

## Education

# Here's why AI is Uganda's fastest route to a \$500 billion economy



DR LAWRENCE MUGANGA

**T**his article is specially addressed to President Museveni. It is a bold call to embrace the one laptop per child policy and digitize education to achieve Uganda's \$500 billion Gross Domestic Product (GDP) dream and accelerate East African economic integration

### A HISTORIC MANDATE DEMANDS A HISTORIC RESPONSE

Please accept my warmest, most sincere, and heartfelt congratulations on your remarkable and overwhelming victory in the elections held on January 15th, 2026. Securing 71 percent of the vote is not just a political win, it is a resounding declaration of trust, confidence, and hope that the people of Uganda have placed in your hands. This is the highest percentage you have ever received, and it speaks volumes about the faith Ugandans have that you can lead them into a future of unprecedented prosperity and transformation.

Your Excellency, this mandate is a sacred responsibility. It is also a once-in-a-generation opportunity to leave a legacy so powerful, so transformative, and so visionary that it will be studied, celebrated, and remembered for generations to come. The question before us today is simple but profound: what bold action will you take in these next five years to fundamentally transform Uganda's economic trajectory and secure prosperity for millions of young Ugandans?

### UGANDA'S GREATEST ASSET: OUR YOUNG POPULATION

Your Excellency, Uganda possesses something that many developed nations desperately wish they had: an extraordinarily young population. Over 76 percent of Uganda's 46 million citizens are under the age of 34 years old. This is not a challenge. This is not

a burden. This is our greatest strategic asset, our most powerful competitive advantage, and our pathway to unprecedented prosperity.

But here is the critical insight: this demographic dividend will only transform into economic prosperity if we equip our young people with the skills, tools, and competencies demanded by the 21st-century economy. If we leave them without digital skills, without technological proficiency, and without the tools to create, innovate, and compete globally, then our youth become an untapped resource, a missed opportunity, and potentially even a source of social challenges.

### THE ONE LAPTOP PER CHILD POLICY: Bold, Brave, and Transformative

Your Excellency, I respectfully and passionately urge you to implement the most ambitious, bold, and transformative educational policy in Uganda's history: The One Laptop Per Child Policy.

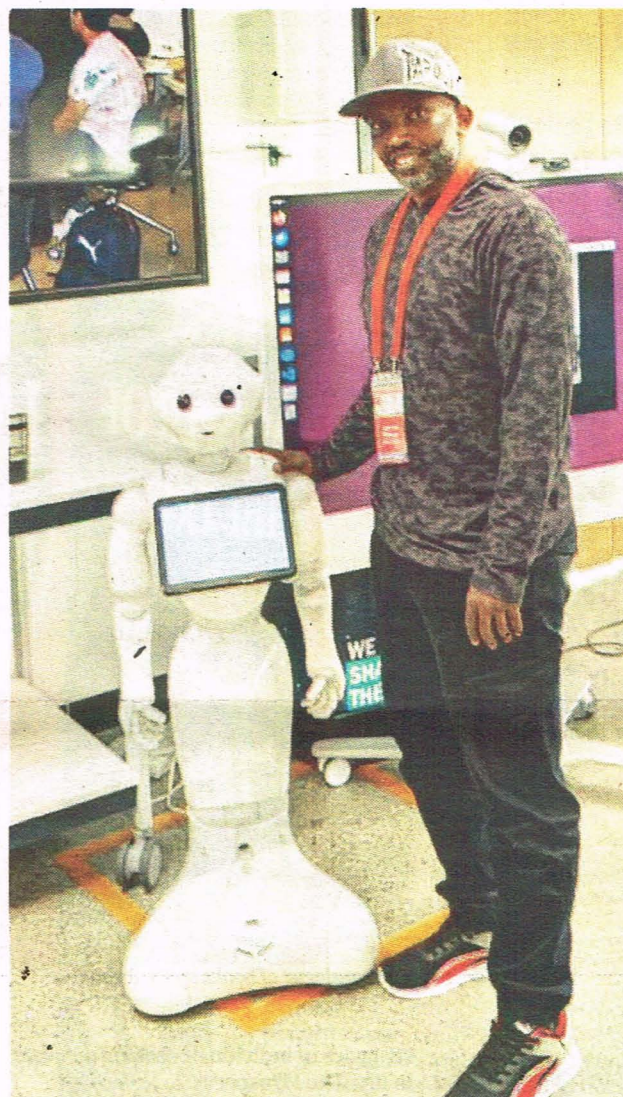
The policy is straightforward: provide every single one of Uganda's approximately 15 million school-going children and young people, from pre-primary through university, with their own personal laptop or tablet computer. These devices must be powered by solar energy to work in areas without electricity, and they must be manufactured right here in Uganda to create jobs and build local technological capacity.

Your Excellency, I can already anticipate the concerns. Some will say this is too expensive. Some will say it is unrealistic. Some will say Uganda cannot afford it. Allow me to address these concerns directly with hard numbers and economic analysis.

### YOUR DREAM OF A SCIENCE-DRIVEN ECONOMY WILL BE FULLY REALIZED

Your Excellency, in countless addresses to the nation, you have consistently emphasized your vision for a science and technology-driven economy. You have called for Ugandans to move beyond subsistence agriculture, embrace innovation, add value to our products, and compete globally through scientific excellence. You have invested in infrastructure, encouraged industrialization, and promoted technical education.

The One Laptop Per Child policy will bring your long-held vision to complete fruition. When 15 million young Ugandans are equipped with digital tools, trained in AI-assisted learning, and empowered to create and innovate, they will become the scientists, engineers, inventors, and entrepreneurs



The author with a teaching assistant, an artificial intelligence-powered robot that supports students around the clock, knows them by name and offers academic consultations anytime

The people of Uganda have given you their trust. History is watching. The opportunity is unprecedented. The time to act is now.

you have always dreamed of producing.

### A REVOLUTION ONLY YOU CAN LEAD

Your Excellency, you have been a revolutionary throughout your life. You led a liberation struggle that fundamentally transformed Uganda. You have championed causes that many thought impossible. You have demonstrated courage, vision, and determination repeatedly throughout your decades of leadership.

Today, Uganda needs you to lead one final, defining revolution: The Digital Education Revolution.

This new five-year term, granted to you by an overwhelming 71 percent mandate from the people of Uganda, is your opportunity to cement a legacy that will echo through generations and be celebrated long after we are all gone. Future historians will write that it was under your leadership that Uganda

transformed from a developing nation into a technology powerhouse. They will record that it was your bold One Laptop Per Child policy that unleashed the creative and economic potential of millions of young Ugandans. They will document that it was your vision that made Uganda wealthier and more prosperous than any other nation in Africa.

### A PERSONAL APPEAL AND A NATIONAL DIALOGUE

Your Excellency, I write this letter not just to you, but to spark a national dialogue about Uganda's economic future and the role of technology in achieving the prosperity we all desire. I want every Ugandan, every policymaker, every educator, every parent, and every young person to engage with these ideas, debate them, refine them, and ultimately demand action.

The choice before us is clear. We can continue with conventional approaches and hope for gradual improvement, or we can boldly embrace technology, digitize our education system, empower our youth with AI and digital tools, and unlock explosive economic growth that makes the \$500 billion GDP target not just achievable but inevitable.

Your Excellency, I have deep respect and appreciation for everything you have done for Uganda over your decades of service. Your contributions to our nation's liberation, stability, and development are undeniable and will always be remembered with gratitude. I write this letter with profound respect for your office and your legacy.

But I also write with passionate urgency because I genuinely believe that embracing the One Laptop Per Child policy and digitizing Uganda's education system is the single most important decision you can make in this new five-year term to secure Uganda's economic future and leave a legacy that will be celebrated for generations.

Your legacy, already substantial, can become legendary. You can be remembered as the president who brought true prosperity to Uganda, who empowered millions of young people to compete globally, who achieved the Ten-Fold Growth Strategy, who led East Africa to economic integration through technology, and who showed the entire African continent the pathway to wealth and development.

I respectfully, passionately, and urgently call upon you, Your Excellency, to embrace this vision, adopt the One Laptop Per Child policy, and lead Uganda boldly and decisively into a prosperous, technology-powered digital future.

The people of Uganda have given you their trust. History is watching. The opportunity is unprecedented. The time to act is now.

The author is Vice Chancellor, Victoria University, Educationist and Economist