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## PRESS RELEASE

Kampala, Uganda – Wednesday, 28 January 2026

***PDPO and CIPESA Partner to Strengthen Data Protection Leadership on the International Data Privacy Day***



The Personal Data Protection Office (PDPO) in partnership with the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) today convened a Data Protection Officers' Masterclass at Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Kampala to mark the International Data Privacy Day. The convening bringing together Data Protection Officers from across sectors to reflect on the evolving role of privacy leadership in an increasingly data-driven economy.

*The workshop themed “The DPO as a Strategic Advisor: Balancing Compliance, Risk, and Business Needs”* focused on strengthening the capacity of Data Protection Officers to move beyond technical compliance and contribute meaningfully to organizational decision-making, risk management, and sustainable business growth.

The sessions explored how Data Protection Officers can reposition themselves from compliance officers to trusted advisors, adopt a risk-based approach to data protection, and provide guidance to management in a



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way that balances regulatory obligations with operational efficiency and innovation. Speakers, including Mr. Edrine Wanyama, Programme Manager Legal at CIPESA, Mr. Stephen Mugabe, Manager, Data Protection Affairs at PDPO, and Ms. Barbra Among Arinda, Executive Director, Credit Reference Bureaus Association Uganda (CRBA), shared insights and practical strategies to equip Data Protection Officers with the knowledge and skills to strike a balance between compliance, risk and business needs.

Speaking at the opening of the masterclass, Mr. Baker Birikujja, the National Personal Data Protection Director, noted that some of the most damaging privacy incidents do not begin with cyberattacks, but with everyday lapses in judgment. He cited examples such as printed reports left unattended, sensitive conversations held in open spaces, exposed visitor registers, unlocked filing cabinets, portable storage devices moved for convenience, casually accessed CCTV feeds, and phone calls handled without due discretion. He emphasized that as the country marks International Data Privacy Day, it is important to recognize that personal data is not only digital. It exists on paper, in registers, filing cabinets, recordings, photographs, CCTV footage, and even in routine conversations, and deserves the same level of discipline, care, and respect wherever it is handled.

Edrine Wanyama, Programme Manager Legal at CIPESA, noted that the partnership with the PDPO was driven by a shared commitment to building strong and effective collaborations in data governance and protection. “We believe in building good partnerships, and we have actively leveraged and worked through these processes to buttress efforts,” he said. He added that data protection is central to CIPESA’s work emphasizing the critical value of data as it directly relates to individuals’ dignity and integrity.

He further noted that marking International Data Privacy Day through the workshop was intentional, explaining that the masterclass was designed to enhance knowledge of Data Protection Officers and build their capacity to effectively respond to emerging data protection risks and take appropriate actions.

The engagement is part of a wider campaign to foster a culture of personal data protection that goes beyond mere compliance and encourages responsible data governance by DPOs across both public and private institutions.

### **About Data Privacy Day**

International Data Privacy Day is observed every 28 January, marking the anniversary of the opening for signature of the Council of Europe’s Convention 108 in 1981, recognized as the first binding international treaty dedicated to personal data protection.

### **About PDPO**

The Personal Data Protection Office is Uganda’s independent data protection regulator. It is responsible for overseeing the implementation of and enforcement of the Data Protection and Privacy Act, Cap. 97.

### **[About CIPESA](#)**



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The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) works to defend and expand the digital civic space to enable the protection and promotion of human rights and to enhance innovation and sustainable development.

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