



**Ministry of ICT
& National Guidance**



**UGANDA
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

EMPOWERING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THROUGH ICT

Today, May 17, 2023, Uganda joins the rest of the world to commemorate the World Telecommunications Information Society Day 2023 under theme, **“Empowering the Least Developed Countries Through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).”**



Recognising ICTs as one of the key pillars for social-economic development, the Government of Uganda has implemented various policies and strategies to promote the use of ICTs to bridge the digital divide and promote socio-economic development, notably:

- 1. National ICT Policy 2014:** The Government of Uganda formulated the National ICT Policy, which provides a comprehensive framework for the development and use of ICTs in the country. The policy seeks to promote universal access to ICT services, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, and promote the use of ICTs in various sectors.
- 2. The Uganda Communications Act 2013:** The Act mandates the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) as the enabler for ICTs under Section 5 (l) to promote research into the development and use of new communications techniques and technologies, including those which promote accessibility of persons with disability and other members of society to communications services.
- 3. Uganda Communications Universal Services and Access Fund (UCUSAF):** Section 5 (s) of the Uganda Communications Act 2013 empowers the Commission to establish and administer a fund for the development of rural communications and information and communication technology in the country under the Uganda Communications Universal Services and Access Fund (UCUSAF). Through UCUSAF, UCC has facilitated the rollout of ICT infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas. The Fund has provided support for the installation of communication towers, internet connectivity, and other related infrastructure in rural and hard to reach areas, making it possible for people living in underserved and unserved communities to access ICT services, thus helping to bridge the digital divide in the country.
- 4. E-Government services:** Government has also implemented several e-government services, such as the National Identification and

Registration Authority (NIRA), which enables citizens to obtain national identity cards and register for various government services online. This has made it easier for citizens to access government services from anywhere at any time.

The National Vision 2040

The National Vision 2040 very clearly identifies ICT access and utilisation not just as a crosscutting development enabler but also as a major business opportunity. This provides the highest policy level underpinning to the imperative for universality of ICT in Uganda. The country cannot achieve the planned development targets if any section of the population cannot exploit the opportunities provided by ICT access and usage.

The use of ICTs has also transformed various sectors in Uganda, including health, education, and agriculture as explained below.

- i. Education/ E-learning:** In the education sector, ICTs have been used to promote e-learning, which has made it possible for students to access quality education, even in remote areas. The Ministry of Education and Sports, in collaboration with the UCC, has implemented the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS), which aims to improve the management of education data in the country. UCUSAF has also partnered with the Research and Education Network in Uganda (RENU) to provide reliable and affordable internet to secondary schools in the unserved and underserved parts of the country.
- ii. Agriculture:** In the agriculture sector, ICTs have been used to improve agricultural productivity and access to markets. The Uganda Communications Commission, under UCUSAF, has collaborated with Uganda National Farmers Federation to bring farmers online and obtain relevant services across the entire value chain such as inputs and weather information, markets, etc.



iv. E-Health: The Government of Uganda has implemented various e-health initiatives to improve access to health services in the country. For instance, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the UCC, has implemented the eHealth Strategy, which aims to improve the delivery of health services through ICTs.

The Government Uganda’s ICT empowerment interventions aimed at bridging the digital divide resonate with a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aligned to the country’s social-economic transformation agenda.

In conclusion, the use of ICTs has played a significant role in empowering the least developed countries, such as Uganda. The government’s commitment to promoting access to affordable and reliable ICT services has accelerated significant improvements in various sectors. As we commemorate the World Telecommunications Information Society Day 2023, we should continue to promote the use of ICTs to bridge the digital divide and promote socio-economic development in the least developed countries.

iii. E-Tourism: Government has invested in providing broadband in the national park areas and tourist attraction destinations. This includes enhancing internet access, mobile network coverage, and road infrastructure to ensure seamless communication and accessibility for tourists. The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), in collaboration with other stakeholders, has also developed mobile applications to enhance the tourist experience.



Happy World Telecommunications Information Society Day 2023!