

UTILISE UGANDA'S IMPRESSIVE INTERNET COVERAGE



SOUMENDRA SAHU
CEO AND MANAGING
DIRECTOR
AIRTEL UGANDA

The recently released GSMA Digital Economy Report is very instructive on Uganda's digital journey over the years. Uganda has made remarkable progress in expanding digital infrastructure. Today, our nation stands at 96% 4G population coverage, a milestone reflecting years of sustained investment, collaboration, and commitment.

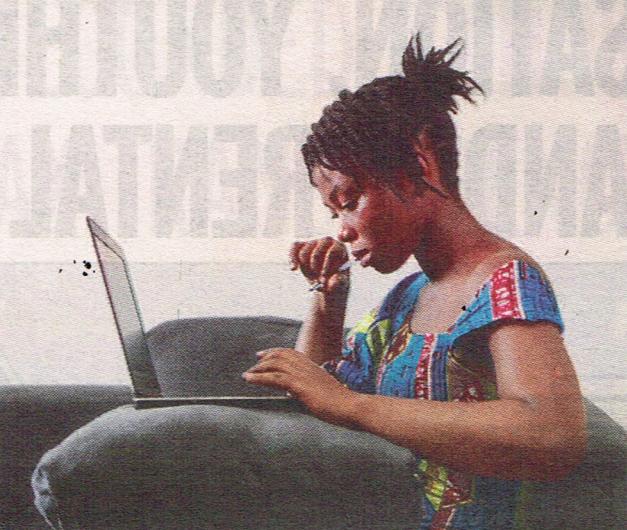
The report also shows that Uganda's mobile broadband coverage now outperforms both

the East African at 78% and Africa at 81% of populations being covered by broadband. This is proof that strategic investment over time truly pays off. Yet, the report also reminds us that coverage alone does not equal connection.

This report presents a new challenge to tackle. The usage gap. Uganda's usage gap is 75%, East Africa at 79% and Africa at 72%. This is a different problem from what the country needed in 1995 when the pioneer mobile operator network Celtel, now run by Airtel Uganda, opened doors.

Even with near-universal 4G availability, three out of four Ugandans living within mobile broadband coverage are still not using it. This "usage gap" stems from challenges that go beyond network infrastructure.

Bridging the usage gap matters because the benefits extend far beyond the telecom industry. The GSMA modelling shows that the right digital reforms could unlock sh14.6 trillion in additional economic



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value by 2030 delivering an estimated 1.79 million new jobs.

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the economy. It is these and more services that Uganda needs to digitise, create value and accelerate usage.

Terminal devices such as smartphones, laptops and consoles remain expensive for many households and

businesses. This is because of various reasons including effects from the disrupted global supply chains. The industry is collectively engaging with various stakeholders to take affirmative action on taxes on entry level devices.

GSMA analysis finds that entry-level smartphones are priced at \$38.91 in Uganda. This price equates to 39% of monthly gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, and 96% of monthly GDP per capita for the poorest 40% of the population. Taxation contributes to 35% of smartphone cost.

The GSMA report recommends adding 4 million unique mobile internet (broadband) subscribers by 2030. This would reduce the mobile internet usage gap by 7% and contribute to the NDP IV 2030 objective of 45% population using the internet. Our approach to bridging the usage gap includes expanding smartphone access through device financing partnerships

for entry-level devices.

As we grow our network, we prioritise energy-efficient, future-proof infrastructure to ensure long-term reliability that will support the growing usage.

As more people enter the digital economy, we must take care of each other's digital safety by addressing the digital skills gaps, building trust in digital services and tools. It is important to integrate digital skills literacy in our daily lives as families, teams and organisations.

We are enhancing cybersecurity systems by leveraging AI and collaborating with the financial ecosystem to prevent spam, scams and fraud.

Uganda's digital journey has reached a critical inflection point. Yes, we have built an exceptional physical foundation. But without meaningful usage and robust protection against digital threats, much potential remains untapped.

This is the true promise of a connected Uganda.