

# A million jobs needed annually to curb youth unemployment - NPA

## Economy.

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Uganda must create at least more than 884,962 jobs every year over the next five years if it is to meaningfully tackle rising youth unemployment, the National Planning Authority (NPA) has said.

The call comes as government continues to implement the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) 2025-30, which identifies job creation as a central pillar of macroeconomic strategy.

NPA says Uganda's demographic pressures require aggressive job creation to

absorb the growing number of young people entering the labour market annually.

Youth unemployment currently stands at 16.1 percent. NDP IV seeks to reduce it to 12.9 percent by the end of the 2029/30 financial year.

"To support private sector-led growth, youth have been identified as a key target group for empowerment through innovation, enterprise development and decent job creation," NPA says.

NPA Executive Director Dr Joseph Muvawala said the scale of the challenge demands more than incremental reforms, noting that Uganda's youthful popula-

tion presents both an opportunity and a risk if not adequately managed.

"The country must align education and skills development to the needs of the labour market. We have to resolve the incompatibility between the qualifications held by graduates and the demands of employers," he said, explaining that the NDP IV macroeconomic framework projects an average of 884,962 jobs annually during the plan period, but sustained economic transformation will require even higher employment absorption, particularly in high-productivity sectors.

NDP IV operationalizes the Human Capital Development Programme,

which aligns with the government's Ten-fold Growth Strategy and its "Skill Up" approach.

The strategy focuses on building a workforce equipped with relevant and competitive skills, especially in emerging and technology-driven industries.

Government intends to scale up digital literacy and specialised training in advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Blockchain, Internet of Things, Cloud Computing, 5G, and Robotics. These sectors are viewed as key drivers of the "new economy" capable of generating resilient, high-value jobs.

Beyond technology, the plan also prioritizes enterprise development and financial inclusion to integrate more young people into the formal economy. Improving access to credit, business development services, and innovation hubs is expected to stimulate entrepreneurship and job creation.

Dr Muvawala noted that particular attention will be given to young people categorised as NEETs; those not in employment, education, or training. The NDP IV outlines targeted interventions to transition this group into productive sectors, including the creative industry and innovation-based enterprises.