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POSTAL
UNION

UPU International Bureau

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To:

- Union member countries and their designated operators

For information to:

- Restricted unions
- United Nations Information Centres
- UN Department of Global Communications

Berne, 2 December 2025

Reference: 0910(DIRCAB.EXT.PART)1123

Subject: Launch of 55th International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People (2026)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to announce the theme for the 55th edition of the International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People, which will take place in 2026. The theme of the competition will be:

Write a letter to a friend about why human connection matters in a digital world

The competition was created by the UPU's 1969 Tokyo Congress and officially launched in 1971. In 2025, the 54th International Letter-Writing Competition honoured four winners with Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. Further information on the upcoming competition as well as those of past years can be found on the UPU website at www.upu.int/en/ilwc.

I invite all UPU member countries to take part in this competition, fostering an environment for children that nurtures eloquence and creativity in written discourse about the future they envision for the world.

Please find enclosed the rules of the competition as revised by the UPU Council of Administration in 2017 (Annex 1). As indicated in the revised rules, only one entry per member country will be accepted. A member country with several territories or designated operators will therefore need to organize its national competition in such a way that only one letter representing that member country is sent to the International Bureau for the worldwide competition. The entry form (Annex 2) must accompany the official submission.

Please inform the International Bureau via communication@upu.int as soon as possible if your member country will be organizing a national competition.

Communication toolbox

To promote the competition, the International Bureau encourages member countries to make use of the visual identity of the event. The competition poster, along with an informative flyer for schools reflecting the 2026 theme, will shortly be available in the International Letter-Writing Competition section of the UPU website (link above). If you would like the International Bureau to approach your country's education ministry to request its cooperation, please let us know, giving us the full name and address of the relevant ministerial department.

The best letter from each country must be submitted **no later than 5 May 2026**, and I kindly ask all member countries to make a special effort to respect this deadline.

I look forward to receiving your country's entry for the 2026 International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Masahiko Metoki', written in a cursive style.

Masahiko Metoki
Director General



Rules of the International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People

1 *Objective*

The UPU's International Letter-Writing Competition aims to improve literacy through the art of letter-writing. Targeted at children and young people, the annual competition encourages participants to express their creativity and refine their language skills. The use of AI is not allowed.

2 *Participation*

The competition is open to participants aged from 9 to 15 years inclusive, with the submission deadline for the international competition serving as the cut-off date for age eligibility. This means that letters from participants who turn 16 before 5 May 2026 will be rejected, while those from participants who turn 16 on or after 5 May 2026 will be accepted.

The UPU International Bureau does not accept compositions sent directly by schools, individuals or similar. If you are an individual who is interested in participating, please contact your national postal operator to see how you can participate.

3 *Organization of the competition and selection of the winners*

The UPU announces the theme for the new competition.

Each member country then organizes a letter-writing competition on the theme in its territory as it sees fit, but preferably with the help of its national education authorities.

The national organizing body/bodies choose the best composition in accordance with the general rules of the competition.

Each member country then sends the International Bureau its best national letter, with the supporting documents (see below), **by 5 May 2026 at the latest**.¹ Only one entry per member country is permitted.

Each entry must be accompanied by the following documents:

- a A completed entry form;
- b The original letter in the following formats:
 - a good-quality scan, in colour, of the handwritten original (if available) in PDF format; and
 - as a Word document;
- c A translation of the letter in English and/or French, as a Word document; and
- d A good-quality photograph of the participant:
 - in JPEG format (300 dpi minimum); or
 - as a print copy (please do not staple or glue the photo to any of the documents if sending by post).

4 *Presentation and content of entries*

Entries must adhere strictly to the theme and not exceed the limit of 800 words in the original language.

¹ Please send by e-mail to communication@upu.int and, if possible, by post to the attention of "International Letter-Writing Competition, Communication Programme" at the address provided in Annex 2 ("Entry form").

5 *Jury designation and results*

The UPU International Bureau will designate an international jury to judge the letters it receives.

The following criteria will be used to judge the quality of the letters:

- structure of the letter (clarity and organization, including a logical flow of ideas, well-constructed paragraphs, and the appropriate use of standard letter-writing elements such as a greeting, body and closing);
- adherence to the theme;
- creativity; and
- use of language.

The judges will select the three best entries (i.e. first, second and third places) and may also award special mentions to other compositions. Once the UPU International Bureau receives the results from the jury, it will notify the member countries within a reasonable amount of time.

6 *Prizes*

The gold medallist, silver medallist and bronze medallist may also be offered a trip to the UPU headquarters in Berne, Switzerland, or an alternative prize to be decided at the sole discretion of the UPU. In case a trip to the UPU HQ is offered as a prize, the UPU will cover only:

- travel (transportation from the participant's country of origin to the UPU and back); and
- accommodation for the duration of the event for the winner and one accompanying adult.

Daily allowances for meals and small expenses are not covered by the UPU and should be planned by the member countries' competition organizers or will be at the expense of the families.

Participants awarded a special mention will also receive a certificate.

7 *Communications*

The UPU International Bureau will undertake communication activities to ensure the widest possible publicity for the prize-winners, their countries, and the letter-writing competition in general.

Member countries are warmly encouraged to make every effort to promote the competition and their prize-winners in their territory.



Entry form for the 2026 International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People

Congratulations on selecting the winning composition from your country.

Please complete this entry form and return both pages to communication@upu.int with the necessary documents attached. In parallel, paper copies can be sent by post to: International Letter-Writing Competition, Communication Programme, UPU International Bureau, Weltpoststrasse 4, 3015 BERNE, SWITZERLAND.

Country information

Country name: _____

Total number of letters the organizing body/bodies received for the national competition: _____

Details of jury: _____

National organizing body/bodies

Name of organizing body/bodies (ministry, designated operator, etc.): _____

Full name of contact person(s) coordinating the competition: _____

Telephone number(s) and e-mail(s): _____

Details of the participant selected

Gender: _____

Full name: _____

Date of birth: _____

E-mail address: _____

Place of residence: _____

Number of words in the original language (maximum 800 words): _____

Original language of the letter: _____

Checklist

<i>Required documentation</i>	<i>Attached (please tick)</i>
Completed entry form	<input type="checkbox"/>
The original letter (max. 800 words): – as a good-quality scan, in colour, of the handwritten original in PDF format; and – as a Word document	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
A translation of the letter into English and/or French, as a Word document	<input type="checkbox"/>
A good-quality photo of the participant (preferably in JPEG format, minimum 300 dpi)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Submission of this entry form by the national organizing body constitutes acceptance of the Rules of the International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People, as well as the specific terms and conditions related to submission of compositions presented below.

Specific terms and conditions related to submission of compositions

The organizing body/bodies hereby acknowledge and agree that the UPU and any of its partners shall be granted a gratuitous, worldwide, unlimited and perpetual licence to copy, edit, distribute, display, make available, publish and reproduce the composition, as well as any illustrations and photographs thereof, as submitted to the UPU International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People. These include the rights to incorporate the composition and materials mentioned above into UPU publications; to translate the composition (or any parts thereof) into other languages; and to create adaptations, compilations, summaries, extracts or other derivative works. The above rights may be exercised by the UPU in any media and formats now known or hereafter devised, and shall include the right to make such modifications as deemed necessary to due exercise of the above rights by the UPU.

Furthermore, by participating in the UPU International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People, the organizing body/bodies hereby grant the UPU and any of its partners a gratuitous, worldwide and perpetual licence to copy, edit, display, publish and make available the name(s) of the winners and organizing body/bodies, as well as any illustrations, photographs and/or video footage of the same (including any representatives) taken in connection with the competition or the composition in any format.

The organizing body/bodies certify that the composition submitted to the UPU International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People is an original effort of the participant, that the composition respects the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and that it does not infringe any third-party rights, including, without limitation, the right to privacy.

In the light of the above, the organizing body/bodies hereby certify that the terms and conditions applicable to the national competition shall comprise, by analogy and *mutatis mutandis*, the specific provisions presented in this section, and that participants taking part in the national competition shall agree to be bound by terms and conditions equivalent to those presented herein for submission of compositions and the materials mentioned above.

Signature: _____

Name and title: _____

Place and date: _____