



Digital Impact Awards Africa 2014

Executive Director-Mr James Saaka, NITA-U

Organisers; Digital Impact Awards Africa 2014

Official Partners,

Awards Jury and Research Panel

Nominees,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen in your respective capacities,

Good evening.

I welcome you all to the Digital Impact Awards Africa 2014 ceremony that ends the remarkable journey of searching for Companies and organisations that use ICTs to create a visible impact. I bring you greetings from the National Information Technology Authority Uganda (NITA), your partner in information technology development. I am delighted to be here today and I would like to thank the organisers of Digital Impact Awards Africa for the invitation.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all the nominees of Digital Impact Awards Africa who use IT based solutions and are spearheading the use of digital media thus maximizing the Digital Dividend.

I would also like to thank the organisers and all the official partners of Digital Impact Awards Africa 2014 for discovering, promoting, encouraging and rewarding innovation and best practices for mobile, web, social, digital and cyber security applications.

My brief remarks will focus on the issues and challenges the digital revolution has and what Government is doing to support the promotion of e-Government, embracing the growth and use of IT based innovations and effective services.

As you are all aware, the world has changed rapidly due to this digital revolution. Communication and information sharing has gone to a level we all would have never imagined; facebook, twitter, skype, whatsapp, online shopping and the list goes on. This is not only to the young generation but to all ages, companies and even governments searching for profiles, information and customer data from the internet.

Much as this revolution has brought in opportunities for communication, knowledge, innovations and business, we cannot run away from the challenges it brings such as online crime, abuse, use of online communications by extremists and so on. The other challenge is mass data storage and transfer due to innovations raising new questions about personal privacy in the private and public sector.

Governments today are struggling to keep up with this revolution through public debates, the law and policies. I would like to highlight what the Uganda Government is doing in light of these challenges.

You may be aware that Government through NITA-U has developed a **National Information Security Framework** that the police, intelligence and other security agencies need to be able to operate more effectively against online crime. This framework has been developed with structures and mechanisms that will ensure protection of national resources and systems from potential cyber-attacks and associated risks such as cyber terrorism. Furthermore, NITA-U set up an official website for the **National Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT)** to support the Government and Citizens to effectively analyse and respond to cyber-attacks. For more information visit our website www.cert.ug and follow us on Twitter @CERT_UG.

The legal framework has also been enforced in the ICT sector. Three cyber laws were passed by Parliament in September 2010 and came into force on 15th April 2011 to form the legal and regulatory framework for the ICT sector in Uganda. They include:

- i. **The Electronic Transactions Act** - providing for the use of electronic communication and transactions and to encourage the use of e-government services;
- ii. **The Electronic Signatures Act** - regulating the use of electronic signatures, and
- iii. **The Computer Misuse Act** –providing for the safety and security of electronic transactions and information systems. It also aims at preventing unlawful access, abuse or misuse of information systems including computers and makes provision for securing the conduct of electronic transactions in a trustworthy electronic environment.

These laws will support our liberty, our security, the growth of our economy and the health of our democracy too.

Particularly today, when we focus on innovations and effective services, government of Uganda recognises that ICT has been a primer for innovations and is becoming important in many areas of our lives. Government has built a National backbone infrastructure for government institutions as well as for the private sector to utilise effective connectivity and internet use at reduced price. I encourage more partnerships to take advantage of this investment.

Furthermore, Government strongly supports innovations through its policies such as the National Development Plan and Uganda vision 2040, National Science Technology and Innovation Policy (2009), Draft ICT policy and the National IT policy. For instance one of the key interventions in the National IT policy is for the establishment of IT parks and incubators equipped with modern facilities to provide one stop shop environment for researchers and investors in the IT industry. Government of Uganda through NITA will therefore;

- i. Promote funding for example through public-private partnerships (PPP), venture capital and joint ventures.
- ii. Develop Infrastructure like ICT parks and Business process Outsourcing (BPO) parks.
- iii. Promote the implementation of intellectual property laws by innovators.
- iv. Help solve the Internet challenge with the current optic fibre implementation around the country and linkages with all neighbouring countries; and
- v. Promote the use of standards and guidelines such as the web and social media guidelines that were developed by NITA-U.

The right culture of innovation guarantees public-private partnerships and a high degree of knowledge diffusion. There is also a need to support the actors like you who are crucial in promoting innovation.

In conclusion, NITA-U is committed to supporting ICT Research and Innovation initiatives to provide a common national ICT research & innovation platform aimed at integrating and giving direction to many on-going but fragmented ICT research and development efforts throughout the country. I would like to appreciate once again the organisers of the Digital Impact Awards Africa 2014 and the contribution of all the nominees to national development. It is my hope that this will be an annual flagship event in partnership with NITA to showcase the milestones so far achieved and to challenge us to rise to greater heights.

Thank you and enjoy the evening.
