



YEAR IN *Review* 2022



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OF 2022

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COVER PHOTO

ITU Secretary General Doreen Bogdan-Martin (2nd left) joins Uganda's team at the Mobile World Congress 2023 in Barcelona, Spain. (L-R) Ag. Executive Director Eng. Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT & National Guidance, Dr. Aminah Zawedde, and UCC Board Chairperson Dr. Dorothy Okello.

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From the Editorial Team



Rebecca Mukite



James Tumusiime



Audrey Kukundakwe

Dear reader,

Welcome to the Uganda Communications Commission Year-In-Review 2022!

The year 2022 saw Uganda, and indeed the world, emerge from the shackles of COVID-19 with business slowly but surely returning to normal following a two-year hiatus.

This allowed the Commission to pick up pace in its implementation of several activities and initiatives in line with its mission of driving the development of a robust communications sector.

This publication provides a bird's eye view of the UCC 2022 scorecard from the vintage point of the Public and International Relations Unit (PIRU), highlighting events, developments and activities that stood out.

This edition focuses in a thematic way on UCC's international relations function, highlighting the role of the Commission in coordinating engagements with the international community on matters relating to ICT on behalf of the Government of Uganda.

Inside these pages, readers can enjoy mouthwatering write-ups tracking UCC assignments, including international meetings, policy and regulatory decisions, consumer awareness campaigns, Corporate Social Responsibility interventions, as well as staff related news, among others.

The PR Team is grateful to the Ag. ED, the Director Corporate Affairs and TMT for the support rendered towards this publication.

Read on!

From the Director Corporate Affairs



Fred Otunnu

Dear reader,

Welcome to this edition of the UCC Year-In-Review publication!

The Department of Corporate Affairs (DCA) is honoured to share this tantalizing line-up of news stories with you in line with our key function of coordinating the smooth flow of information between the Commission and its internal and external stakeholders.

Through this publication, we seek to provide a reliable record of the Commission's highlights and milestones throughout the year, while adding variety and flavour to our end-of-year corporate giveaways.

The year 2022 was particularly eventful as it marked the return to near normalcy following a two-year quagmire imposed by COVID-19 and associated restrictions. Consequently, some of UCC's activities and undertakings that had been frozen sprang to life. This included physical or hybrid as opposed to remote meetings – both local and international.

Accordingly, the cover story in this edition is the milestone of Uganda retaining its ITU Council seat representing Africa, following elections at the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP22) in Bucharest, Romania. We also feature articles on the campaigns undertaken by the Commission during the year, notably Tonfera, SIMU KLEAR, as well as our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) intervention at Kawempe National Referral Hospital, among others.

Finally, I thank our indefatigable Editorial Team for the effort they have put into this publication, and the Ag. Executive Director and Top Management for the unwavering support towards the Department of Corporate Affairs.

Enjoy the package!



UGANDA BASKS IN ITU COUNCIL SEAT GLORY

It was a hard-fought victory as Uganda retained membership of the coveted ITU Council following an election in which 17 African countries competed for 13 seats.

By 2026 when its current term ends, Uganda will have served at the helm of the ITU Council, the governing body of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), for a record 12 years uninterrupted.

That is no mean achievement considering that on three occasions (2014, 2018, 2022) Uganda has had to fend off the electoral challenge of other African countries competing for the 13 slots allotted to Region D (Africa) in the 48-member Council.

The latest contest happened in October in Bucharest, Romania, where the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, the highest policy-making body of the ITU, assembled as it does every four years, to shape the future direction of the UN specialized agency charged

with driving the global ICT agenda.

By the time the last vote was counted, Uganda had been announced among the member states elected for the 2022-2026 cycle, alongside Kenya, Ghana, Egypt, Tanzania, Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Nigeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Rwanda, and South Africa. The race had 16 other African countries.

Uganda's campaign was championed by the Minister of ICT & National Guidance Dr. Chris Baryomusi who led a multi-sectoral delegation to the conference that included Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomats and Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) staff led by the Ag. Executive Director, Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo.

As the governing body of the ITU, the Council considers broad telecommunication policy issues to ensure that its activities, policies, and strategies fully respond to today's dynamic, rapidly changing telecommunications environment.

The Council also reviews general policy, strategy, financial and planning issues, prepares for major ITU events, implements the strategic plan and activities of the Union, among others.



Minister of ICT & National Guidance Dr. Chris Baryomunsi casts Uganda's vote during the ITU PP22 in Romania.

Uganda was first elected to the ITU Council in 2002 during the Plenipotentiary Conference held in Rabat, Morocco. However, subsequent bids for re-election in Turkey (2006) and Mexico (2010) were unsuccessful until 2014 when Uganda returned to the Council during the conference in South Korea. Uganda was subsequently re-elected in 2018 in the United Arab Emirates.

What Uganda brings to ITU Council

Uganda's value proposition is the regional ICT policy and market leadership, experience in evidence-based ICT policy development, a culture of collaboration and consensus building, and a pro-inclusion design ethos.

Uganda also pointed to its record as a three-time ITU Council member, and the fact that it has previously used this membership to contribute to ITU's mission of connecting the unconnected while fostering an inclusive ICT-led socio-economic transformation agenda.

"Uganda bids to build on this contribution by leveraging her regional and international ICT policy leadership to promote ICTs as an enabler of economic growth and development, especially in a post-COVID19 world, and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," Dr. Baryomunsi told delegates.

The minister also invoked Uganda's longstanding experience in regional and international ICT leadership as a three-time ITU Council member, a holder of various leadership roles in the three ITU sectors (Radiocommunication, Telecommunication Standardization and Development), and at the International Telecommunication Satellite Organisation (ITSO).



The UCC Ag. Executive Director makes the case for Uganda's ITU Council membership, flanked by the Minister and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT & National Guidance, as well as the outgoing ITU Secretary General, Mr. Houlin Zhao.

Benefits of ITU Council membership

1. National prestige and visibility. Members of the ITU Council gain visibility because of their contribution to the governance and service of the UN agency.
2. Networking and interaction. As a member of the ITU Council, Uganda gets to interact and engage with top decision-makers in the ICT field around the world, providing an opportunity to influence technical and policy decisions in the global ICT sector.
3. Foresight on global industry trends. Members of the ITU Council, through the approval processes of work plans, get foresight on funding and other partnership opportunities for various ICT initiatives and projects.
4. Contribution to and foresight on ITU programs and initiatives. A member of the Council has an opportunity to influence decisions that affect the Union's programs and initiatives, including scheduling the calendar, priority projects and governance issues.

5. Governance and corporate responsibility benchmarks. The Council, in executing its oversight role, gets reports on the scope, plans and alignment of the Union's programs and initiatives to global corporate responsibility standards for all its stakeholders. This provides significant benchmarking opportunities for Council members.

ITU Plenipotentiary Conference

The ITU Plenipotentiary Conference, a treaty-making assembly that brings together all the 193 member states of the ITU every four years, opened on September 26, 2022, and closed on October 14, 2022.

The conference is the ITU's supreme organ that sets general and technical global ICT policies, adopts the Union's financial and strategic plans, and elects the top management (Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, Directors of the three sectors, member states of the Council, and members of the Radio Regulations Board).

Indeed, a new Secretary General was elected on September 29, 2022. Doreen Bogdan-Martin of the United States, who replaces Houlin Zhao of China, is the first ever woman to lead the ITU in its 157-year history.

The Conference also elected Tomas Lamanauskas (Lithuania) as ITU Deputy Secretary General, Mario Maniewicz (Uruguay) as Director Radiocommunication Bureau, Seizo Onoe (Japan) as Director Telecommunication Standardisation Bureau and Cosmas Zavazava (Zimbabwe) as Director Telecommunication Development Bureau.



Uganda's objectives

With Uganda's key objective of seeking re-election to the ITU Council now achieved, attention shifts to the technical and operational aspects of our participation whereby the country's priorities include:

1. **Cyber security – Building confidence in the use of ICTs.**
2. **Numbering resource optimization – seeking to counter aspects of misuse of numbering resources in a global framework.**
3. **Seeking efficiency in the operational aspects of the Union by advocating for optimum**

utilization of the available resources to drive the global ICT sector agenda.

4. **Maximizing membership value, especially for developing countries.**
5. **Enhancing diversity of the outputs of the Union through enhanced inclusivity.**

Uganda's position on these issues was developed under the framework of the African region, coordinated by the African Telecommunications Union (ATU).

PROMOTING CYBER SECURITY FOR MOBILE FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Chief Executive Officers of Uganda's mobile network operators have joined hands to fight fraudsters who are using mobile money platforms to defraud consumers.

Addressing the CEO cyber security breakfast at UCC in February 2022, the former MTN Uganda CEO Wim Vanhelleputte revealed that the telcos had teamed up to fight the vice by raising consumer awareness through their newly formed mobile money association.

During a panel discussion involving the Ag. Executive Director UCC, Airtel and MTN CEOs, and Bank of Uganda Executive Director Supervision Dr Tumubweine Twinemanzi, among others, it was agreed that consumer awareness and joint effort are key in the fight.

The discussion was part of the CEO cyber security breakfast organized by UCC to draw attention to the issue of cyber security and the risk it poses to the digital financial system.

"What we are facing is some extremely smart fraudsters who have, not just a degree in



engineering but also a degree in psychology, and they manage to deceive you and trap you into doing something that consciously you would never do," the MTN CEO said.

To tackle the challenge, Mr. Vanhelleputte added, MTN, Airtel and other members of the mobile money association would embark on an aggressive campaign to educate the consumer.

"Don't share your PIN, number one golden rule of security! PIN is Personal Identification Number; you don't share it with anybody," he said, adding: "It is not going to solve everything, but it is going to solve majority of the challenges that we are



facing.”

His Airtel counterpart, Mr. Manoj Murali, agreed on the need to educate the consumer, adding rather succinctly, that “this weapon in your hand, the SIM, can be more dangerous than any other weapon that you can think of.”

Notwithstanding the persistence of cyber threats in the digital financial ecosystem, the telecom CEOs concurred that fraud opportunities have reduced.

The former MTN CEO praised UCC for overseeing what he described as one of the most sophisticated, efficient SIM registration models in the world, which he said had “drastically and significantly” reduced fraud opportunities.

“You can’t buy a SIM card in Uganda without a national ID, a genuine national ID with biometric verification of the fingerprint. It is sophisticated,” Mr. Vanhelleputte said.

“It shows that good regulation works, it might be painful for the operators and the customers to implement, but once we have a level playing field, it works.”

The Airtel MD concurred that fraud has reduced, hastening to add, however, that the telcos must remain one step ahead of the fraudsters.

“We have seen a massive reduction in fraud in our system but if you ask me if it is zero, it’s not, so we are continuously on a path to really understand from the mind of the guy who does the fraud, what he is going to do next time,” he said.

On his part, Dr. Twinemanzi said Bank of Uganda had prioritized cyber security by removing it from the general category of risk and reclassifying it as a unique risk that must be tackled outside the normal operational risk scope.

“

“This weapon in your hand, the SIM, can be more dangerous than any other weapon that you can think of” –

***Manoj Murali,
Airtel CEO.***

UGANDA'S OWN MASAMBU KEEPS ITSO FIRE BURNING

Former UCC Executive Director Patrick Masambu was endorsed for a new four-year term as Director General of the International Telecommunication Satellite Organisation (ITSO) during its 40th Assembly in June 2022.

ITSO is a 149-member intergovernmental organisation whose mission is to make communication by means of satellite available to all nations of the world on a non-discriminatory basis.



Uganda's Delegation to the 40th Assembly of Parties of ITSO with the Director General, Patrick Masambu (4th left), in Washington DC.



Patrick Masambu - Director General ITSO



Through ITSO, member states have a guaranteed and protected interest in a significant number of very valuable orbital locations (slots in space where satellites are placed after launch) and the associated frequency assignments, all commonly referred to as “Parties’ Common Heritage”.

Uganda's delegation to the meeting held in Washington D.C was led by Ambassador Santa Mary Kinyera, the Deputy Head of Mission at Uganda's Embassy in the United States capital.

Mr. Masambu was widely praised by several member states for his part in keeping ITSO alive during the difficult period of COVID-19 when the organisation was in danger of disintegrating.

In addition to Mr. Masambu's election, Uganda also retained its membership to the ITSO Advisory Committee (IAC) representing Africa, alongside Morocco, South Africa, Senegal, Angola, and Cameroon at the ITSO Assembly of Parties (AP-40).

Key benefits of ITSO membership include the following:

1. Non-discriminatory access to Intelsat's satellite system.
2. Protection under Article IV(b) of the ITSO Agreement that enables specified domestic public telecommunications services for areas with difficult topography, to be considered on the same basis as international public telecommunications services.
3. Dispute resolution mechanism between member states under the ITSO Agreement
4. Taking part in promoting international public telecommunication services to meet the needs of the information and communication society.
5. Assistance in resolving difficult issues



between Intelsat and its customers.

6. Access to free online courses and materials in the area of satellite communications.
7. Advice regarding ICT policy and regulation.
8. Participating in and benefiting from studies on specific ICT related topics.

Before his appointment as Director General in July 2017, Mr. Masambu had served as Deputy Director General and Director of Technical Affairs at ITSO for seven years. Prior to 2010 when Mr.

Masambu joined ITSO, he served as founding Executive Director of Uganda .Communications Commission (UCC).

In line with Section 5(h) of the Uganda Communications Act 2013, one of the functions of UCC is to coordinate and collaborate with relevant national and international organisations, including ITSO, in matters relating to communications.

The Act, under Section 5(d), further empowers UCC to “to process applications for the allocation of satellite orbital locations.”

About ITSO

ITSO was established in 1973 in response to the UN General Assembly Resolution 1721 (XVI) that sought to make satellite communication technology available to all countries of the world on a non-discriminatory basis.

During the 24th Assembly of Parties in 2000, member states agreed to restructure and privatize ITSO by establishing a private company supervised by an inter-governmental organization operating in accordance with the ITSO Agreement.

Consequently, in 2001 the space system was transferred to the private company - Intelsat - to provide global telecommunication services on a commercial basis, leaving ITSO as a supervisory organisation responsible to ensure that Intelsat fulfills the Core Principles of the ITSO Agreement.

The Core Principles are:

1. Maintain global connectivity and satellite coverage

2. Serve its lifeline connectivity customers
3. Provide non-discriminatory access to the Intelsat system

To enable the proper functioning of the space system, frequency assignments associated with relevant orbital locations (Common Heritage) were made available to Intelsat for its use through the ITSO Parties, and USA and UK who were selected to serve as Notifying Administrations.

Based in Washington D.C, ITSO's primary role is to supervise and monitor Intelsat's provision of international public telecommunications satellite services as specified in the Public Services Agreement (PSA) entered between ITSO and Intelsat.

Alongside the decision to endorse Mr. Masambu for another term as Director General, delegates attending ITSO's Fortieth Assembly of Parties (AP-40) deliberated on the future of the ITSO Agreement and agreed to maintain the status quo.

GOOGLE FRONTS 'BARD' TO OUTSMART CHATGPT



Google is girding for a battle of wits in the field of artificial intelligence with "Bard," a conversational service aimed at countering the popularity of the ChatGPT tool backed by Microsoft.

Bard initially will be available exclusively to a group of "trusted testers" before being widely released later this year, according to a blog post from Google CEO Sundar Pichai.

Google's chatbot is supposed to be able to explain complex subjects such as outer space discoveries in terms simple enough for a child to understand. It also claims the service will perform other more mundane tasks, such as providing tips for planning a party, or lunch ideas based on what food is left in a refrigerator. Pichai didn't say in his post whether Bard will be able to write prose in the vein of William Shakespeare, the playwright

who apparently inspired the service's name.

"Bard can be an outlet for creativity, and a launchpad for curiosity," Pichai wrote.

Google announced Bard's existence less than two weeks after Microsoft disclosed it's pouring billions of dollars into OpenAI, the San Francisco-based maker of ChatGPT and other tools that can write readable text and generate new images.

Microsoft's decision to up the ante on a \$1 billion investment that it previously made in OpenAI in 2019 intensified the pressure on Google to demonstrate that it will be able to keep pace in a field of technology that many analysts believe will be as transformational as personal computers, the internet and smartphones have been in various stages over the past 40 years.



In a report recently, CNBC said a team of Google engineers working on artificial intelligence technology "has been asked to prioritize working on a response to ChatGPT."

Bard had been a service being developed under a project called "Atlas," as part of Google's "code red" effort to counter the success of ChatGPT, which has attracted tens of millions of users since its general release late last year, while also raising concerns in schools about its ability to write entire essays for students.

Pichai has been emphasizing the importance of artificial intelligence for the past six years, with one of the most visible byproducts materializing in 2021 as part of a system called "Language Model for Dialogue Applications," or LaMDA, which will be used to power Bard.

Google also plans to begin incorporating LaMDA and other artificial intelligence advancements into its dominant search engine to provide more helpful answers to the increasingly complicated questions being posed by its billions of users. Without providing a specific timeline, Pichai indicated the artificial intelligence tools will be deployed in Google's search in the near future.

In another sign of Google's deepening commitment to the field, Google announced last week that it is investing in and partnering with Anthropic, an AI startup led by some former leaders at OpenAI. Anthropic has also built its own AI chatbot named Claude and has a mission centered on AI safety.

Source: AP

What is ChatGPT?

ChatGPT is an AI chatbot developed by San Francisco-based startup OpenAI. OpenAI was co-founded in 2015 by Elon Musk and Sam Altman and is backed by well-known investors — most notably Microsoft.

It is one of several examples of generative AI. These are tools that allow users to enter written prompts and receive new human-like text or images and videos generated by the AI.

The chatbot signed up 1 million in the five days after its release, according to a December 5, 2022 tweet from Altman. By January 2023, ChatGPT had amassed 100 million monthly active users only two months into its launch, making it the fastest-growing consumer application in history.

It took TikTok nine months to reach 100 million users and Instagram two and a half years.

January 31, 2023 was the biggest-ever day for ChatGPT, with its website garnering a record 28 million daily visits, according to data from Similarweb. That was up 165% from a month ago.

Source: CNBC

FROM **RCDF** TO **UCUSAF**

The year 2022 witnessed the rebranding of Rural Communications Development Fund (RCDF) to Uganda Communications Universal Services and Access Fund (UCUSAF) to accommodate the Fund's universal access mandate that extends beyond rural areas.



TOP 10 HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022

Operated by UCC at arm's length, RCDF was established to promote universal access to communication services, especially for the unserved and underserved areas and communities in Uganda.

Rebranding workshops were held in Kampala, Masindi, Gulu, Mbale and Mbarara to re-engage with stakeholders, explain the rationale for the move and articulate the Fund's mandate.

Through UCUSAF, the Government of Uganda has implemented several programmes, including the following:

1. Establishing ICT labs in over 1,000 schools.
2. Internet connectivity in schools and border areas.

3. Extension of telecommunications infrastructure in commercially unviable areas.
4. ICT4Farmers programme to transform smallholder agriculture into sustainable profitable enterprises through ICTs.
5. ICTs for PWDs, including digital skilling and assistive technologies.
6. Digital skilling for women, SMEs, PWDs, teachers, etc.

UCC/UCUSAF undertakes these initiatives through strategic partnerships with stakeholders such as Ministry of Education and Sports, Federation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), PWD groups such as NUDIPU and NUWODU, and Uganda National Farmer's Federation (UNFFE).



TONFERA – DO NOT CON ME.

Launching the anti-phone fraud campaign code-named Tonfera was one of the highlights of 2022. The goal of the campaign is to inform, educate and empower consumers to beware of and know how to deal with phone-based fraud.

COVID-19 inspired lockdowns led to an increase in the use of ICTs in everyday life. While this is a welcome development, it has expanded opportunities for fraud that manifests in many forms, including bafere (fraudsters).

One of the bafere's favourite tricks is to call random phone numbers and claim to be UCC or telecom operators' staff seeking to upgrade or verify SIM card or mobile money accounts in a bid to obtain unsuspecting customers' PINs.



Through the Tonfera campaign, UCC works with stakeholders, including telecom operators and the Uganda Police, to amplify awareness so as to build confidence in digital finance services and to protect consumers.

Together, we can frustrate bafere!

DIGITAL FINANCE SECURITY



To enhance the security and integrity of digital financial platforms, UCC established the Digital Financial Services (DFS) security lab in partnership with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

Through this facility, UCC seeks to enhance the usage of ICT-based financial transactions by building the confidence of consumers in their safety. The lab is dedicated to auditing the security and safety of ICT-based financial service applications. Besides partnering with ITU, the UN specialised agency for ICTs, UCC also worked in collaboration with local financial service stakeholders, including the central bank and Uganda Bankers Association, to achieve this milestone.

As part of the project, which was launched at UCC House in Bugolobi on Africa Telecommunications Day, 7th December 2022, training sessions and workshops were organized for technical persons operating the system.

SIMU KLEAR – KNOW YOUR PHONE

SIMU KLEAR is the name given to the campaign that was launched in 2022 to raise awareness about the dangers of illegitimate mobile communication devices.

These are mobile phones that have fake International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) or are not type-approved. Such devices pose risks to the user's health, the environment, cybersecurity, and lower the overall quality of experience for the consumer.

The campaign was conceived to educate consumers about the risks associated with illegitimate phones and how they can verify their devices by using tools such as *197*4#. The campaign has leveraged partnerships with key stakeholders such as Kampala traders, Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), law enforcement and consumer advocacy organisations to address different aspects of this challenge.

SIMU KLEAR is a 3-phase campaign involving



stakeholder engagement, consumer awareness/sensitization, and enforcement.

Through this campaign, UCC seeks to empower consumers to make better and informed decisions about their mobile device choices and to protect themselves from the dangers associated with illegitimate mobile communication devices, as well as curbing phone theft.

CONSUMER AWARENESS



In line with one of its key functions – consumer protection – UCC conducted consumer help camps across the country to address a variety of consumer related issues.

Consumer awareness activities were held in the West Nile sub-region, Sembabule, at the Railway Grounds in Kampala, as well as at Lugogo during the UMA Trade Fair.

In West Nile, UCC held the



following engagements: a consumer help camp at Kubala Market in Terego district; a consumer help camp at Bidi Bidi refugee camp in Yumbe district; Girls-In-ICT Day commemoration, including a weeklong robotics camp for schoolgirls in Yumbe district, and a series of radio and TV shows.

The weeklong activities climaxed in the consumer parliament held in Arua City on

World Consumer Rights Day – March 15. The consumer parliament brings together Government, regulators, operators, and consumers to discuss service delivery in the communications sector.

Through these activities, UCC seeks engagement with consumers to address their needs while enhancing communication services' user satisfaction.

PROMOTING LOCAL CONTENT

Over the years, UCC has undertaken several initiatives to enhance the quality and quantity of local audiovisual content with a view to harness the potential of the creative industry to generate employment and contribute to socio-economic development.

Such initiatives have included the introduction of local content quotas for broadcasters, the annual Uganda Film Festival (UFF) and related capacity building activities, and the Content Development Support Programme.

Related to this agenda, UCC hosted Nikita Adams, an executive at the Warner Bros Studios, in November 2022.

Ms. Adams met film directors, script writers, actors, producers, cinematographers, and

media representatives, among others during her visit. She advised them on how to turn creations into business and how to pitch films to attract desired revenue and recognition targets.

Official engagements aside, Adams was treated to a truly Ugandan experience through exposure to local food, culture, night life and scenery.

Other 2022 highlights of the audio-visual sector included continued support, promotion, and marketing of local content through sponsorship of filmmakers to attend international film festivals such as the Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) in Nigeria, where two home-grown films emerged winners in the Best Animation and Best Achievement in Cinematography categories respectively.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COMMUNICATIONS

Publishing masterclasses held in four universities (Kyambogo University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Ndejje University and Busitema University) were one of the highlights and pre-conference activities leading up to the National Conference on Communications (NCC) in May 2022.

The College of Engineering, Design, Art, and Technology (CEDAT) at Makerere University, and the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), jointly organised the 7th National Conference on Communications.

The Commission initiated the conference in 2010 to offer students, researchers, academia, and practitioners a platform to identify new research challenges, share solutions and discuss issues relevant to the communications sector in Uganda.

This year, organisers added the National Student Challenge in Cyber Security, which is part of the Africa-wide picoCTF-Africa competition, and a school ICT club component, aiming to facilitate networking of young students with industry professionals, to the menu of NCC activities.



*Minister of State for ICT & National Guidance
Hon. Godfrey Kabbyanga addressing NCC 2022*



CEOs TALK CYBERSECURITY

On 5th April 2022, UCC hosted the 2nd Annual CEO Cybersecurity Breakfast, which was attended by, among others, the African Telecommunications Union (ATU) Secretary General, John Omo. The Ag. Executive Director Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), Eng. Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo, used the occasion to challenge CEOs of telecommunication companies to consider cybersecurity as an investment rather than an expense.

“One of the things we hope to achieve from this CEO Breakfast is that the CEOs start to appreciate that they shouldn’t look at cybersecurity as an expense but as an investment,” she said.

“You are investing in security the same way you invest in a boundary wall or burglar proofing for your house.”

The Cybersecurity Breakfast, whose theme was, “Cybersecurity for Mobile Financial Services in the Telecommunication Sector: A Growing Challenge”, brought together CEOs to deliberate on cybersecurity considering increased risks.

The event attracted key players in the telecommunication and banking sectors, including the Bank of Uganda Executive Director Supervision, Twinemanzi Tumubweine, the former CEO of MTN Uganda Wim Vanhelleputte, and his Airtel Uganda counterpart Manoj Murali.

UGANDA WINS ITU VOTE



On behalf of the Government of Uganda, UCC coordinates engagements with the International Community on matters relating to ICT.

In line with this mandate, UCC played an active role as Uganda secured a hard-fought victory to retain membership of the ITU Council, representing Region D (Africa) for the cycle 2022-2026 during the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Bucharest, Romania, in September – October 2022.

The ITU Council is the governing body of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The race had 17 African countries competing for 13 slots. Other winners were: Kenya, Ghana, Egypt, Tanzania, Algeria, Morocco, Senegal, Nigeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Rwanda, and South Africa.

Meanwhile, the International Telecommunication Satellite Organisation (ITSO) Assembly of Parties meeting in Washington DC, endorsed Uganda's Patrick Masambu for a four-year term as Director General of the organization.

Uganda also participated in the ITU World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in Kigali, among other international engagements during the year under review.



TV ACCESS FOR PWDs

On the regulatory policy side, this year saw UCC finalize the transition of the broadcasters to the new 5-year, technology neutral broadcasting licensing regime. The new broadcasting licensing regime allows licensed broadcasters to explore different technologies to deliver their broadcast content. This change was necessary to adapt to the evolving nature of the industry, where content is now available in multimedia form. By adopting longer licenses that are not tied to specific technologies, UCC aims to foster a more flexible and innovative environment.

Still on policy and regulatory instruments,

UCC launched new Guidelines for Television Access for Persons with Disabilities, following countrywide stakeholder engagement and consultations.

The guidelines, launched during the Annual Broadcasting Conference at Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala in December, set out the requirements for television access services that include subtitling or captioning, sign language and audio description.

Through these guidelines, UCC seeks to promote inclusivity in the access and consumption of communication services, including television service for Persons with Disabilities.



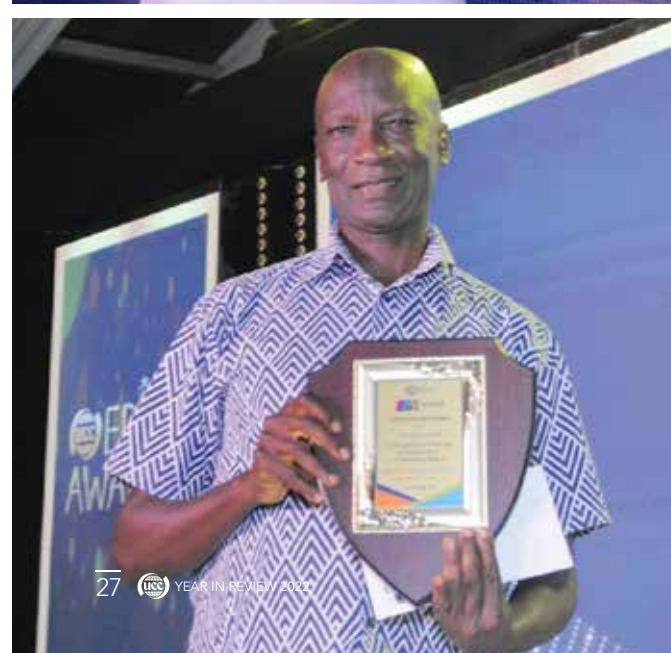
With COVID-19 control measures relaxed since January 2022, UCC staff were once again able to mix and mingle, for both work and pleasure. Among others, three events that stood out were the team building activity at Busiika in August, EPIC Awards gala in November, and Thanksgiving in December.

The story of how it went down at those 3 events can best be told by the images we captured:



PICTORIAL





PICTORIAL





'I AM BECAUSE WE ARE, AND BECAUSE WE ARE, THEREFORE I AM'

The highlight of our Corporate Social Responsibility interventions in 2022 was the donation of critical medical equipment to Kawempe National Referral Hospital.

Uganda Communications Commission donated assorted medical equipment to Kawempe Referral Hospital that medical staff say will go a long way in improving service delivery at the facility.

The equipment worth UGX 81 million was handed over during an event held at the hospital in conjunction with corporate partners, Stanbic Bank, the coordinators of the Corporate Safe-Motherhood CSR initiative, and MTN Uganda. The chief guest at the event was the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Dr. Diana Atwiine.

The equipment comprise 9 CTG (CardioTocoGraphy) machines and 9 Pediatric nebulizers procured from Joint Medical Stores.

CTG (CardioTocoGraphy) machines are used to continuously monitor and record the fetal heart rate obtained via an ultrasound transducer placed on the mother's abdomen. The equipment is used in pregnancy and during delivery as a method of assessing fetal wellbeing, predominantly in pregnancies with increased risk



of complications. Pediatric Nebulizers, on the other hand, are used to support babies in medical breathing distress situations.

In brief remarks, UCC Ag. Executive Director Eng. Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo said the Commission's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy is guided by the African Ubuntu philosophy, which states: "I am because we are, and because we are, therefore I am."

She explained that the policy puts health first because UCC believes in the proverb: "He/she who has health, has hope. And he/she who has hope, has everything."

According to the Kawempe National Referral Hospital

administration, acquisition of this equipment will significantly improve health service delivery at the hospital.

"While we are aware that Uganda's maternal mortality and infant mortality indicators have improved tremendously over time, thanks to the efforts of the Government through Ministry of Health, we believe that together we can achieve even more success," the UCC Ag. Executive Director said.

"No mother should lose her life while trying to give new life, and every new life should get a chance to live to its full potential," she added.



The Commission signed MoUs with three different organisations to facilitate execution of its mission.

To effectively drive the development of a robust communications sector in Uganda, Uganda Communications Commission needs partners across the public and private sectors.

Some of these partnerships have been formalised in form of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) such as those signed with Bank of Uganda, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) and Atomic Energy Council (AEC) during the year 2022.

**DEEPENING
STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT
THROUGH
MoUs**

UCC-AEC

On 19th July 2022, UCC signed an MoU with the Atomic Energy Council (AEC) to establish and enhance a framework for addressing issues relating to safety of the sources of non-ionizing radiation in the communications sector. AEC is the Government body charged with ensuring radiation safety.

Signing on behalf of UCC, Ag. ED Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo observed that the two institutions have “a common purpose of providing protection and safety to the public and our environment.” Her counterpart, Noah Deogratius Luwalira, the Atomic Energy Council CEO, said the MoU



would help to establish a regulatory framework for non-ionizing radiation and to ensure that telecom operators do not exceed the safe limits.

UCC-DPP

The UCC-DPP MoU that was signed on 23rd August 2022 seeks to foster collaboration in a



bid to improve the quality of investigations and prosecution of cybercrime and other communications related cases, including enhanced understanding of digital evidence.

Eng. Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo and Justice Jane Frances Abodo signed on behalf of their respective organisations during the signing ceremony at the latter's head office in Kampala.

Owing to the technical and sophisticated nature of some of the crimes committed through communications channels, UCC sought and was granted a license by the DPP to prosecute some of the cybercrime and related offences.

UCC - BoU

UCC also signed an MoU with Bank of

Uganda on 9th November 2022, binding the two regulators to collaboration in the promotion of a safe and secure digital financial services ecosystem in Uganda.

The mandate to licence, approve, regulate, oversee, and supervise payment services providers, payment systems operators and issuance of payment instruments operated over communications platforms cuts across both agencies, and therefore requires their co-operation to promote safety and enhance consumer experience.

The two agencies have previously worked together on the Mobile Money Guidelines 2013 and a Memorandum of Understanding in 2016. However, the enactment of the National Payment Systems Act in 2020 has necessitated an updated MoU.

While the Central Bank has the statutory mandate to, among others, license, regulate and oversee the provision of payments services, operation of payment systems, and issuance of payment instruments, UCC has the statutory mandate to, among others, license, regulate and monitor the provision of communication services and related value-added services.



UCC AS A WORKPLACE - A Graduate Trainee's Experience



Kenneth Alwong

Joining UCC as a graduate trainee is a dream come true for many a young graduate. KENNETH ALWONG, a recent recruit, shares his experience:

"You have to go wholeheartedly into anything in order to achieve anything worth having," said Frank Lloyd Wright.

One of my greatest aspirations has always been to work alongside a competent group of experts, and that came along with the opportunity to join Uganda Communications Commission as a graduate trainee early this year.

As a young telecommunication engineer, the Department of ICT and Research's Service Development Unit, where I am embedded, has given me an opportunity to feed my curiosity about developments in the information and communications technology sector. This placement has exposed me to the kind of knowledge and skills that I could never have imagined when I first reported at UCC House in Bugolobi.

This placement has exposed me to the kind of knowledge and skills that I could never have imagined when I first reported at UCC House in Bugolobi.

Today, the world is developing faster than at any time in human history. Cutting-edge technologies such as 5G, digital audio broadcasting, and the Internet of Things (IOTs) are all the rage. In the near future, social media networks as we know them will evolve into more engaging and immersive platforms, as conceived by Facebook's Metaverse (virtual world).

Yet, the more and faster technology evolves, the more regulators such as UCC will need to be on top of their game to help maintain a high level of confidence in the new innovations.

That explains why today, UCC is not only a communications sector regulator but also a



partner, an enabler in promoting safe and efficient use of ICTs.

To be able to not only observe but also participate in this regulatory evolution as a graduate trainee is an opportunity that I will forever cherish.

But as we all know, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. So, on the lighter side of life, the gym is one my favourite places at UCC House, after 5:00 pm. Here, I get to wind down by working out, while enjoying banter with my colleagues.

Besides the gym, one of my most memorable experiences during my stay here was the team-building exercise at Busiika Extreme Adventure in August. It was an event that helped me and other new staff to blend into this great community by creating a space that allowed everyone to relax, mingle and have fun.

Team Platinum Oyee!

The author is a Graduate Trainee, Service Development Unit, Department of ICT and Research.



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UCC AS A WORKPLACE - A Graduate Trainee's Experience



Elizabeth Rukundo

I feel blessed to have got this opportunity to work with Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) as a Finance Graduate Trainee (FGT) at the head office in Bugolobi.

This experience has calmed my negative attitude towards public offices in as far as inclusion of People with Disabilities (PWDs) in the working environment is concerned.

I am happy that the UCC workplace is not only accessible for people like me, especially with a lift and a ramp, but also has the necessary equipment and sufficient materials and room for learning/training purposes.

I have also noted that staff I have met across all the departments are generally kind, welcoming, supportive, understanding, and quite keen to share their knowledge and skills.

This workplace has given me an opportunity to experience first-hand the adoption of modern information and communication technologies and to appreciate the key role of regulation in this fast-transforming communications sector.

Personally, I have been fascinated by tools such as Outlook and Navision, which I have found to be very helpful in my work under the guidance of my supervisor.



Personally, I have been fascinated by tools such as Outlook and Navision, which I have found to be very helpful in my work under the guidance of my supervisor.

I am grateful for the opportunity UCC has given me and the warmth and kindness I

continue to enjoy from the management and staff of this organisation.

The author is a Graduate Trainee in the Department of Finance.

MOBILE MONEY AWARENESS TIPS

- **Report to your Service Provider** by dialing **100** in case of **suspicious messages** or **calls**

- Don't **share** your **Mobile-money PIN** to **relatives** and **friends** for convenience

- Don't **show** your **PIN number** to **Mobile money agents**



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Mukite: 'Serving To Grow And Growing To Serve'



Our new Head of Public and International Relations, Rebecca Mukite, is only four months old on the job, having been promoted to the position in October 2022. She shared with 'UCC Year-in-Review' her experiences and reflections on the new job so far:

One of the highlights of 2022 in the context of International Relations was your elevation to the position of Head Public and International Relations. Congratulations! How have you found it so far?

Humbling, very engaging, interesting, dynamic, challenging, but going fairly. It has been and remains hectic. The dry run I undertook in an acting capacity helped me get the feel of the task at hand. There remains so much to learn and a diversity in responsibilities, which leaves a cocktail of excitement and anxiety, but I'm thrilled to have this opportunity and I'm doing my best to adapt to the variances. I'm grateful for the support of my Director, the Ag. Executive Director, and Top Management Team, as well as a team that compliments my deficiencies. I'm looking forward to serving and growing along the journey.

Briefly tell the reader about the role of Corporate Affairs in general and Public & International Relations in particular.

The role of Corporate Affairs encompasses all of the activities UCC undertakes to manage its interactions with stakeholders, including government, operators, employees, customers, the public. The goal of Corporate Affairs is to maintain a positive image of the organization



and to build and maintain strong relationships with strategic stakeholders and the public.

Public & International Relations is a specific aspect of Corporate Affairs that focuses on managing the company's relationships with local and international stakeholders. It helps to build trust and credibility with stakeholders and ensures that UCC's brand image and reputation are protected.

It also seeks to promote UCC's and Uganda's brand, communicate key messages, as well as listen in to the needs of the stakeholders. This involves developing and executing communication strategies, managing media relations, lobbying, and representing UCC and Uganda at international events.

How did COVID-19 affect your work and how relieved were you to see a return to normalcy in 2022?

The sudden shift to remote work and the widespread changes to the global economy and political landscape presented new challenges and required us to adapt quickly.

The pandemic heightened the importance of clear, concise and accurate communication, as we sought to reassure stakeholders and maintain trust in the face of rapidly changing circumstances. The need for timely and effective crisis management also became more pronounced because it was learning on the go, especially for a regulator of communication services which at that time were the backbone for all aspects of continuity in social, economic, and service delivery needs.

Despite these challenges, the return to a more normal environment in 2022 was a welcome development for us in the Public & International Relations Unit. It brought us back into contact with our

closest partners – UCC staff to re-engage with stakeholders, resume in-person events, and refocus on longer-term initiatives.

It was a busy year with WTDC in Kigali, ITSO Assembly in Washington D.C., and ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Bucharest, among others; how much value did Uganda gain from these meetings?

The value that Uganda gained from participating in international meetings such as the WTDC in Kigali, the ITSO in Washington D.C., and the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP) in Bucharest, was in line with the objectives of the delegations to these meetings.

In general, these meetings provide opportunities for Uganda to engage with other member states, exchange ideas and best practices on the global ICT issues, and advance our national interests in the field of ICTs. These interests varied for each of these meetings, and I will not delve into the details.

Through participating in these meetings, Uganda also had an opportunity to showcase and share our national advancements and challenges in the communication sector and to build relationships with other member states and international organizations, and secure support for our ongoing and future initiatives.

It's worth noting that the outcomes of these meetings can take time to materialize and the full value of participating may not be immediately evident. However, by engaging in international forums and building relationships, Uganda is better positioned to advance its interests and achieve its objectives in the long term.

Tell us about Uganda's re-election to the ITU Council; what did it take to pull it off and what does it mean for Uganda?

Uganda's re-election to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council was a significant achievement for the country, demonstrating our commitment to and engagement in the global telecommunications and ICT landscape.



To secure re-election to the ITU Council, we went through a rigorous campaign, which included presenting our case to the ITU membership through bilateral engagements and demonstrating our ability to contribute to the work of the Union. This required a strong commitment from the Government of Uganda, our foreign missions, and the Top Management Team of UCC.

Being a member of the ITU Council gives Uganda a voice in shaping the future of the telecommunications industry and a platform to promote its interests and initiatives. As a member of the Council, Uganda will have the opportunity to represent the interests of Africa to strengthen and consolidate its participation in the development of international telecommunications standards, contribute to the development of international telecommunication policies and strategies, and engage with other nations and organizations on the global stage.

Overall, Uganda's re-election to the ITU Council is a positive outcome for the country and a recognition of our efforts and achievements in the field of telecommunications and information technology. It provides an opportunity for Uganda to continue playing an active role in shaping the future of the industry and to continue advancing its interests on the international stage.

What can UCC staff and external stakeholders expect from the Public & International Relations Unit in 2023?

- Our key priority as a unit is going to be on creating and improving our unit processes to enhance efficiency (time and quality) in delivering services to all our clients, both internal and external.
- Clear, concise, and effective communication: The unit will continue to provide timely, clear, and accurate information to both internal and external stakeholders about the operations, policies, and initiatives of UCC.
- Stakeholder engagement: The unit is going to strengthen its collaboration and partner with other departments to improve the process and outcomes of engaging with all stakeholders, to understand their information needs and concerns and build positive relationships.
- Reputation management and brand strengthening: We intend to work closely with ALL staff to continue building and maintaining a positive reputation and brand strength through brand consistency. UCC staff are our first and strongest brand touch point.
- International relations: We intend to improve and strengthen the quality and outcomes of UCC's participation in international meetings so that there is net benefit to the participating staff, UCC and Uganda.

Last word?

I thank God for ordering my steps to serve HIM through this role. I thank Management for this opportunity to head this very dynamic unit. I look forward to serving the UCC family and all the external stakeholders that this role allows me to engage with in one way or another, as well as to continue growing in skill, character, and form together with my team on this journey, one step at a time.

ED ON BAFERE: CONSUMER IS FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE

BY ENG. IRENE KAGGWA SEWANKAMBO

One of the silver linings associated with the COVID-19 pandemic is the increased usage and dependency on ICTs globally. ICTs supported the continuity of life during lockdowns through uninterrupted communication, access to vital information, e-commerce, online education, remote working, e-services, etc.

However, increased uptake and dependency on ICTs also increased opportunities for fraud that has manifested in many forms, including the bafere (con men or women) phenomenon.

One of the bafere's favourite tricks is to call random phone numbers and claim to be UCC or telecom operators' staff

seeking to upgrade or verify the user's SIM card or mobile money accounts. The phone conversation potentially ends in the mufere wiping out the customer's mobile money balance through trickery and manipulation.

What is UCC doing about this?

UCC agrees with the assertion that if left un-tackled, this vice threatens the public's confidence in the integrity of the mobile financial system. That is why we cannot afford to sit back.

UCC has consistently engaged telecom operators to undertake campaigns cautioning their customers

“

Increased uptake and dependency on ICTs have increased opportunities for fraud, manifesting in many forms, including the bafere phenomenon.



about this challenge. As part of these efforts, the [former] MTN Uganda CEO Mr. Wim Vanhelleputte revealed during the Annual Cybersecurity Breakfast at the UCC Head Office in April 2022 that MTN had teamed up with Airtel Uganda (Managing Director, Mr. Manoj Murali was also present) and other members of their newly formed mobile money association to relaunch an awareness drive for their customers.

In addition, UCC has on its own consistently used engagements in public places across the country, newspapers, radio, TV, and digital platforms to raise awareness about cybersecurity and digital safety.

For example, on March 15, 2022, we hosted a panel discussion on Digital Safety for All to commemorate World Consumer Rights Day. It was during that event, attended by consumer advocacy groups, among other stakeholders, that UCC officially launched its latest drive against fraud in mobile financial services dubbed Tonfera (Don't con me!).

This was followed by the Consumer Awareness Week during which UCC carried out sensitization activities on radio, social media and in public places in the West Nile Region and the mid-West and south-western axes of the country.

This culminated in the televised Communications Consumer Parliament in Arua City on April 29, 2022, during which mobile money fraud was a recurrent subject. Similar campaigns will be conducted in the eastern, north-eastern, mid-northern, and central regions of Uganda in the phases that will follow.

The Tonfera initiative is essentially a call to vigilance on the part of the customer to avoid falling prey to fraudsters. Through this campaign and others before it, we have consistently advised consumers to take note of the following guidelines:

- UCC NEVER calls consumers for any reason. When in doubt, call our tollfree line 0800 222 777.

- Telecom companies NEVER call their consumers seeking verification and/or update or upgrade of SIM cards on phone. When in doubt, dial 100 for clarification from the service provider.
- When called by a mufere, hang up immediately. Do not give them a chance to manipulate you.
- Never give out your PIN and/or one-time password (OTP) to anyone for whatever reason. Do NOT enter any verification codes.
- Report the caller's number to your network provider or UCC immediately. This will facilitate an investigation that includes looking at calling patterns and tracing possible collaborators.
- Take full control of your device by choosing a strong password/PIN and constantly changing it.

In addition to the guidelines above, we urge members of the public to take personal responsibility for their own safety and security by avoiding the following pitfalls:

- If you have not participated in any competition, you cannot be winning prizes.
- Verify the mobile numbers registered using your national ID credentials by dialing *197#
- Report stolen or lost phones to the police immediately and follow through with the service provider to ensure the SIM card is blocked.
- Beware of crafty agents who might use your credentials and biometrics to register multiple SIMs for unscrupulous ends.
- Registration at security checkpoints, meetings or by mobile money agents is a



potential source of vital bio data for baferere.

The Commission appreciates the role played by our partners in combatting mobile money fraud, including the media, service providers, the police, and consumers who consistently report such cases. As a result of this stakeholder collaboration, there are currently 17 ongoing cases, 11 of which are at the level of court hearing, while 6 are still under investigation.

The Commission continues to emphasize that every consumer is his or her own first and last

line of defence. All other intermediate efforts are simply complementary. Be vigilant, be cautious, and be alert whenever using your phone or any other communication device.

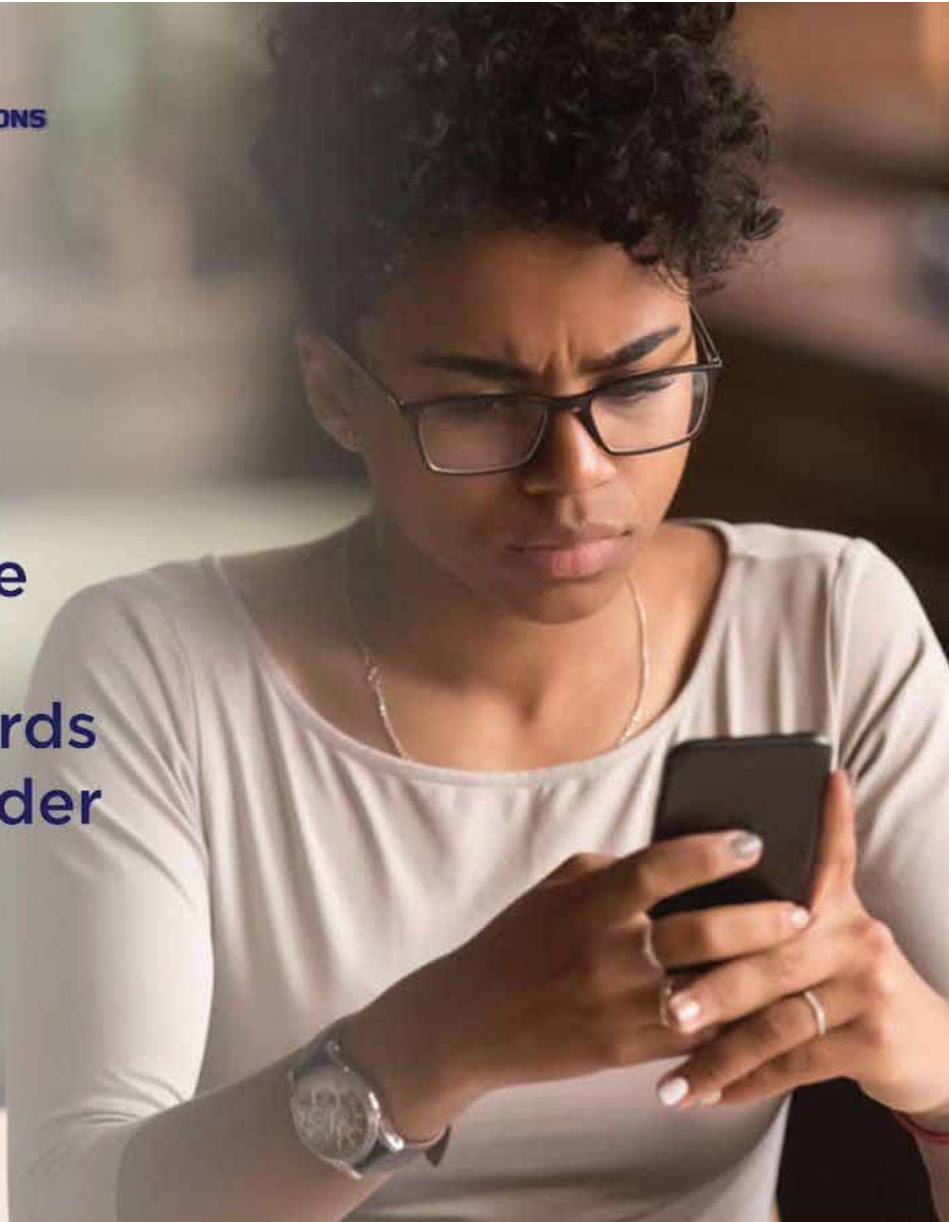
The writer is Ag. Executive Director, Uganda Communications Commission, and this article was first published in New Vision on 12th May, 2022



TONFERA!!!

**Dial *197#
and follow the
prompts to
check SIM Cards
registered under
your NIN.**

#Tonferaaa!!!



'I HAD TO PINCH MYSELF' - RAYMOND

In August 2022, UCC staff were treated to a glamorous event at the Uganda Institute of Communication and Technology (UICT) where excellence was not only celebrated but also rewarded. Raymond Nyakairu, Officer Administration in the Department of Human Resources and Administration was the biggest winner on the night. James Tumusiime caught up with him to relive the moments.

Congratulations on your victory in the UCC EPIC Awards, Raymond

Thank you very much James.

Were you surprised that your colleagues voted for you so overwhelmingly?

I thought I would win one or two awards, but I was surprised that I was voted as the winner for most of the awards for which I was eligible. I was in a state of shock on the night and I had to pinch myself that the moment was real.

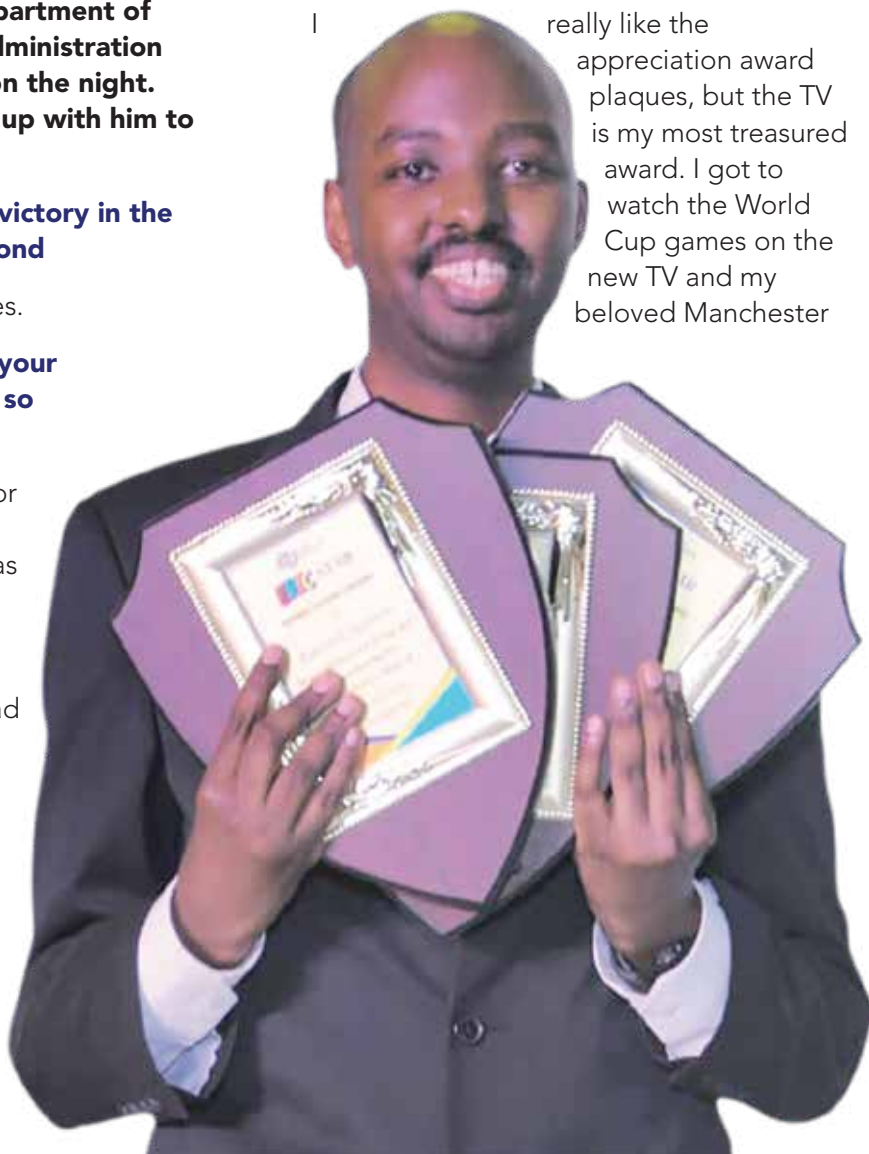
Why do you think they did?

I often receive good feedback and words of appreciation from my colleagues about the great work I am doing. I believe that a lot of them

saw this as an opportunity for me to obtain recognition on a larger scale and that is why they voted for me.

Which one of the many prizes you won do you treasure the most and why?

I really like the appreciation award plaques, but the TV is my most treasured award. I got to watch the World Cup games on the new TV and my beloved Manchester



United have been on a good run of form since I started watching games on the TV.

What would you say are the values that make you exemplary?

I strive to conduct myself in a professional manner in all my interactions with stakeholders.

I endeavor to treat all people with respect, maintain high levels of integrity and quality of work and commit to being a good ambassador of UCC to the external stakeholders with whom I directly interact.

Does the award in any way exert pressure on you to maintain the high standards?

I wouldn't say that it exerts more pressure. It is great to receive recognition for a job well done but I don't do what I do for accolades or awards. I believe that at UCC, we have a hard working and talented group of people and if I do my job to the best of my ability, then I will contribute to the success of other employees in terms of achieving their goals and targets. I am fortunate to work for such an exemplary organization and I try to give all that I can to UCC.

What do you make of the EPIC awards initiative in general?

I am very happy with the initiative. It is a great opportunity to recognize and reward outstanding

Staff and could serve as a motivation for staff to aim for the best standards.

If HR asked you for advice on how to improve the awards, what would you advise?

I don't really have much advice as I believe that the awards and awards night were very well organized. I would maybe suggest starting the nomination period earlier to allow staff more time to fill in the nomination forms.

Last word?

I would like to thank Management and all those involved in organizing the EPIC awards. I would also like to thank all those who voted and congratulate all the winners.



ON DE
WTDC
KIGALI2022



UGANDA PLEDGES \$30M TO BRIDGE DIGITAL DIVIDE

2.9 billion people – or more than one third of the world's population – have never connected to the internet.

KIGALI, RWANDA - The Government of Uganda pledged to commit more than USD 30 million towards initiatives that seek to bridge the digital divide and accelerate socio-economic transformation through universal and meaningful connectivity.

The pledge, equivalent to approximately UGX 112 billion, was made during

Partner2Connect Digital Coalition Roundtable in Kigali, Rwanda, from June 7-9, 2022.

Organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations specialised agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs), the Partner2Connect Digital Coalition was part of the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC).



The pledging event raised USD 18.5 billion from 360 governments, companies and organisations that have embraced the vision for safe, affordable, and meaningful digital connectivity for all by 2030.

Uganda's commitments were announced by the Director, Uganda Communications Universal Services and Access Fund (UCUSAF), Nyombi Thembo, who was part of the delegation to the conference led by Eng. Irene Kaggwa Sewankambo, the Ag. Executive Director, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC).

Uganda made five pledges for commitment adding up to more than USD \$30 million in programmatic and financial pledges under the following focus areas –Connectivity and digital infrastructure; enhancing cyber security; empowering communities and digital inclusion; digital innovation and entrepreneurship.

Pledge 1: Access - Connectivity and digital infrastructure. Under this programme, Uganda pledged USD 6.7 million to drive the expansion of high-speed internet across the country through regulatory obligations, incentives, and subsidization of infrastructure in unserved areas over the next four years.

Pledge 2: Access - Enhancing personal cyber security. This programme will seek to educate and empower internet users to protect themselves from cyber threats as well as strengthen the ecosystem to deal with cyber threats.

Pledge 3: Adoption - Empowering communities (Digital literacy). USD 10 million was committed to facilitate collaboration with stakeholders in digital skilling for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); Persons with Disabilities; girls and women; persons

living in poor communities; youth; and students over the next four years.

Pledge 4: Adoption - Empowering communities (Digital inclusion). This USD 3 million proof of concept programme provides households at the bottom of the pyramid with solar-powered devices preloaded with data and relevant applications and services related to agriculture, education, and e-government. The programme also includes device financing schemes for the middle-income groups to facilitate migration from basic phones to internet-enabled devices.

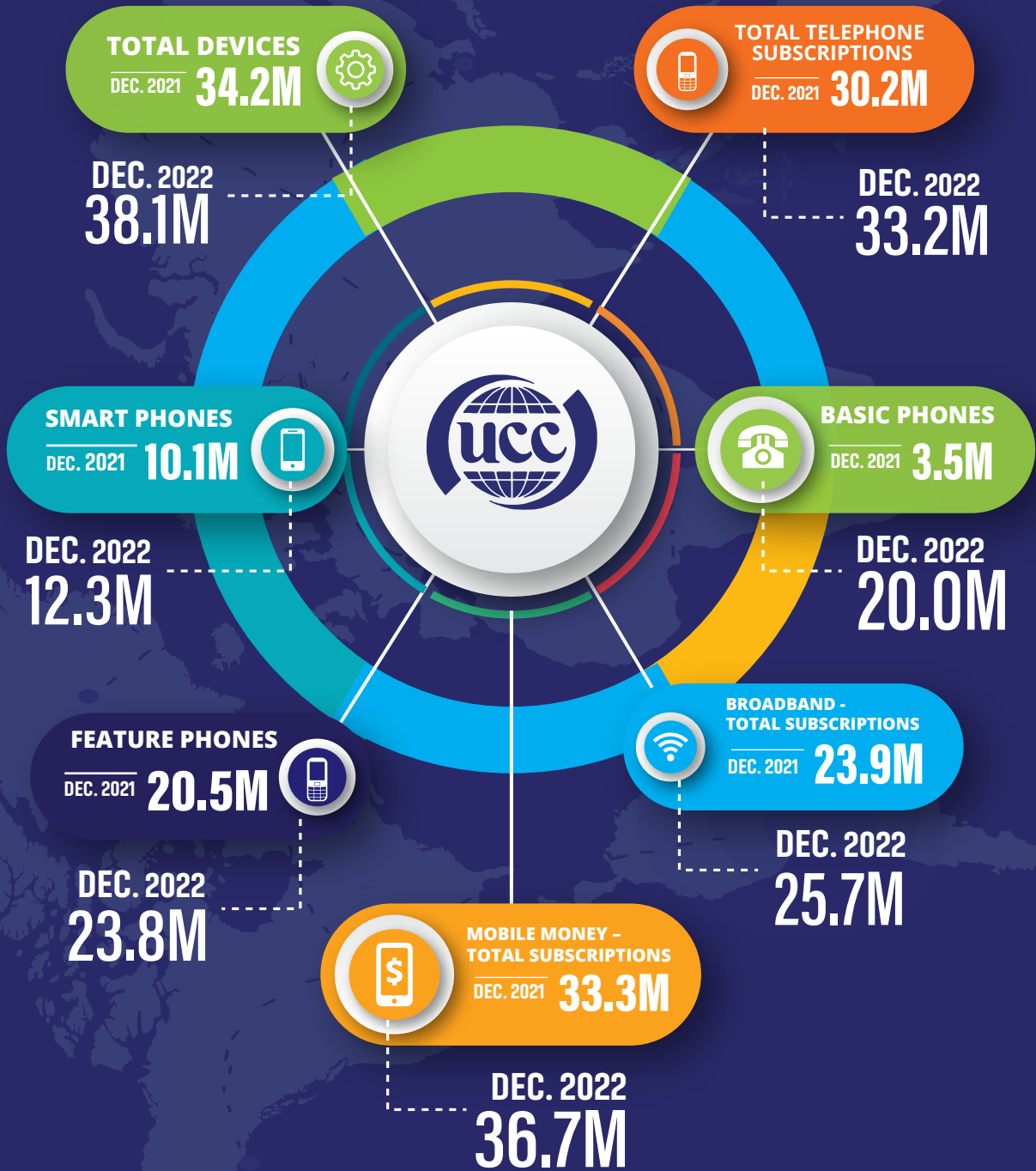
Pledge 5: Value creation - Digital innovation and entrepreneurship. Uganda pledged USD 700,000 to facilitate the implementation of local digital solutions to critical socio-economic challenges, especially in the unserved and underserved areas in a bid to strengthen the digital ecosystem.

The Partner2Connect Digital Coalition is a multi-stakeholder alliance championed by ITU in line with the UN Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Co-operation, to foster meaningful connectivity and digital transformation globally, with a focus on but not limited to hardest-to-connect communities in developing countries.

"The pledges and commitments made in Kigali and in the months leading to this Roundtable send a powerful message that together we can ramp up investments in ICT development to leave no one offline," said former ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao.

A press statement issued after the forum observed that 2.9 billion people – or more than one third of the world's population – have never connected to the internet.

2022 NUMBERS AT A GLANCE



COMING UP...

UCC@25...

The calendar year 2023 is iconic for Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) in aspects that are three-fold.

Not only is UCC celebrating its 25th anniversary, but there will also be simultaneous commemoration of 10 years since regional offices were established in Masindi, Gulu, Mbale and Mbarara, as well as 10 Years of Uganda Film Festival (UFF).

In celebrating these events, UCC aims to increase and strengthen brand awareness; strengthen stakeholder engagement; showcase institutional and sector milestones; strengthen connection with consumers.

The Commission is organizing a media blitz in print, broadcasting and online platforms starting early 2023 to kick off the year-long celebrations.

UCC was established in 1998 to provide regulatory oversight for the communications sector, including telecommunications, broadcasting, radio communications, postal communications, data communication and infrastructure.

UCC was one of the entities born out of the moribund Uganda Posts and Telecommunication, alongside Uganda Telecom, Post Bank and Uganda Post Limited.



The year 1998 marked the beginning of rapid ICT growth and development in Uganda. From 12,000 in October 1998, mobile phone subscribers have since grown to 33 million by December 2022.

Meanwhile, in line with its mandate, UCC introduced the Uganda Film Festival initiative to foster the growth of a viable film industry with knock-on effects on employment, promotion and preservation of the diverse Ugandan cultures and heritage.

Ten years later, there is plenty to celebrate with the film industry experiencing exponential growth in respect to quality, quantity, and human capital development. Local talent and content are gaining international acclaim as Ugandan productions can today not only compete favourably, but also win awards in various international film festivals.



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