



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

SPEECH BY

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AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

AT

THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST MICROSOFT INNOVATION
CENTRE

AT

COLLEGE OF COMPUTING AND INFORMATION SCIENCES,
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, KAMPALA

21st NOVEMBER, 2011

Hon. Ministers

Hon. Members of Parliament

Members of the Diplomatic Corp

Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University

Regional Director of UNIDO

General Manager East Africa for Microsoft

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to preside over the launch of the first Microsoft Innovation Centre in Uganda. Uganda would have become the first Sub Saharan African Country to have such a facility but our dear brothers in Tanzania have taken a lead and we are very happy on their achievement.

Government has identified Information and Communications Technology (ICT) as a vessel which will help in socio-economic development of the Country. ICT development is highlighted in the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) manifesto.

I am delighted to note that this facility is an **"Innovation Centre"** focussing on skills building, jobs and opportunity creation and fostering innovation. This is in line with the ICT sector vision of "A Uganda where national development, especially human development and good governance shall be sustainably enhanced, promoted and accelerated by efficient application and use of ICT, including timely access to information". It 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

The Government appreciates the tireless efforts of United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and Microsoft for making this "Microsoft Innovation Centre" a reality following the signing of a letter of Intent in September 2007. We are in the process of signing a tripartite Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with UNIDO and Microsoft for the two Microsoft Innovation Centres, the first one here at Makerere University and the other at the Uganda Green Computer Co. Ltd. UNIDO and Microsoft have pledged to continue to support the Government of Uganda with other initiatives such as the District Business Information Centres and E-waste management.

The Microsoft Innovation Centre will provide support to small and medium enterprises and independent software vendors, as well as driving student collaboration, provide support for new start-up companies, and act as the test laboratory centre for the development of software projects. Uganda lacks such facility and this will help us bridge the gap that exists between the academia and skills required for jobs. I am confident that the prospective employers from both the public and private sector will value the contributions that this Centre will make in skills empowerment to our youth. Also this facility will contribute towards setting standards for the development of software in close cooperation with National Information Technology Authority-Uganda (NITA-U).

The Government of Uganda is committed to ensuring that a suitable environment is created to make Uganda one of the preferred Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) destinations in the world so as to create jobs for the youth and thereby contribute to H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda's Job Stimulus Program. We would like to ensure that Uganda is one of the beneficiaries of this high growth BPO Information Technology (IT) enabled services industry.

Government and stakeholders in ICT have identified the need to develop a critical mass of skilled personnel in ICT and am happy that this Centre will contribute towards this opportunity especially by providing skills that are needed for high end IT enabled services.

The Ministry of ICT has in the past worked closely with the College of Computing and Information Sciences to implement some of the Government's development initiatives. A recent example is the BPO initiative which is aimed at creating employment for over 3000 Ugandans. On behalf of Ministry of ICT and on behalf of the Government of Uganda, I wish to assure you that we shall take advantage of every opportunity to work with UNIDO and Microsoft so that we can realize an ICT revolution in the Country

Ladies and gentlemen, I take this opportunity to thank UNIDO and Microsoft for this initiative which is very timely. I am confident that the benefits that will accrue to our youth, the software development sector and the ICT industry in general will accelerate the transformation of Uganda to a medium income and subsequently to a developed Country where there will be social and economic prosperity for all our people.

I now take the pleasure to launch the first Microsoft Innovation Centre in Uganda.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY