1983 was proclaimed World Communications Year by the United Nations General Assembly (Resolution A/RES/36/40) to stimulate the accelerated development of communications infrastructures.

Communications are between people through the media of the spoken word, the written or printed word, sight and hearing. In 1983 this involved the use of telephone, postal services, radio, television, telex, computers, earth satellites and of course, newspapers, periodicals and the like.

All these media communicate to people keeping them abreast of local and world news and views thus playing a major role in the cultural and economic development of a nation. Barely a century ago, communications between countries were not only extremely limited but protracted affairs and much depended upon the vagaries of transport and weather.

Modern technological advancement was progressing at such a pace and making it possible for country to country communication to be affected within a matter of seconds.

THE POST
Nor must the humble letter be forgotten! Despite the strides made in the technological fields, direct correspondence between loved ones, friends, relatives and business houses still show a statistical increase each year. The cry — “The post has come!” — still echoes in homes throughout the world when the postman drops the mail in the letter box. The post knows no frontiers and despite wars, earthquakes, storms, floods, epidemics and other calamities the Post invariably reaches its destination to any habitable point on the globe. The Post, therefore, is a valuable and powerful aid to civilisation and progress. (How things have changed since 1983! In Zimbabwe the Post has reduced to such an extent that it barely exists, although a postal service is still maintained it is now severely underutilised. The reasons for this are complex but include the greater use of computer technology and mobile devices that have virtually eliminated the need to use the posts. In more developed economies the postal services are dependent on online shopping and delivery of parcels, the number of letters delivered having reduced considerable. The Zimbabwe post office does not enjoy the benefits that come from internet shopping)

EDUCATION
In order that World Communications Year could achieve its objective, education was considered to be important. Without education there is little meaningful communication and regrettably, in this year of 1983, there are still millions of illiterate people in the underdeveloped countries of the world. The economic problems facing many of these countries are enormous and despite millions of dollars being poured into them by way of grants-in-aid, progress is abysmally slow. Much still remains to be done in the field of education on the part of many governments.
TRANSPORT
Travel is yet another aspect of communication and today modern methods of land, sea and air transport have brought the world within reach of millions thus greatly increasing man's knowledge and understanding of the people of other countries.

It is this understanding that has done much to ease world tension and reduce the threat of another major world war.

ZIMBABWE
Zimbabwe in 1983 was making great strides in all fields of communication. While it is estimated that some 2½ million of its people were still illiterate, the Government was determined to educate all in the foreseeable future. Hundreds of junior, senior and secondary schools were in the process of being built in the rural areas, while adult literacy classes were organised for those beyond school-going age.

Zimbabwe's road, rail and air services were of an exceptionally high standard and compare more than favourably with most other countries on the African continent. Postal and Telecommunication Services were also of a high standard with plans to reach all areas within the next few years.

In late 1984 an Earth Satellite Unit was due to be commissioned and this, coupled with the new Gateway Exchange in Gweru, would relieve Zimbabwe of its dependency on neighbouring countries for international telecommunications links. (The Earth Satellite Station at Mazowe celebrated its opening in 1985 with its own set of stamps)

The Stamps
Catalogue listings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>ZSC</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>630</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>9c</td>
<td>Postman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>631</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>11c</td>
<td>Aircraft ground controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>632</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>15c</td>
<td>Switchboard operator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>633</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>17c</td>
<td>Printing press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>634</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>21c</td>
<td>Road haulage truck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>635</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>30c</td>
<td>Electric train</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technical details

**Stamp size:**
- 9c to 17c: 28 x 42 mm
- 21c & 30c: 42 x 28 mm

**Sheet Size:**
- 50 stamps (9c to 17c - 5 rows of 10 stamps, 21c & 30c – 10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes per printed sheet

**Artist:**
- Rowan Phillips

**Paper:**
- ZSC paper type C – paper known as "Postmaster", manufactured and converted by Smith & McLaurin Ltd, Scotland. The coating is not as fluorescent as the previous papers and the gum is described as 'particle gummed'. It is a very different adhesive from PVA as it has a matt, non-reflective appearance. It is what is known as 'dry gum'.

**Print colours:**
- All stamps - cyan, yellow, magenta & black

**Perforations:**
- SG 14½, ZSC 14¼
- 9c to 17c - Left margin - perforated through; Other margins - imperforate
- 21c & 30c – Top margin – perforated through; Other margins - imperforate

**Printer:**
- Mardon Printers (Pvt) Ltd., Harare, Zimbabwe

**Printer’s Imprint:**
- Bottom Margin. Imprint printed in black
- 9c to 17c below columns 4 to 7
- 21c & 30c below columns 2 to 4

**Cylinder numbers:**
- 9c to 17c - Cyls. 1A & 1B bottom margin below R5/1, colours reading across from left – black, magenta, yellow, cyan
- 21c & 30c - Cyls. 1A & 1B top margin above R1/5, colours reading across from left – yellow, cyan, magenta, black

**Colour register:**
- Type TL 4 – round boxed –
- 9c to 17c - opposite R5/1, colours reading down - cyan, yellow, magenta, black.
21c & 30c – opposite R1/5, colours reading down – black, magenta, cyan, yellow

**Sheet Value:**
9c to 17c - Bottom margin, below R5/10,
21c & 30c – Top margin above R1/5
All printed in black.

**Sheet Number:**
Type SN 4a with ‘PTC’ prefix,
9c to 17c – right margin opposite R5/10, reading downwards
21c & 30c – left margin opposite R1/1 reading downwards

**Print numbers:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9c</td>
<td>750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11c</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15c</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17c</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21c</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30c</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Issue date:**

**Withdrawal from sale:**
11th January, 1984

**Demonetarisation:**
31st January, 1994

**Listed varieties**

No listed varieties are available for inclusion, if lists have been produced please forward

**Unlisted varieties**

There are numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps, particularly in the backgrounds. Some dots and specks shown below are a bit more distinctive, some may be constant.

| 9c: Magenta mark left of delivery hand |
| 11c: Green mark on runway near controller’s hip |
| 15c: “R HILLIPS” – missing ‘P’ and part of ‘H’. Probably water on black printing plate |
The lines round the truck appear to double. This is not a movement of the plate, but as the lines are made up by the four printing colours, poor registration of the plates results in what appears to be double printing. Above the normal stamp to the left, with increasing ‘doubling’ to the centre and right stamps.

Late first strike of the perforator as it moves from right to left, resulting in a narrowing of the space between the perforations on the horizontal junction. All the above examples are from columns 9 & 10

### First Day Covers

The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear.

A pictorial first day of issue canceller was produced for this issued and was used by the Philatelic Bureau. In this cancellation the wavy lines of the PTC have been used. Other first day cover cancellers continued to be used at the main post offices.
Related matters

On 22nd October 1983. The Prime Minister, Robert G Mugabe, commissioned the inaugural trip of the first phase of the electrification of the railways. The first phase being between Gweru and Harare. This cover, produced by the National Railways of Zimbabwe, was signed by the Prime Minister – a rare example of him signing philatelic material.

The 30c stamp in the World Communication Year issue was released prior to the Inaugural trip.

Phase 2 has never begun.

Bibliography:

2. PTC Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 4 of 1983.