



Y's launch

Microsoft

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UGANDA'S FIRST MICROSOFT INNOVATION CENTRE TO FOSTER TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

Kampala— 21st November 2011 – The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Microsoft have jointly announced the launch of the first Microsoft Innovation Centre in Uganda in a ceremony that was officiated by Ruhakana Rugunda, Minister of Information and Communications Technology. Located in Makerere University, the new Innovation Centre is an extension of the global Microsoft Innovation Centre network and is designed to promote the development of innovation and growth of the Ugandan software economy.

The new facility is the result of a partnership agreement between UNIDO and Microsoft, building on UNIDO's already established technical cooperation programmes in Uganda. In cooperation with the Ugandan Government, National IT Authority and Makerere University, the Microsoft Innovation Centre will provide assistance and resources to small and medium sized enterprises to create new and innovative products and services, bring those products to the market and improve their business competitiveness. The Centre will provide support to small and medium enterprises and independent software vendors, as well as develop better student collaboration, provide support for new start-up companies, and act as the test laboratory Centre for the development of software projects.

"I am pleased to note that this Centre is yet another deliverable within the UNIDO–Microsoft partnership. It will act as incubator for innovation; technology training and industry skill transfer and actively contribute to economic growth and prosperity in Uganda. I am confident that prospective employers from both, the public and privates sector, will value the contribution that this Centre can make to skill development, particularly for the youth," added the UNIDO Regional Director for East Africa, David Tommy.

Microsoft works globally with partners from the public sector, academic institutions and industry to promote innovation. The Microsoft Innovation Centres are a central component of this innovation drive, which provides effective support for the local software markets. There are now more than 90 Microsoft Innovation Centres worldwide. They do not carry out research themselves but offer a research and development platform for partners working in innovative sectors, helping to foster innovation in their local country, in their region and across the globe.

"The new Microsoft Innovation Centre in Uganda will provide young entrepreneurs, students, developers and researchers in the local community access to expert information and high-tech equipment for testing and developing the latest technologies built on the Microsoft platform," said Louis Otieno, General Manager for Microsoft East and Southern Africa. "Offering these opportunities to the local community is an important step to encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship. We envision that the Centre will boost the local software developer industry, driving increased availability of highly skilled and proficient ICT users as well as developer skills in the country. By fostering innovation, together we can ultimately drive growth in the local and regional economy."

Uganda's first Microsoft Innovation Centre will focus on skills development, aiming to educate local students to help improve their professional IT knowledge and gain real project experience before graduating. Another key goal of the Centre will be helping developers and IT professionals learn about the latest technologies, stimulating technology innovation and driving the local software economy to boost national competitiveness.

“This is a major milestone for our country particularly for the young people who now have a world-class facility to hone their ICT skills. Uganda has continued to experience significant growth in terms of GDP, investment, employment and tax revenue in the ICT sector and the Microsoft Innovation Centre is definitely going to play a big role in bolstering the continued growth of the sector.” said the Minister of Information and Communications Technology, Ruhakana Rugunda

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About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq “MSFT”) is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

About UNIDO

UNIDO is a specialized agency of the United Nations that works towards improving the quality of life of the world's poor by helping countries achieve sustainable industrial development. UNIDO views industrial development as a means of creating employment and income in order to overcome poverty. It helps developing countries produce goods they can trade on the global market, and helps provide the tools - training, technology, and investment - to make them competitive. At the same time, it encourages production processes that will neither harm the environment nor place too heavy a burden on a country's limited energy resources. UNIDO has 172 Member States and has its headquarters in Vienna, Austria (please visit www.unido.org).

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