



MEDIA STATEMENT

MINISTER NDABENI-ABRAHAMS JOINS WORLD POST DAY CELEBRATIONS

09 October 2020

Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies Stella Ndabeni-Abrahams joins the world in celebrating the World Post Day. The purpose of World Post Day is to bring awareness to the role of postal services in the daily lives of people and businesses, as well as its contribution to global social and economic development. This day is celebrated each year on the 9th of October.

“Before the digital communication came into our lives, sending letters by post was the only option, and in cases where the message is urgent, the option was the telegram. It was this form of communication which revolutionized long-distance communication between rural and urban areas, while playing a very pivotal role in socio-economic lives of citizens. To this very day, the post office still plays a central role in our economy and society,” said Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams.

Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams says the World Post Day 2020 with the theme “*More than mail*” resonates with the mandate of the SA Post Office (SAPO).

This mandate, which includes promoting economic growth through the provision of postal, logistics as well as retail products and services that are competitively priced, is critical, and in line with government’s basic services and infrastructure development objectives. And it is for that reason that SAPO offices around the country continue to support government service delivery projects, exploiting the advantages brought about by SAPO’s massive and extensive infrastructure and presence in almost all corners of the country, including the rural areas.

Currently about 8, 3 million South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) beneficiaries receive their grants through the system facilitated by the SA Post Office and Postbank. And today,

motorists can and continue to renew vehicle licences at selected post offices in seven provinces, with the remaining two provinces expected to join in soon. By so doing, freeing time for motorists to perform their other crucial day's work instead of standing on long queues. This service is used by more than 3 million motorists each year and is expected to keep increasing.

In addition, the Post Office has been delivering schoolbooks to government schools in the Northern Cape and Limpopo for the past five years, with the services expected to be increased to more provinces in the future.

This crucial service has so far assisted learners in these provinces to start their school year with a full set of books, placing them ahead of their peers. The other key service is the provision of primary health care medicines to citizens, especially in the far-flung areas where our elderly citizen lives. This goes a long way in ensuring the health needs of the elderly citizens are catered for effectively and efficiently.

Furthermore, the Post Office has and continues to play a pivotal role in assisting the department and government in the digital migration of television broadcasts by coordinating the installation of set-top boxes for households that qualify for subsidised boxes. Although the project has seen several delays in the last decade, SAPO's assistance has been vital.

Immediate future

Among some of the government services which the Post Office wishes to provide in the immediate future includes but not limited to the renewal of driver's licences and applications for ID books and passports at its branches. But even more importantly, ensuring that the department and government achieve their objectives of building a digitally connected society.

The role of SAPO in economic growth:

As a result of the challenges facing South Africa regarding high unemployment, which has been worsened by the Covid-19 lockdown disruption, His Excellency the President has emphasised the importance of economic growth. To that end, SA Post Office is currently repositioning its e-commerce strategy to be a driver of global exports and to enhance intra-African trade under the new African Continental Free Trade Agreement, while engineering local trade.

The postal system worldwide is a vital partner for e-commerce, usually offering the most cost-effective delivery option, given its extensive presence. To that end, and as part of its role in growing the economy and create the much needed jobs, the SA Post Office has reduced the

backlog of international items ordered online to around three weeks and hopes to have the backlog eradicated within the next month.

The Post Office also plans to expand its role in e-commerce and intends to launch a platform for online shopping within the next few months, aimed specially at facilitating interaction between small craftsmen and traders in South Africa and buyers.

Before the Covid-19 lockdown, the Post Office delivered around two million items per day and expected to grow as the economy normalises and tick up again in the future. This is another strong indication of the critical role the Post Office still plays, but most importantly, its central role in growing the economy.

“Given its massive and extensive infrastructure and presence in almost corners of the country, including the rural areas, there is growing need for government to make use of the SA Post Office to enhance the delivery of people-centred services. And those discussions are positively underway. This will go a long way in assisting the post office to be financially sustainable”, said Minister Ndabeni-Abrahams

Enquiries: Mish Molakeng: 082 469 3997 Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies

Issued by Government Communications (GCIS) on behalf of the Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies

09 October 2020