

UGANDANS TIPPED TO PREPARE FOR AI JOBS

PHOTOS BY MAUREN NAKATUDDE

By Mauren Nakatudde

Considering recent predictions that Artificial intelligence (AI) will create over 230 million jobs in Africa by 2030, Ugandans need to adequately prepare to harness those opportunities.

This AI-powered jobs boom has been predicted by two multinational software businesses; Microsoft and German's System Applications and Products (SAP).

According to SAP's report titled; *Africa's AI Skills Readiness Revealed*, over 650 million Africans will require digital skills training or retrain in the coming years. In that process, \$1.5 trillion will be injected into the African economy, but only if the continent captures 10% of the AI global market.

SAP's report, which was launched recently in Johannesburg, South Africa, followed research in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa. It further projects Africa's digital economy to grow from 5.2% of

GDP in 2025 to 8.5% by 2050.

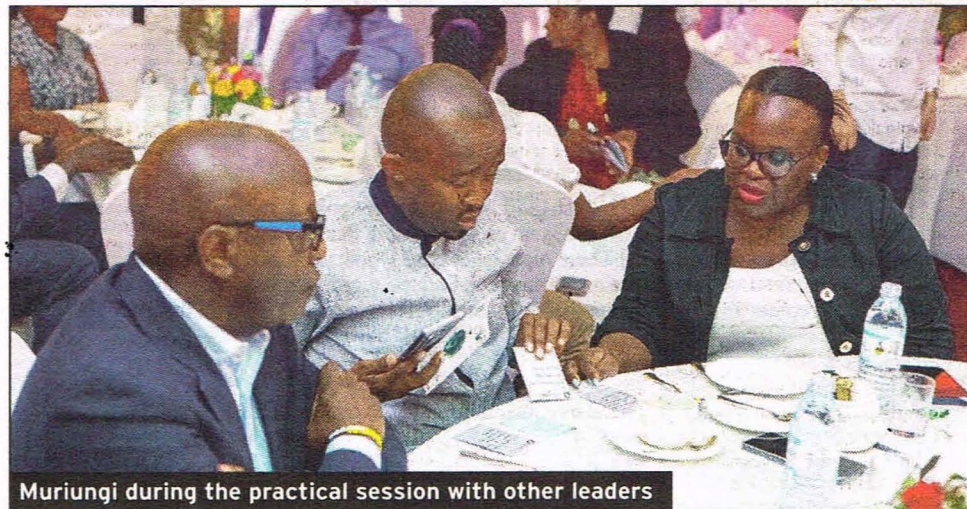
It also points out that Africa's AI market was expected to be worth about \$4.92b by the end of 2025, accounting for 2.5% of the global AI sector. It also says there are over 2,400 AI-focused companies in Africa, including 726 in South Africa, 456 in Nigeria and 204 in Kenya.

However, nine out of 10 African businesses report a shortage of AI expertise. For that, the German software giant expressed its readiness to assist local institutions in preparing Africa for AI integration by ensuring that they produce approved experts.

AI RE-SHAPING BUSINESSES

Deborah Bartlett, the senior executive with AI Akhawayn University (AUI) Global, says she believes the role of AI in shaping business is like all other transformative technologies, where, when they first came in, many executives are scared to use them.

While recently training



Muriungi during the practical session with other leaders

during a one-day practical session of AI organised by the American Chamber of Commerce, Uganda (AmCham) at the Sheraton Hotel in Kampala, Bartlett, an AI expert from Morocco, said: "You remember when the Internet, mobile phones and laptops first came in; each of those was a disruptor.



Bartlett



Zalwango

But some leaders chose to easily adopt them with some mistakes, while others waited for perfection."

Eve Zalwango, the general manager of AmCham, said despite some fears people have towards it, the AI need will intensify as time moves on.

Bartlett notes that the people who will have learnt how to use such technology tools will make money out of it.

She noted that business leaders or executives are classified into three categories or mindsets in adopting technology. There are early, contemplative and the fearful adopters.

The early adopters make mistakes and the contemplative ones tread into new technology more cautiously. However, fearful executives often lag behind.

According to Bartlett, some leaders choose to be a little more thoughtful, waiting to see what they want to adopt. However, Bartlett envisages a danger in that.

"But I would say to them, if you are not careful, you will lose ground, just like other companies have lost when they didn't start to try AI early," she says.

Bartlett likens AI to watching a car all day long.

"You can have a strategy about having a car to drive you from work to home. But until



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you get in that car and change those gears and touch the accelerator and the brake and try to park it, you don't know how helpful it can be in your life," she says.

FROM STRATEGY TO EXECUTION

Zalwango urges business leaders to inquire about the tools that can help them navigate AI in order to make their businesses grow.

On the other hand, she advises leaders to stop talking and become practical.

"You should test the models and figure out whether they are telling you the truth and which ones are helping your

WHAT OTHER LEADERS SAY

Faith Nakagwa, head of programmes and communications in Akola

I have been equipped to use the different tools in AI practically. For example, I have developed my own flyer. I have been sending this business to other experts, but I won't do it again. I now want to see how my reports will look while using the different AI tools.

Michael Kabugo, Organisation Development Consultant

I have always used ChatGPT, but today, I have learnt to use other AI tools like Claude, Gemini and Grok, which I find very useful. Also, AI makes life easier in business and saving. When your company has 10 people in sales, you'd better equip one person with these tools to save costs, since business is about the maximisation of profits.

team think better," she reveals. "You move to execution when you prompt the AI, which will help you logically think through things you haven't done before."

HOW TO START

Bartlett advises executives who are finding it hard to adopt these tools to start gradually instead of wholly embedding it in all their businesses. She says they should pick a department or a business need and see how it makes work faster.

Paul Mwirigi Muriungi, a business lead at Capital One Group and a board member at AmCham, said business executives should first get knowledge around AI that is specific to their industries.

"So, if you are in manufacturing, agriculture and technology, what is AI doing in those sectors?"

Muriungi said you can move from one execution by first of all taking on the certifications specific to that industry or sector. After that, you use AI knowledge to unlock any challenges that you might have.