

Berne (Switzerland), October 9, 2009

## **Celebrating World Post Day 2009**

***Going green helps planet and makes good business sense as economy slows down, says UPU head***

Why are Hong Kong citizens allowed to send one letter free of charge through the Post today? Why has Post Fiji invited the public to visit its main mail processing centre? And why is the Post in Mali using October 9 to launch a nationwide HIV-prevention campaign in its post offices?

Because Posts around the world are today marking World Post Day, celebrated annually on October 9, the date the Universal Postal Union was created in Berne in 1874.

Posts worldwide are drawing attention to the importance and value of their services in keeping people and businesses connected through a myriad of activities reminding people that some 438 billion letters and six billion parcels are still sent through the post annually. And financial, logistics and electronic services are also part of the wider range of services Posts offer today in an era of increasing electronic communication.

Postal services worldwide employ more than five million people, and some 660,000 postal establishments make up the largest physical distribution network on the planet.

### **Feeling the financial crisis**

In 2009, the postal sector has felt the pinch of the economic crisis, as weak consumerism and less advertising mail saw some of the world's largest Posts register significant drops in letter-post volumes and revenues. In a year-over-year comparison of similar quarters, the UPU reported last week that domestic letter-post volumes and revenues among 15 surveyed Posts were down between 6 and 14% in the second quarter of 2009, compared to the same period last year. Such a decline has not been seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

On the other hand, however, the same Posts have seen their parcels volumes grow as e-commerce motored along despite the crisis. And Posts offering financial services continue to see the number of savings accounts and deposits grow exponentially.

### **Going green**

As the world gears up for the United Nations conference on climate change in Copenhagen in December and in the wake of the economic crisis, UPU Director General Edouard Dayan said that becoming more environmentally friendly made good business sense in his annual message to the organization's 191 member countries. He urged Posts to go green and be part of the solution in the fight against climate change.

Postal activities worldwide produce their own share of greenhouse gas emissions. Many Posts, mostly from industrialized countries, have undertaken measures to reduce the impact of their activities on the environment, but more must be done, said Dayan. The UPU is working closely with its member countries and postal operators, as well as regional postal organizations and UN bodies, to reduce the sector's carbon emissions and footprint. As the UN specialized agency for international postal services, the UPU is preparing the first global inventory of greenhouse gas emissions produced by

Posts and will work with the UN Environment Programme to help postal operators reduce their carbon emissions using appropriate measures.

“In this time of financial and economic crisis, sound management of environmental issues can be a significant driving force for growth,” said Dayan. “In taking up the challenge of green growth, businesses can rethink their logistics chain processes, improve their efficiency, plan long-term energy saving measures, develop new products and services that are less harmful to the environment – and therefore more attractive to customers – and, lastly, project a responsible business image.”

The UPU is actively supporting the UN-led “Seal the Deal” campaign and is getting representatives of the worldwide postal sector to sign two eight-metre long banners that urge world leaders to “help save the planet” when they meet in Copenhagen in December for the UN climate summit.

### **Monument centenary**

In related news, the UPU is today celebrating the centenary of its monument, located in Berne and designed by French sculptor René de Saint-Marceaux, who was a native of Reims (France). Celebrations were held in Berne today to mark the occasion, with Swiss Post and France’s La Poste issuing stamps.

Please see separate press release at: [http://www.upu.int/press/en/press\\_releases\\_2009.shtml](http://www.upu.int/press/en/press_releases_2009.shtml)

### **About the Universal Postal Union**

Created in 1874, the UPU, based in Berne (Switzerland), is an intergovernmental organization and the primary forum for cooperation between governments, Posts and other stakeholders of the worldwide postal sector. In addition to maintaining a genuinely universal network that provides modern products and services, it establishes the rules for international mail exchanges among its 191 members and makes recommendations to stimulate mail volume growth and to improve the quality of service for customers. Some 5.5 million employees process and deliver 433 billion domestic letter-post items annually, as well as some 5.5 billion international items and over 6 billion ordinary parcels. About 660,000 postal establishments make the postal network the largest physical distribution network in the world. The UPU celebrated 60 years as a specialized agency of the United Nations in 2008.

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