UN recognizes postal service as 'a true partner for all' delivering good to the world

Marking World Post Day, top United Nations officials highlighted the importance of the postal sector not just for delivering mail but also "delivering good to the world".

"Resilient postal systems offer support during natural disasters, financial services to hundreds of millions of people; and essential information in times of crises," Secretary-General António Guterres said in a message commemorating the International Day.

"This network, through its international treaties and emphasis on universal service, is a constant voice for multilateralism and force for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also promotes literacy and education for children."

With hundreds of thousands of offices across the globe, the postal sector – despite the rise of email and the internet – is still one of the world's largest logistical networks and a vital centre of community life everywhere. Private citizens and businesses rely on the service's affordable, reliable and unparalleled physical delivery network to send letters, parcels and remittances, as well as to conduct financial transactions.

In a separate message, Bishar A. Hussein, Director General of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) – the specialized UN agency for the sector, which coordinates policies among member nations – highlighted the continued relevance of postal service.

> Resilient postal systems offer support during natural disasters, financial services to hundreds of millions of people; and essential information in times of crises – *UN Secretary-General António Guterres*

"In the current digital age, the post has positioned itself as a major player in global e-commerce," he said, noting that the sector's "one global network" approach makes it an "obvious delivery partner" for businesses selling online.

"Customers choose to do business with the post based on its track record of being trustworthy, reliable and affordable," he added.

According to UPU, postal service is particularly important for small and medium-sized businesses seeking to expand into international markets, given its affordability and ease of use. For big e-commerce operators, physical

mail is often the "last-mile delivery" service.

"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," said Mr. Hussein.

Marked annually on 9 October, [World Postal Day](#) celebrates the 1874 anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union, in the Swiss Capital, Bern.

This year, the International Day is being billed as "The Post: Delivering good to the world", urging everyone to appreciate postal workers everywhere, whose trust, dedication, reliability and security are the hallmark of the service worldwide.

[Bullying: Protection for children is a 'fundamental human right' says top UN advocate](#)

Around 130 million, or one-in-three children worldwide, experience some form of bullying, the United Nations stated on Monday, in its latest report on how children can be better-protected. This form of violence has long-lasting and direct consequences for their health, school performance and overall well-being.

"Being protected from bullying is a fundamental human right," said [Marta Santos Pais](#), Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

At an event at UN headquarters in New York, co-organized with the Governments of Mexico and Lithuania, Ms. Santos Pais presented the key findings of the Secretary-General report and welcomed the "growing interest" from the world on the matter, applauding efforts made so far in terms of policy, law and advocacy to protect the safety of children.

Earlier this year, for example, Member States agreed on the adoption of a new indicator in the monitoring of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). [Indicator 4.a.2](#) now measures the percentage of students who have experienced bullying in the past year, by gender, and for each contributing country.

Despite such encouraging signs, the Special Representative identified several key areas where improvement was needed for Governments and institutions.

First, she emphasized the importance of early childhood prevention and noted that the "parent-child relationship is a critical factor in predicting the risk of bullying in adolescence". According to the report, today, 176 million children under-five, witness domestic violence on a regular basis and children who bully others are twice as likely to have been exposed to domestic violence than other children.

"Exposure to toxic stress, domestic violence and a violent family environment has an irreversible impact on the development of very young children," she said, adding that "it contributes to normalize the use of violence".

Today, approximately 30 per cent of adolescents in 39 countries in Europe and North America, admit to bullying others at school.

"Cyber Cocoon Kids" exhibition at UN headquarters in New York, October 2018. UN Photo/Kim Haughton

In addition, Ms. Santos Pais noted that teachers also play a great role in promoting "a culture of respect and safety" in schools and that sports environments can often become contexts where competitiveness leads to "humiliation, shaming and exclusion of those who fail to win".

"Analyses of data from Ethiopia, India, Peru and Viet Nam reveal that violence in schools, including physical and verbal abuse by teachers and by other students, is the most common reason given for disliking school, and, significantly, it is associated with lower scores in mathematics and lower self-esteem," the report highlights.

To address these negative impacts, experts and decision-makers are lacking sufficient data to form evidence-based strategies and programmes. However, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has committed to tackling this gap and to producing an annual report to be released in January 2019 for the first time.

Some of the initial findings published already denote that physical appearance — such as being overweight or having non-conforming gender expressions — is the main driver for bullying. Race, nationality and skin color are also high on the list. In the report, religion was not highlighted as major contributing factor.

While the term "bullying" covers physical, psychological and sexual violence (understood in this context to mean sex-related mockery and gender-based discrimination), very little data is available on the psychological occurrence of it, and countries must do more to gain a better understanding of this issue. The UNESCO report shows that girls and boys are equally affected overall by bullying, but that boys are more likely to suffer from physical violence.

Cyberbullying on the rise

Cyberbullying, which can cause profound harm as it leaves a permanent

footprint online and can quickly reach wide audiences, is on the rise, UNESCO's report notes. In seven European countries overall, the proportion of children online aged 11-16 who've suffered cyberbullying, increased from 7 per cent in 2010, to 12 per cent in 2014.

Countries and institutions can adopt a wide variety of measures to help reverse these trends, including carrying out awareness-raising campaigns and teacher-trainin, adopting laws that clearly define bullying and pushing schools to implement concrete actions such as helplines for children.

The report of the Secretary-General will be presented on Tuesday to the Third Committee of the General Assembly so next steps can be determined.

"Children are eager to see action to bring this manifestation of violence to an end," said Ms. Santos Pais. "And they deserve no less!"

Note: To draw attention to how deeply cyberbullying impacts the lives of millions of children every day, the UN has launched an innovative multimedia experience at its headquarters in New York, titled "[Cyber Cocoon Kids](#)", highlighting the abuse that children undergo online.

[With boundaries blurring between crime and terror, international cooperation's vital, UN highlights](#)

The constantly-evolving 'nexus' between crime and terrorism, ranging from simple deals to complex symbiotic relationships, demands greater understanding to break the illicit flow of black-market cash across borders, a United Nations meeting heard on Monday.

Terror groups are getting increasingly-involved in "lucrative" criminal activities such as trading in natural resources and human trafficking, Michèle Coninsx, the Executive Director of the UN [Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate](#) (CTED), told the Security Council [briefing](#) on the issue.

Similarly, criminal groups join hands with terrorists, and are providing services such as counterfeiting, arms dealing, and helping to smuggle terrorists from one country to another, she said.

"We know that terrorist groups recruit individuals with criminal background or criminal skills, and petty crimes are committed to finance terrorist activities, including travel of foreign terrorist fighters," explained Ms. Coninsx, noting that conflicts and instability further entrench such deal-

making.

The head of CTED said her office and other parts of the UN counter-terror effort, such as the [UN Office on Drugs and Crime](#) (UNODC) and the [UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute](#) (UNICRI), were working together to address the scourge.

> Terrorist groups recruit individuals with criminal background or criminal skills, and petty crimes are committed to finance terrorist activities — CTED chief Michèle Coninsx

She also highlighted the Executive Directorate's work with UN Member States, identifying good practices, including joint investigative units and effective prosecution mechanisms, to handle organized crime and terrorism.

Looking ahead, Ms. Coninsx urged the international community to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism and its support structures, especially to identify new terrorist trends, map linkages between terrorists and criminal groups, and share information more effectively.

Links between organized crime and terrorism 'not new'

At the briefing, Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velásquez, the Chair of the UN [Counter-Terrorism Committee](#) (CTC), said that the links between terrorism and international crime syndicates is not new and has been high on the agenda of the Security Council as well as the General Assembly, for a long time.

Mr. Velásquez, also the Permanent Representative of Peru to the UN, highlighted the importance of international instruments — in particular, the UN [Convention against Transnational Organized Crime](#) and its supplementary Protocols and Security council resolutions — for countries to disrupt criminal and terrorist groups.

In that context, he reiterated that development of an effective response to growing nexus between terror and crime, should remain one of the highest priorities during his leadership of the Committee.

'Blurring lines' between organized crime and terrorism

Speaking alongside UN officials, Laura Adal, a senior analyst at the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, said that the use of violence and threat of violence employed by both terrorists and criminal groups, tends to "blur the lines" between the two.

While dynamics of individual groups are unique and highly localized, both criminal and terrorist groups contribute to instability and undermine governance, and both rely on the "strategic" use of violence said Ms. Adal.

Responding to the crime-terror nexus must take into account their propensity towards violence and intimidation, she said, calling for greater efforts to strengthen rule of law, democratic governance and development.

At the same time, ensuring that Governments and societies allow the benefits of development to reach all citizens, is equally vital, added Ms. Adal.

[Cutting-edge tech a 'double-edged sword for developing countries': UN report](#)

The latest technological advances, from artificial intelligence to electric cars, can be a "double-edged sword", says the latest UN [World Economic and Social Survey](#) (WESS 2018), released on Monday.

The over-riding message of the report is that appropriate, effective policies are essential, if so-called "frontier technologies" are to change the world for the better, helping us to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and addressing climate change: without good policy, they risk exacerbating existing inequality.

Amongst several positive indicators, WESS 2018 found that the energy sector is becoming more sustainable, with renewable energy technology and efficient energy storage systems giving countries the opportunity to "leapfrog" existing, often fossil fuel-based solutions.

The wellbeing of the most vulnerable is being enhanced through greater access to medicines, and millions in developing countries now have access to low-cost financial services via their mobile phones.

Referring to the report, UN [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) said that "good health and longevity, prosperity for all and environmental sustainability are within our reach if we harness the full power of these innovations."

However, the UN chief warned of the importance of properly managing the use of new technologies, to ensure there is a net benefit to society: the report demonstrates that unmanaged implementation of developments such as artificial intelligence and automation can improve efficiency but also destroy quality jobs.

"Clearly, we need policies that can ensure frontier technologies are not only commercially viable but also equitable and ethical. This will require a rigorous, objective and transparent ongoing assessment, involving all stakeholders," Mr. Guterres added

The Survey says that proactive and effective policies can help countries to avoid pitfalls and minimize the economic and social costs of technology-

related disruption. It calls for regulation and institutions that promote innovation, and the use of new technologies for sustainable development.

With digital technology frequently crossing borders, international cooperation, the Survey shows, is needed to bring about harmonized standards, greater flexibility in the area of intellectual property rights and ensuring that the market does not remain dominated by a tiny number of extremely powerful companies.

Here, the UN has a vital role to play, by providing an objective assessment of the impact that emerging technologies have on sustainable development outcomes – including their effects on employment, wages and income distribution – and bringing together people, business and organizations from across the world to build strong consensus-led agreements.

[FROM THE FIELD: Comoros farmers battle climate change](#)

Farmers in the Comoros islands are learning, with the support of the UN, to adapt to dramatic shifts in the climate which have contributed to the deterioration of agriculture across the Indian Ocean archipelago.

Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns including a severe decrease in rainfall have led to soil erosion and widespread deforestation as well as decreased crop yields.

UN Environment/Hannah McNeish

A UN climate change expert panel determined in a **[special report](#)** on Monday that the world needs to move much faster and more dramatically, if global warming is to be contained to anything like the levels demanded by the 2015 Paris Agreement.

The Comoros sits some 300 kilometres off the coast of East Africa and is amongst the most underdeveloped countries in the world.

But now, a project backed by UN Environment has been launched to plant 350,000 trees per year across the three islands of the archipelago, in the hope that reforestation will protect the environment and boost development there.

Read more about the challenges that Comorian farmers face here.