



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Zambia's Postal Sector to Steer Economic Growth

Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) says Zambia's Postal Sector has great potential to steer economic development both at national and international levels.

Speaking alongside the Pan African Postal Day which falls on Wednesday January 18, 2017 under the theme "*The Post: An Essential Infrastructure for the Development of E-commerce in Africa*", ZICTA Director General, Margaret Chalwe Mudenda, described the day as important on the Zambian and African calendar looking at the critical role the postal sector plays in the economy.

Mrs Mudenda said the commemoration of the Pan African Postal Day meant a lot to Zambia, as the country sits on the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) Administrative Council and chairs the Committee on Policy, Strategy and Governance.

She added that the sector in Zambia has greater potential to contribute immensely to the national development, and has since implored players in the postal services sector in Zambia to embrace technology and innovation to improve on efficiency and service delivery.

The Director General noted that the postal infrastructure in Zambia and international levels has a solid track record of trust with customers which has been built and nurtured from time immemorial.

Mrs Mudenda added that ZICTA's ultimate goal was to leverage on postal networks to foster the economic development of country's rural populations and remote locations, adding that the sector was poised for massive development in view of the newly developed postal regulations.

"As we commemorate the 37th anniversary, allow me to appeal to all the players in the sector to utilise technology and venture into innovative ways of doing their business. It should not be business as usual", she noted.

Mrs Mudenda said the information and communications technologies (ICTs) were a backbone of a vibrant postal sector anchored on e-commerce, which can contribute to rapid social and economic development.

And Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) Secretary General, Younouss Djibrine, said PAPU has helped in spearheading coordination of development activities, as well as providing technical and strategic support for the postal sector while safeguarding the interests of African posts on the international scene.

Mr Djibrine described the 2017 theme as being in line with the top priorities for development of posts identified by all regions of the world during their respective strategic conferences.

“This theme is in line with the top priorities for development of posts identified by all regions of the world during their respective strategic conferences, which were held in 2015 and it was endorsed in the Istanbul World Postal Strategy by the 26th UPU Congress in October 2016”, he said.

Mr Djibrine noted that through the theme, the postal fraternity was 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 world.

He added that the theme resonated very well with the new vision for the postal sector known as “**Vision 2020**” which was built on three pillars of Innovation, Integration and Inclusion, the now famous “**3 Is**”.

He said the to realise a full postal sector’s enormous potential as an essential communication and trade facilitation infrastructure, and consequently an important catalyst for national development, Africa’s postal fraternity has worked out an ambitious infrastructure development project such as the *electrification and connectivity* project, to cover all post offices on the continent.

Mr Djibrine was delighted to announce that PAPU was currently working on a key project code-named *Ecom@Africa* under the auspices of the UPU as part of the quadrennial Regional Development Plan for Africa (RDPA) for the 2017-2020 period.

He added that *Ecom@Africa* was aimed at developing and implementing virtual platforms for e-commerce as well as “smart” storage and distribution systems in each of the five regions across Africa.

Mr Djibrine recognised the role the UPU, leadership of the International Bureau, as well as the African Union Commission continues to play 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.

The Secretary General concluded his commemoration message by quoting an old adage “*If a man knows not to which port he sails, no wind is favorable*”, and hoped that the postal family would ultimately live the dream of fostering inclusive social and economic development of Africa, while successfully growing its own business.

PAPU, as a specialised Agency of the African Union (AU) responsible for development of postal services in Africa ranks amongst the oldest specialised institutions in the African continent. It will be celebrating its 37 years on Wednesday January 18, 2017.

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