

# PROMOTING CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE AS UGANDA CELEBRATES PAN AFRICAN POST DAY



**Eng. Irene Kagwa Sewankambo**  
UCC Ag. Executive Director

The Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) Day is a brainchild of African leaders who set aside this day to celebrate the establishment of the continental organisation on 18th January 1980. And so, Uganda joins the rest of Africa today, to celebrate the 43rd PAPU Day, focusing on the theme that was approved by the Union's Plenipotentiary Conference: "The Post: An established promoter of cross-border e-commerce in Africa."

Based in Arusha, Tanzania, the Pan African Postal Union (PAPU) is a specialized institution of the African Union that is responsible for the development of postal services in Africa. The organization is led by Zimbabwean national Sifundo Chief Moyo, the Secretary General, deputised by Ugandan Jessica Uwera Ssengooba, who formerly worked at Uganda Post Limited (UPL) – the Designated Postal Operator.

PAPU was established by the constitutive Plenipotentiary Conference of African ministers in charge of postal services, held in Arusha in 1980, following a decision by African Heads of State and Government during their summit in Gabon, July 2-6, 1977. Having started with a membership of 35 countries in 1980, PAPU currently boasts of 45 Member States.



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The Union's vision is to ensure the implementation of a single postal territory that provides innovative, integrated, and inclusive policy guidelines for the development of the postal sector in Africa.

**PAPU's core objectives are:**

- Enabling the postal sector to become an essential component of the digital economy and socio economic inclusion;
- Sensitizing African leaders to prioritize the postal sector projects in national development plans;
- Strengthening Africa's voice in global postal dialogues.



**Mr. Sifundo Chief Moyo**  
PAPU Secretary General

This year's PAPU Day theme, **'The Post: An established promoter of cross-border e-commerce in Africa,'** speaks to the broad agenda of the digital transformation of the traditional Post into the "smart post" built around new technologies for holistic and integrated service delivery.

Commenting on the fast-evolving postal ecosystem, the PAPU Secretary General, Mr. Sifundo Chief Moyo, said in a message tailored for the day that the postal industry should reposition itself as a logistics pivot by leveraging its traditional appeal as a trusted delivery service provider. "The inexorable decline of letter-post volumes and the explosion of e-commerce small packet volumes, and the steady increase in parcel post volumes are confirmations of the trajectory in which the postal industry should redirect its efforts, re-capacitate its resources, and re-calibrate its approach in order to re-establish and reposition itself as a logistics giant leveraging its historical capital as a trusted logistics provider," Mr. Moyo said.

The Secretary General further argued that the Post needs to seize the opportunities offered by the promising e-commerce markets to boost their revenue sources and firm up on its relevance to the communities it serves. "It is through the accessibility of postal applications and services through the internet and hand-held devices such as smart phones, tablets, laptops, etc. that the Post can be effective and efficient in service delivery in the Digital Economies that are being created in the Global Village where we

all live," he said.

Among other initiatives, PAPU has taken measures to urge postal actors in Member States to comply with cross-border e-commerce requirements in line with global and national customs and trade laws. In that regard, PAPU in partnership with some Member States is implementing the Operational Readiness for E-Commerce project (ORE), which is sponsored by the Universal Postal Union (UPU).

Initiated in 2017, the project seeks to enhance operational efficiency and e-commerce development by supporting postal operators to modernise equipment, tools, and processes with a view to meeting the minimum operational requirements, in terms of visibility, data quality, supply chain integration, end-to-end delivery reliability, and security.

Posta Uganda has participated in the ORE project since its inception in 2017, from ORE 1, ORE 2 to the current ORE 3 that was launched by the Universal Postal Union in Abuja, Nigeria, in December 2022.

The project has supported Posta Uganda to improve its services, including adoption of new technologies that can support e-commerce, such as e-posta, and the Customs Declaration System (CDS) for

advance data on security and customs.

Posta Uganda has also benefitted from capacity building training and workshops organized by UPU and acquired six new delivery vans through UPU's Quality of Service Fund (QSF). Commenting on the project, Mr. Moyo said: "Improving last-mile delivery reliability and transactional visibility will go a long way towards building or recovery of consumer trust as well as earning appreciation for good postal service quality."

Through these interventions, PAPU hopes to become an effective catalyst for postal transformation and development that will propel postal services across Africa to digitize and consequently meet the expectations of African citizens, businesses, and governments.

**"Together, let's establish the Post as the preferred partner of cross-border e-commerce in Africa!"**

**Full statement of the PAPU Secretary General on PAPU Day 2023:**

[https://www.upap-papu.africa/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SGs-message\\_PAPU-Day-2023.pdf](https://www.upap-papu.africa/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SGs-message_PAPU-Day-2023.pdf)



**PAPU Assistant Secretary General Jessica Uwera Ssengooba (right) with UCC Director Corporate Affairs Fred Otunnu (extreme left), former UCC board member Charles Auk and a Zimbabwean official after Ms. Ssengooba's election in Zimbabwe, 2021.**