The honorable, minister of Technology, Communication and Innovation, Etienne Sinatambou inaugurated the 15th Annual General Meeting of SAPOA being hosted by Mauritius.

This event was held at the Intercontinental Hotel at Balaclava on Monday 06 June 2016.

The (SAPOA), Southern Africa postal Operators Association is the SADC regional body is responsible for the postal sector, and aims at ensuring that every sector of the community has access to a modern, efficient and diversified range of mail and e-products. Some 100 delegates from Member countries, and senior officials from the Universal Postal union and the Pan- African postal union attended the meeting.

In his speech the minister, Etienne Sinatambou talked about the Postal Services and the Challenges facing the sector, having been associated with postal matters since quite long.
Being also responsible for the development of Technology, Communication and Innovation, he stated that he fully assess the impact of technology and other electronic supplements or substitutions on the Post in Mauritius, the region and worldwide.

Despite the odds and challenges, opportunities exist to enable the Post to thrive ahead with the adoption of Innovation and Quality services by the Postal services across the region and the World as well as making full use of Technology.

He also emphasis on the theme of the AGM which is "The Post Embraces Technology To Offer Quality Products and Services".

The minister, Etienne Sinatambou made an appeal to all Postal Operators in the Region to adopt Technology, as a tool to enhance Post Office services so as to remain relevant and viable, knowing well the financial constraints that all Post Offices are facing across the Region and worldwide with significant decline in the volumes of physical mail.

The Post will always be by the side of society regardless of the type of technology. The minister explains that the Key for all Posts is to be innovative and develop diversification strategies so as to offer quality products and services to all customers along postal and non-postal lines of business.

The other important factor is to be positioned as the Government Partner of Choice in courier and e-Government service delivery to the Citizens across all parts of the country concerned and optimising the vast postal network.

The honorable minister, Etienne Sinatambou says that he has followed the Mauritius Post since its corporatization in 2003. In 2005, and that he personally intervened to redress of the Financial situation of Mauritius Post Ltd upon a crucial transitionary period, having inherited ex-government employees and other liabilities, namely staff pension liabilities apart from the sensitive element of on-time Tariff revision implementation to recover the costs of operations since no subsidy is granted to the Post.

Since the last UPU Congress in Doha in 2012, Mauritius Post Ltd has integrated the Doha World Postal Strategy alongside its own strategies, has adopted different business models, mail reengineering and system solutions and has diversified innovatively through various other products and services, including financial payment facilities to the citizens, with a special focus on the lower segments of the population, and providing basic banking facilities throughout our vast network of Post offices in the Republic of Mauritius.

The "Post Finance" cluster regroups all financial services, from payment of utility bills, Vehicle registration, basic banking, Insurance and Pension payments to numerous bill payments on behalf of public and private companies through partnerships.

Mauritius Post Ltd has recently invested in a new Postal Integrated System from Reasons Solutions of India, after 10 years of only Front End computerisation of the counters which served our purposes during that period. In so doing, all the front end and back end systems and other interfaces are now integrated and operate with higher efficiency and control in a fully automated environment.
The Mauritius Post has always aligned all staff in this venture and training is very high on the agenda at the Postal Academy so as to keep the employees updated on different systems and procedures.

The Mauritius Post has, therefore, invested heavily in the technology part to meet international standards and requirements and to be able to interface with external stakeholders like the UPU, the Global Monitoring System, Customs, and others. As such, the Digital Post is on the move at Mauritius Post with a series of initiatives in the e-Post Services as well.

Such investments, we believe, will place Mauritius Post in a better position to compete on the market, and fulfill requirements from the competent Authorities.

The Mauritius Post is currently working with the customs authorities in their quest for advanced manifest to speedily and safely clear packets with the advent of growing e-Commerce volumes.

With the development of new Air Corridors which the Government is putting in place Mauritius Post will have a greater role to play in the e-commerce development be it at distribution, logistics or warehousing levels. The honorable minister, Etienne Sinatambou also mentioned that the Mauritius Post is also re-engineering numerous services so as to meet expanding e-commerce business.

Mauritius Post wants to position and promote the Post Office as a non-bank player in the financial arena to bridge financial inclusion as well as to provide support to the micro and small business segments in the remote areas where there is no bank branches.

Upon the initiative of Mauritius Post, the relevant frameworks are in place at the Central Bank, and discussions are on-going to put in place such structure in a feasible way. Overall, Post Offices can play an important role as a facilitator towards the SME sector.

Pursuing its financial strategy, Mauritius Post has also joined the electronic money transfer system of UPU through IFS (International Financial System) with transactions already happening from our diaspora residing in France.

Tests are ongoing with other countries like India, Bangladesh, Madagascar and South Africa to develop e-money transfers among the migrant workers operating in Mauritius.