



HE Minister Mondli Gungubele
Statement on behalf of South Africa
UPU Extraordinary Congress and UPU Strategy Summit
4th October 2023

Honourable Chairperson and our host, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Mr Metoki, Director-General and the UPU team

Honourable Ministers and Senior Government Officials

Chairpersons and CEOs of Postal Operators, Regulators and Wider Postal Sector Players

Representatives of International Organisation

Distinguished guests

Excellencies

Let me begin by thanking our Host, the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the impeccable and gracious hospitality extended to me and the South African delegation, since our arrival. Once again, the Government of Saudi Arabia have proven their unwavering commitment to global partnership.

This UPU Strategy Summit serves as a critical forum to explore innovation solutions and identify priorities for our organisation. It remains critical that any changes to the structure and working methods of our organisation should be tailored to ensure delivery of our mandate; efficiently utilise the postal network and reach; and maintain the Union so to achieve our strategic priorities.

For South Africa the Post remains a valuable part of the critical infrastructure of our country, despite our recent financial challenges. During the era of the COVID pandemic the post helped to ensure that we could continue to reach and support our citizens, including the disadvantaged, across all corners of our country. We delivered and provided PPEs as well as social grants across the country, amongst other existing services and programmes.

In the past, in this forum, we have spoken about the historical transition of the postal business from a letter post business that also delivers parcels, to a parcel delivery business that also delivers

packages and other e-commerce products. I am here at this UPU Congress to assure the global community that South Africa remains committed to the success of our Post Office.

We want to create an efficient, integrated logistics and e-commerce service provider, that will play an essential role in providing e-commerce services everywhere, from the advanced commercial centres to our disadvantaged communities. We see the South African Post Office as the national e-commerce aggregator central in the platform economy. We will be looking for partnerships with the on-line retailers and manufacturers, transport, and air freight services, as well as seeking new opportunities to diversify our infrastructure. We will also look to create opportunities to work with Small-Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) as well as multinationals in the ecosystem. We believe the postal community has an invaluable role to play in bringing the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area to all Africans, to strengthen intra-regional trade, and in connecting the world.

The outcomes of the 4th Extraordinary Congress have provided a valuable stepping stone for the Post. The Opening agenda will allow for greater engagement between the UPU, the post and the wider postal community, creating more opportunities for partnerships and the development of new products and services. The decisions made will pave the way for structured partnerships that could provide us with opportunities to access more e-commerce traffic. All we ask for is the acknowledgment and compliance with jurisdiction laws and regulations of member-countries. Some amongst us are intentional in protecting the growth of our Designated Postal Operators. The new work being done on Digital Payment Systems, utilising the Digital Public Infrastructure approach, will assist to upgrade our payment settlement systems that will elevate our competitiveness in facilitating transactions.

Honourable Chairperson

We are determined to build the Post Office of Tomorrow, modernising by investing in the right technology to position the Post Office to meet the expectations of today's customers. We will become an essential e-commerce platform partner in providing logistical solutions for the rapidly growing digital economy, while fully committed to the UPU's vision of a single, universal postal platform, that leaves no-one behind.

We have before us the opportunity to strengthen the functioning of our Union and build a more integrated, innovative, and inclusive postal network that is truly able to meet the needs of its customers and deliver valuable services to all of the citizens of the world. I hope collectively we will be able to make concrete decisions that will help us to seize this opportunity.

Shukran.... (*Thank you*)