

Opening Remarks

Ms. Wahkeen Murray

Chief Technical Director, ICT

Mona ICT Policy Centre National Cyber Security Conference

June 18, 2019 @ 9:00 a.m.

Salutations:

- **Professor Hopeton Dunn**, Conference Chair and Director, Mona ICT Policy Centre, CARIMAC, UWI
- **Mr. Shernon Osepa**, Manager, Regional Affairs for Latin America & the Caribbean, ISOC.
- **Mrs. Nicola Whyms-Stone**, Legal Counsel, Legal and Compliance Division, NCB
- **Mr. Gilberto Martins de Almeida**, Legal Advocate and Consultant, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
- Presenters
- Participants
- Members of the Media
- Ladies and gentlemen, Good Morning!

The pleasure is mine to address you this morning on behalf of the Hon.

Fayval Williams, Minister of Science, Energy and Technology, who

unfortunately was not able to attend this Conference as she is off the island on Government business.

The Ministry applauds the Mona ICT Policy Centre on this the 7th staging of the National Cyber Security Conference. I believe that given the current discourse around ICTs and even our current initiatives, your theme- '**Data Protection: What Next for NIDS; Unpacking GDPR; Promoting Digital Productivity**' turns the spotlight on significant issues which will play a vital role in our development efforts in this age.

Shaping the discourse

As we all know, we are living in the age where data and information is the new gold. It is an age of new discovery, increased innovation and access. An age where borders are virtually non-existent and where we are not just citizens of a country but also 'netizens'.

Our ability to connect with each other and engage with the technology has become a great enabler for growth and development but it also makes us vulnerable.

As such, the time has come for us to actively engage in the discourse that the rest of the world has been engaged in for some time, around data protection and privacy.

Data Protection Regime

Ladies and gentlemen, data is important and every internet user is at serious risk of identity and data theft, data breaches and invasion of privacy.

As a Ministry, we recognize the importance of data in this age and to this end we have, as you are all aware, tabled for the consideration of the legislative arm of government, the Data Protection Bill.

The Bill is a significant piece of legislation as it will usher in a new paradigm and establish a uniformed, robust and clear framework with respect to the protection of people's personal and sensitive personal data.

While it may appear that there has been some inactivity in relation to the Bill, the opportunity is taken to assure you that the Ministry has been working assiduously on same. Every single comment and/or recommendation made by approximately twenty-five (25) persons to the Joint Select Committee has been reviewed and the Ministry's recommendations have been prepared for submission to the Joint Select Committee for its consideration.

As Minister Williams indicated in her contribution to the Sectoral Debate, it is the Ministry's intention to have the Bill passed during this financial year.

In the global context, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) stands as one of the most important recent changes in the data protection sphere and will undoubtedly re-shape the way countries consider the issue of data protection and data privacy.

The time is at hand for us to examine data protection and what it means in the context of the Internet of Things, machine to machine learning, artificial intelligence and the many technological changes that will occur as the fourth industrial revolution takes shape.

Technology, Productivity and Cyber Security

According to the Jamaica Productivity Centre reports, labour productivity (or output per worker) has declined at an average annual rate of 1.3 per cent. Jamaica is said to compare poorly in labour productivity when compared with its trading partners and CARICOM member states. The factors that contribute to low labour productivity

include inadequate investment in human and physical capital, science and technology, and organization and management systems. In fact, the MSME and Entrepreneurship Policy of 2018 identifies low capacity for innovation and utilization of technology as one of the challenges faced by MSMEs.

Digital Productivity Tools have the potential to make technology work for us in the most efficient manner possible. However, the increase use of technology has its pitfalls.

While we know that absolute cyber security is elusive, we are committed to building a strong infrastructure and ensuring that citizens understand the risk attendant to cyber space and the actions to be taken to mitigate same.

In this regard, the Organization of American States through its Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism has been working with the Jamaica Cyber Incident Response Team (JaCIRT) to implement an early warning system with the installation of a Security Information and Event Management Network.

This network will, among other things, enable the JaCIRT to provide alerts as soon as there is a detected cyber threat that presents an immediate risk to the information technology systems in Jamaica. The system will help us to be more proactive in our approach to cyber security.

The Ministry will, through its Public Education and Awareness Campaign, seek to reach 20,000 persons through targeted messages developed specifically for our most vulnerable groups – the youth, the elderly and MSMEs.

Closing

Ladies and gentlemen, as technology continues to revolutionise every aspect of our world, our responsibilities will be greater and our response will be even more critical.

In the light of the Government's own efforts, the Ministry is extremely pleased with the discourse that has been taking place in recent times on data protection and once again commends the Mona ICT Policy Centre for creating yet another space for stakeholders to share and learn from each other.

In closing, the opportunity is taken to wish for the organizers of this Conference and all participants a fruitful and impactful event. I hope that your discussions will facilitate the building of a robust data protection and cyber security framework in Jamaica.

Thank you.