global governance".

Laborie explains that one aim was to "better balance accounts of the respective roles of telecommunication on the one hand, and postal networks on the other, in networking the planet in the modern era". For too long, he says, the focus had been on the telegraph and telephone, "but postal networks remained the prime mover of information, light goods and money across borders throughout the 19th and most of the 20th centuries." The UPU's anniversary, he adds, was "an opportunity not to be missed to place an institution that was at the very core of this reality back into the global historical narrative and to explore its many facets".

He credits "the academic network built since 1995 by the Committee for Postal History, together with partners such as the Institute in Prato", and "the enthusiasm of the International Bureau", for allowing the colloquium, a special issue of the French historical review Monde(s), and the book itself "to take shape in record time".

Structured around five thematic sections, the book traces the UPU's institutional development, the interplay of sovereignty and cooperation, and the material culture of the Post – from philately to digital transformation.

For Philippe Wahl, former Chair and CEO of La Poste Group, the volume also carries a forward-looking message. "Our future will be shaped by universality", he notes, describing it as "the foundation of both connectivity and governance – the common good that remains essential for the UPU".

As both editors recall, collaboration with the International Bureau was vital. We were extremely pleased to have the Bureau on our side", says Richez. "Together we discussed logistics, but also the sources that could shed new light on this long history". Two staff members from the Bureau and another from Canada Post, all trained in the social sciences and humanities, even contributed chapters using previously untapped materials such as the UPU's statistical archives dating back to 1875.

Standing as both a tribute and a turning point, the book casts new academic light on the postal sector's role in building global connection. It also reflects the insight, commitment and careful curation of all those involved in shaping the colloquium's intellectual direction – a collective effort which invites readers to rediscover the UPU's enduring vision of the world as a single postal territory. HN

RECOMMENDED READINGS

UNESCO

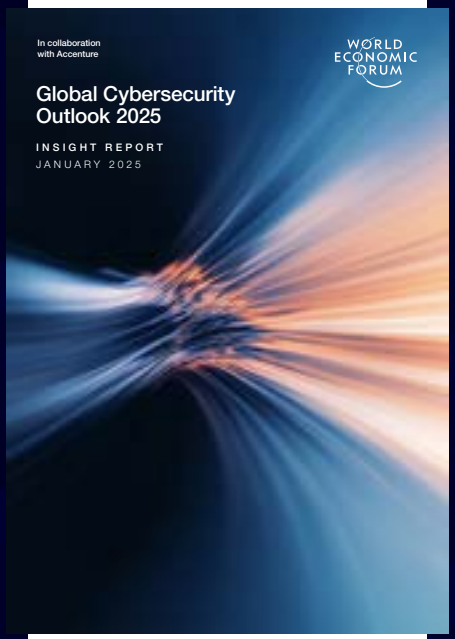
Ocean Decade Vision 2030: a theory of change for the Ocean Decade Challenge 10 (2025-2030)



https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000393761?posInSet=2&queryId=N-EXPLORE-e83addd0-b2e4-4438-9472-9c2975d3715a

WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2025



https://reports.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Cybersecurity_Outlook_2025.pdf

UN DESA

World Social Report 2025: A New Policy Consensus to Accelerate Social Progress



https://desapublications.un.org/publications/world-social-report-2025-new-policy-consensus-accelerate-social-progress

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025



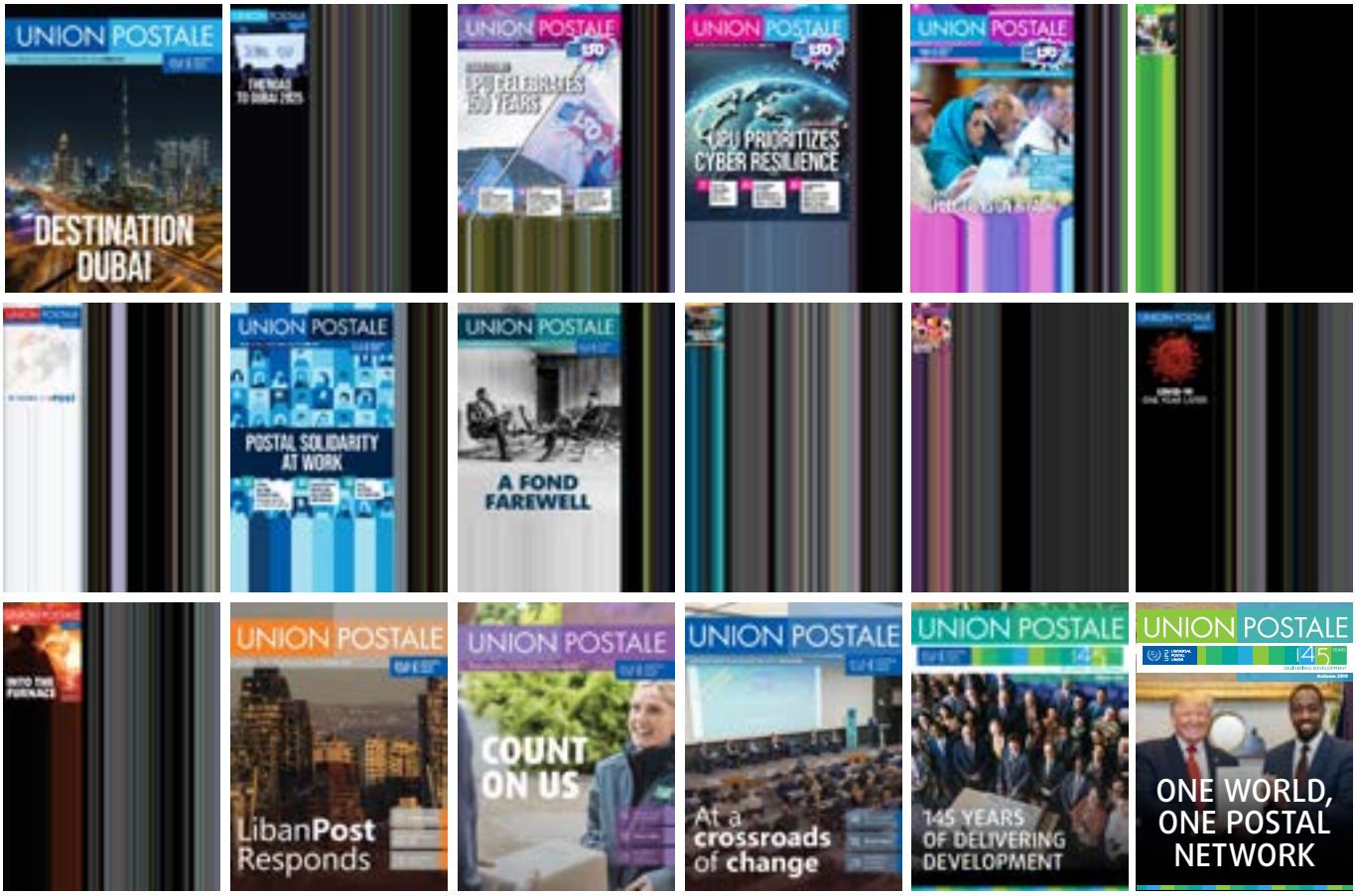
https://desapublications.un.org/publications/sustainable-development-goals-report-2025

UNION POSTALE

www.upu.int/en/news-media/magazine

EXPLORE THE LATEST INSIGHTS, STORIES, AND INNOVATIONS FROM THE GLOBAL POSTAL WORLD — NOW AVAILABLE TO READ ONLINE FOR FREE.

Access all four issues of our flagship magazine in the language of your choice.



Union Postale is the Universal Postal Union's flagship magazine, founded in 1875. Each issue is published quarterly in several languages, giving advertisers a regular opportunity to reach out to their audience.

Some 12,000 copies of Union Postale are sent to named distribution lists annually. The bulk of these readers are the top decision-makers from national Posts and ministries from the UPU's 192 member countries. They include chief executives, operations managers, technical experts, industry regulators and government ministers.

Around 1,000 further copies of the magazine are also distributed each year during meetings of the UPU's decision-making bodies, the Postal Operations Council and Council of Administration, attended by thousands of delegates from member countries and special industry events, such as Post-Expo.

An advertisement in Union Postale reaches a truly international audience.

The magazine is the only UPU publication that accepts advertising. One booking ensures your advertisement appears in all language versions of the magazine both in print and online.

Ideally, the artwork should be delivered in PDF format for each available language.

Union Postale does not accept advertorials.

Advertising rate card 2025

Full Page	Book 1 issue	Book 4 issues (5% discount)	Book 8 issues (10% discount)
Inside magazine	2,000 EUR	7,600 EUR	14,400 EUR
Inside front cover	2,100 EUR	7,980 EUR	15,120 EUR
Inside back cover	2,100 EUR	7,980 EUR	15,120 EUR
Back cover	2,300 EUR	8,740 EUR	16,560 EUR

CONTACT
Yana Brugier,
Editor-in-chief
EMAIL: yana.brugier@upu.int
TELEPHONE: +41 31 350 31 11

UNION POSTALE magazine
Universal Postal Union
Weltpoststrasse 4
3015 BERNE
Switzerland

@UPU_UN

@UNIVERSAL_POSTAL_UNION

@UPU_UN

@UNIVERSALPOSTALUNION

@UNIVERSAL-POSTAL-UNION

@UNIVERSALPOSTALUNION

