



## Press Release

**Experts push towards Digitalization of Postal Services in Africa**

**Tunis, Tunisia, 15 March 2019:** Promoting Digital Transformation of the postal services to support Africa's transformation was the subject of the High Level Forum held in Tunis, Tunisia on 13 and 14 March 2019.

Held under the overall theme "Transforming Postal Services in Africa: Digitalization for Services Delivery to Citizens, Strategy to increase postal contributions to e-commerce development and financial inclusion

enhancement", the objective of the High Level Forum, which is an initiative of the African Union Commission, was to enable African Postal Sector stakeholders to focus on creating an environment that will enable the Postal Service to embark upon the transformative journey.

Addressing the opening plenary of High Level Forum, the African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid said Information and Communication Technology was at the heart of development on a global scale and digital innovations are disrupting industries, including the postal and logistics sectors, at an ever increasing pace.

"The ability of the ICT to transform our economies was a matter that was raised at the highest level by African leaders and they were clearly expressed in the solemn declaration of the fiftieth anniversary of the African Union," the Commissioner stated.

"In this respect, a number of decisions have been taken by the African Union's legislative bodies in favor of the development of the Postal Sector; they are only waiting to be implemented, in particular by the Member States, the Regional Economic Communities with the support of our development partners," the Commissioner uttered.

She concluded by stating that postal digital services for e-post, e-commerce, and e-government are a growing area of opportunity to increase the relevance of postal services to changing customer needs.

For his part, Tunisian Minister for Communication Technologies and Digital Economy, Mr. Mohamed Aouar Maarouf highlighted his country's efforts to keep the postal service future-proof, which transformed the traditional postal service provider to a modern-day e-Commerce and logistics powerhouse through a number of innovative strategies.

The Minister recognized the leadership of the African Union Commission in positioning Africa's postal sector as a strategic player, with a view to helping its citizens to tap into the emerging e-commerce business opportunities.

Also speaking at the opening ceremony, Secretary General of the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU), Mr. Younnous Djibrine noted that information and communications technologies (ICTs) are a back-bone of a vibrant postal sector anchored on e-commerce, which can contribute to rapid social and economic development.

Mr. Djibrine added that the theme of the meeting resonates well with PAPU's vision and he noted "through the theme, the postal fraternity is conveying a strong message that it was committed to further develop and put its extensive global network at the disposal of governments, customers, businesses and other stakeholders to spur growth and prosperity for the benefit of all citizens of the continent," Mr. Djibrine opined.

Echoing the same sentiments, the Director General of the Universal Postal Union, Mr. Bishar A Hussein stated that the Post has positioned itself as a major player in global e-commerce.

"For e-commerce integrators, the Post is the best partner for last-mile delivery services. This is because the Post not only has the largest physical network even within individual countries, but is also the only reliable service for delivery to remote and marginalized communities," Mr. Hussein stated.

Talks and discussions explored how postal services can better serve citizens, best practices on postal reform, solutions on transformation and modernization of the sector and ensure the postal sector considers appropriate strategies to take advantage of developments in the digital agenda.

The Forum wrapped up on Friday, with delegates having unanimously agreed to a wide range of strategies that countries can take to ensure that the postal sector can better serve nations and citizens, help grow the economy and drive development.

Strengthening their shared commitment to promoting economic equality through transformation of the postal services, agreements of cooperation were also signed between Moroccan Post & Tunisian Post and Sudan Post & Tunisian Post on the sidelines of the Forum.

The Forum was jointly organized by the African Union Commission, the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) and the Government of the Republic of Tunisia.

More than 250 participants from African Union Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), continental organizations, Academia, specialized institutions, private sector (start-ups), civil society organizations, journalists, and ICT stakeholders attended the meeting.

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