

**Launch of a Networking Forum for Data Protection Officers organised by
NCCG and DPO on 25 May 2023 at Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee
Tower at 09:30 hrs**

**Ms. Aruna Radhakeesoon – *Chair of the National Committee on Corporate
Governance***

Mrs. Drudeisha Madhub – *Data Protection Commissioner*

**Mrs. Hemlata Sadhna Sewraj-Gopal – *Second Deputy Governor of the
Bank of Mauritius***

**Mr. Viswajithsing Tuhobol – *Officer-in-Charge of the Financial Reporting
Council***

**Mr. Navindsing Jugmohunsing – *Deputy Permanent Secretary of the
Ministry of Financial Services and Good Governance***

Mr. Matthew Lamport – *Member of the NCCG*

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to you all.

It is with great pleasure and interest that I have responded to the invitation of the National Committee on Corporate Governance and the Data Protection Office to this Networking Forum because when it comes to data protection and effective enforcement in the digital world, we have a lot to learn, to talk about and to share.

Data is undoubtedly a valued and significant asset. There is nothing as important and as precious as data for an individual as well as country. Collecting and sharing data is key to conducting business in today's global digital economy. Data Privacy is more relevant now than ever and has become central to how an organisation can maintain trust and safeguard the data it collects or processes.

We must recognize that the Internet has had an extraordinary impact on our life, be it in business, in governance, in our social life, etc. Millions of people around the world use computers and the internet every day. We all use it in school, at work and even at home.

It is true that the Computer has made our life easier, it has brought so many benefits to the society, but it has also brought some problems, and cybercrimes is one of them. In fact cybercrime is one of the most prevalent and most popular rising crimes being committed today.

In the battle to keep internet open and free, we need to acknowledge that, not limited by rules or any other controlling influence, and in the wrong hands, the power of the internet and big data pose serious risks. The question and the challenge of our age is how to reduce those risks and yet embrace the opportunities so that stocking and sharing of data serve businesses, spread human ingenuity and enhance human freedom.

Ladies and gentlemen

Globalization and the accelerating pace of technological development have brought about new challenges for the safeguard of personal data. Mauritius proactively takes measures to curtail threats on different networks within the country.

Through the Data Protection Act 2017 (DPA 2017), Mauritius has aligned its domestic laws with some of the most stringent international standards in relation to the processing of personal data and the protection of the rights of data subjects.

Our focus on legislation and innovation has positioned the country as one of only a few outside Europe to feature data protection laws in line with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Our Data Protection Act applies to entities established in Mauritius that process personal data, and to entities that use equipment located in Mauritius for the processing of personal data.

Mauritius's strong data protection framework has built trust in the online business environment. Persons and entities making use of the Mauritius jurisdiction have the added confidence and reassurance that their personal data and those of their clients will likely be safeguarded and protected according to the most stringent international norms.

As legal framework is improving, hackers also are evolving – and as they evolve, so too do the threats they propagate. They learn how to refine their criminal craft, and they equip themselves with the tools they need to bring down even more high-value targets.

Unfortunately, this kind of rapid growth within the virtual crime sector has not been matched by a commensurate push to evolve cyber defense. But fortunately, developments are taking place.

This lead to the necessity for Data Protection Officers to meet regularly to exchange experience and best practice in data protection. To succeed in business today, you really need a network of people who you can always reach out to for advice, for inspiration, to do business and so on.

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others”, says an African proverb.

Precisely this is the objective of today’s forum which is meant to serve as a hub for networking, learning and staying up to date with the latest developments in the field of data protection.

Dear Data Protection Officers

Technological evolution causes us all to live in a world where people and things turn into information flows and set up relationships that only consist in data exchanges.

We should not forget that those who have the right recipe can turn data into big money. I am of opinion that multinationals which are all tech giants churning data day in and day out, have the recipe.

Your task is therefore attaining ever greater importance. Ensuring adequate data protection is proving day by day an increasingly essential prerequisite for democracy to work and fundamental rights and freedoms to be made real.

Getting assurances that our data is protected and safeguarded both before and when moving on the network is fundamental in order to prevent new technologies from becoming a threat – turning us all into the inhabitants of an out-of-control, disquieting technological world.

Data protection is a shared responsibility and collaboration among Data Protection Officers is crucial. I am convinced that you will use this forum to share your

experiences, challenges and insights on the implementation of regulations and evolving best practices in data protection within your respective organisation.

The Networking Forum will allow you to collaborate on common issues, share resources and work together to address challenges collectively. This cooperation will enhance the effectiveness of your data protection efforts and facilitate a coordinated approach to ensure compliance with data protection laws and regulations.

People's personal data are being processed every second – at work, in their relations with public authorities, in the health field, when they buy goods or services, travel or surf the internet. Individuals are generally unfamiliar with the risks related to the protection of their personal data and of their rights in this respect. They are seldom aware of what they can do if they consider that their rights have been breached, or of the role of national data protection agencies.

I believe there is need to raise awareness about the rights to personal data protection and privacy. These may include campaigns targeting the general public, educational projects for teachers and students, open doors at data protection agencies and conferences.

Ladies and gentlemen

I have in front of me a group of officers - committed, passionate and able to continuously find ways to improve. I congratulate the National Committee on Corporate Governance and the Data Protection Office for organising this networking forum.

On this note, I have the pleasure to launch officially the Networking Forum while wishing the participants to come forward with some valuable suggestions at the end of the day.