

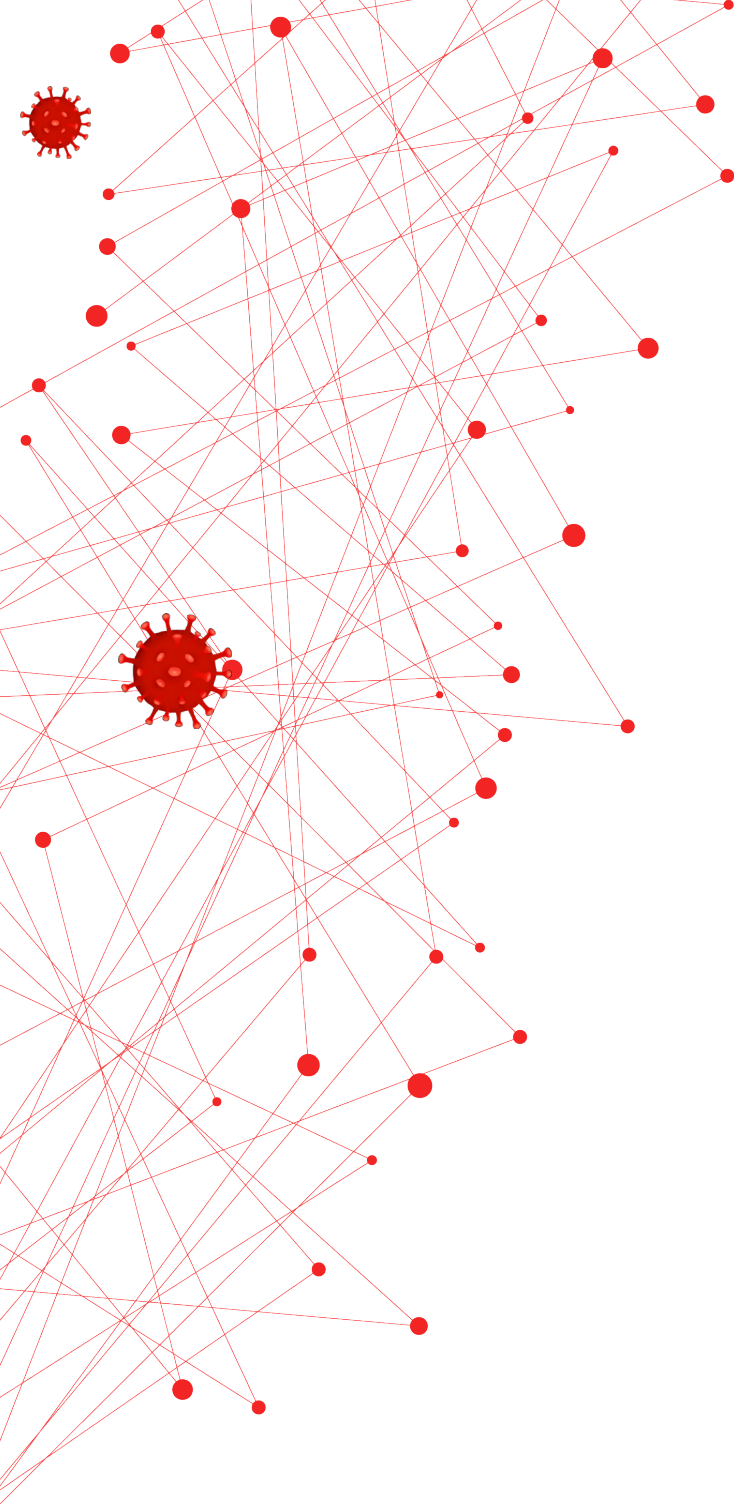


UPU | UNIVERSAL  
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UNION

# UPU MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE 2021

**COVID-19 and the postal  
sector – what has and  
hasn't changed, and what  
needs to change**

Tuesday, 10 August 2021  
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.)



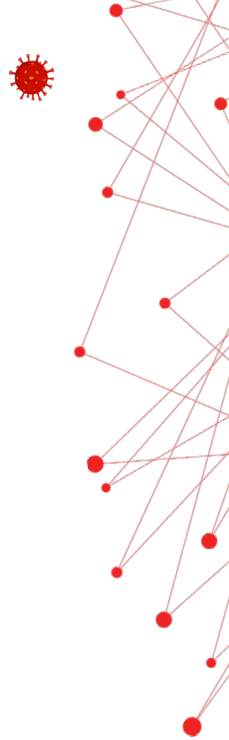
The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic shattered all global economic prospects: in addition to its tragic public health impact, the crisis has had devastating socio-economic consequences. Although governments, firms and citizens have adapted to the new reality, most macroeconomic aggregates have collapsed to unprecedented levels not seen since World War II. And although economic growth and trade are expected to rebound in 2021, there are still considerable risks ahead for the world economy.

While these trends will not necessarily limit the growth of e-commerce, they will change consumer behaviour, at least in the short term. As Internet connectivity continues to expand, the transformational impact of digitalization in all sectors will accelerate. Market players can thus expect to see an increase in services that are complementary to retail e-commerce, from payments to parcels and logistics.

With a global network of nearly 630,000 post offices, 5.2 million staff and physical infrastructure covering 192 countries, the postal sector is expected to play a role in this transformation, and to support the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the sector also faces a number of long-term challenges that it will have to address in order to retain its role as a network to promote communication between inhabitants of the world.

On 10 August 2021, as leaders convene for the Abidjan Congress, the 27th in the UPU's 147-year history, a Ministerial Conference will be held. Structured in four panels, it will be a unique opportunity to take stock of the transformations brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to reflect on what has not changed and what needs to change in order to bring about a sustainable future.

Speakers at the conference will include ministers, chiefs of regulatory authorities, heads of intergovernmental agencies and other high-level representatives of organizations interested in the benefits that the postal sector can bring to societies and economies worldwide.



9.00–9.30

**SPEAKERS**

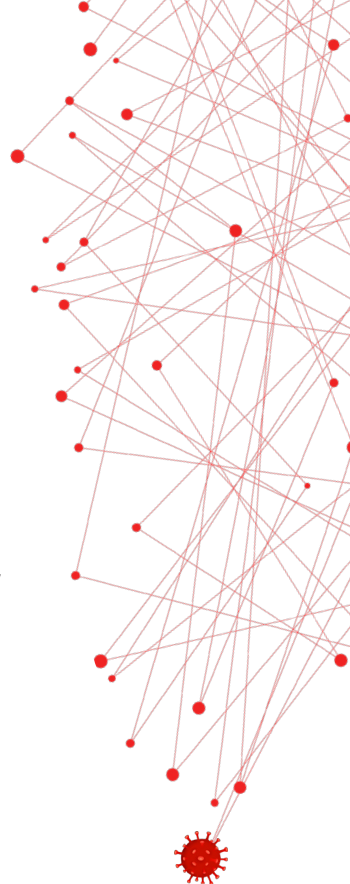
## OPENING CEREMONY

**Mr Bishar A. Hussein**, Director General of  
the UPU International Bureau

**Mr Roger Félix Adom**, Minister of the Digital  
Economy, Telecommunications and Innovation,  
Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.)

9.30–9.45

## GROUP PHOTOGRAPH





9.45–11.00

## PANEL 1: WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE WORLD SINCE THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19?

COVID-19 has caused major disruptions in global supply chains, with ramifications for the postal sector. Panellists will discuss the effect that the pandemic has had in their respective countries and which solutions were found to address the challenges they faced.

### SPEAKERS

**Mr Darsanand Balgobin**, Minister of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, Mauritius

**Hon. Marvin Gonzales**, Minister of Public Utilities, Trinidad & Tobago

**Mr Junsheng MA**, Director General of State Post Bureau, China

**Mr Paul Scully**, Minister for Small Business, Consumers & Labour Markets and Minister for London, United Kingdom

**H.E. Mr Ryota Takeda**, Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan

11.00–12.15

## PANEL 2: WHAT HAS NOT CHANGED OVER THE PAST 2 YEARS?

In spite of the disruption that it caused, COVID-19 has not reversed certain macro-trends that had been emerging over the past few decades. Panellists will reflect on which areas have remained unchanged in the face of the pandemic, taking national, regional and global perspectives.

### SPEAKERS

**S.E. Ms Petra De Sutter**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Administration, Public Enterprises, Telecommunication and the Postal Services, Belgium

**Mr Dmitriy Kim**, Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation

**Mr Wolfgang Küpper**, Secretary General, OTIF

**Hon. Brigadier Mark Anthony Phillips**, Prime Minister of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana

**H.E. Ms Mayra Arevich Marin**, Minister of Communications, Cuba



12.15–13.45

## LUNCH BREAK

13.45–14.15

## STATEMENTS FROM MINISTERS

Ministers in the audience will make statements on various topics outside the panel framework.

14.15–15.30

## PANEL 3: WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE?

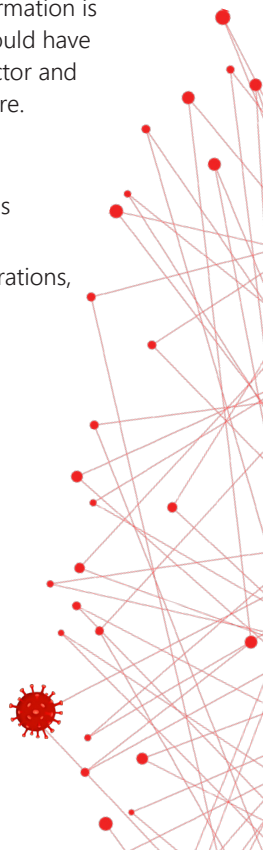
Among the areas that did not change in the face of the pandemic, there may be some elements whose transformation is long overdue. Panellists will consider which changes would have been desirable and should be pursued in the postal sector and beyond with a view to building a more prosperous future.

### SPEAKERS

**Mr Fábio Faria**, Minister of Communications, Brazil

**Mr Kunio Mikuriya**, Secretary General, World Customs Organization

**Dr. Ismail**, Vice Minister for Posts and Informatics Operations, Ministry of Communications and Informatics, Indonesia



15.30–16.45

## PANEL 4: KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR UN AGENCIES AND FOR THE UPU IN PARTICULAR

As the world changes and as transformations are triggered in international supply chains and in the postal sector, UN agencies have a role to play in providing multilateral solutions to complex global challenges. Panellists will take stock of all previous analyses and discussions in order to provide guidance to the UN system and to the UPU in particular on the way forward.

### SPEAKERS

**Mr Bernard Maissen**, Secretary of State, Director General of the Federal Office of Communications, Switzerland

**Hon. Mr Faustine Engelbert Ndugulile**, Minister of Communication and Information Technology, Tanzania

**Hon. Ms Josephine Teo**, Minister for Communications and Information & Second Minister for Home Affairs, Singapore

16.45–17.15

## CLOSING CEREMONY

### SPEAKERS

**Mr Pascal Clivaz**, Deputy Director General of the UPU International Bureau

**Mr Bishar A. Hussein**, Director General of the UPU International Bureau

**Mr Roger Félix Adom**, Minister of the Digital Economy, Telecommunications and Innovation, Côte d'Ivoire (Rep.)





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