

Govt contracts Kenyan firm to regulate AI

BY KHALIL IBRAHIM MANZIL

KAMPALA: The government has begun developing a national emerging technologies strategy aimed at guiding the adoption, regulation and use of innovations such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cloud Computing.

The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and National Guidance, Ms Aminah Zawedde, said the strategy will provide a framework to ensure emerging technologies are used responsibly while supporting Uganda's digital transformation and economic growth agenda.

"The proposed strategy places AI at the centre of the country's technological advancement because it has the potential to improve service delivery in key sectors, including health, agriculture, education and public administration," she said yesterday in Kampala.

Ms Zawedde added: "The strategy will focus on expanding digital infrastructure to support innovation, which will improve internet connectivity, cloud services and the establishment of data centres for effective use of emerging technologies."

She said the government also intends to strengthen data governance as part of a strategy to ensure information is properly collected, processed and shared, while safeguarding citizens' privacy.

Ms Zawedde said other plans include promoting research and innovation through partnerships with universities, technology companies and research institutions to develop locally-driven digital solutions.

The head of ICT research, development and policy at the same ministry, Mr Ambrose Ruyooka, said the initiative aligns with priorities under the National Development Plan (NDP) IV, which identifies digital transformation as a key driver of productivity, job creation and economic growth.

Once completed, he said the strategy is expected to guide the government agencies, the private sector and innovators on how emerging technologies can be adopted in a safe, coordinated and productive manner.

Mr Timothy Mwololo Waema, a professor of Information Systems in the School of Computing at the University of Nairobi, whose firm was contracted to help in developing the strategy, said the initiative is meant to help Uganda harness the economic opportunities presented by new technologies.

He explained that emerging technologies have a huge impact in countries, improve productivity and create jobs. "Uganda wants to harness these opportunities to support priorities under the NDP IV."

TECH GROWTH

Other plans being mooted by the government are to promote research and innovation through partnerships with universities, technology companies and research institutions to develop locally-driven digital solutions.