

Mr Paul Bunting, Mr Ustaran, Mrs  
N'ganga, Mrs Olweny, Microsoft  
Delegates

Heads of departments, parastatals,  
ministries and private  
organisations,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

Some few years ago, a new debate  
started; a debate about data  
protection in a world of total  
connectivity, a debate about privacy  
in a world where data flows across  
borders as easily as the air we

breathe, and about the future of the digital world.

Recently, the debate took an unexpected twist and amplitude, as stories about the PRISM project, the NSA and Edward Snowden saga surfaced, further consolidating the battle that the rights of every citizen must be protected.

The author, Gijs de Vries rightly said “if information ends up in the wrong hands, the lives of people very often are immediately at risk”.

Tim O’Reilly, founder of O’Reilly Media further said “We’re entering

a new world in which data may be more important than software.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Indeed, our country is also taking cognisance of the challenges and threats of a rapidly evolving technological environment and data driven economy since it is aiming to be a cyber island and providing internet access as a basic human right.

We fully recognize the requirements for an advanced legal and

regulatory framework for data protection to ensure that systems of regulation, governance and business are capable of responding to the challenges of globalisation and most importantly to the opportunities of information and communications technology.

Indeed, the massive growth of e-commerce has transformed the value of personal data from a mere administrative and non-commercial fulfillment to a valuable asset worthy of being a commodity on its own.

It is clear that personal data can be a source of wealth for both the owners and also the data subjects but subject to its proper management and strategic handling.

On the other side of the coin, when information falls to irresponsible hands, the misuse of personal data can create a series of losses, ranging from financial to legal liabilities, and from commercial to public embarrassment.

As Commissioner of the Data Protection Office, I must say I am quite happy to see the growing awareness and level of importance that organisations and the public are now giving to data protection issues.

Organisations seek our advice almost every day on data protection matters. And looking at the nature of complaint investigations being registered in my office, I can say that data protection has infiltrated the fabric of Mauritian life. People are concerned about their personal information.

Consequently, we are continuously calling on industry to:

- Adopt a privacy by design approach by building privacy protections embedded into products and services.
- Provide appropriate transparency so that people can better understand organisations' collection, use and retention practices with respect to their information.
- Give people more effective tools to assert greater control over

their information and how it is used.

- Provide appropriate access to the data that companies hold about them.
- Provide adequate security to protect the data they hold about people.
- Give parents control over the information companies collect about their young children.
- And, last but not the least, create a climate of accountability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,



As we grow increasingly data rich with intelligent and enhanced technology, it is very important to regulate the use of consumer's personal data.

I am sure, today, no-one is ignorant of the increasing interest towards cloud computing, open data and apps technologies.

Cloud computing has data protection implications which should be seriously looked into by all stakeholders to avoid putting people's privacy rights at stake.

It is important to highlight that public clouds raise critical privacy concerns and because of lack of transparency and the global nature of the data, it becomes difficult to enforce privacy and data protection rules.

Although, in principle, accountability for security and privacy in public clouds remains with the **organisation**, the cloud provider is also bound by the obligations of the organisation

through a written contract, according to section 27 of the DPA.

Consequently, organisations must ensure that any selected public cloud computing solution is configured, deployed, and managed to meet the security, privacy, and other requirements of the organisation.

The wave of apps technology is also flooding our everyday life starting from very young teenagers. Apps running on smartphones, tablet computers, Iphones, and other

mobile devices are very common nowadays. With just a tap of a finger on a mobile device, megabytes of software applications can be installed on mobile phones in just few seconds.

The danger is: Whether the configuration of these software products allows by default the collection, storage or sending of the user's persistent or recurrent information, through cookies or clicktrails, which very often the user is unaware of.

Undoubtedly , it is of paramount importance that we understand these potential risks because frequently, whether willingly or unwillingly, we are leaving our digital traces, publishing a lot of personal data, or entrusting our data without knowing where or how it is going to be used.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Rest assured, data protection is not against technological development. However, the development and maintenance of the digital era should not compromise the fundamental rights of people, namely the right to privacy.

Thus, there is a pressing need to adopt a more proactive approach and design data protection safeguards from the very outset in all ICT driven technologies and architectures.

We, the data protection community, are standing at a pivotal moment where we have a unique opportunity and responsibility to carve the future of privacy for the global economy.

It is high time that our data protection regime work not only in

our local context but at the same time, be at par with international challenges.

The first challenge and milestone for the office is to comply and be accredited with international standards so that Mauritius can be recognised by the European Union as an adequate country in data protection. A draft amendment data protection bill is currently on its journey to Parliament.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let this moment be a starting point for all of us to work towards a sustained technological world respecting the privacy rights of every citizen.

I am sure today's conference will lead to ideas towards the development and strengthening of the data protection framework in Mauritius, taken from various perspectives of all the stakeholders. I hope all of you have a beneficial and fruitful discussion during this conference.



Thank you for your attention.