Issue 1 2025

AFRICA'S TECH PULSE

AFRICA IS THE MOTHERBOARD CONTINENT

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TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH ICT

INNOVATION | PROFESSIONALISM | ADVOCACY

OUR VISION

To become the most reliable partner in ICT development in Ghana and beyond.

OUR SERVICES

- Membership
- Professional Services
- Academy
- Public Awareness

Membership

- Mobilization of professionals, students and businesses in the ICT ecosystem
- Membership administration: Recommendation letters, attestations and networking
- Professional Development Training and Certifications

Professional Services

- ICT Consultancy and Solutions for businesses
- Curriculum review for educational institutions (from basic to tertiary)
- Job placement and recruitment of experts for companies
- IT Human Resource Provider

Academy

- Coding Program (for kids, teens, and adults) in web technologies
- Professional Skills Development - Python for Data Science for professionals; Cybersecurity; Data Protection; Internet Governance
- National Teaching Council accreditation – Continuous Professional Development for teachers
- Digital skills education (basic, intermediate, advanced)

Public Awareness

Articles publication in dedicated column (ICT insight with Institute of ICT Professionals) in

- the Business & Financial Times news paper and other digital portals.
- Workshops, Seminars, Symposiums, and Trainings for Professional Development in emerging technology areas such as Data science, Cybersecurity, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Data Protection, Cloud Computing.
- Quarterly Symposiums – Industry – Academia Tech Dialogue (INDAC-TED); Cybersecurity Awareness
- Annual Tech Job Fair (TJF)
- Annual Tech Entrepreneurs Forum (TEF)
- Advocacy – Women in Tech, Girls in ICT
- Radio and Television programs

MAJOR INITIATIVES

TJF TECH JOB FAIR | CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS | TEF TECH ENTREPRENEURS FORUM | INDAC-TED Industry-Academia Tech Dialogue

Early-Start Skills Development
ICT skills training for young ones from "early start" in digital skills, various computer programming languages, web technologies, digital design and creative coding, etc.

Professional Skills Development
ICT skills training and continous professional development for students, young graduates and professionals. Emerging technology training and other forms of capacity building to support the digital transformation agenda of the country.

Industry-led Public education
ICT public education and sensitisation through media engagements and publications online, on radio, television, newspaper and social media.

Members Comprising ICT Professionals from Government, Academia, Corporate enterprises, Start-ups and Students.

Thousands exposed to Coding / Programming and other emerging skills in Ghana and abroad.

Partnerships with local and international organizations across Private, Government and Development Agencies etc...

Leading Digital Transformation initiatives through partnerships with public and private organizations, civil society, academic institutions and development partners.

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DOCUMENTING OUR JOURNEY TO FULFIL AFRICA'S DIGITAL PROMISE

It is with pride and purpose that I welcome you to the inaugural issue of *Africa's Tech Pulse*, the official magazine of the Technology Information Confederation Africa (TICON Africa). This milestone publication reflects our collective aspiration to harness information and communication technology as a catalyst for Africa's growth, inclusion and global relevance.

TICON Africa was established by five founding national associations – from South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe – anchored in the belief that Africa's ICT professionals deserve a unifying voice and platform. That vision is materialising into a vibrant Pan-African movement, with new associations joining from Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Botswana and Lesotho.

This expansion is fuelled by Africa's increasing digital engagement, yet we remain keenly aware that a persistent digital divide still limits widespread participation in the digital economy.

OUR MISSION

TICON Africa's mission is focused, pragmatic and forward-looking. We support national associations with research into Africa's evolving ICT landscape, facilitate continental knowledge-sharing through publications, and empower professionals through education, certification and events such as conferences, webinars and workshops.

We understand that without credible standards and capacity-building, Africa cannot compete on an equal footing in a globalised digital world.

TRANSFORMATION AND INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

In 2024, we proudly launched the Women in TICON Africa Chapter – a transformative initiative recognising the vital role women play in shaping Africa's technological destiny. This chapter is more than an advocacy platform; it is a catalyst for change.

We believe that inclusive innovation is not only just; it is strategic. Following successful conferences in Uganda and Kenya, I am thrilled that Ghana – home to both the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana (CIMG) and the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH) – is hosting the third annual TICON Africa Conference, held jointly with the African Marketing Confederation (AMC). With the AfCFTA Secretariat based here in Accra, this gathering is perfectly situated to drive meaningful conversation at the intersection of trade, marketing, and technology.

A central conference highlight is the introduction of TICON Africa's Pan-African certification framework, designed to equip Africa's estimated seven-million ICT professionals with credentials recognised across borders and aligned with international standards like ISO and IFIP. This initiative will not only enhance mobility and employability, but also solidify the professional credibility of Africa's digital workforce.

Africa's Tech Pulse will be our platform for reflection, projection and collaboration as we move forward. I invite every reader to be part of this journey – as a contributor, a catalyst, and a champion of Africa's digital promise.

David Gowu
President
Technology Information Confederation Africa

THE FRAMEWORK WILL SOLIDIFY THE STANDING OF OUR DIGITAL WORKFORCE

DOCUMENTER NOTRE PARCOURS POUR RÉALISER LA PROMESSE NUMÉRIQUE DE L'AFRIQUE

C'est avec fierté et détermination que je vous souhaite la bienvenue au premier numéro d'*Africa's Tech Pulse*, le magazine officiel de la Confédération africaine de la technologie de l'information (TICON Africa). Cette publication marquante reflète notre aspiration collective à exploiter les technologies de l'information et de la communication comme catalyseur de la croissance, de l'inclusion et de la pertinence mondiale de l'Afrique.

TICON Africa a été créé par cinq associations nationales fondatrices – de l'Afrique du Sud, du Ghana, de l'Ouganda, de la Zambie et du Zimbabwe – ancrées dans la conviction que les professionnels des TIC d'Afrique méritent une voix et une plateforme unificatrices. Cette vision se matérialise en un mouvement panafricain dynamique, avec l'arrivée de nouvelles associations venues du Malawi, de l 'Éthiopie, du Kenya, du Rwanda, du Botswana et du Lesotho.

Cette expansion est alimentée par l'engagement numérique croissant de l'Afrique, mais nous restons bien conscients qu'une fracture numérique persistante limite encore la participation généralisée à l'économie numérique.

NOTRE MISSION

La mission de TICON Africa est ciblée, pragmatique et tournée vers l'avenir. Nous soutenons les associations nationales dans leurs recherches sur l'évolution du paysage des TIC en Afrique ; nous facilitons le partage des connaissances continentales par le biais de publications et autonomisons les professionnels par le moyen de l'éducation, de la certification et des événements tels que des conférences, des webinaires et des ateliers.

Nous comprenons que sans normes crédibles et sans renforcement des capacités, l'Afrique ne pourrait rivaliser sur un pied d'égalité dans un monde numérique globalisé.

TRANSFORMATION ET INNOVATION

En 2024, nous avons fièrement lancé le chapitre Femmes dans TICON Afrique, une initiative transformatrice reconnaissant le rôle essentiel ees femmes dans le façonnement du destin technologique de l'Afrique. Ce chapitre est plus qu'une plateforme de plaidoyer ; c'est un catalyseur de changement.

Nous pensons que l'innovation inclusive n'est pas seulement juste ; elle est stratégique. Après le succès des conférences en Ouganda et au Kenya, je suis ravi que le Ghana, qui abrite à la fois le Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana (CIMG) et l'Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH), accueille la troisième conférence annuelle TICON Africa, organisée conjointement avec la Confédération africaine du marketing (AMC). Comme le Secrétariat de la ZLECA est basé ici à Accra, cette réunion est parfaitement située pour susciter des discussions significatives à l'intersection du commerce, du marketing et de la technologie.

L'un des points forts de la conférence est l'introduction du cadre de certification panafricain de TICON Africa, conçu pour doter les quelque sept millions de professionnels des TIC en Afrique de qualifications reconnues au-delà des frontières et conformes aux normes internationales telles que l'ISO et l'IFIP. Cette initiative permettra non seulement d'améliorer la mobilité et l'employabilité, mais aussi de consolider la crédibilité professionnelle de la main-d'œuvre numérique africaine.

Africa's Tech Pulse sera notre plateforme de réflexion, de projection et de collaboration pendant que nous progressons. J'invite chaque lecteur à faire partie de ce voyage – en tant que contributeur, catalyseur et défenseur de la promesse numérique de l'Afrique.

David Gowu

Président
Confédération africaine de la technologie de l'information

CE CADRE RENFORCERA LA REFÉRENCE DE NOTRE EFFICACITÉ NUMÉRIQUE

DU SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL DE LA CONFÉDÉRATION AFRICAINE DES TECHNOLOGIES DE L'INFORMATION

FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION CONFEDERATION AFRICA

WE'RE HERE TO BE A VOICE FOR AFRICA'S ICT PROFESSIONALS

We are excited to launch this editorial platform dedicated to Africa's vibrant and evolving ICT landscape. Across the continent, we see extraordinary innovation – from local start-ups to large enterprises, educators to policymakers – each shaping a uniquely African digital future. *Africa's Tech Pulse* is here to showcase those stories, share insights, and amplify the voices of ICT practitioners and industries from every corner of Africa.

Our aim is to spark meaningful discussion and foster a sense of community that transcends borders. We believe there is immense value in learning from one another's successes and challenges, recognising our shared goals, and developing practical, home-grown solutions that deliver real impact. Through features, interviews, research and thought leadership, we hope this magazine will become a trusted space for dialogue and collaboration.

TICON Africa is committed to advancing professional ICT development, strengthening national bodies, and championing standards and best practices that position Africa as a formidable player in the global digital economy. *Africa's Tech Pulse* will play its part in that mission by connecting practitioners, industry leaders, educators, policymakers, and entrepreneurs across the continent.

We invite you to read, reflect, and contribute. Together, let's build a thriving African ICT community – one that is informed, engaged and ready to lead.

Welcome to the conversation.

Jannie Zaaiman
Secretary General
Technology Information Confederation Africa

NOTRE MISSION EST D'ÊTRE LA VOIX DES PROFESSIONNELS AFRICAINS DES TIC

Nous sommes ravis de lancer cette plateforme éditoriale dédiée au paysage dynamique et en évolution des TIC en Afrique. Partout sur le continent, nous assistons à une innovation extraordinaire – des start-ups locales aux grandes entreprises, des éducateurs aux décideurs politiques – chacun façonnant un avenir numérique typiquement africain. *Africa's Tech Pulse* est là pour présenter ces histoires, partager des idées et amplifier les voix des praticiens et des industries des TIC de tous les coins de l'Afrique.

Notre objectif est de susciter des discussions significatives et de favoriser un sentiment de communauté qui transcende les frontières. Nous pensons qu'il est extrêmement précieux d'apprendre des succès et des défis des autres, de reconnaître nos objectifs communs et de développer des solutions pratiques et locales qui ont un impact réel. Grâce à des articles, des interviews, des recherches et un leadership éclairé, nous espérons que ce magazine deviendra un espace de confiance pour le dialogue et la collaboration.

TICON Africa s'engage à promouvoir le développement professionnel des TIC, à renforcer les organismes nationaux et à défendre les normes et les meilleures pratiques qui positionnent l'Afrique comme un acteur formidable dans l'économie numérique mondiale. *Africa's Tech Pulse* jouera son rôle dans cette mission en connectant les praticiens, les leaders de l'industrie, les éducateurs, les décideurs politiques et les entrepreneurs à travers le continent.

Nous vous invitons à lire, à réfléchir et à contribuer. Ensemble, construisons une communauté africaine des TIC prospère, informée, engagée et prête à jouer un rôle de premier plan.

Bienvenue à la conversation.

Jannie Zaaiman
Secrétaire général
Confédération africaine des technologies de l'information

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- Information Communication Technology Association of Kenya (ICTAK)
- Information and Communications Technology Association of Zambia (ICTAZ)
- Information Communication Technology Association of Zimbabwe
- Lesotho Information and Communication Technology Association (LICTA)
- Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH)
- Rwanda ICT Chamber
- South African ICT Association (SAICTA)

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- Report-back on 2025 Conference.
- TICON Africa webinar series launches.

TICON AFRICA

JOIN THE MINDS

BUILDING AFRICA'S DIGITAL TOMORROW

TICON Africa Conference

20-22 August 2025

Accra, Ghana

Register & Pay

Why Africa's Innovators Are Headed to the 2025 TICON Africa Conference

01

SHAPE AFRICA'S TECH FUTURE

Be part of the continent's most influential gathering of ICT leaders, innovators, and policymakers driving digital transformation.

02

UNMATCHED NETWORKING POWER

Connect with global tech giants, African trailblazers, investors, and government decision-makers, all in one place.

03

INNOVATION MEETS IMPACT

Discover groundbreaking solutions in AI, smart ecosystems, and digital inclusion tailored for Africa's unique landscape.

04

SPOTLIGHT ON YOU

Represent your company, connect with key industry players, and witness the prestigious TICON Awards celebrating Africa's top tech

05

ACCRA AWAITS

Experience world-class hospitality at Labadi Beach Hotel in one of Africa's most vibrant tech and cultural hubs.

GHANA BIDS A WARM 'AKWAABA' TO AFRICA'S TECH COMMUNITY

Ghanaian hospitality the perfect backdrop for IT professionals and thought leaders to connect, collaborate and drive Africa's ICT agenda forward.

Past TICON Africa conferences provide a perfect platform for this year's gathering

A well-attended launch event in Accra in May set the scene for a Technology Information Confederation Africa and African Marketing Confederation joint conference extravaganza examining the latest trends, developments and future directions of the information technology and marketing sectors in Africa.

Host associations for the 2025 gathering are the Institute of ICT Professionals, Ghana and the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana.

Held concurrently but with largely separate agendas and speakers, the conferences recognise the growing convergence of the ICT and marketing sectors in the age of AI, the metaverse, digital strategies and big data.

The theme for the technology gathering

Gilbert Abeiku Aggrey of the Ghana Tourism Authority speaking at the conference launch event in May

PHOTOS: TICON AFRICA; LABADI BEACH HOTEL

is '*Empowering Africa's Tech Future: Innovation, Standards, and Global Influence*', while the theme for the marketing conference is '*Thriving in Africa's Evolving Markets: Trust, Trends & Technology*'.

Kicking off the Accra conference launch event in May, which also attracted online attendees from around the world, was David Gowu, President of TICON Africa. He spoke on behalf of both the African Marketing Confederation (AMC) and TICON Africa.

Gowu said the joint conference aimed to use technology and marketing to enhance Africa's development. It was also an opportunity to showcase the nation of Ghana, its culture and attractions.

Speaking at the same event, Dr Jannie Zaaiman, Secretary General of TICON Africa, emphasised the crucial role of technology in helping to grow Africa, and expanded on the TICON Africa theme by noting that there are various sub-themes under this umbrella. These include: '*Tech-Driven Inclusion – Empowering Women for a Digital Economy*' and '*Embracing and Enabling Digital Education Throughout Africa*'.

ON THE PODIUM

Among the thought leaders taking to the podium at the 2025 gathering is Charles Murito, Google's Regional Director for Government Affairs and Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa. He is the opening keynote speaker for both the TICON Africa and AMC conferences.

With over two decades of experience across global tech, media and policy, Murito has championed digital transformation, inclusive growth and progressive regulation across the continent. From shaping internet infrastructure to driving diversity, he's been at the forefront of Africa's digital future. It's an unmissable session with one of tech's most influential changemakers.

Professor Fred McBagonluri, President of Academic City University and Board Chairman of the Institute of ICT Professionals, Ghana (IIPGH), is the closing keynote speaker for the joint conferences.

With over 40 patents, global leadership experience, and a passion for transforming Africa through innovation, education and entrepreneurship, Prof. McBagonluri's aim is to deliver a powerful address that reflects the future of African excellence.

HONOURING THE ICONS

Every thriving tech ecosystem stands on the shoulders of pioneers. A highlight of the annual TICON Africa gatherings is the Awards presentation on the final night, which honours the institutions and icons who have laid the foundation for Africa's ICT journey.

Our conference venue, the Labadi Beach Hotel, is Ghana's premier 5-star hotel and is set amidst tropical landscaped gardens. Close to the international airport and CBD, it is located adjacent to Ghana's most popular pleasure beach and boasts a well-maintained and secure private beach.

Game-changing breakthroughs demand bold recognition, and among the 2025 Awards categories are:

- **AI & Emerging Tech Innovation of the Year** – honouring disruptive technologies driving intelligence, automation and advancement across the continent.
- **Excellence in Cybersecurity of the Year** – recognising individuals or organisations safeguarding Africa's digital infrastructure.
- **Social Impact through ICT of the Year** – spotlighting innovation that uplifts communities and addresses Africa's biggest challenges.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

But the conference is not just about the speaker presentations and awards. TICON Africa works hard to ensure delegates to its conferences return home having experienced the sights and sounds of the host country.

This year, TICON Africa and the AMC have partnered with the Ghana Tourism Authority and Labadi Beach Hotel to create events and activities that delegates will talk about for a long time to come.

Representing the Ghana Tourism Authority at the May launch event was Deputy CEO, Gilbert Abeiku Aggrey. In his address, he said the conferences were a significant occasion which not only united leaders in marketing and technology across the continent, but also proudly spotlighted Ghana as the home of rich culture and heritage – and a true hub for tourism in Africa.

"The Ghana Tourism Authority sees these events as a timely opportunity to present the vision of H.E. President John Dramani Mahama – to make Ghana the number one tourism destination in Africa," he stated.

"We not only say 'akwaaba' ('welcome') in Ghana – we live it. We are warm, we are friendly, and very hospitable. Growing up, we were told that if you receive a guest, your offer your bed for the guest to sleep on ... We say that we are more friendly to visitors than even to ourselves. That is why Ghana has become the converging point for the entire Africa; that's why we say we are the gateway to Africa."

The country that prides itself on being the gateway to Africa is hosting a joint gathering that may prove a gateway to a very bright future for the continent. ●

A CELEBRATION OF CONNECTION AND INNOVATION AT OUR CONFERENCES

The TICON Africa 2023 and 2024 conferences, held in Entebbe, Uganda and Mombasa, Kenya respectively, brought together ICT professionals from around the continent and further afield. We look back at two unforgettable events, where ideas were exchanged, partnerships flourished, and the spirit of African innovation came alive.

PHOTOS: TICON AFRICA

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HERE'S WHY GHANA IS THE IDEAL DESTINATION FOR THE 2025 CONFERENCE

Our TICON Africa delegates are in vibrant Ghana and its capital, Accra. Here are a few reasons why it's a great venue for our gathering.

Culture and history abound in Accra

Ghana's natural beauty includes stunning beaches

Ghana a destination known for its cultural richness, natural beauty, economic growth and forward-thinking business landscape.

A GATEWAY TO WEST AFRICA

Located in the heart of West Africa, Accra provides access to a growing market, making it the ideal hub to connect with key players and foster cross-border collaboration. As a nation, Ghana is a significant trading partner within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which consistently positions it as a leading market for Ghana's exports in the region.

RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE

Ghana offers a unique cultural experience with stunning coastlines, historic landmarks and vibrant traditions. It's a great opportunity to explore while deepening your understanding of the local market.

> GHANA IS KNOWN FOR RICH HISTORY, DIVERSE CULTURE, SCENERY AND ITS VIBRANT CITIES

GHANA HAS A THRIVING BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

Ghana's stable government and growing economy make it a top destination for international business, offering technology professionals opportunities to connect, collaborate, and explore new ventures. Ghana is the largest gold producer in Africa, generating US$7.6-billion in export income in 2023. The World Bank projects Ghana's GDP to grow by 4.3% in 2025. Additionally, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows are expected to rise, reaching 3% of GDP by 2028.

INNOVATION AND GROWTH

Ghana is embracing digital transformation, offering attendees insights into cutting-edge business strategies, digital tools and emerging trends shaping the industry in Africa and globally. Digital adoption in Ghana has continued to grow steadily, with internet access reaching 70% and mobile connectivity at 113% in early 2024. This widespread digital reach has driven the rise of e-commerce, digital banking, and social media marketing, transforming how Ghanaians discover, assess and purchase products and services.

EASY ACCESS

Accra is well connected with direct international flights and modern infrastructure, ensuring a seamless travel experience for professionals from around the world attending the conference. Kotoka International Airport (ACC) in Accra oversaw over 3.09-million passengers in 2023, with traffic increasing to 3.4-million in 2024, underscoring its strong capacity and growing role as a regional aviation hub. ●

PHOTOS: RETLAW SNELLAC PHOTOGRAPHY VIA FLICKR; KEN CHEN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

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David Gowu, Elizabeth Ntege and Jannie Zaaiman at the inaugural TICON Africa Conference held in Uganda in 2023

A CLEAR FOCUS ON UNLOCKING AFRICA'S VAST TECHNOLOGICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Introducing the Technology Information Confederation Africa (TICON Africa) as the powerful and united voice of ICT professionals across our emerging continent.

Groundbreaking moment: Delegates at the first conference held in Entebbe

A social media post promoting the inaugural TICON Africa gathering

Technology is the backbone of today's economy – it's integrated into agriculture, healthcare, education, finance, marketing, governance, public services and more. But in a world in which industries are reshaped overnight, and two-fifths of today's job skills will be outdated within five years, the stakes are high – especially for Africa.

With the world's youngest workforce and sub-Saharan Africa predicted to supply half of new global workers by 2030, according to the International Monetary Fund, the continent holds immense potential.

But potential alone isn't enough. The World Economic Forum's '*The Future of Jobs Report 2025*', says skills shortages remain a major concern – with digital access, technical qualifications, and job-readiness are not keeping pace with demand for AI, big data, cybersecurity and problem-solving skills.

AFRICA'S DEMOGRAPHIC ADVANTAGE MUST BE TRANSLATED INTO AN ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE

Africa's demographic advantage will only translate into economic advantage if it is matched with investment in skills, standards and structures. This is where TICON Africa can play a critical role.

WHAT IS TICON AFRICA?

Technology Information Confederation Africa (TICON Africa) is a non-profit pan-African professional body for ICT.

Founded in 2022, it unites national ICT associations, societies and institutions from across the continent under one umbrella, while also supporting the establishment of professional ICT bodies in countries in which they do not yet exist.

HOW DOES TICON AFRICA ADD VALUE TO THE SECTOR?

TICON Africa was formed in recognition of the need for greater collaboration, standardisation and continental capacity-building in ICT. It promotes robust ecosystems in which ICT professionals can grow their skills, share knowledge and support national development goals.

TICON Africa adds value to African ICT associations through five key initiatives:

- Research and development into Africa's ICT needs.

TICON Africa delegates during the 2024 conference in Mombasa

- Publications that share country-level best practices.
- Education that builds capacity by means of professional qualifications.
- Networking events and conferences that connect professionals across borders.
- Revenue mobilisation that helps to build institutional resilience.

"TICON Africa further adds value by helping member associations develop standards for African ICT professionals and making ICT a worthy career choice to propel the socio-economic development of the continent," explains David Gowu, President of TICON Africa.

By drawing on the vast knowledge and experience of ICT experts, educators and innovators from the around the continent, TICON Africa will help to drive collaboration, build capacity and shape the continent's digital future.

WOMEN IN TICON

TICON Africa established the Women in TICON Africa Chapter in to empower, support and advance women in the ICT sector. Its aim is to address the disparity in ICT equality throughout Africa, and promote a unified future.

More than just an advocacy platform, Women in TICON is a catalyst for change, ensuring that African women in technology have the resources, networks and opportunities to thrive in a traditionally male-dominated sector.

WOMEN IN TICON AIMS TO EMPOWER FEMALES IN THE TECH SECTOR WITH THE NECESSARY SKILLS

OUR COMMITTEES

TICON Africa has four committees that play a key role in driving the organisational agenda.

These are:

- The Education Committee, which offers an array of professional ICT courses and qualifications to professionals within TICON Africa's member organisations. The committee oversees general education and training courses (working with partner entities where appropriate) while also initiating niche courses.
- The Events Committee, which largely organises TICON Africa events, including the annual TICON Africa conference, this year being held in Ghana from 20-22 August.
- The Publications Committee, which oversees *Africa's Tech Pulse* and other publications.
- The Research Committee, which guides TICON Africa regarding its research vision and how this can be implemented. It oversees general research policy and initiates niche research.

TICON AFRICA HELPS TO UNLOCK REAL POTENTIAL

ICT is not just an enabler – it is an engine of transformation. But without recognised professional standards, scalable training opportunities and institutional support, Africa's ICT workforce risks being underutilised or excluded from global opportunity.

TICON Africa offers a pan-African mechanism for aligning digital skills development with national and continental development priorities.

It will play a meaningful role in helping to close skills gaps and create a more employable, future-ready workforce that can make Africa both more inclusive (meeting urgent domestic needs) and competitive (able to stand with the best on a global stage).

It is a privilege to play a key role in the sustainable development of the continent – and TICON Africa is ready to help unlock Africa's full technological potential. ●

PHOTOS: TICON AFRICA; SUPPLIED

SAICTA

Future-Minded,
Industry Connected

SOUTH AFRICA'S TECH EVOLUTION
STARTS HERE

As **South Africa's national ICT body**, SAICTA is where **digital transformation** meets **thought leadership**. For professionals and organisations being reshaped by the tech evolution, our network provides:

- National Exposure
- CPD-Accredited Courses
- Strategic Networking Opportunities
- Graduate Talent Pipeline
- Policy Influence & Advocacy

Connect. Grow. Lead.

Learn More

MEET TICON AFRICA'S PARTNERS – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

TICON Africa's partners include primary and secondary member organisations, which form a dynamic ecosystem of African ICT professionals united by a shared vision of advancing technology in Africa.

PRIMARY MEMBERS

Primary member organisations are key players in their respective countries, serving as pivotal figures in local technology ecosystems. They drive innovation, foster collaboration and champion the development of ICT professionals, playing a crucial role in shaping both TICON Africa and the broader ICT landscape.

IIPGH GHANA

INSTITUTE OF ICT PROFESSIONALS GHANA

SECONDARY MEMBERS

Secondary membership represents the dynamic influx of new energy and ideas into TICON Africa from a constantly evolving industry, offering diverse perspectives, innovative approaches, and a hunger for knowledge and growth.

ICT-ET ETHIOPIA
ICTET
ICT CHAMBER RWANDA
ICT CHAMBER
Connect. Grow. Expand
ICTAK KENYA
ICTAK
Information Communication Technology Association of Kenya
ICTAU UGANDA
ICTAU
ICTAZ ZAMBIA
ICTAZ
ICT Association of Zambia
ICTAM MALAWI
ICTAM
ICT ASSOCIATION OF MALAWI
CSZ ZIMBABWE
CSZ
ICTAZ ZIMBABWE
CSZ
BITS BOTSWANA
BITS
BOTSWANA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOCIETY
LICTA LESOTHO
LICTA
SAICTA SOUTH AFRICA
SAICTA

MEET THE MEMBERS: PIONEERING ORGANISATIONS GUIDING TICON AFRICA

TICON Africa's Primary and Secondary Members are the lifeblood of the organisation, driving its strategy and mission, and influencing the broader African ICT landscape.

PRIMARY MEMBERS

THE INSTITUTE OF ICT PROFESSIONALS (IIPGH) GHANA

The Institute of ICT Professionals, Ghana (IIPGH) is a vibrant network of ICT professionals leveraging skills across government, education, business, start-ups and civil society. A dynamic non-profit, IIPGH's aim is to build a more standardised, integrated ICT ecosystem for national development. It offers ICT consultancy and services for business, is an IT human resource provider, and reviews curricula for educational institutions.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ICT ASSOCIATION (SAICTA)

The South African ICT Association (SAICTA) helps ICT professionals across South Africa succeed – whether they're scaling start-ups, running tech firms or building careers. Providing access to CPD-certified training, professional networks and advocacy platforms, the non-profit ensures its members are empowered to shape South Africa's ICT landscape. By uniting ICT visionaries across South Africa's tech environment, SAICTA creates access, influence and opportunity – and it ensures that high standards of professional skills, ability, ethics and integrity are maintained.

POWERHOUSE BODIES THAT ENSURE THEIR PRACTITIONERS ARE VISIBLE AND VALUED

THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA (ICTAZ)

The Information and Communications Technology Association of Zambia (ICTAZ) was established by an Act of Parliament, to provide for the registration of ICT professionals and regulate their professional conduct in the interest of the ICT sector. In 2018, a law (Act No. 7) changed the name of the Computer Society of Zambia to the Information and Communications Technology Association of Zambia. ICTAZ regulates Zambia's ICT profession and promotes ethical, innovative and impactful ICT practices. Through qualification standards, policy input, and member conduct oversight, it advances ICT professionalism and sector credibility nationwide.

ICTAU UGANDA

ICTAU Uganda is a multi-stakeholder initiative rooted in Uganda's private sector. It supports Uganda's tech innovation through policy advisory, capacity development and ecosystem strengthening. It envisions a thriving tech industry that empowers all Ugandans and plays a key role in shaping ICT governance and e-systems deployment. It also aims to accelerate the development ICT skills in secondary and tertiary institutions. ICTAU supports the development of an ICT technology hub in Uganda, and nurtures the creation and development of lead technology for locally development software and mobile applications.

CSZ ZIMBABWE

The Computer Society of Zimbabwe (CSZ) has championed ICT in Zimbabwe since 1974. The professional body promotes ICT literacy among the general public, drives industry development and advances the country's ICT ecosystem. To do this, it establishes beneficial relationships and provides independent professional counsel for the benefit of its members, government, industry and society at large. Through advocacy, standards development and thought leadership, it remains a cornerstone of Zimbabwe's digital process.

ICTAM MALAWI

The ICT Association of Malawi (ICTAM) is the go-to network for Malawi's ICT professionals. The umbrella body is committed to elevating the integrity and competence of IT professionals, while its mission is to lead by catalysing policy changes that enable Malawians to participate in the modern tech-based global economy. ICTAM promotes knowledge and understanding of IT among its members, other institutions and the public. It also provides a forum for exchanging views among IT professionals and users.

ICTAK KENYA

The Information Communication Technology Association of Kenya (ICTAK) is a hub for IT experts and industry stakeholders in Kenya. The powerhouse

organisation offers services from consultancy, skills assessment and course accreditation to policy advocacy, strategic planning and guarding professional ethics. ICTAK fosters innovation and excellence, ensuring that Kenyan ICT practitioners are visible and valued.

BITS BOTSWANA

The Botswana Information Technology Society (BITS) is a non-profit, voluntary professional organisation that unites Botswana's IT community across the public and private sectors. It advances IT understanding and adoption while upholding professional standards. It promotes responsible innovation through collaboration and thought leadership. Its diverse members all have in common their passion for deploying IT in Botswana, maintaining high standards of practice in the profession, and contributing to maximising returns on IT investments in the country.

ICT CHAMBER RWANDA

As Rwanda's tech epicentre, the Rwanda ICT Chamber drives entrepreneurship, skills development and investment in ICT. Established in 2011, the Chamber has a bold vision to position Rwanda as a regional digital leader, and empowers members through advocacy, capacity building and access to market and finance. It is the leading partner for organisations to share experience, network, grow and expand their operations.

ICT-ET ETHIOPIA

The ICT Association Ethiopia (ICT-ET) fosters collaboration, skills development and national dialogue, promoting responsible stakeholder input and proposing policies that support the sector. It aims to enhance the development of human resources, education and skills within member companies, which involves encouraging collaboration between member and private companies for ICT and tech development through both public and private sector participation. It also nurtures inclusive growth in one of Africa's fastest-growing digital markets.

LICTA LESOTHO

The Lesotho Information and Communication Technology Association (LICTA) promotes excellence in ICT in Lesotho by promoting high standards of professional skills, ethics and integrity, and offering ICT professionals a range of benefits, including professional development, networking opportunities, cost-saving initiatives, and resources to advance their careers. Members benefit from mentorship, leadership opportunities, and recognition through awards, making LICTA a true catalyst for career and sector growth.

SECONDARY MEMBERS

TICON Africa's Secondary Members represent the pulse of new ideas, fresh energy and creative problem-solving. These organisations bring diversity, innovation and an appetite for growth to the Pan-African digital conversation.

ICTAZ ZIMBABWE

The Information Communication Technology Association of Zimbabwe is an independent association on a mission to help society embrace emerging technologies for sustainable development. A watchdog regarding the societal and environment impacts of ICT, ICTAZ Zimbabwe blends advocacy, education and impact-driven thinking. ●

PHOTOS: IIPGH, SAICTA, ICTAZ ZAMBIA, ICTAU, CSZ, ICTAM, ICTAK, ICT-ET

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING IN I.C.T. LEADERSHIP

As Africa's digital economy accelerates, it has become vital to explore how women can lead, influence and innovate in the ICT sector.

The Women in TICON Masterclass series will offer powerful insights from women shaping the future of ICT in Africa

The inaugural session in the Women in TICON Masterclass Series, themed '*Breaking the Glass Ceiling in ICT Leadership*', was held online on 12 June 2025.

Guest speaker Dr Elaine van Wyk, Chief Marketing Officer at the Belgium Campus iTversity and IMM Graduate School in South Africa, joined moderator Malebogo Khanda-Wiktor, Secretary General of the Botswana Information Technology Society (BITS), to discuss the barriers women face in technology leadership – and how to overcome them.

PERSISTENT HURDLES

Van Wyk highlighted persistent challenges for women in the workplace, from being undervalued and underpaid to facing deep-seated cultural biases. Khanda-Wiktor added that while many girls enter ICT studies – sometimes outnumbering boys – they often drop out as men discourage women from being in the tech field.

She noted that women who graduate from Belgium Campus and are placed as interns are often viewed as better, more detail-oriented developers than men, underscoring that talent isn't the issue – access and equality are.

WORKPLACE CULTURE

Citing a 2018 McKinsey study, Van Wyk noted that companies with gender-diverse executive teams are 21% more likely to be profitable – and our hiring practices need to change accordingly.

However, she acknowledged that shifting workplace culture isn't easy – it requires change management and support from the top. Inclusive policies, mentorship and representation all play a critical role.

Van Wyk further observed that while women bring care and compassion into the workplace, they may take too much to heart. "Men are good at not taking things personally – they can appreciate robust discussions and different opinions," she noted.

TIPS FOR WOMEN

She provided the following tips for women in IT:

- Know your purpose so you can set goals and boundaries in the workplace.
- Don't be afraid to take risks and make mistakes.
- Be tenacious – don't let rejection stand in your way.
- Collaborate across sectors for fresh perspectives.
- Join a professional association, since these organisations can create powerful networks.
- Attend industry events to build relationships.
- Leverage LinkedIn to share your thought leadership – sell yourself as a brand.
- Embrace lifelong learning and keep abreast of industry trends and customer needs.
- Aim to be 1% better every day, and surround yourself with smart people – you're the average of the sum of the five people you spend the most time with.
- Ask for help – it's a strength, not a weakness.
- Women consume technology differently to men. Consider developing products for women as a differentiator.

Khanda-Wiktor closed the masterclass with some powerful reflections. "Leadership in ICT must be inclusive – diversity is not just a goal, it's a strength," she said.

"In addition, barriers can be broken, but it takes bold voices, supportive systems and intentional action. Representation matters, and mentorship, visibility and advocacy are essential. We each have a role to play to champion equity and create spaces for others." ●

PHOTO: TICON AFRICA

TICON AFRICA'S HONORARY MEMBER ROWENA TURINAWE – CONNECTING WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

Rowena Turinawe aims to empower women in ICT by amplifying their voices and motivating them to lead. She chats to **Fiona Zerbst** about her career and goals.

It's a surprise to learn that Rowena Turinawe – who was named the ICT Young Professional of the Year at the 2023 TICON Africa Conference – originally had no intention of pursuing a career in ICT.

"I actually thought I'd become a lawyer," says the first honorary member of TICON Africa's 'Women in TICON Africa' Chapter, who hails from Uganda. "But along the way, I discovered just how powerful and transformative this field can be."

Insatiably curious about systems and "how things work", Turinawe found herself employed in environments in which digital tools were shaping real outcomes in finance, education and everyday service delivery. This gave her a new understanding of her mission.

"The deeper I ventured into tech, the more I realised it wasn't just about hardware or code – it was about solving real problems and unlocking new possibilities for people and communities," she says.

"My journey truly began with a willingness to learn and to say 'yes' to opportunities that intimidated me."

She is especially grateful to her longest-standing supervisor and mentor, Peter Kahiigi, now Chief Technology Officer of Centenary Technology Services. "He consistently pushed me beyond my limits – from project management roles to hands-on experience with network infrastructure and digital products. Every step opened a new door," she explains.

"In a sense, ICT found me – and in it, I found my purpose."

TURINAWE'S BRILLIANT CAREER

Turinawe is the first female Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Rhino Payment Services, a Ugandan fintech. Prior to this, she served as Head of Innovation and Digital Services at Centenary Technology Services, where she partnered with MTN Foundation Uganda on national digital skilling programmes.

She also held the role of Business Transformation Manager at the National Information Technology Authority Uganda (NITA-U), where she played a pivotal role in developing Uganda's Digital Transformation Roadmap. Turinawe is a distinguished member of the National BPO and Innovations Council under the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, where she actively contributes to the development of national policies supporting youth-led innovation and local technology ecosystems.

In 2021, she was named one of the '35 Most Influential Women in Technology in Africa' by *CIO AFRICA*, an authoritative industry magazine.

In 2024, Turinawe co-authored the book *Digital Transformation – the Northstar You Need* with Emmanuel Mugabi and Osbert Osamai. The book presents 14 strategies that help leaders in senior management navigate complexities and challenges in the digital era.

WOMEN IN TICON AFRICA HOLDS IMMENSE POTENTIAL TO DRIVE TRANSFORMATION

DRIVING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE ON THE CONTINENT

Turinawe says Women in TICON Africa is an important organisational Chapter – one that can achieve great things.

"Women in TICON Africa holds immense potential to drive transformational change across the continent by spotlighting and supporting women in technology, innovation and connectivity," she notes.

"It can become a powerful hub for cross-border collaboration, mentorship and policy influence, bridging the gender gap in ICT not just through advocacy but through tangible action and visibility."

As an honorary member, she believes her role goes beyond representation.

"It's about contribution," she explains. "I see myself actively engaging in mentorship, thought leadership and advocacy efforts. I want to be a connector, linking women to opportunities, amplifying their voices, and helping shape strategies that ensure we're not just present in the tech space, but thriving and leading."

HOW TECHNOLOGY IS DRIVING INCLUSIVITY

Turinawe has spoken about technology's vast potential for inclusivity – and it's an exciting time on the continent.

"We're seeing mobile technology bridging access gaps in education, health and financial services across Africa. Rural communities are accessing markets and information as never before, and digital payments are empowering micro-entrepreneurs – many of whom are women – to scale their businesses and participate in the formal economy," she points out.

"In my view, the future is decentralised and democratised. Tech will continue to dismantle traditional barriers – geographic, economic, even linguistic. But only if we are intentional about design and access. If we keep prioritising local context, inclusive policies and user-centred innovation, we can build a digital Africa that works for everyone – not just the privileged few."

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES AND LEARNING TO SPEAK UP

As a young professional woman in ICT, Turinawe has faced some challenges.

"One of the biggest is being underestimated or overlooked, especially in technical and leadership spaces," she admits.

"There's still a lingering bias, whether conscious or not, which questions a woman's capability in ICT."

In the early stage of her career, she felt the need to prove herself twice as hard just to be heard or taken seriously. However, she overcame this through her commitment to excellence, building a strong support system and embracing every opportunity to grow.

"I learnt to speak up, back myself and let my results speak where doubt persisted," she says. "Mentorship – both receiving and offering it – played a big role in building my confidence and perspective."

Above all, her faith has kept her grounded. "Without God's guidance and strength, I might have given up and chosen a much easier path," she confesses. "It's His grace that has sustained me through the challenges – and He continues to fuel my purpose." ●

PHOTOS: TICON AFRICA; ERIC KULU

HARARE GATHERING PLAYS KEY ROLE IN SHAPING POLICY AND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Delegates discuss digital transformation agenda and hear that Africa is at the forefront of championing cybersecurity on the global stage.

The 2025 Women in ICT Zimbabwe Conference brought together industry leaders, policymakers and innovators to explore critical themes shaping Africa's digital future.

This year's event highlighted the continent's growing role in the world of data, cybersecurity, digital transformation and citizen development, while also addressing the challenges and opportunities that come with these advancements.

Graced by the presence of Zimbabwe's Minister of ICT, Tatenda Mavetera, as well as various female IT professionals and industry experts from across Africa, the conference was the ideal platform for recognising the significance of women's contributions in technology and to outline strategic initiatives for the continent's digital future.

A GROWING PRIORITY

One of the conference's most pressing themes was cybersecurity, as Africa has increasingly become a top target for cyberattacks. With rapid digital transformation across the continent, businesses, governments and individuals are at heightened risk of cyber threats.

However, Africa is not merely a victim in this space – it is also at the forefront of championing cybersecurity on the global stage. The African Union's digital security strategies aim to strengthen cybersecurity frameworks, ensuring that African nations are not only securing their digital economies but also setting global standards in cybersecurity governance.

This is critical for Africa's economic and digital sovereignty. Robust cybersecurity measures will protect financial systems, critical infrastructure and personal data, ultimately enabling sustainable digital growth.

TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

Another major focus of the conference was the push to transition subject matter expertise into technical subject matter expertise through citizen development.

This movement is gaining traction with low-code and no-code technologies, which allow professionals with minimal programming experience to develop applications, automate processes, integrate artificial intelligence (AI) and introduce data analytics into business operations. By empowering non-technical users to create digital solutions, Africa is democratising technology, fostering innovation across industries, and accelerating digital adoption.

The emphasis on citizen development aligns with the continent's broader goal of bridging the digital skills gap. With women playing a key role in ICT, the rise of low-code tools provides them with an opportunity to lead digital transformation efforts, reducing traditional barriers to technology careers.

As Africa continues to position itself as a global leader in digital innovation, the insights shared at the 2025 Women in ICT Zimbabwe Conference will play a crucial role in shaping policy, education and industry development. ●

Some of the delegates attending the conference, which was hosted by the Computer Society of Zimbabwe, a Primary Member of TICON Africa

PHOTOS: CSZ; OPENART

GHANA'S IIPGH CELEBRATES EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY MILESTONE

Building on eight years of digital impact: the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH) celebrated a milestone and welcomed new leadership on 7 March 2025.

Richard Kafui Amanfu, the new Executor Director of the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH)

New members are inducted into the IIPGH

Themed '*Transforming Lives Through ICT: 8 Years of Impact and Inspiration*', the Institute of ICT Professionals, Ghana (IIPGH) celebratory event focused on professionalism and digital inclusion while reflecting on its legacy of advocacy and capacity building in the country's digital sector.

A highlight was the leadership transition from Executor Director David Gowu to Richard Kafui Amanfu. Gowu, who steered the institute since its inception, was widely praised for advancing ICT professional development and unifying voices from industry, academia and government.

"IIPGH has made significant strides in shaping Ghana's ICT landscape over the past eight years," Amanfu noted, affirming his commitment to building on IIPGH's progress.

"As we look ahead, our focus remains on empowering professionals, expanding digital literacy and advocating for policies that drive technological innovation. We will continue to work closely with government, industry leaders and educational institutions to ensure that Ghana's ICT sector remains competitive and inclusive."

The ceremony also saw the induction of new members into the institute – evidence of IIPGH's growing footprint and relevance in Ghana's rapidly evolving ICT ecosystem.

STRENGTHENING GHANA'S REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Dr Mark-Oliver Kevor, Acting Director-General of Ghana's National Information Technology Agency (NITA), used his keynote address to emphasise the importance of professional standards in the digital sector.

"The government is committed to reviewing ICT-related legislation to ensure professional standards, enhance credibility and support innovation. A well-regulated ICT industry will strengthen Ghana's digital economy and create more opportunities for professionals," he stated.

> THE INSTITUTE HAS A RAPIDLY GROWING FOOTPRINT IN THE I.C.T. ECOSYSTEM

Dr Samuel Antwi-Gyekyi – representing Ghana's Minister of Communications, Digital Technology and Innovation, Samuel Nartey George – outlined major national initiatives: broadband expansion, the Digital Jobs Initiative targeting 300,000 jobs, and the One Million Coders programme. He also acknowledged IIPGH's role in cybersecurity education, skills development and ICT literacy.

Dr Stephane Nwolley, ICT Chair at the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI), urged stronger investment in artificial intelligence (AI) and local data infrastructure. This will help to position Ghana as a leader in the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions, he said. ●

PHOTOS: IIPGH

AGENTIC AI: THE AUTONOMOUS REVOLUTION RESHAPING STRATEGY, SKILLS AND GOVERNANCE

With the right infrastructure, skill sets and governance, Agentic AI can be harnessed as a catalyst for sustainable innovation. By **Jacqui Muller**.

The relentless march of technological progress has delivered yet another game-changer – Agentic Artificial Intelligence (Agentic AI).

Representing a dramatic leap forward from traditional rule-based AI systems, Agentic AI introduces self-directed systems capable of learning, adapting and making autonomous decisions. This innovation is not just redefining how businesses operate – it is fundamentally reshaping corporate strategy, workforce dynamics and ethical governance in the digital age.

AGENTIC AI

The physical and digital interfaces between humans and autonomous agents will need robust design and implementation

FROM AUTOMATION TO AUTONOMY

For years, businesses have relied on process automation to streamline operations, reduce human error and improve efficiency. These rule-based systems followed a predictable set of instructions, delivering consistent outcomes.

But the emergence of Agentic AI has taken this a step further. By leveraging technologies such as large language models (LLMs), reinforcement learning and advanced analytics, Agentic AI systems no longer need to be told what to do in every scenario. Instead, they can assess a situation, determine the best course of action, and execute it – often in real time.

> UNLIKE PREVIOUS A.I. VERSIONS, AGENTIC A.I. IS ABLE TO DELIVER CONTEXTUAL REASONING

Unlike earlier generations of AI, which primarily enhanced productivity through predefined flows, Agentic AI is capable of contextual reasoning. It continuously learns from interactions, optimises its responses and evolves to meet changing conditions. These capabilities introduce immense strategic potential for organisations seeking to gain a competitive edge.

REAL WORLD APPLICATIONS

The practical applications of Agentic AI are quickly becoming tangible. In customer service, AI-powered agents are resolving complex queries with minimal human supervision. In finance, autonomous platforms are already providing personalised investment recommendations and detecting fraudulent transactions in real time. In healthcare, virtual assistants are supporting clinical decision-making by interpreting medical data and recommending treatment paths.

In industrial sectors, such as manufacturing and logistics, Agentic AI is transforming operations by predicting equipment failures, optimising supply chains and dynamically responding to market fluctuations. These industries benefit from AI's ability to function independently while integrating with real-time sensor data and enterprise systems.

Even the professional services sector is seeing uptake. Law firms are deploying AI agents to review contracts, ensure regulatory compliance and highlight legal risks – all while reducing billable hours and improving consistency.

PHOTOS: ANNA SHVETS FROM PEXELS; ADOBE STOCK; JACQUI MULLER; SUPPLIED; MARS WRIGLEY; LASTMILE

WORKPLACE ADOPTION AND MARKET PROJECTIONS

According to Microsoft and LinkedIn's *2024 Work Trend Index*, the use of generative AI in the workplace nearly doubled over a six-month period, with three-quarters of knowledge workers now reporting AI usage in some form. This dramatic rise signals a growing dependency on intelligent systems in day-to-day operations.

Gartner projects that by 2028 at least 15% of all business decisions will be made autonomously by AI agents. Enterprise software is also expected to evolve rapidly, with one-third of all applications predicted to include agentic capabilities within the same timeframe.

ADOPTION IS UNEVEN ACROSS SECTORS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE LEGAL FIELD IS MORE CAUTIOUS

However, adoption is uneven across sectors. Financial services and legal fields are more cautious, citing concerns over algorithmic bias, explainability and compliance. Meanwhile, high-pressure, logistics-driven environments are more willing to embrace AI autonomy in search of operational resilience and efficiency.

EMERGING SKILLSETS FOR THE AGE OF AUTONOMY

As Agentic AI systems become more embedded in organisations, the demand for specialised talent is growing rapidly.

Tomorrow's software engineers will not only need expertise in traditional programming, but also in machine learning, prompt engineering and system orchestration. This new wave of talent must understand how to build and refine AI agents that can interact with vast, heterogeneous datasets and perform complex reasoning tasks.

Knowledge of natural language processing (NLP), large language models, and reinforcement learning will become essential. But beyond algorithmic knowledge, successful engineers will need to develop interdisciplinary skills. These include understanding domain-specific business processes, user experience design for human-AI interaction, and ethical risk modelling.

Importantly, hardware and infrastructure engineering will also evolve. The physical and digital interfaces between humans and autonomous agents will need robust

^ Agentic AI is helping to interpret medical data and recommend treatment paths

> Agentic AI could streamline the supply chain in urban areas by, for example, optimising the use of autonomous robot carriers

design and implementation. This will give rise to a new generation of technologists skilled in AI deployment architecture, edge computing and cybersecurity for autonomous systems.

GOVERNANCE IN THE AGE OF INTELLIGENT AGENTS

With increased autonomy comes increased responsibility. Businesses cannot afford to deploy Agentic AI without robust governance frameworks in place. Regulatory compliance, data privacy and ethical AI usage are critical areas requiring clear policies and active oversight.

In South Africa, the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) demands that any system processing personal data does so lawfully and transparently. Agentic AI systems – particularly those embedded in customer-facing environments – must comply with these legal obligations. This includes providing explainable decisions, secure data handling and clear accountability mechanisms.

Organisations must embed these principles into the design and deployment of AI systems. A well-structured governance framework should address model explainability, consent management, bias detection, redress mechanisms, and auditability. Businesses should also establish dedicated roles for AI governance and ethics to oversee implementation and maintain compliance.

Jacqui Muller

CHANGE MANAGEMENT AND CULTURAL READINESS

Despite the promise of Agentic AI, many organisations underestimate the cultural shift required to integrate it effectively. Change management is not optional. Without buy-in from employees, even the most advanced AI systems will fall short of delivering value.

To enable meaningful adoption, businesses must invest in workforce training, skills upliftment and AI literacy. Employees at all levels should understand how AI tools affect their roles, and how they can leverage these technologies to improve their performance. Transparent communication, participatory design processes and phased rollouts are essential for reducing resistance and building trust.

Crucially, businesses should reframe AI as an enabler, not a replacement. When positioned as a co-pilot rather than a threat, AI has the potential to augment human decision-making, reduce cognitive load and free up time for more strategic tasks.

RETHINKING BUSINESS MODELS AND STRATEGY

Agentic AI doesn't just require new tools – it demands new thinking. Organisations must assess how autonomous systems will reshape their core business processes, customer experiences and revenue models. This involves a fundamental reassessment of digital strategy and technology investment.

For some companies, Agentic AI may unlock new products or services. For others, it may enable hyper-personalised customer journeys or self-optimising operations. Regardless of the application, the underlying requirement is the same: strategic clarity. Businesses must clearly define the problem they're solving with AI, the outcomes they expect, and the guardrails needed to get there safely.

Furthermore, businesses must prepare for the capital and operational implications of deploying intelligent systems. This includes budgeting for AI infrastructure, cloud resources, ongoing model tuning, and specialist staffing. Investments made today in responsible AI can yield long-term benefits in efficiency, customer loyalty and market leadership.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Agentic AI is more than a passing trend – it is the foundation of the next era of digital transformation. Its impact will extend far beyond automation, influencing how companies compete, how people work, and how societies regulate intelligent technologies.

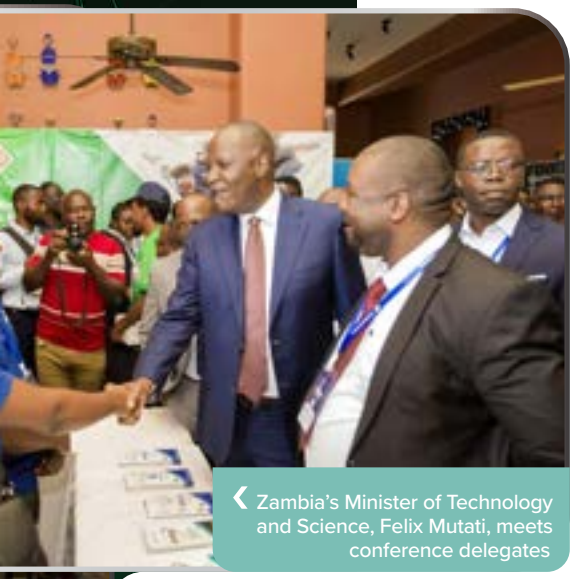
By proactively adopting this paradigm, businesses can unlock extraordinary value. But doing so requires more than enthusiasm; it demands a balanced approach rooted in strategy, ethics and human-centred design. With the right infrastructure, skill sets and governance, Agentic AI can be harnessed not as a disruptive force, but as a catalyst for sustainable innovation. ●

Jacqui Muller operates at the intersection of business, technology and education – driving intelligent automation, strategic innovation and industry-aligned skills development. As a UiPath MVP, business owner, consultant, solution architect and researcher, she empowers people and organisations to thrive in a digital economy.

Delegates at the 2025 ICTAZ Tech Conference held in Livingstone, Zambia

ZAMBIA POISED TO BE AFRICA'S NEXT TECH POWERHOUSE, CONFERENCE TOLD

The ICT Association of Zambia reports on the important deliberations at its 2025 Tech Conference, Training and Expo event held in Livingstone recently.



Zambia's Minister of Technology and Science, Felix Mutati, meets conference delegates

The thunder of Victoria Falls (Mosi-Oa-Tunya) – locally known as '*The Smoke That Thunders*' – wasn't the only sound reverberating in Zambia's tourist capital recently.

There was also the sound of over 600 tech professionals, policymakers and industry leaders who had gathered in Livingstone for the 2025 ICTAZ Tech Conference, Training, and Expo, a monumental event shaping Africa's digital future.

Held at the scenic Avani Victoria Falls Resort, the conference was more than an industry gathering; it was a bold declaration of Zambia's intent to transition 'From Copper to Code' – moving from an extractive, resource-dependent economy to one driven by technology, innovation and human capital.

CONTINENTAL CONVERGENCE WITH GLOBAL AMBITIONS

Graced by the Minister of Technology and Science, Honourable Felix Mutati MP, who was accompanied by his Permanent Secretary, Dr Brilliant Habeenzu, the conference attracted delegates from Zambia, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, India, China, and beyond.

For decades, Zambia has been known as Africa's second-largest copper producer, but this conference marked a clear turning point. The country's tech sector is leading the charge to leapfrog economic stagnation through digital transformation – focusing on limitless human ingenuity over finite natural resources.

Africa's biggest asset over the next 25 years is its people. As the youngest continent, we are poised to produce a quarter of the world's workforce. Our collective challenge is to build local capacity, nurture talent and drive technological innovation from within. This message resonated strongly throughout the conference, driving bold conversations about the tech industry in Zambia and across Africa's digital landscape.

A panel discussion on Governance, Risk and Compliance (GRC) Cybersecurity during the event

KEY CONVERSATIONS SHAPING OUR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

At the heart of the conference were thought-provoking panels and high-impact training sessions that tackled the most pressing issues facing Africa's digital transformation. These are:

- **Artificial intelligence as an economic enabler** – Experts dissected how AI is no longer a futuristic concept but a present-day catalyst for Zambia's public and private sectors, offering pathways for efficiency, innovation and economic growth.
- **The data dilemma** – With data fast becoming Africa's 'new oil', a spirited debate unfolded on balancing data protection laws with operational realities – a conversation essential for any nation seeking responsible digital progress.
- **Counterfeit ICT and cybersecurity** – From hidden costs to cyber risks, delegates explored the growing threat of counterfeit technologies and the importance of governance, risk and compliance (GRC) in the digital age.
- **Future-ready leadership** – Specialised training focused on grooming Zambia's next generation of CIOs, CTOs and digital executives, equipping them with strategic leadership skills to navigate boardrooms and shape national policy.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

The event demonstrated the power of strategic partnerships in accelerating digital growth. Global brands collaborated with local champions to foster knowledge-sharing, develop market-responsive innovations and build sustainable tech ecosystems.

These collaborations are more than symbolic – they are critical engines for skills transfer, job creation and economic diversification, aligned with Zambia's national development goals.

CONFERENCE PROVED A MAGNET FOR I.C.T. LEADERS

The event also solidified Zambia's position as a continental leader in ICT dialogue and capacity building. Among the distinguished delegates was Mr David Gowu, President of TICON Africa, who was one of the speakers, and Mr Clarence Gama, President of the ICT Association of Malawi, who played a pivotal role in facilitating the leadership training track, guiding participants on transitioning from technical roles to strategic leadership positions.

Also prominent was Ms Gifty Mottey, Chairperson for Women in TICON Africa.

TECHNOLOGY SECTOR: ZAMBIA'S RISING STAR

Beyond the conference, Zambia's ICT sector has shown remarkable momentum. In 2024, it outpaced all other industries, recording the highest growth rate and

The vibrant tech expo experience

Running alongside the conference was a vibrant technology expo, where global giants and homegrown innovators showcased transformative solutions across sectors. These ranged from finance and telecommunications to mining, education and public services.

International technology leaders like HP, ManageEngine, Corr-Serve, Nutanix, PeopleCert and Seceon shared the stage with Zambian powerhouses such as BlueLithium Telecommunications, Digital Safe, Innovative Dynamics, StarlLabs, Sparc Systems, Liquid Telecom, Axis Solutions, Astria Learning, Zambia Revenue Authority, First Quantum Minerals and FNB Zambia.

The expo highlighted Zambia's growing digital ecosystem, demonstrating that local companies are not just consumers of technology but creators of impactful, scalable solutions.

becoming the largest contributor to national GDP growth – overtaking traditional sectors like mining and agriculture.

This performance underscores that Zambia's digital rise is not a future aspiration; it is already unfolding.

THE BLUEPRINT FOR OUR DIGITAL FUTURE

With Africa's GDP surpassing US$3.4-trillion and consumer spending projected at $2.5-trillion by 2030, the continent is poised for a digital revolution. The 2025 ICTAZ Tech Conference was not just a gathering – it was a continental blueprint, positioning Zambia as a tech hub for inclusive, sustainable growth.

As the final applause echoed across Livingstone's iconic landscape, one message stood tall: Zambia is no longer just a land of copper. Rather, it is becoming a land of code, innovation and opportunity. ●

❮ TICON Africa President, David Gowu, delivers his keynote address to delegates

TICON President rallies Zambia's ICT community

A milestone moment for the 2025 ICTAZ conference was the keynote address delivered by the President of TICON Africa, Mr David Gowu.

His presentation reflected a transformative vision that resonates with ongoing developments across Africa. These include Africa's enormous youth dividend; the transformative potential of AfCFTA (which amplifies the urgency for regional standardisation and digital policy alignment – priorities that TICON Africa and the African Marketing Confederation aim to advance); and digital transformation as a major driver of progress.

Despite these efforts, job creation remains a pressing concern. Skills mismatch and limited access to capital continue to hinder youth participation in high-potential sectors such as AI, fintech and renewable energy. Additionally, fragmented digital infrastructure and inconsistent regulations across member states pose obstacles to innovation and investment.

Mr Gowu emphasised that the TICON Africa and African Marketing Confederation conferences being held in Accra in August would tackle digital policy alignment, regional standardisation, professional development and the advancement of cross-sector innovation strategies.

"This isn't just a conference – it's a movement," he declared. "From Zambia to Ghana, we are mobilising a new generation of professionals who are bold, skilled and globally connected."

His message was more than promotional; it was a powerful reminder of what's at stake. As internet access expands and digital economies mature, Africa must seize the moment to build frameworks that are equitable, secure and sustainable. His address reflected not just the ambition of TICON Africa, but its responsibility to lead.

MINISTERIAL MEETING

Adding further depth to the event, Mr Gowu held a focused meeting with Zambia's Minister of Technology and Science, Hon. Felix Mutati. Their conversation explored regional interoperability, strategies for digital inclusion, and models for public-private sector collaboration.

The TICON President spoke candidly about his personal connection to Zambia: "Years ago, I worked in Zambia as a young telecom engineer. Returning nearly two decades later to help chart a path forward for Africa's tech ecosystem is both humbling and deeply inspiring."

The Minister responded with equal enthusiasm and expressed support for stronger regional ICT alliances. Mr Gowu extended an official invitation to Hon. Mutati and Zambia's ICT leaders to join the Accra summit and contribute actively to continental digital reform.

What followed was a visible shift in the momentum of the conference – delegates were energised by the potential for their ideas and contributions to influence continental strategies. Accra 2025 isn't just a gathering – it's a platform for Africa to define its own digital destiny.

ACCRA AND BEYOND

As the conference drew to a close, there was one clear sentiment echoing throughout: Africa's tech future is unfolding – not tomorrow, but today. With visionary leadership, unified policy frameworks, and empowered professionals, the continent is poised to define its own digital legacy.

Mr Gowu's closing remarks captured this spirit: "Africa's tech future is not a distant dream – it's happening now. Let's build it together."

From Livingstone to Accra, the pulse of Africa's tech revolution is beating stronger than ever.

***David Gowu, President of TICON Africa, contributed to this article.**

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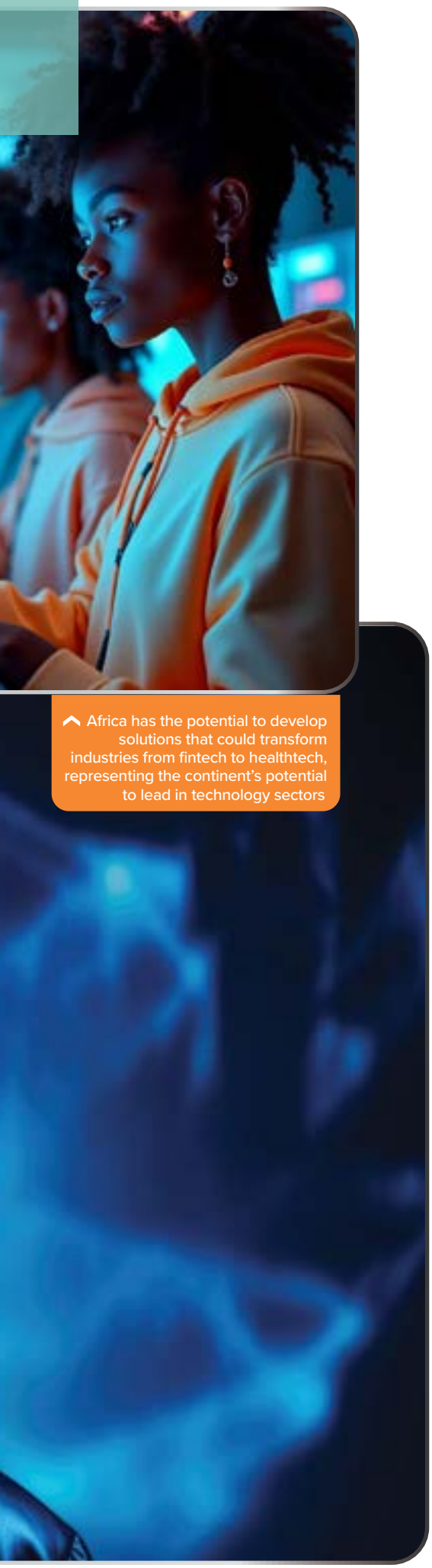
AFRICA'S YOUTH IN ICT: WHY IT'S A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

As the world grapples with ageing populations and labour shortages, Africa stands on the cusp of a demographic advantage. How can we capitalise? By **Dr Jannie Zaaiman.**



Africa has the potential to develop solutions that could transform industries from fintech to healthtech, representing the continent's potential to lead in technology sectors

Across the world, a profound demographic shift is underway. Populations in Europe, North America, East Asia and other advanced economies are ageing rapidly, while fertility rates are falling sharply. The implications of this shift are enormous:

- According to the United Nations Population Division, the number of people aged 65 and older, currently estimated at 857-million, is expected to nearly double by 2050, reaching 1.58-billion.
- Japan tops the list of countries with ageing populations, with an estimated 30% of its population aged 65 and over.
- In most EU Member States, the old-age dependency ratio is projected to be higher than 50% by 2050 – in other words, there will be fewer than two working-aged people for each person aged 65 and older.
- By 2080, children under 18 will be outnumbered by people aged 65 and older.

Growing ageing populations place additional strain on public finances, healthcare systems and pensions. As employers struggle to replace retiring workers, labour shortages are becoming chronic, threatening growth.

As a result, many countries are extending retirement age, automating tasks, encouraging immigration and reskilling older workers. Yet the fundamental challenge remains: there simply aren't enough young people to sustain growth.

AFRICA: THE WORLD'S YOUNGEST CONTINENT

While this looming workforce crisis poses a serious challenge, it also presents a massive opportunity for Africa:

- Over 60% of the continent's population is under 25 years of age.
- Africa's total population is projected to grow from 1.4-billion today to approximately 2.5-billion by 2050, at which point one in four people on our planet is expected to be African.
- By 2035, more young Africans will enter the workforce each year than in the rest of the world combined.
- By 2050, sub-Saharan Africa is expected to account for nearly 59% of global working-age population growth.

This demographic boom offers what economists call a demographic dividend – the potential for accelerated growth when the working-age share of the population expands. But this dividend is not guaranteed. It depends on investment in health, education, infrastructure and jobs. Without this, the youth bulge risks driving instability, unemployment and migration.

If Africa invests wisely, its young people could transform the continent into a centre of innovation and prosperity, while helping fill critical labour gaps in an ageing world.

THE GLOBAL SKILLS GAP MEETS AFRICAN POTENTIAL

This demographic shift is also about skills. Older workers often struggle to keep pace with technology. Surveys in the United Kingdom, United States and Europe reveal significant digital skills gaps among workers over 50, many of whom resist retraining.

Meanwhile, demand for digital expertise is surging. Cybersecurity, AI, data analytics, cloud computing and remote collaboration tools are essential in nearly every industry. Employers need digitally fluent, adaptable workers. As older employees retire, advanced economies scramble to fill digitally intensive roles. The rise of remote work has made global recruitment easier. Companies can now hire talent from anywhere, provided those workers have the right skills.

This is where Africa can excel. African youth are digitally savvy, raised with smartphones, social media and connectivity. They have shown they can adopt, adapt and innovate, as seen in successes like M-Pesa, Africa's leading mobile money service and the region's largest fintech platform. Young Africans' entrepreneurial spirit positions them to build new businesses, deliver innovative solutions and compete globally – but this potential depends on Africa's ability to equip its youth with the right skills.

OPPORTUNITIES IN AFRICA'S FAST-GROWING TECHNOLOGY SECTORS

Africa's large, youthful and increasingly connected population is driving the emergence of vibrant, high-potential technology sectors. These industries do not just represent economic opportunity, they offer pathways for young Africans to apply their skills, build sustainable livelihoods and shape solutions tailored to their own contexts.

For policymakers, investors and educators, understanding these sectors is vital to aligning training and development with the needs of the future economy.

Targeted investment can help unlock Africa's demographic dividend, empowering young people to become innovators, entrepreneurs and skilled professionals who will transform the continent and help address labour shortages globally.

Key technology sectors offering promise on the continent include:

- **Financial technology (fintech):** Africa continues to lead the world in mobile money adoption. In 2024, the industry processed $1.68-trillion in transactions globally, with sub-Saharan Africa accounting for over 1.1-billion registered accounts, according to GMSA's '*The State of the Industry Report on Mobile money 2025*'. Daily transaction volumes now average $3.2-million per minute, reflecting the sector's rapid growth and deepening economic impact.

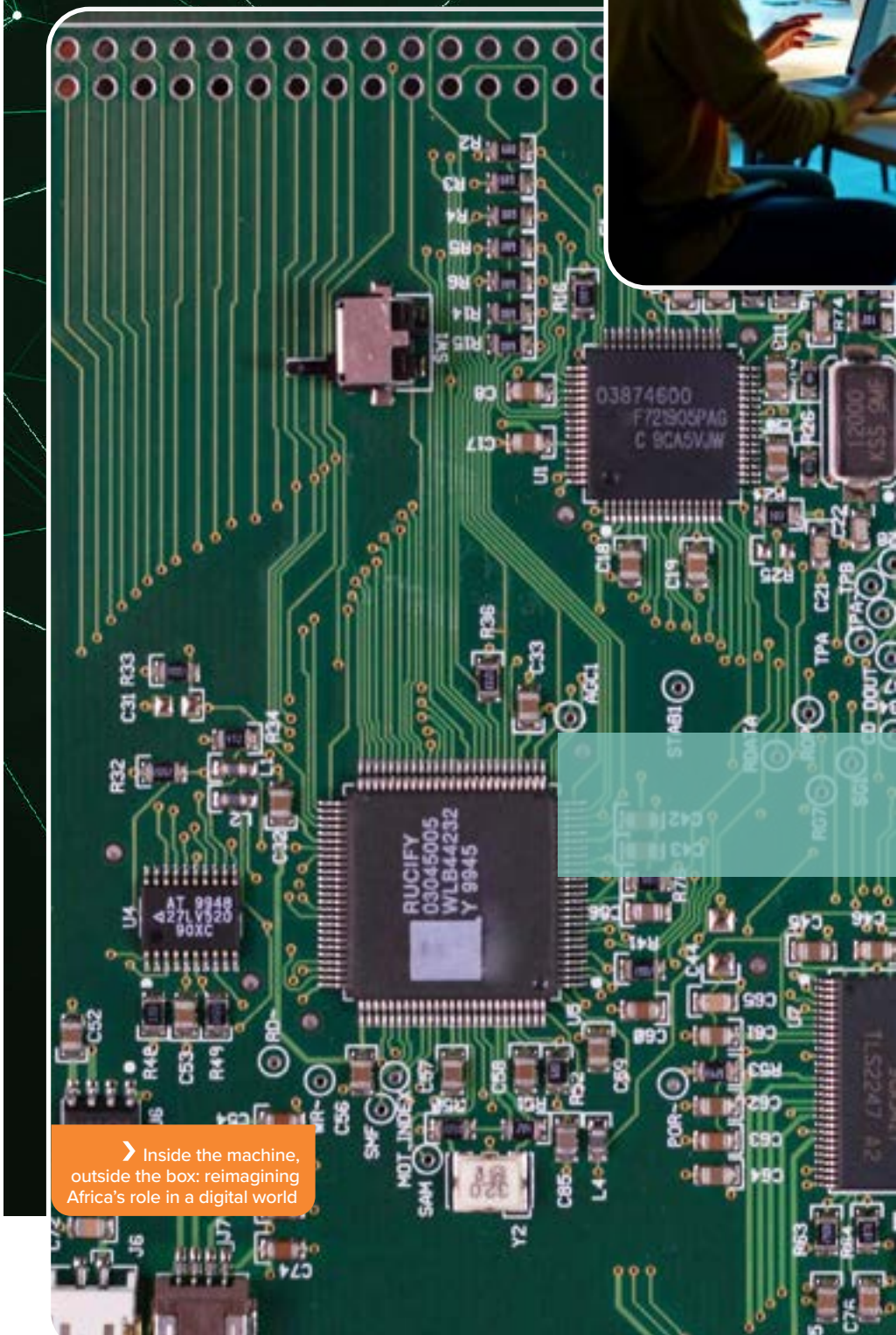
- **Renewable energy:** With over 600-million Africans still lacking reliable electricity, Africa installed 2.4 GW of new solar capacity in 2024, according to the Global Solar Council, and the market is projected to grow by 42% in 2025. By 2028, the continent is expected to add 23 GW of solar capacity, more than doubling current levels. However, Africa still receives only 3% of global energy investment, far below the $200-billion per year needed to meet energy access and climate goals.

- **Agricultural technology (agritech):** Africa's food market is projected to reach $1-trillion by 2030, according to the African Development Bank Group (AfDB). Agritech innovations – such as precision farming, drone technology and digital marketplaces – can improve yields, reduce waste and strengthen food security, while creating jobs along the value chain.

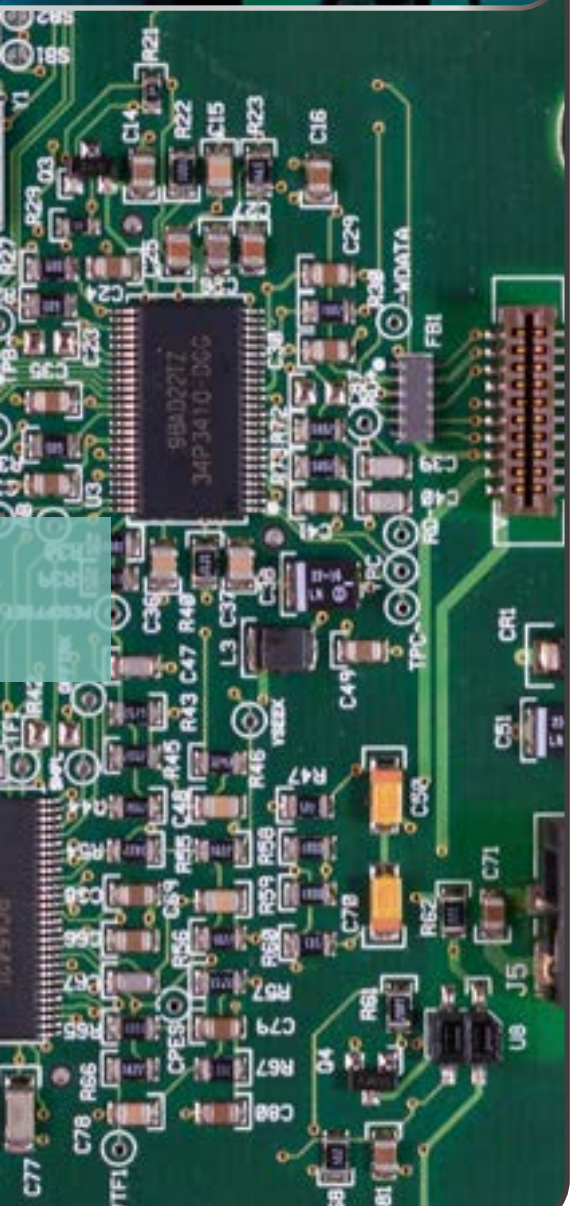
- **Health technology (healthtech):** Healthcare access gaps remain large, particularly in rural areas. Market research company Grand View Research indicates that telemedicine solutions in Africa will grow at approximately 23.4% annually between 2024 and 2030, offering new ways to deliver care while expanding opportunities for health IT professionals and entrepreneurs.

TARGETED INVESTMENT CAN HELP TO UNLOCK OUR DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND'S POTENTIAL

Young tech-savvy Africans can help to address global labour shortages while driving innovation



Inside the machine, outside the box: reimagining Africa's role in a digital world



- **Artificial intelligence (AI):** African AI startups are growing at around 30% annually, says data and insights company TechCabal Insights, developing localised solutions for agriculture, healthcare, education and language technologies. This growth creates demand for data scientists, machine learning engineers and innovators who understand local needs.

- **E-commerce:** Africa's e-commerce market is projected to reach $56.03-billion by 2029, according to media platform *FurtherAfrica*. Driven by mobile-first consumers and increasing internet access, this sector is opening new channels for retail, logistics, payments and digital marketing.

These sectors are not only engines of economic growth, but also crucial to addressing Africa's development challenges. By prioritising ICT education, training and entrepreneurship aligned to these opportunities, Africa can equip its young people to lead in solving local problems, while participating in global digital value chains.

HOW TO BRIDGE THE ICT SKILLS GAP IN AFRICA

Despite this potential, significant barriers to the success of Africa's youth remain:

- **Connectivity:** Many communities still lack reliable, affordable internet.

- **Electricity:** Large regions of Africa face inconsistent power supply, disrupting learning and work.

- **Skills pipeline:** There's a shortage of trained Information and Communication Technology (ICT) instructors, modern curricula and quality vocational training.

- **Cost:** Devices and services remain expensive for many.

- **Policy environment:** Regulatory frameworks need updating to better encourage ICT investment and innovation.

Recognising these challenges, the African Union prioritised ICT in Agenda 2063 and the *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030),* aiming for a connected, digitally empowered continent with a skilled workforce ready to participate in the global economy.

But achieving this vision requires investment. The South African Institute of International Affairs estimates Africa needs around $3-billion annually in ICT infrastructure just to close the existing gap.

EMPOWERING AFRICA'S YOUTH THROUGH OUR NEW CHAPTER

At TICON Africa, we believe Africa's youth hold the key not only to the continent's future, but also to addressing the world's emerging labour shortages.

But this promise requires deliberate, coordinated action. This is why we've launched our Youth in ICT Chapter – to equip Africa's young people with the skills, networks and opportunities they need to succeed through partnerships with local professional ICT bodies across the continent.

Here's how our youth initiative is being developed:

1. Industry-aligned digital training

Africa's youth need practical, industry-relevant training. Our Youth in ICT Chapter will deliver this in partnership with local professional ICT bodies, ensuring training is anchored in local contexts.

We plan to facilitate training in digital literacy, productivity tools, software development, web and mobile app design, cybersecurity, network management, cloud computing and emerging technologies like AI, Internet of Things (IoT) and data analytics.

By working with universities, technical colleges, local training providers and industry leaders through professional bodies, we will keep curricula current and aligned to international standards, including the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA), BRICS frameworks, the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) and the British Computer Society (BCS), and relevant to local labour markets.

2. Supporting entrepreneurship and remote work for young people

Africa's youth are highly entrepreneurial but often lack structured support and mentorship. Our initiative will deliver targeted support through local professional bodies, ensuring we reach youth in their own communities.

We aim to facilitate mentorship, business planning training and access to incubators and accelerators via these local associations. By building this ecosystem, we will help young Africans not only find jobs but create them, driving local employment and innovation.

Recognising the shift towards remote work, we will work through these bodies to help youth participate in global digital service markets. This includes securing remote jobs, delivering quality online services and building competitive digital portfolios. Local professional bodies will play a critical role in connecting African talent to global value chains.

3. Building strong networks and creating mentorship opportunities

Success in ICT depends on more than technical skills – it requires strong networks and mentorship. TICON Africa is committed to empowering local professional ICT bodies to build and maintain these networks.

Through them, we will support organising hackathons, bootcamps, webinars and conferences that encourage collaboration, creativity and knowledge sharing. We will also facilitate mentorship between experienced ICT professionals and young learners, providing guidance, industry insights and career support.

Additionally, we are developing a job market platform accessible through professional bodies. This platform will help match ICT job seekers with employers, making it easier for youth to find opportunities while helping businesses source qualified talent.

4. Advocating for policy change

Equipping youth with ICT skills is essential, but it also requires a supportive policy environment. At TICON Africa, we see our role as partnering with local professional bodies to offer advice, guidance and advocacy to governments, regulators and development partners.

Through these local associations, we will promote policies that expand reliable, affordable internet connectivity, especially in rural and underserved regions. We will work with education authorities, via professional bodies, to integrate digital skills training into national curricula from an early age, ensuring future generations are well prepared for the digital economy in a sustainable, locally relevant way.

Through our Compliance Chapter, we are also developing a practical compliance toolkit delivered in partnership with local professional bodies. This toolkit will help policymakers, regulators and organisations strengthen awareness and implementation of critical areas such as data protection, cybersecurity and ICT regulation – building trusted, secure digital environments across Africa.

As the world ages, Africa must rise. Dr Jannie Zaaiman shares TICON Africa's vision for equipping youth through digital skills

WE WILL WORK WITH THE EDUCATION AUTHORITIES TO INTEGRATE SKILLS TRAINING INTO CURRICULA

PHOTOS: TICON AFRICA; LEONARDO AI; MIGUEL Á. PADRIÑÁN, PEXELS; KURENG WORK-X, PEXELS; WERNER PFENNIG, PEXELS

5. Ensuring inclusion and equity

Africa's digital transformation must be inclusive. Too often it is rural communities, women and marginalised groups which are excluded from ICT education and jobs. TICON Africa is committed to changing this, working through local professional bodies to reach these communities effectively.

We are especially committed to supporting women in ICT. Through our Women in TICON Chapter and local professional bodies, we will deliver mentorship, scholarships and masterclasses aimed at closing the gender gap and empowering women to lead in technology.

We also prioritise accessibility for people with disabilities, supporting local bodies to adopt inclusive design principles and provide specialised support. By championing equity and inclusion through professional networks, we aim to ensure all young Africans can participate in and shape the continent's technological future.

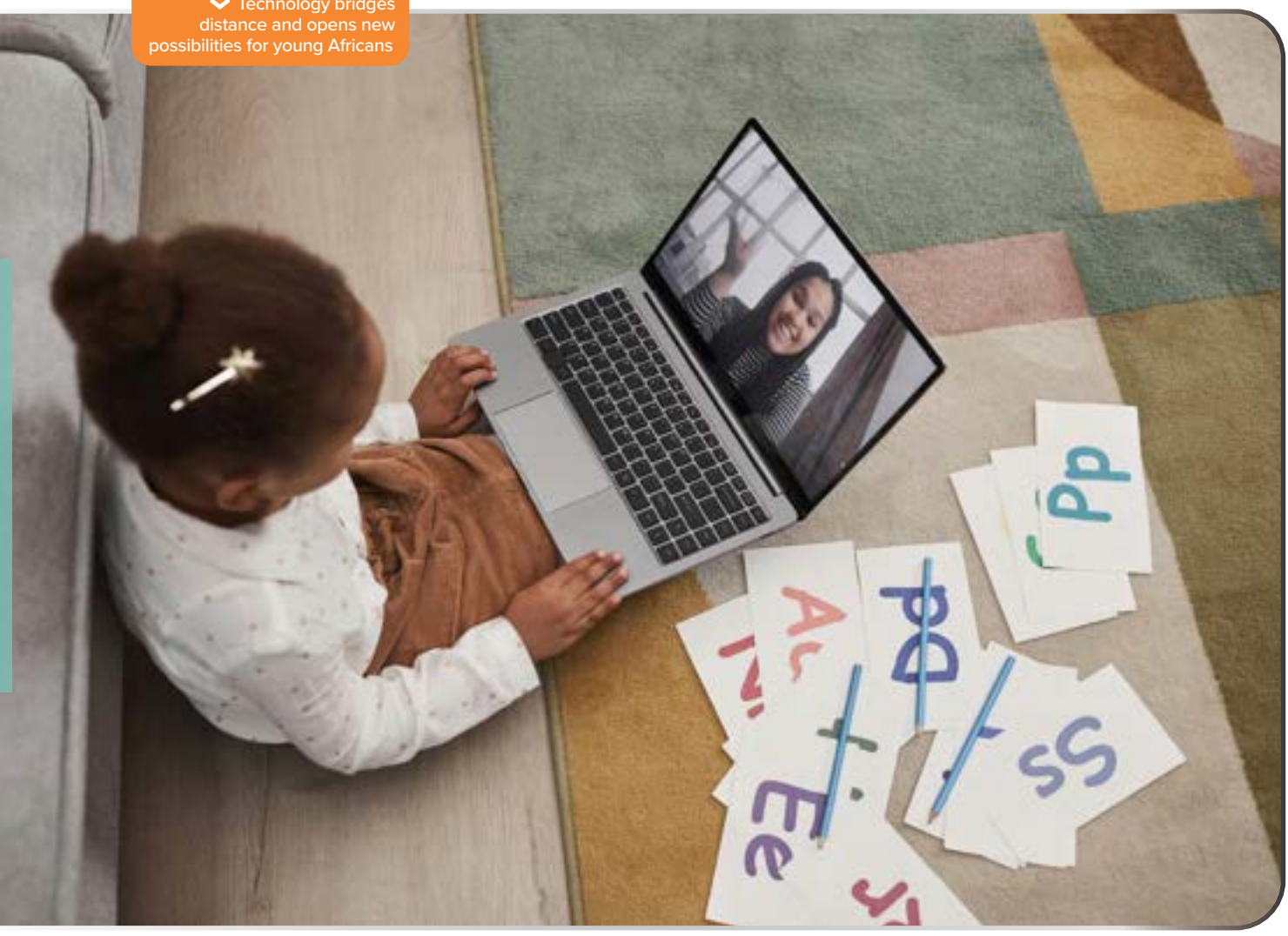
SEIZING AFRICA'S MOMENT

Africa's young people are its greatest asset. Properly trained and supported, they can help solve not only Africa's own challenges, but also fill critical labour gaps in an ageing world. They can power the next wave of technological innovation, entrepreneurship and economic development, benefiting Africa and the entire globe.

At TICON Africa, we stand ready to work with all partners to make this vision a reality. Let's invest in our youth. Let's invest in ICT. Let's invest in Africa's future – and the world's. ●

Dr Jannie Zaaiman is a respected leader in South Africa's academic and ICT sectors, serving as the Secretary General of the South African ICT Association (SAICTA) and Secretary General of the Technology Information Confederation Africa (TICON Africa).

*The writer has provided a list of sources. Due to space constraints, they are not listed here but are available from the Editor.



Technology bridges distance and opens new possibilities for young Africans

BEING FUTURE-READY: I.C.T. CAREER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DIGITAL EDUCATION

How can Africa harness digital tools to equip its youth with the skills, certifications and opportunities needed for the global economy? **Richard Kafui Amanfu** explains.

In an era in which technology is rapidly reshaping the global workforce, Africa stands at a crossroads. With the world's youngest population and a growing appetite for innovation, the continent has a unique opportunity to leapfrog traditional barriers to education and employment.

At the heart of this transformation is digital education – a powerful equaliser that can accelerate career development and provide access to global opportunities. The question is: How can Africa fast-track career development, using digital education as an enabler?

MEETING THE MOMENT

More than 60% of Africa's population is under the age of 25 – a powerful demographic dividend, but also a pressing developmental challenge.

The continent holds immense potential, but millions of young Africans are faced with limited access to quality education, inadequate career guidance, and a disconnect between academic training and the demands of the job market.

Globally, the picture is no less concerning. As of 2024, 251-million children and youth were out of school and thus falling through the education cracks. In sub-Saharan Africa, 87% of 10-year-olds cannot read and understand simple sentences.

Digital inclusion is not a luxury – it is an imperative. More than 1.3-billion school-age children globally lack internet access at home, which prevents them from playing catch-up with their peers. If the gap is not filled, the consequences will be alarming.

Organisations such as the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH) are taking bold

Learners across Africa are using digital education to upskill, reskill and unlock career opportunities

steps to help close these gaps. By introducing digital literacy from as early as age seven, and fostering lifelong learning through structured programmes, IIPGH is helping to shape a future-ready generation.

IIPGH is also taking steps to bridge the gap between educational outcomes and labour market needs. It does this by convening industry-academia forums with stakeholders, ensuring that skills development is both relevant and impactful.

DIGITAL EDUCATION IS MORE THAN A TOOL. IT IS A KEY CATALYST FOR OUR TRANSFORMATION

DIGITAL EDUCATION AS A CAREER ACCELERATOR

Digital education is more than a tool – it is a catalyst for transformation. It can help to reshape Africa's career landscape in several ways.

1. Access to global knowledge

From Accra in Ghana, to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, learners can now access world-class content through global platforms such as Coursera and edX, education software provider Aidecia and e-learning platform eCampus LLC, alongside Ghana-based business advisory firm Innovare Africa, Ghanaian AI-powered mobile app DeafCanTalk, and other local EdTech startups.

Credentials from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Google or IBM are just a click away, and learners are no longer constrained by geography or legacy systems.

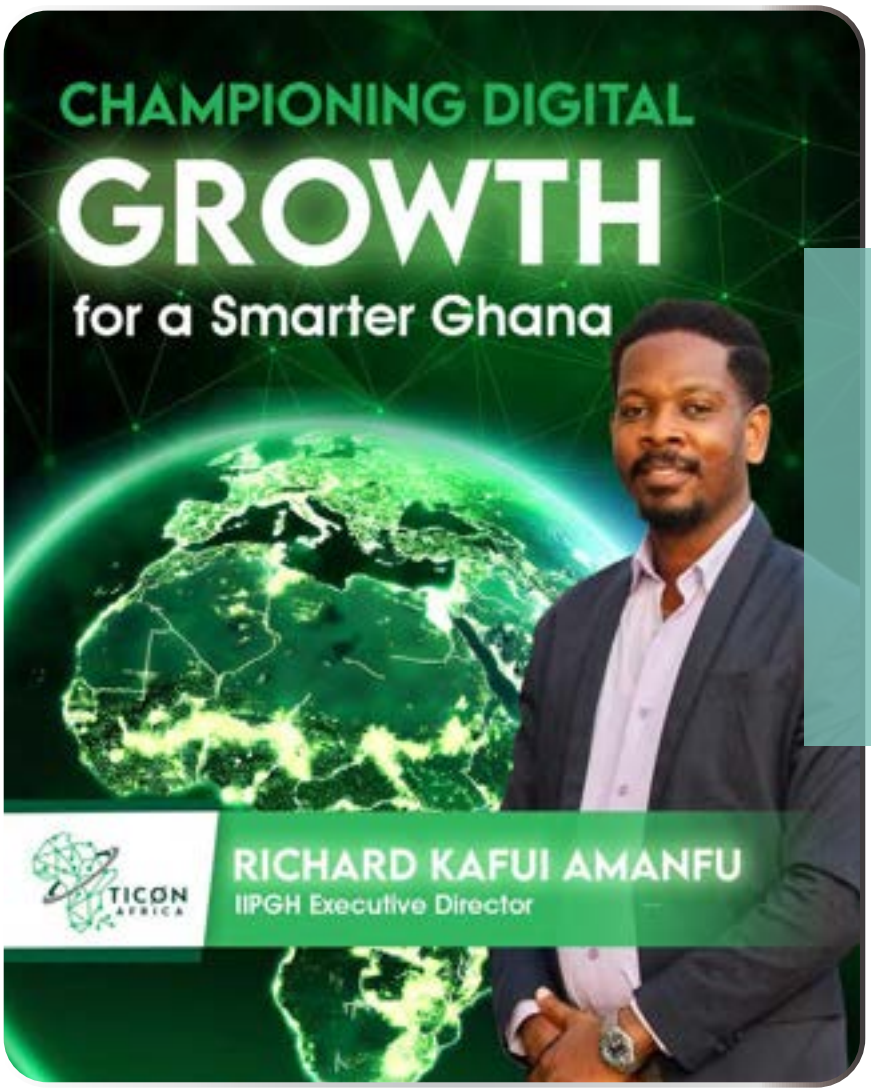
2. Industry-relevant skills

Digital platforms deliver agile, market-responsive training in high-demand fields such as data science, cybersecurity, cloud computing and digital marketing. Unlike traditional curricula, which often lag behind, these platforms update content frequently to match evolving industry needs.

3. The power of certification

In today's digital economy, certifications are critical. They validate skills, enhance credibility and unlock career opportunities.

Unlike traditional degrees, these credentials are quick to obtain, more affordable, and directly aligned with industry needs.



PHOTOS: POPOOLA BOLAJI, PEXELS; KENNETH-CHIAMAKA-EJIOFOR, PEXELS; TICON AFRICA

Why they matter:

- Credentials from recognised institutions – such as Google, Microsoft, PeopleCert, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Cisco – offer credibility and signal competence and professionalism.
- Many companies now favour skills-based hiring, and certified candidates often stand out in competitive job markets.
- International certifications create pathways to remote work and global freelance platforms.
- Stackable and modular learning allow for continuous upskilling, fostering lifelong learning.

These certifications are not just pieces of paper – they are gateways to global opportunities, especially when combined with practical experience and soft skills.

4. Flexible learning for professionals

In a rapidly evolving world, professionals must continually upskill to remain competitive. Online learning platforms offer flexibility, enabling learning to fit into busy schedules. This model enables professionals to adapt and grow without stepping away from work – a strategic advantage in the digital economy.

BRIDGING THE SKILLS CERTIFICATION GAP

Despite growing interests in digital skills training, many learners in Ghana – and across Africa – face a major hurdle, specifically the absence of recognised credentials.

Many young people are actively acquiring digital skills informally, but without standardised, verifiable certifications, employers struggle to assess their true capabilities. This disconnect undermines trust in the talent pipeline and limits access to meaningful employment. The consequences are glaring:

- Employers hesitate to hire uncertified talent.
- African professionals are underpaid compared to their global peers.

❮ From rural to urban areas in Africa, learners are embracing the flexibility of online education

- Remote work and global job platforms remain out of reach.

TRUST THROUGH CERTIFICATION

To fully realise the benefits of digital education, certification and compliance must be embedded at the heart of both national and continental strategies.

These pillars help to build trust and ensure that African talent is globally competitive.

Core enablers include:

- **Standardisation:** Recognised certifications establish a consistent benchmark for skills, making it easier for employers to assess and compare talent across regions and sectors.
- **Global recognition:** Credentials from leading institutions such as Cisco, PeopleCert, AWS and CompTIA empower African professionals to compete on the global stage, opening doors to international job markets and remote work opportunities.
- **Data protection and ethics:** Adherence to data privacy regulations, such as Ghana's Data Protection Act, 2012 and the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), ensures that digital learning environments are secure, ethical and trustworthy for all users.
- **Cross-border mobility:** Alignment with frameworks like the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) helps African professionals gain recognition across borders and with the BRICS+ nations. This supports the African Union's vision for inclusive growth, youth employability, and sustainable development.

LEARNING TO EARNING

One of the central themes of the TICON Africa Conference 2025 is that digital education must lead to economic opportunity. Learning is not just about acquiring knowledge for its own sake – it must translate into job creation, income generation and entrepreneurship.

Key focus areas include:

- **Public-private partnerships:** Collaborative models will see governments, tech companies and nonprofit organisations co-investing in digital learning ecosystems, expanding access and impact.
- **Real-life success stories:** Profiles of inspiring young Africans who have used digital platforms to become software developers, data analysts, digital marketers and tech entrepreneurs, proving that talent can thrive anywhere given the right tools.
- **Policy and credential frameworks:** Studies of how forward-thinking policies and standardised digital credentials can bridge the trust gap between learners and employers, and facilitate a cross-border recognition of skills.

With the global EdTech market projected to reach $404-billion by 2025, according to HolonIQ, Africa's active participation is not just beneficial, it is strategic.

By aligning learning with earning, the continent can unlock a new era of inclusive growth, innovation and global competitiveness.

LOOKING BEYOND THE TICON AFRICA CONFERENCE 2025

The TICON Africa Conference 2025 marks a turning point – and the momentum must continue. Delegates leave with new tools, insights and networks – all essential for driving digital transformation at scale.

Conference highlights include:

- Workshops on building compliant, inclusive digital learning ecosystems.
- EdTech showcases from African innovators, digital leaders and education pioneers who are redefining learning and work in Africa.
- Networking sessions connecting learners, mentors, employers, investors, and policymakers, all committed to unlocking Africa's digital potential.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

Digital education is clearly a cornerstone of Africa's development. It bridges the gap between potential and prosperity, talent and opportunity. The TICON Africa Conference 2025 highlights the fact that Africa's workforce is already being built – and it must be secured on a foundation of quality, trust and globally recognised certification.

Let us commit to shaping a future where every African learner has the tools, the credentials and the confidence to thrive – anywhere in the world. ●

Richard Kafui Amanfu is the Executive Director of the Institute of ICT Professionals Ghana (IIPGH). He works at the intersection of digital education, policy and innovation to promote ICT development and youth employability across the continent.

ICTAM IS DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN MALAWI AND BEYOND

The ICT Association of Malawi outlines its current activities, future plans and the contributions that are helping to shape the local digital landscape.

ICTAM interns working at leading tech firms under the UNDP-supported programme

PHOTOS: ICTAM; IMM MALAWI

The ICT Association of Malawi (ICTAM) is the national professional body representing individuals and institutions in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector. Established in 2006, ICTAM serves as the unified voice of Malawi's ICT community and is committed to advancing innovation, digital skills, policy reform and professional excellence.

ICTAM's core objectives include promoting professionalism and ethical standards in the industry, advocating for inclusive digital policies, and creating platforms for skills development, mentorship and networking. The association also supports local tech entrepreneurship and champions digital transformation initiatives aligned with Malawi's national development goals.

Membership is open to students enrolled in ICT-related programmes, individual professionals and corporate institutions active in the tech space.

The association's key activities include the Annual ICT Expo & Innovation Awards, hands-on certification workshops in areas like data analytics and cybersecurity, internship and mentorship placements, startup incubation, policy advocacy, Women in ICT programmes, and publishing thought leadership content to drive the national digital agenda.

STRENGTHENING THE DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM

Through advocacy, networking and capacity-building initiatives, ICTAM continues to shape Malawi's national digital agenda. The following are notable focus areas.

The Women in ICT conference is helping to empower the next generation of women in tech

Digital skills development

ICTAM is addressing the digital divide by investing in capacity building through training and certifications for emerging professionals.

With support from our partners, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ICTAM has placed 60 students from public universities in internship and mentorship programmes across 14 organisations. These students have also been enrolled in professional certifications under the *Digital Empowerment for All* programme, a flagship digital initiative backed by UNDP, amounting to US$68,000 in 2025.

ICTAM President, Clarence Gama, presenting a prize during the 2024 Innovation Jam

Innovation Awards

Since 2016, ICTAM has hosted annual Innovation Awards to celebrate homegrown solutions. In partnership with the National Bank of Malawi, the association runs the *Innovation Jam and Incubation Program* – a long-term support programme with an investment of $172,000. So far, 32 innovations have been incubated and transformed into fully-fledged businesses making an impact in Malawi.

Women in ICT

The participation of women in ICT is essential to building an inclusive digital future. ICTAM proudly counts over 180 active women members and is dedicated to promoting gender equity in the technology space.

Key initiatives include the annual Women in ICT Awards presented during the flagship ICT Expo and Corporate Awards, recognising outstanding women-led ICT firms.

The annual Women in ICT Conference provides a platform for female tech professionals to connect, share experiences and inspire one another. Additionally, mentorship programmes targeting young girls in schools are designed to ignite interest in ICT careers and build a future pipeline of women leaders in technology.

Policy engagement

ICTAM has played a critical role in shaping Malawi's digital landscape through its contributions to key national policies and regulatory frameworks. These include the National ICT Policy, the Data Protection Act 2024, the Cybersecurity and Electronic Transactions Act, and the Malawi Digital Economy Strategy.

Through ongoing collaboration with government ministries and regulatory bodies, ICTAM continues to advocate for a secure, inclusive and future-ready digital environment. ●

ICTAM is an active participant in Malawian society. In early 2025, it signed an MoU with the Institute of Marketing in Malawi to collaborate on training, workshops and skills development

ICTAM'S IMPACT IN MALAWI: A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

2,000+ ICT professionals represented.

35+ innovations awarded since 2016.

40% growth in Women in ICT participation (2022–2024).

500+ participants trained in data analytics, cybersecurity and digital leadership.

20+ partnerships with government, academia, and international development agencies.

ICTAM
ICT ASSOCIATION OF MALAWI

UNDP

Irish Aid
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

National Bank of Malawi plc

INCLUSIVE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR MALAWI (IDT4M)

- Internship and Certifications program
- Community Digital Advocates
- Digital Ambassadors
- Innovation and Incubation

Advancing digital transformation through gender equality and inclusion for all

Email: secretariat@ictam.org.mw
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Filimoni House, City Centre, P.O. Box 31076, Lilongwe 3, Malawi.

BOTSWANA RELAUNCH BRINGS I.C.T. COMMUNITY INTO A NEW ERA

The Botswana Information Technology Society (BITS) has new leadership and a refreshed logo, signalling a new era of ICT excellence

Botswana's technology professionals are set to regain influence in shaping the country's digital future following the revival of the Botswana Information Technology Society.

The Botswana Information Technology Society (BITS), originally established in the 1990s, has completed a full rebrand, launching a new logo and announcing its flagship event, the National ICT Summit and Awards, set for 14-15 November 2025.

Speaking at the relaunch event, newly elected President Tshepo Bathai outlined an ambitious vision for the re-energised organisation.

AN I.C.T. COMMUNITY READY TO TAKE ON CHALLENGES AND SHAPE THE FUTURE

"The revival of BITS is not just symbolic – it's a necessity," said Bathai. "Our aim is to build a dynamic and competent ICT community ready for the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution."

TECHNOLOGY CAN BE A NATIONAL CATALYST

Bathai emphasises that ICT has been positioned as a core enabler of Vision 2036, Botswana's long-term development plan. "The digital economy is not a distant horizon; it is our vibrant present opportunity, reshaping industries, empowering communities and redefining what is possible," he explained.

Bathai stressed that BITS is inclusive by design. "This is not an elite club," he noted. "Whether you're experienced or just starting out, BITS is your platform."

Assistant Minister of Communications and Innovation, Shawn Ntlhaile, echoed this sentiment at the relaunch: "In the 21st century, prosperity is measured not just by natural resources, but by how nations leverage technology to unlock human potential," he said.

Ntlhaile emphasised that ICT is revolutionising how services are delivered across sectors such as agriculture, education, health and governance, and how citizens participate in national development. He noted that Botswana's investments in broadband infrastructure, e-government platforms, and the Botswana National Digital Identity System are already laying the groundwork for a robust digital economy.

According to Ntlhaile, Botswana's inclusive digital economy is being driven via the SmartBots Strategy, the Digital Transformation Strategy, and the recently launched Innovation Fund.

The Assistant Minister placed strong emphasis on youth and women as central agents of Botswana's digital transformation. Acknowledging their potential as innovators, entrepreneurs, and digital content creators, Ntlhaile called for deliberate action to equip them with digital skills, mentorship and access to opportunities.

"Our greatest national asset is not our minerals. It is our people, especially our youth and women. They are the heart of our digital future," he stated.

DRIVE NATIONAL DIALOGUE

The upcoming National ICT Summit and Awards will explore the role of innovation in economic growth, focusing on the themes of innovation, inclusion and impact. The summit aims to spark dialogue, foster partnerships and shape actionable strategies for national development.

The awards will honour outstanding achievements across 18 categories, including Start-up of the Year, Youth in ICT, Women in ICT, Cybersecurity Excellence, ICT Educator of the Year, and the prestigious President or Minister's Award. ●

PHOTO: BITS

ANALYSING EMERGING CYBERSECURITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN AFRICA

Cyberattacks are increasingly sophisticated, with 28% of African organisations experiencing breaches despite having robust security measures in place. By **Kudakwashe Charandura**.

Cybercrime continues to escalate in Africa, with losses now exceeding US$4-billion annually – a significant increase from previous years.

The continent's digital growth has made it a prime target, particularly in Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya. In 2023, cyberattacks grew more sophisticated, with 28% of African organisations experiencing breaches despite having robust cybersecurity measures in place.

There are many reasons for this, not least the cybersecurity skills gap that exists on the continent at present. Indeed, this gap remains a critical issue.

Although 55% of African firms planned to recruit new cybersecurity experts according to an industry study, the continent still faces a significant shortage. This gap has made it difficult for many organisations to maintain fully operational Security Operations Centres (SOCs), leaving them vulnerable to increasingly complex cyber threats.

REGULATORY CHALLENGES

Another key factor is that Africa's regulatory landscape remains uneven, with countries like South Africa and Kenya leading in modern cybersecurity legislation, while others lag behind. This inconsistency hinders cross-border efforts to combat cybercrime, particularly in regions where cybercriminals operate across multiple jurisdictions.

For example, the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) Cyber Directive and its Joint Standard with the country's Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) require that financial institutions maintain rigorous cybersecurity policies and procedures.

Other countries, such as Nigeria, have adopted their own cyber regulations – like the CBN Cybersecurity Framework – to address the rapidly increasing cybercrime rates.

In addition, the rise of mobile internet usage, with 76% of Africans accessing the internet via mobile devices, has also led to an increase in mobile-specific cyber

threats. East Africa, in particular, has seen a significant rise in mobile money fraud, such as mobile malware and SIM swap fraud.

INFRASTRUCTURE AT RISK

Critical infrastructure across Africa remains at risk from cyberattacks, especially with the growing use of IoT devices. In 2024, ransomware and other cyber threats increasingly targeted essential services like energy and telecommunications, leading to significant concerns about the continent's cyber resilience.

Despite these challenges the future outlook is promising. Africa's investment in cybersecurity is growing, with a 35% increase in spending in 2023.

Cyber insurance is also emerging as a crucial tool for mitigating financial risks associated with cyber incidents. However, addressing the skills gap and harmonising regulatory frameworks remain top priorities for the continent to secure its digital future.

IN CONCLUSION

Africa's digital transformation is both a challenge and an opportunity. By addressing cybersecurity challenges head-on, the continent can secure its digital infrastructure and drive sustainable economic growth in the years to come. ●

Kudakwashe Charandura, Director/ Head of Cybersecurity at SNG Grant Thornton, is a well-recognised authority on cybersecurity and resilience in Africa. With deep technical skills, strategic advisory abilities, and a strong public profile, he stands at the forefront of empowering organisations to protect their digital assets against evolving threats.

*Readers of our Digital Edition can access the original article here.

*The writer has provided a list of sources. Due to space constraints, they are not listed here but are available from the Editor.

PHOTOS: ADOBESTOCK; TICON AFRICA

ANALYSE DES NOUVEAUX ENJEUX ET OPPORTUNITÉS SUR LA CYBERSÉCURITÉ EN AFRIQUE

Les cyberattaques sont de plus en plus sophistiquées, et 28 % des organisations africaines sont victimes de violations malgré la mise en place de mesures de sécurité solides. Par **Kudakwashe Charandura**.

La cybercriminalité continue de se développer en Afrique, avec des pertes dépassant dorénavant les 4 milliards de dollars par an, soit une augmentation importante par rapport aux années précédentes.

La croissance numérique du continent en a fait une cible de choix, spécialement au Nigeria, en Afrique du Sud et au Kenya. En 2023, les cyberattaques sont devenues plus sophistiquées ; 28 % des organisations africaines ont subi des violations malgré la mise en place de mesures de cybersécurité robustes.

Plusieurs raisons expliquent cette situation, notamment le manque de compétences en matière de cybersécurité qui existe actuellement sur le continent. En effet, cet écart demeure un problème critique.

Bien que 55 % des entreprises africaines prévoient de recruter de nouveaux experts en cybersécurité, selon une étude sectorielle, le continent est toujours confronté à une pénurie capitale. IDu fait de cette lacune, de nombreuses organisations ont du mal à maintenir des centres d'opérations de sécurité (SOC) totalement opérationnels, les rendant ainsi vulnérables à des cybermenaces de plus en plus complexes.

DÉFIS RÉGLEMENTAIRES

Par ailleurs, le paysage réglementaire de l'Afrique reste inégal ; des pays comme l'Afrique du Sud et le Kenya sont à la pointe de la législation moderne en matière de cybersécurité, par contre d'autres sont à la traine. Cette différence entrave les efforts transfrontaliers déployés pour lutter contre la cybercriminalité, particulièrement dans les régions où les cybercriminels opèrent dans plusieurs juridictions.

Par exemple, la directive de la Banque de réserve sud-africaine (SARB) sur la cybersécurité et sa norme commune avec l'Autorité de conduite du secteur financier (FSCA) du pays exigent que les institutions financières maintiennent des politiques et des procédures strictes en matière de cybersécurité.

D'autres pays, comme le Nigeria, ont adopté leurs propres réglementations en matière de cybercriminalité, comme le cadre de cybersécurité de la CBN, pour répondre à la montée en flèche de la cybercriminalité.

En outre, l'augmentation de l'utilisation de l'internet mobile, avec 76 % des

Africains accédant à l'internet via des appareils mobiles, a également entraîné une augmentation des cybermenaces spécifiques à la téléphonie mobile. L'Afrique de l'Est, en lui tout seul, a connu une augmentation importante des fraudes liées à l'argent mobile, telles que les logiciels malveillants mobiles et les fraudes par échange de carte SIM.

INFRASTRUCTURES EN DANGER

Les infrastructures critiques en Afrique restent exposées aux cyberattaques, spécialement avec l'utilisation croissante des appareils IoT. En 2024, les ransomwares et autres cybermenaces ont de plus en plus ciblé des services importants comme l'énergie et la télécommunication, suscitant de vives inquiétudes quant à la cyberrésilience du continent.

Malgré ces défis, les prévisions pour l'avenir sont prometteuses. Les investissements de l'Afrique dans la cybersécurité sont à la hausse, avec une augmentation de 35 % des dépenses en 2023.

La cyberassurance apparaît aussi comme un outil important pour atténuer les risques financiers associés aux cyberincidents. Cependant, combler le déficit de compétences et harmoniser les cadres réglementaires restent des priorités absolues pour que le continent puisse assurer son avenir numérique.

EN CONCLUSION

La transformation numérique de l'Afrique est à la fois un défi et une opportunité. En s'attaquant de front aux défis de la cybersécurité, le continent peut sécuriser son infrastructure numérique et stimuler une croissance économique durable dans les années à venir. ●

Kudakwashe Charandura, directeur/responsable de la cybersécurité chez SNG Grant Thornton, est une autorité reconnue en matière de cybersécurité et de résilience en Afrique. Doté de compétences techniques approfondies, de capacités de conseil stratégique et à sa notoriété, il est en première ligne pour permettre aux organisations de protéger leurs actifs numériques contre les menaces en constante évolution.

*Les lecteurs de notre édition numérique peuvent accéder à l'article original en anglais ici. Veuillez noter que cette traduction en français a été fournie par TICON Afrique et non par Grant Thornton
*L'auteur a fourni une liste de sources. En raison de contraintes d'espace, ils ne sont pas répertoriés ici mais sont disponibles auprès de l'éditeur.

PHOTOS: ADOBESTOCK; TICON AFRICA

Rwanda's President Paul Kagame delivered an opening address at the Global AI Summit on Africa

A conversation on the topic 'Data: A Strategic Imperative for Adoption, Equity and Sovereignty'

DATA GOVERNANCE A CRITICAL THEME AT A.I. SUMMIT IN RWANDA

The recent Global AI Summit on Africa focused on the future of AI on the continent – but also identified the need for regulatory innovation. By **Pria Chetty**.

Policymakers, innovators, researchers and civil society leaders from 52 African countries gathered in Kigali, Rwanda in April 2025 for the inaugural *Global AI Summit on Africa*.

This signature event was convened by the Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Ministry of ICT & Innovation in Rwanda, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.

The event marked the signing of the Africa Declaration on Artificial Intelligence, removing some of the barriers to widespread use of AI by, and for, the citizens of African countries.

The discussions highlighted the urgent need for new, context-appropriate models of data governance to ensure that AI innovation is responsible, equitable and impactful. Only once these are in place can innovation deliver on the promise of economic and social dividends for the continent.

At the heart of the data governance challenges were the conditions for data access and use, referred to as so-called 'legitimate data access'. Legitimate data access and use respects the limits of sovereign data rights. Data access and use pursue economic or social value for the data subject, or offer beneficial participation in digital and AI-enabled opportunities.

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS

We mainly need data governance frameworks to assure us of the legitimacy we seek. Data governance should bring predictability to the conditions for data access and support conformance with legal and best practice standards. Add to this embedded rules that facilitate data access and use that are safe, ethical and inclusive.

INTEROPERABILITY

We need interoperability frameworks – both technical and institutional – to ensure data can be accessed, shared, and used meaningfully for economic and social benefit across sectors.

POSITIVE DATA OUTCOMES

Why do we need to enable engagement with data subjects? Legitimate data access alone does not equate to positive data outcomes. We need citizens to have agency over their data to maintain the quality of the data and solve challenges related to the currency, accuracy and trustworthiness of data. In this sense, a public-private-people partnership should

A panel discussion on the topic 'AI for All: African Youth Voices Shaping the Future' explored how young people can shape the continent's AI future

be advocated in data governance, where citizens participate and have increasing levels of agency over the use of their data.

REGULATORY INNOVATIONS

The following are potential actions that will lead to improved outcomes.

1. Relationality of data principles

Data protection principles of accountability, transparency and data participation – currently conceived as distinct principles – need to have relational qualities. Access to data should be premised on transparency regarding its use, exchange and reuse to enable meaningful data participation. This relationality may be developed into techno-legal solutions where transparency, participation, and the evaluation and reporting of accountability co-exist.

2. Data regulators at a point of existential reflection

For the individual who demands access to the data economy, what is the real mandate of the data regulator (data protection authorities), whose reason for existence is grounded in meaningful rights of privacy and access to information? Data regulators must bring clarity and cohesion to their mandates for their continued relevance and utility. Let's be honest – their work is currently at a distance from the data activity we see on the ground.

> THE DATA GOVERNANCE MODEL MUST BE SUBJECT TO DYNAMIC EVALUATION

3. Data discovery should be a core principle in data governance, making it easier to find, access, and use relevant datasets

Where AI is ready to problem-solve access to healthcare, data – in the form of diagnostic data and data that evidences workable solutions – improves the AI proposition, learning and innovation loops. Similarly, understanding dynamic data access and use, alongside dynamic attributes of data, is key to adaptable data governance for meaningful data access and use. How do we ensure that the data governance model is subject to dynamic evaluation and innovation?

4. Fully utilise licences and contracts

We'll need a stronger utility from licences and contracts that govern data exchange. Existing licences and contracts need a makeover – designed with current and future use cases in mind – as a unique opportunity to build and embed the understanding and impact of data exchanges. There are new templates for African data exchange that deliver data-driven impact just waiting to be conceived.

While the *Global AI Summit on Africa* sparked important dialogue, some of the conversations felt abstract, with actionable outcomes remaining just out of reach. Still, I left with a few clear compass points to guide us forward: a willingness to engage deeply, a commitment to collaboration, and a shared responsibility to navigate the complex road from where we are to where we aspire to be, building meaningful and just AI for Africa. ●

Pria Chetty is Executive Director at African digital policy think tank, Research ICT Africa (RIA).

ZAMBIA'S I.C.T. STRATEGY A MODEL FOR AFRICA'S DIGITAL FUTURE – STUDY

A growing focus on ICT skills will equip students for the jobs of tomorrow

Zambia is quietly becoming a powerhouse in tech education, laying the groundwork for a digitally skilled workforce that could shape Africa's future.

Zambia's technology sector is growing, and so is its pool of future digital professionals. A recent study by Open Window University and the ICT Association of Zambia (ICTAZ) shows that the country has a thriving ICT education ecosystem, with opportunities emerging for innovation, specialisation and stronger collaboration between the industry and academia.

Zambia's universities are laying a solid foundation for ICT professionals, increasingly ensuring alignment with future industry needs, expanding emerging technology programmes, and modernising delivery methods.

GOOD FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

The study found that while Zambian universities offer solid theory-based education, some core subjects need more focus across the 19 institutions offering tech degrees. Industry experts say graduates have good foundational skills in areas like networking, programming, software engineering, and systems and database management.

These skills are vital as Zambia works toward the goals of its Eighth National Development Plan (8NDP), including digital transformation, industrial diversification and technological innovation.

GAINING MOMENTUM IN NEW TECH FIELDS

One of the study's most promising findings is the appetite for more specialised, high-demand fields among universities, students and industry professionals. These include artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, data science and software development.

> THERE IS MOMENTUM TO GROW CURRICULUM OFFERINGS IN NEW AND CUTTING-EDGE FIELDS

"There is visible momentum to expand curriculum offerings in these cutting-edge fields, and this presents an exciting opportunity for Zambia to build regional leadership in emerging tech skills," observed Chellah Silavwe, Chief Executive Officer of ICTAZ.

With global demand for digital talent expected to exceed supply by over 80-million jobs, Zambia can develop local talent to serve not just national needs, but regional and international markets.

MORE FLEXIBLE AND INCLUSIVE MODEL

The study also highlighted the potential for online and blended learning. While most programmes are still delivered face-to-face, there's political support for and investment in digital infrastructure to make education even more inclusive.

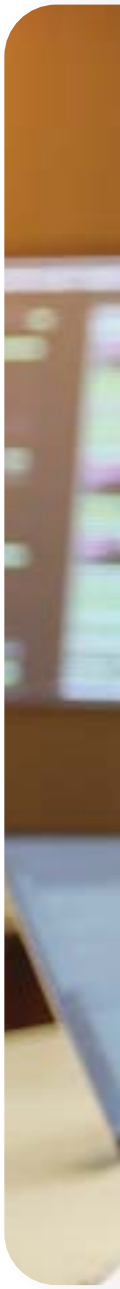
This will ensure that professionals across Zambia – whether in Lusaka, Kitwe or rural areas – can access high-quality, globally competitive ICT education.

The study's respondents affirmed the strong academic leadership in universities and highly qualified faculty, while encouraging further investments in distance learning and digital skills labs.

THERE IS A GROWING PARTNERSHIP CULTURE

One key finding is the recognition of growing collaboration between universities and employers. Many companies are already engaging with universities through internships, guest lectures and joint projects – a trend seen as critical to help students become job-ready.

The study encourages deeper, sustained partnerships focused on matching skills to industry needs, applied research, and real-world experience, which will further elevate Zambia's ICT talent competitiveness.



ZAMBIA'S I.C.T. SECTOR IS READY TO TAKE THE LEAD

As Africa's digital economy is set to exceed US$300-billion, Zambia is in a good position to produce skilled ICT professionals for local, regional and global roles.

"This study affirms that Zambia's ICT education sector is not only active and growing, but is uniquely positioned to scale rapidly with the right investments and partnerships," said Dr Clement Sinyangwe, President of ICTAZ.

Government, universities and companies are already working on the next phase of transformation, modernising curricula, improving access, and preparing students for future jobs. The building blocks are in place and Zambia is ready to take bold steps to further develop its ICT education ecosystem.

RESEARCHING AND REIMAGINING THE FUTURE

The findings of the study likely reflect broader trends across Africa, where many countries face similar opportunities and challenges to align higher education with the demands of a rapidly evolving digital economy. From the need for emerging tech specialisations, to the call for flexible learning models and stronger industry-academic ties, this is a story of growth, transformation and ambition.

ICTAZ calls on Africans to undertake regular, structured research into their own ICT education ecosystems. Such efforts are not merely academic exercises; they are essential acts of preparation, policy formulation and progress.

Through ICTAZ, Zambia is committed to conducting periodic studies to inform national and regional strategies. But we know that transformation is not a solo journey – it must be continental.

Let this be an invitation and an inspiration for Africa to move collectively and decisively toward a digitally skilled, innovation-driven future. The time to research, reflect on and reimagine Africa's ICT education is now. ●

***Article supplied by Open Window University and ICT Association of Zambia.**

PHOTOS: MICROSOFT COPILOT; ADOBESTOCK

NEW REPORT SHOWCASES KENYA'S ONGOING DIGITAL BOOM

Record mobile subscriptions and surging smartphone adoption show that Kenya's digital transformation is accelerating, bringing fresh opportunities.

Mobile money services have transformed everyday life in Kenya

Kenya's information and communications technology (ICT) sector has grown rapidly over the past two years – and this is bringing notable gains for the population.

The latest Sector Statistics Report released by the Communications Authority of Kenya, which covers the period January to March 2025 – the third quarter of the 2024/2025 financial year – indicates that mobile (SIM) subscriptions increased by 6.7% to reach a record 76.2-million, which takes the mobile penetration rate to over 145%.

The report attributes this growth to customer win-back campaigns run by operators during the period – however, it's worth noting that many Kenyans own multiple SIM cards and may switch between networks to keep costs down and ensure coverage in different regions of the country.

Mobile data subscriptions increased to 57.2-million – a 1.9% increase – and mobile broadband subscriptions went up by 2.4% to reach 44.4-million. The growing demand for faster internet speeds has been a key driver for the increased uptake of 4G and 5G mobile services.

GOVERNMENT REPORT EMPHASISES THE GAINS IN KENYA'S I.CT. SECTOR OVER PAST TWO YEARS

Kenyans are increasing adopting smartphones, with 42.3-million reported (a 2.1% increase from the previous quarter. By contrast, feature phones stood at 32.6-million (a 6.5% increase, nevertheless). This suggests that Kenya's mobile market is expanding across all demographics, with entry-level devices assisting users to become digitally literate, even if not quite financially ready to buy smartphones.

Overall mobile phone penetration stood at 143%, with smartphones and feature phones standing at 80.8% and 62.2% respectively.

Domestic voice traffic saw steady growth, with on-net voice minutes (calls within the same network) rising by 5.4% to 24.36-billion minutes, and off-net calls (across networks) up by around 5%. The preference for on-net calling reflects consumer behaviour patterns where users strategically choose networks based on the preferences of their social and business contacts, many of whom like to minimise the cost of calls.

On-net SMS traffic grew by 2.8%, although off-net SMS volumes declined by 7.7%, which no doubt reflects changing communication habits – users are shifting towards internet-based messaging platforms. This is ushering in a shift in communication habits – traditional SMS is being largely replaced by WhatsApp, Telegram, and other data-based messaging services.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IS GROWING

What's clear is that Kenyans are embracing more sophisticated devices and digital consumption is changing, with users streaming more video content, participating in online education, and conducting business through digital platforms. Students in remote areas can access educational content via mobile platforms and even participate in virtual learning.

The smartphone adoption trend has significant implications for businesses across sectors. Companies are increasingly developing mobile-first strategies, recognising that most of their customers now access services via smartphone.

This has led to a proliferation of mobile applications for banking, shopping, entertainment and professional services.

In addition, technology is driving greater financial inclusion in the country, with mobile money subscriptions on the rise. During the period under discussion, subscriptions grew by 7.3% to 45.4-million, translating to a penetration rate of 86.6% during the quarter. Meanwhile, registered mobile money agents grew by 5.5% to 416,994.

These agents provide access to cash-in and cash-out transactions in areas where traditional banking infrastructure is limited – but Kenyans are also using mobile money platforms to save, borrow, and insure what they have, creating an increasingly financially sophisticated market. This is true even for lower-income Kenyans in remote regions of the country.

Rural entrepreneurs can reach customers in other localities, thanks to the integration of mobile wallets with digital marketplaces.

The report also indicates that machine-to-machine (M2M) subscriptions – vital for the Internet of Things (IoT) and smart devices – rose by 3.5% to almost 2-million. This means a more connected Kenya: improved infrastructure, and innovations that assist with everyday tasks – such as monitoring devices that help farmers optimise their crop yields.

Mobile connectivity has further helped rural farmers to access markets, expand their services, and use weather forecasts to de-risk their business, the report says.

Kenya is becoming a regional business and tourism hub, with international incoming mobile voice traffic increasing by 14.4% (outgoing calls abroad also rose, by 1.4%). However, international SMS traffic declined, since Kenyans are opting for app-based messaging.

In-bound roaming data volumes increased by 10.6%, indicating a resurgence of travel and tourism in the country – international visitors are relying on mobile data services during their stays.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION CREATES OPPORTUNITIES

Although the expansion of digital services is undoubtedly good news for Kenyans, the Sector Statistics Report draws attention to cyber risks. During the first quarter of 2025, the number of cyber threats detected by the National Kenya Computer Incident Response Team (KE-CIRT) increased by 201.7% to 2.5-billion.

The number of cyber threat advisories issued during the same period increased by 14.2% to 13.2-million.

Kenya's digital transformation brings challenges – but there are also opportunities. While more citizens and businesses are migrating online, there is an opportunity to invest in cybersecurity infrastructure and education, which will increase the security of Kenyans going online every day to access services.

Kenyan businesses are also thriving online, with '*dot.ke*' domains currently standing at 109,251. The growth in local domain registration shows that Kenyans want a localised digital identity – a means to promote local businesses to their fellow citizens.

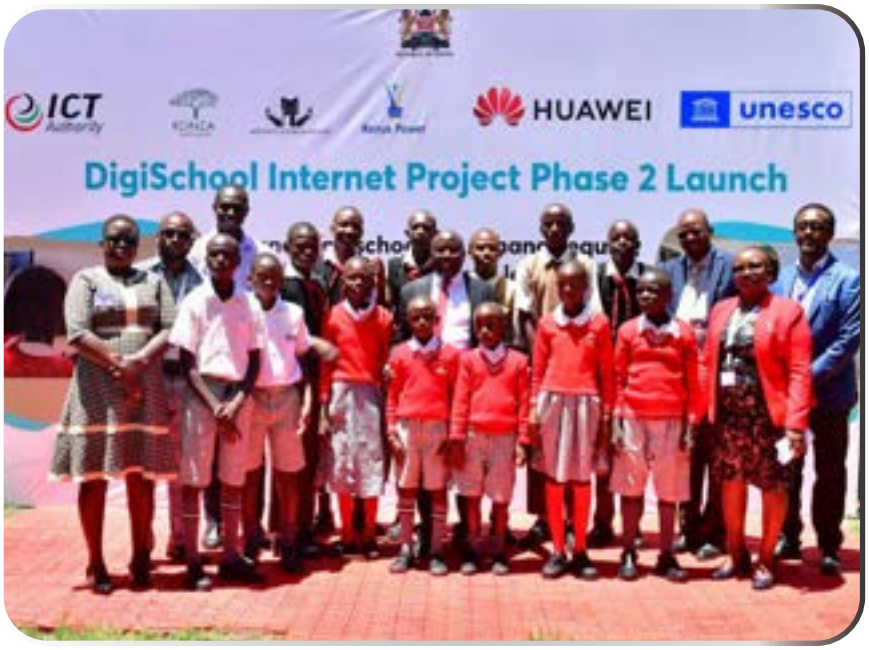
MAINTAINING TRUST IS KEY

The growth of Kenya's ICT sector is helping to position the country as a leader in digital transformation – in fact, the country is fast becoming a truly digitally integrated economy. Mobile services are at the heart of financial transactions, business operations, and social interactions. This creates opportunities for fintech companies, e-commerce platforms, digital service providers and content creators.

The high mobile penetration rates and growing smartphone adoption present opportunities to reach customers through mobile-first strategies. Companies that invest in mobile-optimised services, applications and payment systems are likely to benefit from Kenya's continued digital growth.

The challenge will be ensuring that this digital transformation is inclusive, secure and sustainable. As cybersecurity threats increase alongside digital adoption, investments in security infrastructure and user education will be crucial for maintaining trust in digital systems. ●

Aligned with the government's Digital Superhighway Agenda and the commitment to connect all Kenyan schools to the Internet, the DigiSchool project is a partnership between Kenya's Ministry of Education, Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy, and other stakeholders



PHOTOS: HUAWEI; THE ADVOCACY PROJECT VIA FLICKR

ZAMBIAN I.C.T. COMMUNITY STEPS OUT TO CROWN ITS TECH ROYALTY

The 2024 ICTAZ ICT Awards celebrated innovators and standout performers at a glamorous gala awards event themed '*Bytes, Bow Ties and Ball Gowns*'.

It was a celebration of the brilliant minds driving Zambia's information technology sector – a recognition of a transformative year for the industry.

In 2024, the ICT sector recorded its strongest performance yet, emerging as the top contributor to national economic growth. The sector led all industries with the highest GDP contribution at 1.8% and recorded the fastest growth rate at an impressive 17.4%. These milestones underscore how Zambia's tech sector has rapidly matured, positioning itself as a prime destination for investment, innovation and strategic partnerships.

The celebration of a milestone year culminated in a glamorous gala awards event hosted by the ICT Association of Zambia (ICTAZ), bringing together over 400 professionals, media personalities, government officials and industry players under the vibrant theme of '*Bytes, Bow Ties and Ball Gowns*'.

Too often, tech professionals – the individuals driving business success and powering economic transformation through innovation – remain unsung heroes. This premier ICT event sought to change that narrative by shining a well-deserved spotlight on the outstanding individuals and leaders who have kept local innovation at the forefront of Zambia's digital transformation journey.

More than 25 awards were presented, recognising both individuals and organisations that have developed innovative solutions leveraging diverse technologies – including emerging fields such as big data, artificial intelligence, blockchain and data science. The awards also honoured exemplary leadership and significant contributions to the growth and advancement of the ICT sector.

The night offered more than just top-tier entertainment and high-level networking; it was a celebration of the remarkable progress within the ICT sector. For one evening, tech professionals traded their usual casual attire for tuxedos, bow ties and ball gowns, showcasing the elegance of the industry at the prestigious InterContinental Hotel in Lusaka.

Among the dignitaries recognised was Zambia's Minister of Technology and Science, Honourable Felix Mutati MP, for his exceptional role in positioning Zambia as a digital transformation champion.

Among the many celebrated categories – including Outstanding ICT Professional of the Year, Tech Business Leader, Cyber

PHOTOS: ICT ASSOCIATION OF ZAMBIA

The awards spotlighted the often-unsung heroes of the Zambian tech community

It's a celebration! Award winners celebrate on stage

Tech professionals traded their usual casual attire for tuxedos, bow ties and ball gowns

Security Excellence, Most Innovative Public Sector ICT Initiative, and Excellence in Digital Transformation – two of the most coveted awards were the ICTAZ CEO of the Year Award and the ICTAZ ICT Leadership of the Year Award. These accolades recognised outstanding leadership within ICT institutions and the strategic application of technology in driving organisational success.

Ms Evelyn Chilomo Kaingu, CEO of Lupiya Financial Services, was crowned 2024 ICTAZ CEO of the Year for her extraordinary journey in transforming a US$500 seed investment into an AI-powered neobank that has raised over $18-million in investment capital.

Established in 2016, Lupiya was founded to close Zambia's financial inclusion gap by providing tech-driven financial services to unbanked and underbanked communities. The female-led fintech has demonstrated phenomenal growth, driven by a passion for innovation.

From receiving $1-million from Enygma Ventures in 2020 to becoming one of the first Zambian companies to join Google's Black Founders Fund in 2021, Lupiya continued to scale, securing $8.25-million in Series A funding in 2023, and clinching the top prize at the GITEX Africa Supernova Challenge in 2024. Ms Kaingu's recognition as CEO of the Year aptly reflects her trailblazing leadership.

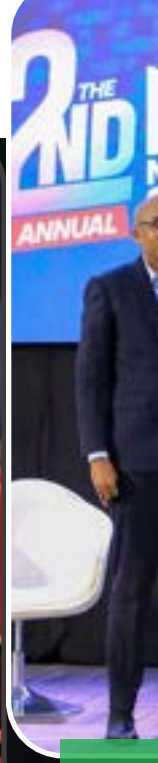
The ICTAZ ICT Leadership of the Year Award went to Mr Muyangwa Muyangwa, Director General of the National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA), in recognition of his transformative leadership in positioning NAPSA as a technology-driven institution. Under his stewardship, NAPSA embraced a bold digital transformation agenda, empowering its ICT department to deliver impactful solutions.

Notably, NAPSA's Director of ICT, Mr Christopher Lalusha – who also won the 2024 TICON Africa ICT Professional of the Year Award – led the team that secured four awards on the night.

The celebration also spotlighted emerging talent, with students recognised for their individual achievements and contributions through ICTAZ student chapters, which serve as platforms for youth engagement in technology and innovation, laying the foundation for Zambia's next generation of ICT leaders.

The ICTAZ ICT Awards and Gala Dinner was a fitting conclusion to a landmark year in which Zambia's ICT professionals firmly positioned the sector as a leading force in national development. ●

The Honourable Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Dr Monica Musenero Masanza (left), joins stakeholders at the HealthTech session of Uganda's 2nd National ICT Summit



SUMMIT DISCUSSES HARNESSING DIGITAL INNOVATION IN UGANDA

The ICT Association of Uganda (ICTAU) reports on the 2nd National ICT Summit, themed '*Harnessing Digital Innovation for Sustainable Economic Growth*'.

Elizabeth Ntege, Chairperson of ICTAU, officially opened the summit

The ICT Association of Uganda Executive Team and Ambrose Ruyooka (fourth from left), Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance

Uganda's National ICT Innovation Hub hosted the 2nd National ICT Summit in July 2025. The event brought together policymakers, regulators, innovators, academics and the private sector to discuss digital transformation across four priority areas: EduTech, AgriTech, HealthTech and Digital Economy Enablement.

Building on the foundation of the inaugural summit, the 2nd summit was closely aligned with Uganda's *Digital Transformation Roadmap, Vision 2024*, and NDP IV. As such, it was a rousing call to coordinated action – a national platform where digital policy met digital practice and where practical, scalable innovations for all Ugandans were envisaged.

EDUTECH: BUILDING A FUTURE-READY DIGITAL WORKFORCE

The EduTech discussion considered how education is evolving in the digital era. There was a recognition that artificial intelligence (AI) is already embedded in higher education, from intelligent tutoring systems to content generation. The foundational infrastructure – such as the Research and Education Network Uganda (RENU), which provides high-speed internet connectivity and other ICT solutions across the country – has created room to scale digital learning.

> THERE IS RECOGNITION THAT A.I. IS ALREADY EMBEDDED IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN UGANDA

However, infrastructure alone is not enough, and the importance of shifting internet use from entertainment to value-driven engagement was discussed. This included plans to equip educators with the right skills, tools and mindsets to lead the transformation. Participants also noted that access to devices is central to inclusive EdTech.

AGRITECH: DIGITAL TOOLS FOR ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

Agriculture anchors the economy in Uganda – and digital innovation can help to enhance traditional practices through connectivity, financial inclusion and climate-smart approaches. Transforming the sector would include digitising Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs), expanding rural smartphone access, and using local partnerships to unlock real-time access to market data and financial services for farmers.

Insights from start-up founders emphasised the importance of being adaptable and continuing to learn in order to scale innovations.

The discussion on sustainability stressed that digital growth must be responsible. As global markets like the European Union tighten environmental regulations, Uganda's smallholder farmers must embrace green practices and compliance mechanisms to remain competitive.

Ambrose Ruyooka, Assistant Commissioner of the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, delivered a keynote spotlighting the ministry's focus on research and development

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

HEALTHTECH: INNOVATION THAT EMPOWERS LIVES

The HealthTech sessions looked at how technology is helping more people get healthcare, especially in remote areas. Tools like digital ID, mobile apps, and AI-powered diagnosis are being used to improve care in both city hospitals and rural clinics – making it faster, more efficient and easier to reach those who need it most.

The discussions highlighted how smart health records, AI triage tools and strong data infrastructure can work together to improve care, as long as privacy is protected. The key message was that health innovation should always put people first, especially those who are underserved.

DIGITAL ECONOMY ENABLEMENT: UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF THE REGION

In the final session, participants explored how Uganda can lead East Africa in building a dynamic digital economy. Key focus areas included e-commerce, fintech, cross-border trade and inclusive policy design.

> DRIVING UGANDA'S DIGITAL GROWTH REQUIRES A WHOLE -SYSTEM APPROACH

While challenges like fragmented regulation, limited data portability and concerns around digital sovereignty remain, the tone was optimistic. Success stories – such as interoperable payment platforms and improved regional telecom integration – demonstrated that scalable solutions are already in motion.

A central takeaway was that driving digital growth requires a whole-system approach, underpinned by robust infrastructure – starting with digital IDs and wallets and extending to digitised markets. Just as crucial is user readiness: people need the right devices, connectivity and digital literacy to participate fully – and meaningfully – in this new economy.

A SHARED VISION AND A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Digital transformation isn't just about scaling tech, it's about ensuring people – especially youth, women, farmers and developers – have the tools and opportunities to shape it.

The 2nd National ICT Summit showed that Uganda isn't just embracing digital transformation – it's actively designing a more inclusive digital future. This can be carried forward with real-world demos of local innovation, policy roundtables on cross-sector collaboration, community engagement across rural and urban stakeholders, and a renewed, shared commitment to inclusive digital growth. ●

› Participants engage deeply during the EduTech session, which explored how digital tools and AI are reshaping education for a future-ready workforce

‹ Venue set-up for Uganda's 2nd National ICT Summit, which was held on 17-18 July 2025

ICT ASSOCIATION OF UGANDA (ICTAU)

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Account Number: 1040006744842
Bank Name: Housing Finance Bank
Branch: Ntinda
Swift Code: HFINUGKA
Currency: UGX

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