

# UICT seeks sh15b for smart classrooms

By Juliet Kasirye

The Uganda Institute of Information and Communications Technology (UICT) is seeking for sh15b from the Government to establish smart classrooms and laboratories aimed at training world-class ICT professionals.

According to the institute, a smart classroom is a technology-enhanced learning environment that integrates digital tools, high-speed internet and interactive systems to improve teaching, learning and academic management.

Unlike traditional chalk-and-talk methods, smart classrooms promote interactive, efficient and skills-oriented learning. Such classrooms are equipped with computers or tablets for both lecturers and students, interactive displays or smart boards, projectors and multimedia systems, high-speed internet and networking, learning management systems, audio-visual tools such as microphones, cameras and speakers, as well as educational software and digital content, including augmented and virtual reality.

UICT principal Dr Frederick Edward Kitoogo said the student population has



**Kitoogo: UICT principal**

grown to over 2,000 learners, with 1,650 on government sponsorship and the rest privately sponsored. However, existing laboratories are inadequate and cannot accommodate even a tenth of the students.

"Because of the increasing numbers, especially government-sponsored students, the available classroom blocks can no longer accommodate all physical learners. To manage this, we have introduced shift-based learning, with some students attending morning, afternoon and night sessions," Kitoogo said.

He stressed the need to upgrade lecture halls into digitally enabled physical and virtual learning spaces, to improve teaching outcomes and support nationwide digital

skilling programmes.

## SCALING UP INNOVATIONS

Beyond smart classrooms, Kitoogo also called for the establishment of modern physical and virtual laboratories in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud computing and data science.

He said while smart classrooms focus on teaching, smart laboratories are designed for innovating.

Kitoogo made the appeal during an oversight and engagement meeting with the parliamentary committee on ICT and national guidance at the institute's Nakawa campus in Kampala on Thursday. Discussions at the meeting covered policy gaps, limited funding, understaffing and the regulatory framework.

Committee chairperson Tony Ayo urged the Government to support local innovations through improved policies and increased funding.

"Instead of remaining consumers of foreign-developed technologies, we must strengthen policies that support local innovation and increase funding to enable innovators to commercialise their products," Ayo said.