

# Delivering 10-fold growth: What is our contribution?

At the beginning of each year, leaders from across MTN's markets gather to align on our shared ambition: Driving digital solutions for Africa's progress. This year, our discussions focused on how we can accelerate digital adoption in ways that deliver meaningful economic impact across the continent. The conclusion was clear. Real progress will require deliberate choices, co-ordinated action and strong partnerships in every market.

Following that session, we met President Yoweri Museveni at State House, Entebbe, to discuss Uganda's opportunities and our contribution to advancing digital progress as a catalyst for national prosperity. The central question was how to translate Uganda's digital ambitions under National Development Plan IV (NDP IV) into tangible results for businesses, households and the broader economy.

If that is the goal, then every sector must define its contribution. For the ICT industry, contribution is not simply about expanding

networks or increasing data usage. It is about raising productivity across agriculture, tourism, minerals, manufacturing, services and small enterprises. The real test is whether digital tools are helping businesses grow faster, farmers access better markets and young people access new income streams.

The infrastructure base has expanded significantly. Nearly 87% of Ugandans live within reach of mobile broadband. Yet only 29% actively use the internet. That gap between coverage and usage represents unrealised growth.

If adoption does not keep pace with infrastructure, the economic multiplier remains limited. Closing that gap requires shared action.

For the industry, the responsibility is continued investment and practical innovation: Strengthening rural coverage, improving service quality and designing device financing models that reduce upfront costs. It also means expanding



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partnerships that deliver digital training tied directly to livelihoods.

For policymakers, the contribution lies in widening access. Entry-level smartphones remain out of reach for many households, partly because taxes significantly increase the retail price. Lowering the cost of entry is not a sector decision. It is a growth decision. Each additional affordable smartphone in the hands of a trader, farmer, or

student expands the country's productive capacity.

For the education sector and development partners, the focus must be capability. Connectivity alone does not generate income. Digital literacy must move beyond basic familiarity to practical application: Marketing produce online, managing mobile payments, tracking inventory, accessing digital credit responsibly. These are the skills that convert access into value.

For businesses across sectors, the responsibility is integration. Adoption accelerates when digital tools are embedded in supply chains, procurement systems, distribution networks and customer engagement. When participation in markets increasingly requires digital interaction, usage rises naturally.

In this sense, smartphone penetration and digital literacy are not telecom indicators. They are national productivity indicators.

Digital infrastructure should be viewed as economic infrastructure, alongside roads and electricity. Roads connect producers to markets. Electricity powers production. Affordable connectivity and devices reduce transaction costs, expand reach and improve transparency. When more citizens are connected and capable, enterprises scale quickly and competitiveness improves.

In earlier discussions with the permanent secretary to the finance ministry and secretary to the treasury, Ramathan Ggoobi, we focused on alignment. Fiscal policy, infrastructure investment, affordability reforms, skills development and regulatory certainty must pull in the same direction. NDP IV already recognises ICT as an enabler. The foundation is largely in place. The priority now is accelerating adoption and embedding digital into sector performance.

Progress cannot be measured by coverage alone. It must

show up in incomes, stronger enterprises, job creation and better service delivery.

Infrastructure lays the foundation, but affordable smartphones widen participation. Digital skills turn access into income, and integration across sectors delivers scale. When these elements move together, the usage gap narrows and digital ambition begins to translate into measurable economic growth.

History will not judge us by the ambition of our strategies, but by the outcomes we deliver. If we are serious about national prosperity, then digital adoption must move from conversation to co-ordinated action. Each sector has a role. The question is whether we will move together, at pace, and with intent. If we do, digital will not simply connect Uganda. It will power its next chapter of growth.

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