# UGANDA INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

# 2023 REPORT

**IGF**

Uganda Internet
Governace Forum

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**Date: August 24th, 2023**

**Theme: The Internet We Want – Empowering Ugandans.**

**Venue: Sheraton Hotel, Kampala.**

The Uganda Internet Governance Forum (UIGF) is a multi-stakeholder meeting that brings together representatives from government, civil society, academia, technical community, private sector and individuals interested in Internet Governance (IG) issues. The objectives of the UIGF are to: Establish IG issues relevant to Uganda; Build consensus on national and regional positions around relevant IG issues and create awareness about various IG issues including online safety in Uganda especially among vulnerable users. Since its inauguration in 2006, the UIGF has continued to discuss and address Internet Policy issues pertinent to the country. To date, twelve (12) forums have been held with each addressing different thematic areas.

The 2023 Uganda Internet Governance Forum commenced with pre-activities of the Youth IGF held on 23 August 2023 and the School of Internet Governance Hosted at the National ICT Center in Nakawa. The one-day event brought together a total of 123 (44 female; 79 male) representatives from government, media, private sector, civil society and individuals interested in shaping discussion on how the Internet can be used as a tool for empowerment and development in Uganda.

## Participation by stakeholder group

| Stakeholder group | No. of participants |
|---|---|
| Government | 4 |
| Intergovernmental organization | 46 |
| Civil society | 50 |
| Private sector | 17 |
| Press/media | 6 |

The UIGF follows a bottom-up approach, which includes soliciting for topics from interested parties. The call for proposals shared on different mailing lists and the forum website. The topics are then selected by a multistakeholder organizing committee comprising representatives from government, civil society and private sector to form the main theme and subthemes for the forum. The UIGF 2023 was proudly sponsored by the Internet Society Foundation, Internet Governance Support Association (IGFSA), Enabel Uganda, Pollicy Uganda and Ministry of ICT and National Guidance.

The forum this year served as a launch for the ***Digital Rights for Girls and Women Project*** in Uganda. The project was officially launched by Mr. Tom Vanneste, Country Representative for Enabel Uganda together with the Representative of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance in Uganda. The project seeks to promote inclusion of women and girls in the development and consumption of ICTs in Uganda.

The forum also witnessed the launch of the **Where is my Data,** card game developed by Poliicy. The card game works to educate individuals both at the work place, in the community and at home on how to find, assess and to address online risks.

## Opening Remarks:

Lillian Nalwoga, convener of the UIGF welcomed and highlighted the IGF as a multistakeholder process and pointed out some of the programs and projects that have emerged from the UIGF conversations over the past few years. Some of the main achievements of the UIGF including developing the capacity of Ugandans in understanding IG issues through the Uganda School on Internet Governance (USIG) and the Uganda Youth Internet Governance Forum (UYIGF).

She urged members to actively participate and carry forward the conversations from the forum to the regional and global forums She highlighted the value attached to the IG processes and overall outcomes of the different forums. She encouraged participants to attend the East African, African and Global IGF.

**UYIGF 2023 Report presentation**

Young people are a key stakeholder in the Internet governance ecosystem as they make the largest demographic on the Internet. The IGF secretariat has since recognized the importance of meaningful youth participation at the IGF processes and promotes the strengthening of Youth IGF Initiatives around the globe. The UYIGF 2023 was held on August 23, 2023 under the theme "The Internet We Want-Empowering young people in Uganda." A summary of the Uganda Youth IGF was presented by Innocent Adriko, UYIGF Coordinator.



**Key Highlights:**

- The young people realize the power of artificial intelligence in terms of efficiency and productivity. They seek to embrace it by developing their knowledge base and skills. However, the youth are concerned about the fact that Artificial intelligence education in learning institutions is taking a rather slow pace as only a handful of the universities offer a program.
- There are further concerns of how the education system will easily adopt Artificial intelligence in learning because most universities have still failed to fully adopt online teaching.
- The youth noted that Encryption is under threat because most actors are either not paying attention to it or are ignorant about it. We appreciate initiatives by the Chapter and other stakeholders towards raising awareness and advancing encryption and call upon other stakeholders to join the campaign towards assessing the major threats and addressing them.
- The young people highlighted the top cyber security threats

today as; Social engineering, third party exposure, Configuration mistakes, Poor cyber hygiene, Cloud and Mobile device vulnerabilities, Ransomware, IOT and Poor data management, and emphasized needed for more engagement and skilling of young people to address these cyber security issues.

- From the youth in Uganda, in periods of crisis, digital technologies provide a lifeline that keeps people, communities, and businesses functioning. Hard times like COVID-19 showed us that the Internet is not a luxury but a lifeline, and underscored why affordable and meaningful Internet access must be a basic human right. But, while the Internet has remained reliable, our world has become increasingly unpredictable. The biggest threat to the Internet and its functionality is the users and the recent trends are evident enough to prove this. The good news is that we have the opportunity to do better, to make better decisions for the future of the Internet so that it can grow even bigger and stronger.

**Keynote Address:**

Speaking at the forum was the Minister of State for National Guidance, Hon. Kabbyanga Godfrey Baluku, urged all partners to work towards achieving an internet that is accessible for all Ugandans while cautioning against its abuse.



*"An Internet that fully empowers Ugandan is one that is one that is accessible, inclusive and secure is an Internet that bridges the digital device, regardless of the allocation or background, can harness the benefit of the digital age. Accessibility is the cornerstone of the Internet. Of the Internet. We must work, we must work tirelessly to provide affordable reliable Internet access."*

**Hon. Kabbyanga Godfrey Baluku**
Minister of State for National Guidance

Further, speaking on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance Ms. Shirley Gladys Nakyejwe, Senior ICT Officer & Intellectual Property Management Specialist who endorsed the theme and highlighted that in a world driven by technology and connectivity, this theme holds paramount significance for the progress and prosperity of our nation - Uganda.

She further highlighted contribution of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stands at a remarkable over 9%, significantly contributing to our national revenue. Moreover, the ICT sector employs 2.3 million individuals. This growth in ICT's contribution to our GDP results from significant initiatives undertaken by the Government and private sector players to expand infrastructure coverage and develop eservices, among other efforts. According to the National Planning Authority (NPA), information and communications services have continued to experience an average growth rate of 14.8%. However, there remains room for growth in computer programming and the ICT trade and manufacturing industries.

She shared that the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance has recently unveiled the Digital Transformation Roadmap of Uganda — a comprehensive guide steering our nation toward embracing and leveraging digital technologies across all sectors of society. This roadmap, which spans five years, is rooted in the Digital Uganda Vision 2040, an initiative aimed at transforming Uganda into a modern and prosperous nation. It stands on five key pillars: Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity; Digital Services that revolutionize government-citizen interactions; Cyber Security, Data Protection, and Privacy; Digital Skills to empower our citizens for an ever-evolving world; and Innovation and Entrepreneurship to ignite creative ideas into startups and market-transforming innovations.

The ministry understands the power of collaboration in this digital transformation journey, and that's why we join hands with associations such as the Internet Society of Uganda and other private sector organizations. We aim to ensure that the benefits of digital transformation are universally accessible, leaving no one behind.

She stated that as we stand at the forefront of this digital revolution, we must also acknowledge the weight of responsibility that accompanies it. Ensuring security, privacy, and robust cyber defenses is paramount as we pursue our digital ambitions. The panels and sessions on digital rights, data privacy, and security provide us opportunities to learn and grow in these crucial areas.



*'Technology is a means to an end, not an end in itself and therefore, the true measure of our success will be the positive impact we create in the lives of Ugandans,*
**Ms. Nakyejwe Shanny.**

## High Level Panel: "The Internet We Want – Empowering Ugandans"

**Panelists:** Tom Vanneste *(Resident Representative, Enabel Uganda)*
Emmanuel Eilu *(Senior Lecturer, Uganda Christian University)*
Gloria Katuuku *(Manager Planning, Strategy and Performance NITAU)*
Irene Karungi *(Senior Electronics Engineer, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance)*
Verengai Mabika *(Senior Policy Advisor – Internet Society Africa.)*

**Moderator:** Joshua Mpairwe,
*President, Internet Society Uganda Chapter*



**Session highlights:**

- AI has both positive and negative effects and requires regulations to manage it for the safety of individuals and countries and with time, Academia will soon sit down and come up with support policy ideas to frame AI.
- Automation of Jobs is happening, creating diverse gaps in employment, requiring us to find ways to harmonize human employment and AI.
- People who can't afford smartphones live amongst us and we need to empower them better to bridge the digital divide. We should focus on awareness to ensure that people do not see technology as a threat but rather an opportunity.
- Government is still studying the AI topic and has already put in place measures to make sure Uganda is not left behind and our people enhance the opportunities of AI and mitigate all the risks.

The National Fiber Optic Cable is available in 1466 sites covering 4296Kms through more than 100 local government entities in the country. The government of Uganda has also setup WiFi hotspots in major cities to among other efforts for government to improve access to the internet.
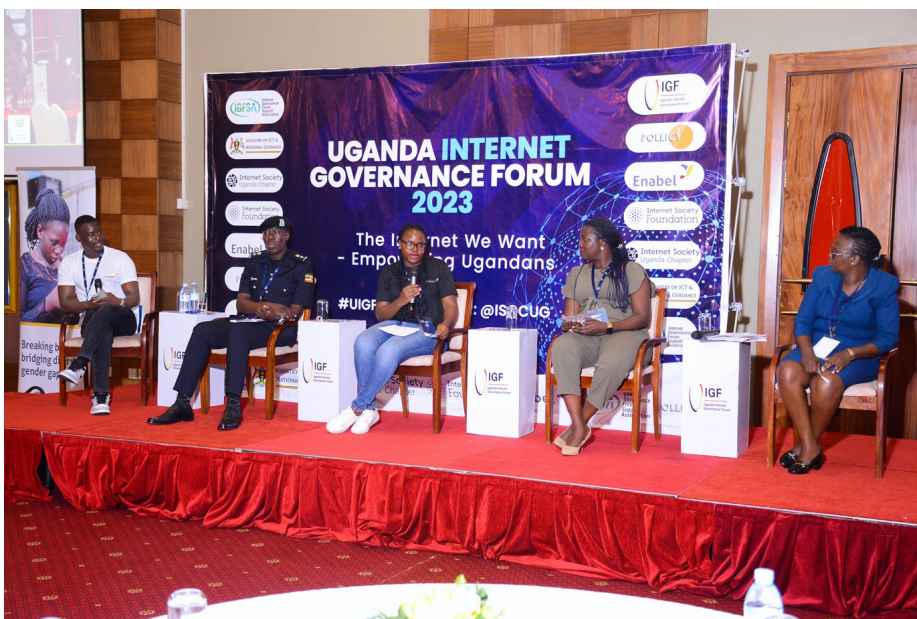
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*"AI is a co-pilot ready to move with you just in case you need it on your way to solve issues at all levels of life. Its rather unfortunate that we are creating computer museums in schools and that is affecting the quality of ICTs in Uganda".*
**Mr. Vanneste**

## Session one: Innovation Hubs as Centers of Excellence in Advancing Digital Rights and Transformation in Uganda.

**Panelists:** Sandra Aceng *(Executive Director, Women of Uganda Network)*
Olga Naiga *(Business and Investment Analyst, Hive Collab)*
Janepher Taaka *(Gender and Inclusion Expert, Enabel Uganda)*
Francis Ogweng *(Assistant Superintendent of Police, ACP/CCTV Operations, Uganda Police Force.)*

**Moderator:** Moses Owiny,
*Digital Rights Expert, Enabel Uganda.*

**Session highlights:**

- Need to address barriers to inclusion including structural and social barriers like policies and norms that encourage inclusion of women and girls.
- Create digital spaces safe for women and girls and put in place feedback mechanisms where they can use to access information. use in providing information on accessibility.
- We should put emphasis on building capacity on legal reforms and inform public of the options and laws available to their defense. A lot of crime continues to happen online in Uganda due to lack of awareness.
- Digital rights are human rights in the digital realm that allow people create publish and innovate online. Rights such as freedom of expression should be upheld.

## Artificial Intelligence and the creative Economy: Policy, Safety and Intellectual Property

**Panelists:** Hon. Racheal Magoola *(Chairperson Parliamentary Forum on Creative Arts)*

Silver Kayondo *(Advocate & Founding Partner, Ortus Africa)*

Jackee Budesta Batanda *(Creative Writer)*

GNL Zamba *(Music artist, CEO, Baboon Forest Entertainment)*

Loukman Ali *(Cinematographer & Film Director)*

Zulfa Bobina *(Data & Digital Rights Research, Pollicy)*

**Moderator:** Canary Mugume,
*Investigative journalist – NBS Television.*

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**Session highlights**
Africa has many stories to tell and share digitally while leapfrogging on the untapped local content and AI can be used to tap into this resource.



*"The rest of the world is saturated with their stories. But we as Africans, have something new to offer, and that's where we come to the content that we can generate using AI. We have infinite possibilities. We have stories that have never been tapped. ... If we can use AI to harness all of these stories and create productions that at ship will be able to catch up with the rest of the world by leveraging that intellectual property and selling it or licensing it to other parts of the world."*

**Loukman Ali,**
Cinematographer & Film Director

AI is beneficial in enhancing creativity and efficiency in creative industries however, concerns about job security and authenticity in creative work should be put into consideration.

When it comes to using AI in creativity, I find that it's a very symbiotic relationship that one cannot exist without the other. AI cannot generate material on its own, so it uses things that creatives have already used, and it gives you options that would spark your imagination and enhance creativity. I've been using AI that's Chat GPT with other programs like midjourney video leap to enhance my creativity, but also to also make data driven decisions in terms of where do I find my funds? We no longer now just go to shows to find out if the show will work out. GNL Zamba

Creative artists should seek collaboration with AI experts to improve the quality of their production work placing emphasis on the development of AI models tailored to local languages and contexts.

Panelists called for the adoption of policy frameworks to protect the integrity of creative industries. Government was urged to develop measures that counter illegal uses of AI and issues of bias, data sourcing, and enforcement in the development and deployment of AI models.

The importance of educating people about respecting copyright and acknowledging the ownership of creative works was also emphasized.

*"The biggest challenge we have is that everything we do is accessible, easily accessible. Also there's no a proper monitoring system with radio stations and TV stations, that means we cannot really earn what we could have earned."*
**Hon. Racheal Magoola,**
Chairperson Parliamentary Forum on Creative Arts.

The need for ongoing education, collaboration, and adaptation to navigate the evolving relationship between AI and creative industries.

**Media coverage**
- https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/education/low-internet-reach-hinders-ict-classes-4350390
- https://medium.com/@pinnoivan2000/empowering-ugandas-digital-future-unveiling-the-promise-of-ai-cybersecurity-and-digital-rights-88e91adeb713
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZVqUyib2kC8
- https://youtu.be/Bd8xXpLyeGU?si=uqlgGrb6NKhzGmFx

# Forum Pictorial