

REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

**A REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION & WORLD YOUTH SKILLS
DAY 2025**

Theme:

“AI and education: Preserving human agency in a world of automation”

National Focus:

“Promoting an Employer led TVET system that is effective and meets the needs of the labor market”

No	DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION
1	28/04/2025	Pre-event (Exhibition)	Kololo ceremonial Grounds
2	29/04/2025	Main Event (IDE)	Kololo Ceremonial Grounds
3	15 - 16 July 2025	Post Event (World Youth Skills Day)	Presidents Office Auditorium

FOREWORD

Education is the foundation upon which every great nation is built. It is not only a right; it is a responsibility that we hold in trust for future generations. With Uganda's youth population projected to double by 2040, the new TVET framework focuses on employability, innovation, and entrepreneurship, especially in high-potential fields like technology, construction, agribusiness, and manufacturing.

The rise of artificial intelligence and automation is not merely a technological shift. It is a test of values, wisdom, and humanity. This year's global theme, *AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation*, reminds us that even as machines grow more capable, it is the human mind and heart that must guide progress. Education must remain a space where our children learn, innovate, think critically, lead ethically, and serve with compassion.

Our national theme, *Promoting an Employer Led TVET System which is Functional, Effective and Efficient to Meet the Needs of the Labour Market*, is a clear reflection of where Uganda is headed. Vocational education is no longer a fallback. It is a path of purpose, a key to employment, entrepreneurship, and transformation. When skills are practical, industry-driven, and accessible to all, they unlock the potential of our young people and move the nation forward.

As a Ministry, we are implementing reforms that are bold and necessary. The formation of the TVET Council, shift to modular and competency-based assessments, and the alignment of training with employer expectations are not just institutional changes. They are national priorities and we are laying the groundwork for a system that produces skilled, and values-driven citizens.

Let this Foreword serve as a tribute to our collective resolve of making vocational education not just an alternative, but a first choice for the young people of Uganda. The future we speak of is not distant, It is already being shaped by the partnerships, support and progress we celebrate during the International Day of Education and World Youth Skills Day 2025.



Dr. John C Muyingo

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION & SPORTS (Higher Education),
Also Holding the portfolio of the Minister of Education and Sports**

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The joint commemoration activities of the international day of education and World Youth Skills Day 2025 signified the government's continued commitment in building a responsive and inclusive education system that serves the needs of all learners. This is inline with our National focus of “Promoting an Employer-led TVET System which is Functional, Effective and Efficient to Meet the Needs of the Labor Market. This speaks directly to the transformation we are building in Uganda’s education and skills development agenda.

The success of this celebration, and the broader progress we are making in TVET reforms, has been made possible through the unwavering support of our development partners, private sector collaborators, academia and civil society actors. These efforts are not only financial; they are deeply strategic, timely, and aligned with our shared vision for a modern, inclusive, and demand-driven education system.

We extend our sincere appreciation to **Diplomatic missions;** including Delegation of the European Union to Uganda, Embassy of Ireland in Uganda and Embassy of Belgium in Uganda. We also acknowledge **Development Partners;** including Global Gateway, UNESCO ,UNICEF, UNHCR, Enabel, Fin Church Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council, Welt Hunger Hilfe Uganda, **Civil Society Organisations;** including, Right to play, Education Local Expertise Centre Uganda, Plan International, War Child Canada, Windle International Uganda, Aga Khan Foundation Uganda, FAWE Uganda, GENPUR, ADRA and private sector companies including HUAWEI, Global Network Corporation among others for all your strong financial and technical contribution to the event.

To the technical teams at the Ministry of Education and Sports, your dedication throughout the planning and execution of the educational skills exhibition, the main celebration, and the post-event high-level policy dialogue which was coordinated by the Universal Education Secretariat led by Mr. Lwetutte Gilbert Happy as the National Coordinator, Education Development Partners Technical Skilling Working group which is chaired by Mr. Ham Lukurwe from Enabel and the Education Response Plan Secretariat which coordinated the Education In Emergencies (EiE) working group. These collaborative efforts demonstrated the professionalism and purpose that define this Ministry.



Dr. Kedrace R. Turyagyenda
PERMANENT SECRETARY

SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES / ACTIONS FROM THE EVENT

1. Ugandans are already seeing the benefits of this employer led approach through the Public-Private Partnerships with industries in manufacturing, construction, agribusiness, ICT, oil and gas, Tourism and the creative arts.
2. The exhibition showcased innovations, skills, and talents nurtured through TVET proving that investment in relevant education and training is an investment in national prosperity.
3. Boosting youth employment through an integrated approach combining training, job matching, financial support, and youth participation in programme design and implementation builds a better tomorrow for Ugandans.
4. Attracting youth to TVET is not merely about promoting it as a viable alternative to university education, but about rebranding it as a powerful, aspirational platform for innovation, dignity, and self-reliance
5. Technology is the application of science to solve community problems.
6. Coming from a technical education background with comprehensive hands-on technical and applied managerial skills gives an advantage over those from other education systems in any given assignment.
7. Education is not just about acquiring skills, but also about using them to serve others and fulfill a higher purpose.
8. Education is a basic human right and a key foundation for individuals to reach their full potential, as well as for societal and economic growth
9. Artificial Intelligence offers significant opportunities for education if guided by clear ethical principles stressing that the technology should complement the human and social aspects of learning rather than replace them
10. The UN remains committed to improving education infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development to build a skilled and competitive workforce.
11. Promoting inclusive and responsible use of AI and similar technologies to enhance quality education and create jobs.

12. Boosting youth employment through an integrated approach combining training, job matching, financial support, and youth participation in programme design and implementation
13. Supporting investment in the development of digital technologies and public infrastructure to achieve universal connectivity, close the digital divide, advance e-commerce, and deepen financial inclusion.
14. While the possibilities of technology were exciting, it could not replace the basics of education.
15. The Education Development Partners announced the recent approval of the GPE-funded ULEARN programme for Uganda, which would support foundational learning and strengthen the education system, focusing on equity, inclusion, and resilience
16. TVET was now positioned at the vital nexus between education and the world of work, facilitating the transition of young people and adults into employment, supporting lifelong learning, and driving Uganda's socioeconomic transformation.
17. Almost every district now hosted a public TVET institution, with only 45 out of 178 Local Governments yet to be fully covered. She added that each region also benefited from a Centre of Excellence delivering internationally benchmarked training.
18. Youth should now march towards the power of TVET to transform their economy and society.
19. The celebration was not merely to acknowledge the power of skills training but to reaffirm a commitment towards building a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system that is responsive to the needs of young people and the national labour market.
20. The showcased innovations skills and talents are proof that investment in relevant education and training is an investment in the nation's prosperity.
21. H.E the President insisted that government schools must plan to eliminate school charges.
22. free education for all in Uganda and affluence for all as a global ideal.

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INTRODUCTION

In 2024, Uganda actively participated in the **African Union Year of Education**, marking a historic milestone in promoting education as a tool for socioeconomic transformation. Building on these achievements, the **2025 IDE celebrations** will focus on **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** as a pivotal mechanism for fostering youth empowerment, addressing unemployment, and promoting socio economic inclusion, particularly in marginalized communities and refugee-hosting districts.

The 2025 International Day of Education inspires reflections on the power of education to equip individuals and communities to navigate, understand and influence technological advancement. The national celebrations aim to reposition TVET as a preferred and attractive pathway, emphasizing its critical role in equipping youth with practical skills for self-reliance, innovation, and economic participation. This year's commemoration seeks to inspire a paradigm shift, ensuring that TVET is not merely seen as a fallback option but a dynamic driver of inclusive development.

RATIONALE

The 2025 IDE celebrations are rooted in the understanding that TVET is an essential pillar for achieving sustainable development. Key drivers for this year's focus include:

1. **Youth Unemployment:** Addressing Uganda's rising youth unemployment rates by equipping young people with market-relevant skills.
2. **Expanding access and inclusiveness:** Creating awareness of TVET among parents with learners and other stakeholders on available options and pathways.
3. **Social Economic Empowerment:** Promoting entrepreneurship, innovation, self-employment among youth and adults
4. Advancing technology and innovation as a key driver to development.

Objectives

1. To raise Awareness on the transformative potential of TVET in reducing unemployment and fostering social-economical development in Uganda.
2. To foster Partnerships among TVET providers and the World of Work including policymakers, development partners, the private sector, and civil society.
3. To showcase the products and innovations from TVET actors

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The IDE 2025 celebrations were implemented through a multi-stakeholder approach, with leadership from the Ministry of Education and Sports and active participation from:

1. Government Ministries and Agencies
2. Development Partners
3. Private Sector (TVET employers and industry leaders)
4. Civil Society and NGOs
5. Media (to amplify awareness and coverage)

The celebration was threefold starting with an educational skills exhibition in form of a pre-event, the National celebrations at Kololo Ceremonial grounds bringing key stakeholders together as the main event and a high level policy dialogue to commemorate the World Youth Skills Day at the office of the president conference hall as a post-event.

The IDE 2025 celebrations leveraged the TVET Act and Policy framework, which prioritizes: **Demand-Driven Skills Development:** Aligning TVET programs and courses with labor market needs, **Inclusivity:** Promoting access for all, regardless of socioeconomic status or location and **Sustainability:** Sustainable funding, Integrating green skills and sustainable practices into TVET curricula.

EDUCATIONAL SKILLS EXHIBITION

This TVET skills expo was an opportunity for various stakeholders including skilling hubs, students from various TVET institutions, government MDA's, civil society organisation programs and Education Development Partners funded projects to showcase skills, innovations and prototypes.



The Exhibition was opened by the Hon. Peter Ogwang who was received by the Chairperson of the International Day of Education Organising committee, Ms. Atima Frances, Director Education Standards together with the Exhibition sub Committee led by Dr. Eddy Turyatamba, Asst. Commissioner Vocational Education, Ministry of Education and Sports.

Remarks by Minister of State for Sports, Ministry of Education and Sports



The Minister of State for Education and Sports, Hon. Peter Ogwang extended his greetings to Partners from industry and private sector, representatives of educational institutions, members of the media fraternity, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. He said it was a great honour and privilege for him to join them at the opening of the exhibition as Uganda marked the international Day of Education 2025.

He noted that the celebration was not only about recognizing the power of skills training, but also about recommitting to building a TVET system that directly and urgently responds to the needs of young people, and the country's labor market. He emphasized that this year's localized theme "Promoting an Employer-Led TVET System which is Functional, Effective, and Efficient to Meet the Needs of the Labour Market," was timely.

He pointed out that as Uganda moves towards achieving Vision 2040, and the Sustainable Development Goals, there was an urgent need to strengthen Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in order to produce a workforce that is skilled, innovative, and ready for the challenges of a dynamic and competitive global economy. He stressed that an employer-led TVET system ensures training that is aligned with industry demands, bridging the gap between

classroom learning and the real world of work. He highlighted that the NRM government had recognised this and made TVET and skilling a priority, and that the Ministry of Education and Sports under the leadership of the First Lady, Maama Janet Museveni was fully committed to reforms that engage employer curriculum design, internship placements, and assessments, promote apprenticeship programs, equip TVET institutions with modern technologies, and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation among young people.

The Minister further stated that Ugandans were already seeing the benefits of this employer led approach through the Public-Private Partnerships with industries in manufacturing, construction, agribusiness, ICT, oil and gas, Tourism and the creative arts. He called upon more employers to step forward and be part of shaping the future workforce of Uganda.

He said that the exhibition showcased innovations, skills, and talents nurtured through TVET proving that investment in relevant education and training is an investment in national prosperity. Addressing the youth, he reminded them that they were the engine of Uganda's development and encouraged them to take advantage of every opportunity, remain resilient, be innovative, and ready to lead the country into a brighter future.

In conclusion, he expressed gratitude to development partners, Private sector champions, TVET institutions, and the organizing committee for their tireless efforts in making the event successful. He urged everyone to work together in building a TVET system that empowers every learner, strengthens industries, and moves Uganda Forward.

The educational skills exhibition was then officially opened and the Hon. The minister thanked all the participants and invoked God's blessings upon everyone.

The exhibitions included a demonstration by the nursing school at Rubaga hospital on offering first aid to people who have got accidents on the roads.



Various exhibitors from cross the country came together to display TVET works





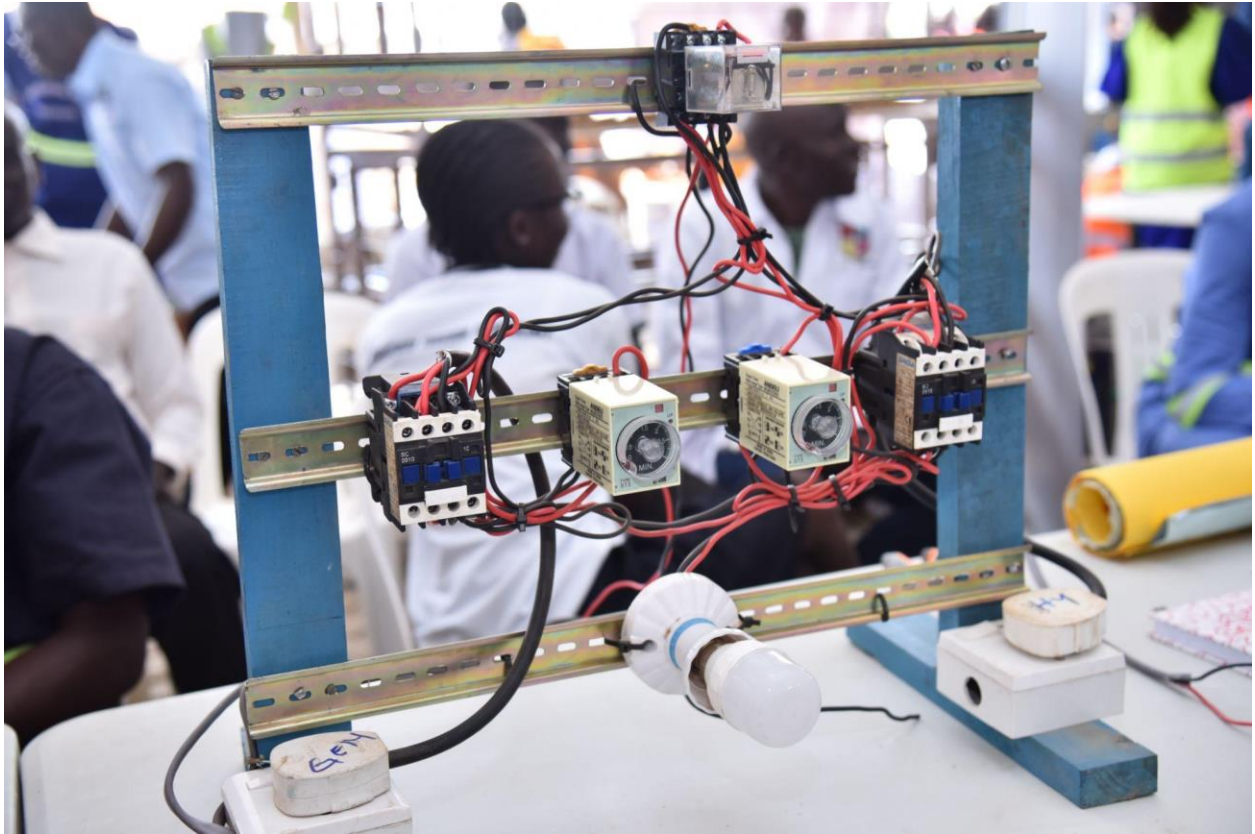












MAIN EVENT

The main event was officiated by H.E the President of Uganda and the First Lady / Minister of Education and Sports who were received by a delegation consisting of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports, Director of the Directorate Education Standards, Deputy RCC Kampala, Country Representative UNHCR and State Minister for Sports, Ministry of Education and Sports.



On arrival of the Chief Guests, The National anthem and East African Anthem were sung and after the Master of ceremony welcomed all the invited guests, recognised the key dignitaries and education institutions present highlighting the National Focus of this event which is “Promoting an Employer led TVET system that is effective and meets the needs of the labor market.”

The MC then introduced various beneficiaries who had taken a TVET educational path and are currently impacting society

TESTIMONIES FROM TVET BENEFICIARIES

As proof that TVET is really transforming lives, a selected team of beneficiaries who have taken this path and excelled in the various professions gave testimonies highlighting their life journey to inspire the Nation and reaffirm the ability to succeed using this path, These among others included:

1. Dr. Eddy Turyatemba (PhD), Commissioner Vocational Education Ministry of Education and Sports



Dr. Eddy Turyatemba delivered a speech describing a living testimony of an undisputable TVET pathway to reducing unemployment and achieving inclusive development. He dedicated his testimony to Her Excellency the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Maama Janet Museveni, whom he referred to as the chief promoter of TVET. He expressed sincere thanks to PS/ES Dr. Kedrace Turyagyenda, who authorized the organizing committee chaired by Director Atima Frances to include testimonies of people who went through TVET on the day's tight agenda.

He presented his inspiring journey as a true testament to the transformative power of TVET in combating unemployment and promoting inclusive development. He explained that his story reflects how TVET can create opportunities, foster innovation, and contribute meaningfully to national growth.

He narrated that his journey started after senior four when he harvested five bags of Irish potatoes and decided not to sell at the low price from his village in Nkongoro, Kamwenge District. Instead, he took the train to Kampala and joined Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo for a National Certificate in Motor Vehicle Technology Part 1 in 1991 and Part 2, then joined a certificate course in motor vehicle mechanics which laid his strong foundation in technical skills. He then advanced to earn a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering in 1996 and later did a Higher Diploma in the same field. He was elected Guild President at Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo in 1999-2000. He went back to Kyambogo University and completed a degree in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering. He later joined Makerere University for a Master's Degree in Renewable Energy and finally completed a PhD in Technology Education at the University of Eldoret, Kenya, in 2023.

Dr. Turyatemba noted that all this was intertwined with work that enabled him to pay for himself and described his professional career as equally remarkable. He started work at a garage at Clement Hill in Mengo and then taught at Mengo Technical Institute. He joined the government and started as a technical teacher at Kapchorwa Technical School, then became Chief Instructor at Jinja VTI, and later a Principal at Bumaire, Nalwire, and Kiryandogo Technical Institutes. He expressed pride in rising from being a technical teacher to serving as an Assistant Commissioner in charge of Vocational Education and Training, where he has championed policies, regulations, and programs that expand skills training across the country.

He shared personal achievements and contributions to the community, including being happily married to Bora Rosette, with whom God has blessed him with six children. The firstborn, after senior four with a good first grade, started TVET at Nakawa VTI and has now finished a diploma in Architecture and is self-employed. The second born is studying Fashion and Design at Ntinda VTI. The third born is doing Hotel and Institutional Catering at Buganda Loyal Institute. Two other children are at Kintate SS and the last at Kabojja Junior School.

He reflected on his PhD studies, appreciating that technology is the application of science to solve community problems. Beyond public service, he has

demonstrated the entrepreneurial spirit nurtured by TVET. He innovated a formula from natural herbs to make a mosquito repellent product aimed at reducing malaria, one of Uganda's most pressing health challenges. He reported that in Uganda, 16 people die every day due to malaria, most of whom are children and pregnant mothers. Their factory is in Burenga, Wakiso District, producing and packaging the product in 100g, 50g, and 20g sizes. They can produce about 2,000 pieces every day, but the main challenge remains marketing the products to raise awareness and encourage use. The product was approved by UNBS.

He stated that he employs 52 people directly and over 2,000 people indirectly, contributing to their livelihoods and economic empowerment. They also pay taxes to the URA amounting to about 32,574,400 shillings per annum, boosting government revenue for public service.

Dr. Turyatemba concluded by saying that his journey illustrates how TVET equips individuals not just for jobs but for leadership, innovation, and enterprise development. He showed that with the right skills and mindset, TVET graduates can transform their communities, drive economic growth, and support inclusive development.

He emphasized that in a world where unemployment remains a critical challenge, his life proves that TVET is the undisputed pathway to self-reliance, job creation, and sustainable national progress.

2. Eng. Dr. Odoch Morris Odrua, Beneficiary of TVET



Dr. Odoch Morris Odrua introduced himself as a proud beneficiary of TVET, the Ugandan system of technical education. He explained that joining technical education after P7 was a choice he made among many options, which challenges the common perception that technical education is only for academically weak students or those from disadvantaged financial backgrounds.

He quoted Eleanor Roosevelt, saying "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams," and expressed that he had a dream of becoming an exceptionally skilled engineer, not limited to bricklaying, concrete practice, carpentry, and joinery. He stated that today he is an internationally recognized highway bridge and structural specialist, with comprehensive bridge engineering training from Japan, a doctorate degree specializing in international construction management from Europe, a master's degree in infrastructure planning and management from Japan, a master's in business administration from the UK, a master's in international construction law from the UK, a postgraduate diploma in project planning and management from Uganda Management Institute, a bachelor's degree in civil and building engineering from Uganda, a diploma in

civil and building engineering from Uganda, and craft part I and II technical certificates, as well as a junior technical certificate.

He emphasized that coming from a technical education background with comprehensive hands-on technical and applied managerial skills has always given him an advantage over those from other education systems in any given assignment. He outlined his progression through all ranks of engineering projects from unskilled laborer to mason, site gang leader, site trade foreman in carpentry and masonry works, general foreman, clerk of works, project engineer, and project/contract manager.

He stated that he has contributed to promoting Uganda's economic growth through road infrastructure projects, citing his roles as site resident project engineer for the construction of the New Nile Bridge at Jinja, Isimba Public Bridge on Kayunga-Kamuli Road, the Kampala flyover, the road-upgrading project recently commissioned, and other small bridges in Uganda.

He shared that he has dedicated part of his earnings to promoting technical and vocational education in Uganda by facilitating career talks with his team at different skills development centers, primary schools, secondary schools, and universities. Addressing students present, he encouraged them by saying that although they are at the beginning, they will reach their goals, adding that this is a wonderful place to start.

He quoted Malcolm X, saying "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today," and added that success at any level is not final, failure is not fatal, and that it is the courage to continue that counts. He emphasized that the only way to do great things is to love what you do.

Finally, he addressed parents, trainers, and private owners of skill development centers, reminding them that however good a seed is, the quality of the soil determines its yield, and urged them to support students in the best way they can to help make their dreams come true.

He concluded by thanking everyone very much.

3. Mr. Mwesezi Godwin, Production Manager at Crown Beverages Limited



Mwesezi Godwin, one of the proud pioneers of the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB), shared his journey of growth and success. He stated that he currently serves as the Production Manager at Crown Beverages Limited and is also the Founder and CEO of Godtech Engineering, a Ugandan company specializing in industrial pallet manufacturing and modifications.

He explained that his journey began after completing his O-Level studies at St. Michael High School in Sonde. From an early age, he had nurtured a dream of becoming an engineer, but like many talented young Ugandans, he faced the challenge of limited resources. He applied for a government scholarship to pursue an engineering course at university but was not selected. Although this could have been a discouraging moment, he said it marked the beginning of a greater path.

Fortunately, a friend introduced him to Uganda Technical College (UTC) Bushenyi, an option he had not previously considered. He applied for a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering and was fortunate to receive a government scholarship, which he said was a major breakthrough as he could not afford private university tuition at the time. He joined UTC Bushenyi in 2012, and described his experience there as life-changing.

Between 2012 and 2014, he not only acquired technical skills but also gained real-world exposure through industrial training in various factories. His final industrial training took

place at Crown Beverages Limited, where he was given the opportunity to prove himself. He reported that even before completing the training, he was offered his first job as a Line Monitor — an opportunity he attributed to the hands-on skills gained through UBTEB and UTC Bushenyi. He expressed deep gratitude to these institutions for shaping his career.

When his diploma results were released, he applied for a government scholarship under the diploma entry scheme at Kyambogo University. By the grace of God, he was accepted and began a bachelor's degree in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering in 2015. He described this as a dream come true and thanked the Government of Uganda and Kyambogo University for enabling students like him to continue their academic journey.

As he pursued his studies, he also advanced in his career at Crown Beverages. He noted that just two months into his role as a Line Monitor, he was promoted to Technical Operator, a role he held for two years before being elevated to Shift Manager — a position he served in for six years. His journey of consistent growth was recognized once again when he was promoted to Production Manager, entrusted with overseeing a new, state-of-the-art production plant on Kakungulu, Entebbe Road. He regarded this responsibility as one of the greatest honors of his career and stated that he strives daily to uphold high standards of quality, efficiency, and innovation.

While progressing professionally, he also ventured into entrepreneurship. In 2015, he founded Godtech Engineering, with a vision to support local industries through quality industrial pallets and mechanical modifications. Over the past decade, the company has grown steadily. He revealed that it currently employs eight people directly, with several others engaged through indirect services. He emphasized that Godtech Engineering is a fully tax-compliant Ugandan business contributing to national development through local manufacturing and job creation.

He further shared that the success of Godtech Engineering enabled him to expand into the transportation business, which now operates a fleet of over six trucks serving clients across the country. These ventures, he said, provide livelihoods and reflect his dedication to innovation, job creation, and sustainable industrial development.

To strengthen his leadership and strategic capabilities, he pursued and completed a Master's in Business Administration (MBA), which he said enhanced his ability to lead teams, grow businesses, and contribute to Uganda's economic transformation.

Reflecting on his journey, he described it as one of resilience, opportunity, and faith. He positioned himself as a testament to the power of technical education, the significance of government support in higher education, and the transformative impact of entrepreneurship.

In closing, he expressed deep gratitude to UBTEB, UTC Bushenyi, Kyambogo University, Crown Beverages Limited, and the Government of Uganda for believing in his potential and that of many other young Ugandans.

He reaffirmed his commitment to giving back through mentoring the next generation of engineers and entrepreneurs and contributing to Uganda's industrial growth and prosperity.

4. Kyomuhendo Irene, CEO and Operations Manager, Heash Construction Solutions



Kyomuhendo Irene shared her testimony as a powerful example of what God can do through education. She identified herself as a proud beneficiary and alumna of the TVET system, having pursued a Diploma in Civil Engineering at Uganda Technical College Kyema. She explained that the training she received there not only equipped her with valuable skills but also aligned with God's greater plan for her life.

Initially, Irene had enrolled in a degree program but was unable to continue due to tuition challenges. She requested a dead year, hoping to find a solution, but eventually had to withdraw. She mentioned that she had earlier been offered government sponsorship for a diploma course but had turned it down because her aspiration was to pursue a degree. At the time, she lacked proper guidance and believed that a diploma was a lesser option. However, circumstances eventually led her back to the diploma path—a

decision she later realized was not a mistake. She affirmed that joining the TVET system became the turning point in her life, and she had no regrets about it.

Through the TVET training, she said she gained not only technical skills in engineering but also interpersonal and leadership skills that helped her discover hidden abilities. She noted that the curriculum was practical, well-structured, and holistic, which enabled her to unlock and apply potential she hadn't realized she possessed. Even before completing her diploma, Irene was able to secure employment with a Chinese construction company. She later worked with a consultancy firm before transitioning into self-employment.

Today, Irene serves as the CEO and Operations Manager of Heash Construction Solutions, a company she founded. She emphasized that her journey through TVET enabled her to create employment opportunities for other young people. Beyond the workplace, she stated that TVET also built her as a leader. She has founded community associations, served as General Secretary for Women in Engineering at Kyambogo University, and led initiatives focused on children, women, and youth in Kampala, Masindi, and Hoima. Additionally, she has been active in church ministry.

She explained that the TVET experience made her self-reliant and equipped her for meaningful work. She now combines employment and entrepreneurship to not only sustain herself but also empower others. Irene highlighted that her journey proved that education is not just about acquiring skills, but also about using them to serve others and fulfill a higher purpose.

In conclusion, Irene described her TVET journey as transformative—one that equipped her with skills, independence, and the capacity to make an impact in her community. She expressed gratitude to God for guiding her and to the Government of Uganda for supporting the TVET system, which she credited for her personal, professional, and community development.



Remarks from Resident Coordinator, United Nations Uganda

Mr. Leonard Zulu conveyed warm greetings from the United Nations family in Uganda and expressed delight at participating in the national commemoration of the International Day of Education, held under the theme “Artificial Intelligence and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation.”

He commended the Government of Uganda, under the leadership of President Yoweri Museveni, for spearheading education reforms on the African continent to keep pace with changing times. These reforms included the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997, Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007, and the adoption of the new secondary school curriculum in 2021, which emphasizes the acquisition of practical life skills.

Quoting the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, Mr. Leonard recalled his message for the International Day of Education 2025, where he stated that “.” Guterres had also noted that rapid technological advancements, such as Artificial Intelligence, hold great promise in supporting learners of all ages.

He highlighted that, and should serve teachers and learners with the aim of enhancing autonomy and well-being. They pointed out that AI could enhance learning in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions by refining vocational skills needed for the job market and economic growth. He notably said that UN-supported initiatives in Uganda’s TVET sector had already yielded positive results.

These efforts have included equipping TVET institutions with production equipment and ICT infrastructure to enable trainers to deliver high-quality programmes.

Looking ahead, he underscored the importance of continued investment in science, technology, and artificial intelligence in education. They called upon the government and stakeholders to take specific actions, including:

In conclusion, on behalf of the United Nations System in Uganda, the speaker urged government, private sector, civil society, and individuals to unite in supporting education initiatives that empower Uganda’s youth and promote sustainable development. They expressed optimism that through collective action, Uganda could build a future where everyone has access to quality education and the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

Statement from Chairperson Education Development Partners and Ambassador of the European Union Delegation in Uganda



H.E. Jan Sadek expressed that it was a great honour to address the audience on behalf of the Education Development Partners (EDP) Group during the International Day of Education celebrations. They described the event as a moment to reflect on progress, challenges, and the way forward in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4: inclusive and equitable quality education for all.

He noted that this year's global theme focused on the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technologies in transforming education. Uganda's national emphasis on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) was described as timely and visionary, given that the future of work would require not only knowledge but also skills, adaptability, and innovation.

They emphasised that before introducing AI tutors or intelligent learning platforms, it was essential to ensure that every learner had access to a trained teacher or instructor, functional classrooms or workshops, working toilets, clean drinking water, and electricity. Without these essentials, digital innovation would remain inaccessible for many, cautioning that in a context of limited resources, introducing AI should not divert critical investments away from teachers, trainers, infrastructure, and learning materials. AI, they said, should complement foundational efforts rather than compete with them.

To illustrate AI's potential; Mr. Jan gave practical examples and described a scenario where a rural teacher with 40 students and no textbooks could use AI to generate a simple and practical lesson plan on the water cycle for Primary 4 learners. They also demonstrated how AI could assist TVET instructors in crowded workshops with limited materials by suggesting locally sourced activities, generating safety checklists, providing step-by-step guides, and adapting content for different skill levels. He explained that such technology could transform teaching and learning across Uganda particularly in remote areas if introduced alongside adequate support, training, and infrastructure. However, they warned that AI carried risks if implemented without careful planning, as it could reinforce existing inequalities. For this reason, they called for inclusion, transparency, and ethics to be at the center of AI integration.

He then reaffirmed that human connection remained central to learning and that technology should support rather than replace teachers, who must remain the heart of the classroom. Mr. Jan confirmed that Education Development Partners were ready to work with the Government to ensure AI and digital tools were introduced alongside investments in teachers, trainers, and essential school infrastructure including WASH facilities, school meals, and safe, climate resilient environments. He further expressed a commitment to supporting the development of a national AI strategy for education and training aligned with UNESCO's Recommendation on the Ethics of AI, but tailored to Uganda's specific context and aspirations under the TVET Policy Framework and Skilling Strategy.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Jan urged all stakeholders; government, development partners, civil society, and the private sector to ensure that AI serves education and training rather than controls it, creating a future where every learner, including those in vocational and technical fields, can thrive and contribute to the country's development.

Dr. Kedrace R. Turyagyenda. Permanent Secretary, Ministry of education and sports



On behalf of the Technical Team of the Ministry of Education and Sports, Dr. Kedrace R. Turyagyenda stated that it was a great honour to welcome everyone to that important occasion, as they celebrated a landmark day in the Ministry's calendar, the International Day of Education. She noted that the United Nations had designated 24th January as the International Day of Education to reaffirm the central role that education plays in building resilient, inclusive, and prosperous societies. She acknowledged that although the celebration was taking place belatedly due to unavoidable circumstances, the relevance and importance of the occasion remained undiminished.

She expressed eternal gratitude to God for the opportunity to serve a sector that develops the human capital essential for sustaining Uganda's social and economic transformation.

She recalled that the previous year, the celebrations had focused on Universal Primary Education under the theme "*Education for Lasting Peace*," which allowed for reflection on both the milestones achieved and the challenges that persisted.

She went on to state that the focus for the current year was on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), describing it as a strategic pillar for skilling, employment, and national development. She observed that over the past decade, Uganda had made remarkable progress in advancing TVET, and that the event provided an opportunity to reflect on the journey and the vision ahead.

She reminded the audience that His Excellency had graced the launch of the "*Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan (2012–2022)*" in 2012, a visionary framework that repositioned TVET as a driver of economic growth. Since then, she stated, significant accomplishments had been recorded, including modernization and expansion of TVET infrastructure, enhanced capacity building for instructors, integration of skills development across all education levels, and the establishment of six Centres of Excellence under the Uganda Skills Development Project (USDP).

She listed the Centres as Uganda Technical College Elgon, Uganda Technical College Bushenyi, Uganda Technical College Lira, Uganda Technical College Kichwamba, Bukalasa Agricultural College, and the Uganda Petroleum Institute Kigumba (UPIK), specializing in oil and gas. She noted that these Centres were delivering internationally accredited programs and setting new benchmarks for excellence in technical training.

She highlighted the approval of the TVET Policy 2019 and the enactment of the TVET Act 2025 as further reinforcement of the Government's commitment to building a responsive, demand-driven, and competency-based TVET system aligned with Uganda's labour market needs and development aspirations.

She emphasized and extended profound appreciation to the National Resistance Movement (NRM) Government for its visionary leadership in prioritizing education reforms, as articulated in the Uganda Vision 2040 and the National Development Plans III and VI. She stated that these frameworks underscored the imperative of skilling as the foundation for sustainable growth and competitiveness.

She reported that significant progress had been made in expanding access to TVET, noting that She acknowledged that where gaps persisted, partnerships with the private sector and investment in skilling hubs were providing complementary pathways to skills acquisition and employability. She called upon parents and communities to proactively engage with these opportunities to empower the youth.

She further reported that the Ministry had completed the coding of nine Presidential Pledged Vocational Training Institutions (VTIs), and acknowledged

the President's contributions and enduring commitment to the education sector as invaluable.

In conclusion, she thanked His Excellency, Maama, and all the esteemed guests for honouring them with their presence. She called upon everyone to continue building an education system fit for the future, one that is resilient, future ready, and capable of empowering generations to come.

Remarks from Hon. Peter Ogwang, State Minister for sports, Ministry of Education and Sports.



Hon. Peter Ogwang stated that in the year 2025, they celebrated the transformative power of education towards sustainable development, but also reflected on the challenges and opportunities that shape their world. As they focused on the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) in education and human agency, they were reminded of the profound impact technology has on their lives and the need for thoughtful and responsible engagement with these advancements, safeguarding human rights and preserving linguistic and cultural diversity.

It was further stated that that was why as a Nation, they were focusing on skilling Ugandans, especially youth, through TVET and other Programmes. The objective was to ensure that they had a skilled Competency Based labor force that is responsive to the needs of the labor market and industry.

Therefore, it was concluded, Hon. Peter Ogwang, State Minister for Sports, Ministry of Education and Sports, expressed great honor and privilege in joining the gathering for the opening of the exhibition commemorating the International Day of Education 2025. He underscored that

He drew attention to the localized theme “Promoting an Employer-Led TVET System Which is Functional, Effective, and Efficient to Meet the Needs of the Labour Market” noting its timeliness in the current context. He emphasized that as Uganda progresses towards Vision 2040 and the Sustainable Development Goals it is imperative to strengthen TVET in order to produce a skilled innovative workforce capable of meeting the challenges of a dynamic and competitive global economy.

Hon. Peter Ogwang's main speech: He noted that an employer-led TVET system ensures that training aligns with both current and emerging industry demands effectively bridging the gap between classroom instruction and workplace expectations. He highlighted the Government's prioritization of TVET and skilling under the NRM agenda citing the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Sports led by Maama Janet Museveni to reforms that engage employers at all stages from curriculum design to internship placements and final assessments promote apprenticeship programmes to equip students with practical experience before graduation equip TVET institutions with modern tools and technologies that reflect current workplace realities and encourage entrepreneurship and innovation to create job creators rather than job seekers.

He acknowledged that Ugandans are already witnessing the benefits of this approach through Public Private Partnerships in sectors such as manufacturing construction, agribusiness ICT oil and gas tourism and the creative arts. He called upon more employers to participate actively in shaping the country's future workforce.

He concluded by extending appreciation to Development Partners private sector champions TVET institutions and the organizing committee for their contributions to the success of the event.

Speech from Hon. Janet K. Museveni, First Lady / Minister of Education & Sports



Hon. Janet welcomed everyone to their belated celebration of the International Day of Education 2025. She thanked God for enabling them to gather there that day to honor a special day that is internationally dedicated to education.

The First Lady thanked the President of Uganda for accepting their invitation to officiate at the celebration and for prioritizing it given his very busy schedule. She said that this was an indication of his selfless commitment and continued support to the education sector in the quest to achieve quality and equitable education for all Ugandans.

Reminding everyone that education is a basic right, the First Lady emphasized that every person irrespective of age, gender or ability should enjoy it. She pointed out that the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda recognizes education as a fundamental human right and a key driver of development. She further emphasized that the Government through its national planning frameworks recognizes human capital development as a key priority area to propel development.

The First Lady further stated that the International Day of Education celebrations are under the theme “AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation”. In addition she said that this theme required us to explore and discuss the opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence and its use within the field of education and training. Recognizing that the technology was already shaping the future landscape of their workforce, she stressed the need to critically reflect on the relationship between artificial intelligence and human capital development.

Hon. Janet then stated that it was time to ask questions such as, Is technology taking over and replacing human capital? Is human capital development still necessary given what AI could do and is already doing? Is it possible that AI and human capital could co-exist positively given that each has its strengths and weaknesses?

The First Lady further explained that in their attempt to answer or respond to those questions, the Ministry of Education and Sports had developed the digital agenda for the education and sports sector in line with the Government commitment towards enhancing the use of technology to achieve Vision 2040.

As a Nation, we had localized the theme of this year's celebrations to focus on Promoting an Employer-Led TVET System which is functional, effective, and efficient to meet the needs of the labour market. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) offer numerous benefits including enhanced employability, increased economic growth and is a pathway to social mobility. She stated that TVET Programs equip individuals with critical skills and knowledge making them more attractive to employers and driving economic development.

TVET fosters a culture of continuous learning by enabling individuals to adapt to changing job market demands in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) No.4 which emphasizes lifelong learning. She added that TVET Training has a potential to foster inclusivity and break down barriers to employment for workers with disabilities, which goes a long way in increasing workforce participation and productivity.

The First lady further stated that according to the recent National Population census 2024, it was evident that the highest percentage of their population were youth which posed a challenge of youth unemployment. Given the demands of employment, she said it was inevitable that the Government focuses on skilling young people to meet the demands of the world of work.

The First Lady thanked the President for being a great ally in skilling young people. She said that through the Presidential Skilling hubs, a number of out of school youth had been provided with relevant skills to enable them be self-employed and it was gratifying to know that a number of them had come up with innovations and prototypes. She emphasized that all they required was more support to take them to the next level of production. She stated that if the Government could ensure that each of those young people got a tool box to start a small starter industry, then employing those people would be real.

The First Lady also thanked the President for supporting the development and assenting to the TVET Act 2025. She said that this long-awaited law would now give strategic direction and guidance for the required reforms in the TVET Sub sector. She was happy to report that the law commenced on 15th March 2025 and that the process of establishing the relevant agencies to operationalize it such as the TVET Council and the Assessment Boards was ongoing.

In The First Lady's closing remarks, she appreciated the support of the Development Partners who had held hands with them in pursuit of quality education and Sports for all. She affirmed their commitment to this partnership and expressed her prayer that they would gather for the event the next year with more achievements to celebrate. She thanked the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports with her Technical Team for organizing the event and for the routine work they do in the Ministry that had enabled the Sector to register achievements especially in the TVET Sub Sector.

The First Lady then stated that it was her singular honor to invite the President to deliver his address.

SPEECH FROM H.E YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI, THE PRESIDENT OF UGANDA



H.E the President of the Republic of Uganda, Yoweri Kagua Museveni began his speech by reminding the audience that before modern education, there was traditional education characterized by three main factors. He said that traditional education was primarily informal and was passed down through families, as society at the time was organized in caste systems. He explained that there were cattle keepers like the Karamajongs, agriculturalists, fishermen, and artisans such as blacksmiths. According to him, knowledge was shared informally at home as children grew up, and although it wasn't written down, it was quite extensive.

H.E noted that some scientists were now retrieving and validating that traditional knowledge using modern methods, especially in fields like medicine and life support systems. He added that apprenticeship was another form of traditional education, especially among artisans like blacksmiths and carpenters. He mentioned that institutional education also existed, particularly within kingdoms, where young people were formally trained, mainly in warfare.

The President went on to say that when modern education was introduced, its mission wasn't initially clear. It was mostly initiated by churches and to a lesser extent by the colonial government. The aim was to train catechists to spread

religion and to provide the colonial government with clerks, interpreters, and some technical staff such as medical assistants.

H.E expressed his appreciation for the presence of the attendees and pointed out that the education system at that time was very limited. He illustrated this by mentioning that by 1961, there were only six A Level schools in the whole of Uganda namely Budo, Gayaza, Ntare, Namagunga, possibly Nabbingo, and Kisubi.

H.E further said that his generation had experienced this limited system and understood its shortcomings. That was why, after restoring stability, his government proposed Universal Education during the 1996 elections. However, he acknowledged that this had not been fully implemented due to resistance from some head teachers and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) who were more interested in collecting money.

The President took a moment to congratulate the Minister of Education for the progress made but reiterated that the real solution lay in universal education. He emphasized that all children must attend school and stay in school, and that while private schools could charge fees, government schools should not. He insisted that government schools must plan to eliminate school charges.

H.E also referred to the skilling hubs, which he said were helping desperate youth. He expressed hope that the conference could include testimonies from such young people who had benefitted. He explained that many of these youth had been locked out of the education system due to financial barriers, but when given free skilling opportunities, they experienced a renewed sense of hope. He stressed that there should be no school charges in government schools once the system was ready and reiterated that the testimonies given at the conference highlighted how free education had helped the youth.

H.E pointed out that once free education was achieved, the next focus should be on the kind of education being offered. He emphasized the importance of science education, arguing that Africa had been colonized not due to a lack of kings, priests, or artists, but because it had lagged behind in science and technology. He used the example of gunpowder, noting that while Europe had acquired it, Africa was still using bows and arrows. He insisted that Africa must never lag behind again in science and technology. He also addressed concerns about Artificial Intelligence (AI), stating that it was not magic but a method of using natural laws to solve problems. He urged people not to fear AI and described it as part of understanding and applying nature.

However, H.E clarified that social sciences were still important, citing the four traditional factors of production: land/natural resources, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship. He explained that entrepreneurship, while not a science, was key to organizing the other elements. Thus, while social sciences had their place, he said they needed to be grounded in a strong base of science and technology.

In his final remarks, the President acknowledged the presence of development partners like UNESCO and the European Union, appreciating their support. However, he criticized the planning in Western Europe, saying he didn't understand why some parts of the world were allowed to remain backward while only a few enjoyed prosperity. He argued that global affluence would benefit everyone.

H.E recounted how, in the past, he had failed to attract investors for Uganda's rich iron ore deposits because there was a global glut in steel, with prices as low as \$200 per ton. But when China and India began to develop rapidly, global demand pushed steel prices up to \$900 per ton. Now, he said, his challenge was selecting which companies to partner with, rather than finding willing investors. He pointed out that increased global prosperity—regardless of political ideology—had driven up demand for materials like steel and copper, which had benefitted Uganda. He concluded by encouraging continued support for global development and prosperity, arguing that if all the world's 8.5 billion people had a per capita GDP of \$20,000, the global economy would flourish, and everyone would benefit.

H.E closed by congratulating the organizers of the International Day of Education, particularly the Minister of Education, and reiterated his key points: **free education for all in Uganda** and **affluence for all as a global ideal**.

Below is a pictorial of various participating stakeholders including Government officials, students from TVET institutions and schools, civil society organisations, Development partners and the academia







POST EVENT - WORLD YOUTH SKILLS DAY

This two-day dialogue brought together policymakers, TVET experts, development partners, academia, private sector players, and civil society to:

- 1) Discuss strategies for enhancing TVET relevance and quality.
- 2) Launch flagship initiatives aimed at improving TVET access and equity.
- 3) Discuss TVET financing strategies and modalities
- 4) Showcase success stories and innovations in TVET.

Day 1: Engaging Stakeholders and Strategic Partners

The first day of the IDE 2025 Post-Event and World Youth Skills Day Policy Dialogue was marked by a highly engaging, inclusive and strategic series of activities aimed at aligning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to labor market demands. The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders from government institutions, development partners, private sector leaders, civil society organizations, and international bodies.

The check-in process was seamlessly done by the Universal Education Secretariat / Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), with delegates arriving promptly and being efficiently guided to the main conference hall. The early registration phase set a professional tone, ensuring proper documentation and attendance tracking.

Participants were then taken through a comprehensive pictorial and verbal presentation showcasing key moments of the International Day of Education celebrations and activities leading to this policy dialogue. The session served as a strong reminder of the journey and purpose of the engagement, reinforcing the importance of continuity in advocacy and implementation.

Official Opening Ceremony

The official opening ceremony included high-level speeches from the Hon. Minister of Education and Sports, the Permanent Secretary, Chairperson Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education, H.E Ambassador of Belgium to Uganda, Country Representatives of UNHCR, UNICEF, The National Senior Projects Officer UNESCO and Dr. Captain Mike Mukula. A strong expression of political will and multi-stakeholder commitment was made.

The high-level opening reiterated TVET's central role in Uganda's national development strategy. Dignitaries emphasized the need for a paradigm shift towards an employer-driven TVET system capable of closing the skills gap and boosting youth employability.



Opening remarks by Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education; Hon. Margaret Rwabushaija Namubiru

Hon. Margaret Rwabushaija Namubiru, Chairperson of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education, conveyed warm greetings from the Parliament of Uganda and the Forum. She expressed her pleasure at joining the high-level policy dialogue on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), describing it as a matter central to Uganda's transformation agenda.

She stated that the Parliament of Uganda had consistently shown unwavering commitment to advancing quality, inclusive, and relevant education for all Ugandans. Through progressive legislation, increased budgetary support, and

oversight, Parliament had prioritized the reform and expansion of TVET as a cornerstone for skilling, innovation, and national competitiveness.

She noted that, as part of this commitment, the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education had hosted the first-ever and highly successful TVET/BTVET exhibition on Parliamentary Grounds during the 10th Parliament. The event brought together various stakeholders and partners to exhibit skills, goods, and services, network, and educate both Parliamentarians and the general public on the benefits of TVET.

In alignment with Vision 2040, the National Development Plan (NDP IV), and the Uganda Skills Development Agenda, Parliament had reaffirmed that TVET was not merely a fallback option, but a first-choice pathway to decent employment, industrialization, and youth empowerment. She added that policies and budget allocations had been passed to support the transition to an employer-led TVET model where curricula were driven by market demands, the private sector played a central role, and learners acquired productive, entrepreneurial, and globally competitive skills.

She stressed the urgency of employer-led reform, explaining that Uganda's labour market was youthful, dynamic, and growing, yet faced the paradox of high unemployment alongside a shortage of skilled workers. She emphasized the need to shift from supply-driven training to demand-responsive systems, ensuring that training institutions produced graduates for real work opportunities in sectors such as manufacturing, the digital economy, construction, the creative industry, and the green economy.

She observed that the dialogue was pivotal in fostering stronger public-private partnerships, reinforcing industry involvement in curriculum design, assessment, and apprenticeships, and institutionalizing quality assurance mechanisms that made TVET credible and aspirational.

Outlining the role of Parliament, she stated that Parliamentarians were prepared to champion legislation and policy reforms that created enabling environments for TVET institutions and private sector actors, monitor the implementation of national and regional TVET strategies to align with labour market needs, advocate for increased public investment in infrastructure, tools, and trainer capacity, and promote inclusive access to TVET for women, persons with disabilities, and underserved communities. Through the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Quality Education, she reaffirmed commitment to evidence-based advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and continuous learning to ensure that no Ugandan was left behind in the skilling revolution.

She called on participants to renew their shared resolve to build a skills development system that was future-ready, inclusive, and employer-anchored. She encouraged learning from successful models, leveraging digital technologies, and empowering young people to create jobs rather than only seek them.

In conclusion, she quoted Proverbs 22:29 (NIV): “Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank.” She urged stakeholders to build a TVET system that dignified skill, promoted excellence, and elevated every Ugandan to their highest potential, and expressed her anticipation for the fruitful outcomes of the dialogue.

UNESCO Message by the National Senior Projects Officer, UNESCO Uganda

In the official opening remarks delivered by Mr. Charles Draecabo on behalf of the Director General of UNESCO, Ms. Audrey Azoulay. Addressing a diverse audience that included government officials, development partners, educators, students, and representatives from the United Nations and NGOs, Charles began by honouring the occasion as a moment of reflection and collective responsibility, and then transitioned into reading the official statement from the Director-General of UNESCO.

He emphasized that the 2024 theme for this globally celebrated day-held annually on January 24th-centres on the transformative potential and challenges of AI in education, a subject of growing global importance amid accelerating technological advancements. Charles underscored that AI is not merely another educational tool but a paradigm-shifting innovation that redefines traditional boundaries between humans and machines, and reshaping how intelligence itself is defined-once thought to be a uniquely human or at least biological trait. He illustrated this by contrasting the rapid adoption of generative AI tools with the traditionally lengthy and rigorous process of textbook development, thereby highlighting both the opportunity and the risk of unregulated AI integration.

In this context, he noted UNESCO's proactive stance in developing ethical and regulatory frameworks to guide the use of AI for over a decade, culminating in the historic 2021 adoption of the first international standard on AI ethics by its Member States after an extensive two-year consultation process. Despite this global milestone, Charles acknowledged that practical readiness remains low: as

of 2023, less than 10% of schools and higher education institutions had formal policies in place for AI use.

To address this gap, UNESCO had published “Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research” in 2023, advocating for, among other things, a minimum age threshold of 10 years for AI use in classrooms and an overarching commitment to fairness, inclusivity, and learner safety. The statement emphasized the dual responsibility of empowering both teachers and students to use AI effectively, while also safeguarding against potential harms such as misinformation, digital inequality, and the erosion of intellectual integrity.

A 2023 UNESCO survey revealed that, despite widespread use of AI by educators, less than 10% of institutions had implemented AI governance policies. Furthermore, by 2022, only seven countries had developed teacher-focused AI frameworks, and just 15 countries had integrated AI-related learning goals into national curricula.

In response, UNESCO launched AI competency frameworks for students and teachers during the 2023 Digital Learning Week. These documents, the speaker explained, outlined the principles for appropriate AI use and called for substantial investment in AI education without compromising core educational values.

Charles concluded by stressing the urgency of widespread digital literacy and principled policy action, calling on all education stakeholders to ensure that the integration of AI serves not only innovation but also equity, ethics, and human development—thereby aligning technological progress with the core values of education and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Remarks from UNHCR demonstrated and emphasised TVET as a national priority



On behalf of UNHCR and their personal capacity, Mr. Michael John Wells from UNHCR, expressed honor at being part of the important post International Day of Education event. He noted with pride that UNHCR had actively participated in the main celebration held on 29th April 2025 at the Kololo Ceremonial Grounds, which was presided over by His Excellency, the President of Uganda, and the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports.

He emphasized that participating in the post-event activities provided a valuable opportunity to deliberate on critical issues affecting children and youth groups that make up the largest portion of both the refugee and national populations.

Mike highlighted the relevance of the international theme, “AI and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation,” and Uganda’s national theme, “Promoting an Employer-led TVET System that is Effective, Efficient, and Meets the Needs of the Labor Market.”

He remarked that both themes were strategic in light of the evolving global context, especially as they emphasize the importance of empowering youth to harness emerging opportunities. The themes were also said to align well with SDG 4 and Uganda’s broader socioeconomic transformation agenda.

He acknowledged the strategic reforms made by the Government of Uganda in strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), citing the implementation of the new lower secondary curriculum as an example. According to them, this reform aimed to create a more flexible and relevant learning experience for learners, allowing them to develop skills aligned with their interests and future job markets. He observed that there was growing interest in TVET among youth, which needed to be enhanced through structured, certifiable training and the provision of incentives.

Mike further noted that within refugee communities, there were already emerging success stories of youth who had benefited from such initiatives, enabling them to earn livelihoods and pursue further education.

Operation Demography: Current Education Landscape

He reported that as stakeholders reflected on the theme, it was important to recognize that the refugee population in Uganda continued to increase, while available resources were diminishing. Uganda currently hosts over 1.9 million refugees and asylum seekers, with 63% of them being children and youth of school-going age. This, they said, placed additional pressure on the already overstretched education system, and the need for basic education and skilling remained critical. He shared that current gross enrolment rates among refugee

populations revealed significant gaps, with only 34% at pre-primary level, 83% at primary, 10% at secondary, and a dismal 2.4% accessing skilling and tertiary education. Due to reduced global humanitarian funding particularly food and general assistance many children and youth were increasingly at risk of adopting negative coping mechanisms, exposing them to exploitation and abuse. Despite these challenges, Mike reported that it continued to engage with non-traditional donors and the private sector to mobilize additional resources that could complement government efforts.

Refugee Inclusion in Education

Mike expressed UNHCR's appreciation to the Government of Uganda for leading the implementation of the National Action Plan under the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), aimed at including refugees in national service delivery through high-level, government-led coordination and long-term development entry points. He acknowledged the government's policy frameworks, including the Education Response Plan (ERP) for refugees and host communities initiated in 2018, which aims to integrate refugees into the national education system. They highlighted that refugees, like nationals, access the same schools, curriculum, certification processes, and skilling opportunities. He emphasized the need to strengthen a "whole-of-society" approach to enhance collaboration among government entities, the private sector, NGOs, communities, and individuals, to support refugee inclusion effectively.

Global Refugee Forum Pledge

Mike also referenced Uganda's commitments as co-convener of the Global Refugee Forum (2023), where the government pledged to increase the resilience and self-reliance of displaced populations by creating at least 300,000 viable economic opportunities for refugees and host communities by 2027, explaining

that this pledge was to be realized through various strategies, including integrating refugees into agricultural value chains, promoting private sector investment, increasing access to both formal and informal vocational training, and fostering employment creation through the development of market-relevant skills.

While applauding these efforts, he cautioned that significant progress in refugee education and livelihoods would still largely depend on resource availability both from domestic and development partners. They emphasized that the major education-related costs were recurrent and that without clear responsibility-sharing mechanisms, neither development actors nor the government were currently in a position to absorb these costs sustainably.

Call to Action

In conclusion, Mike's call to action reiterated that for Uganda to realize its goal of “Promoting an Employer-led TVET System that is Effective, Efficient, and Meets the Needs of the Labor Market,” it was imperative to reinforce the “whole-of-society” approach. This, they stated, would strengthen collaboration among all stakeholders government, private sector, NGOs, communities, and individuals to collectively support refugee inclusion and national development.

Country Representative UNICEF gave Reflections on Uganda's Youth Skills Challenge



In the official reflections presented by UNICEF during the commemoration of World Youth Skills Day, a powerful and data driven appeal was made to prioritize the skills development and economic empowerment of Uganda's burgeoning youth population, with particular attention to the most marginalized. Speaking to an audience of government officials, UN agency partners, educators, and youth, Dr. Robin Nandy began by honouring the young people present, framing them as both the purpose and potential of the dialogue.

The remarks underscored UNICEF's alignment with Uganda's National Development Plan (NDP) IV, especially in its prioritization of human capital development through education, vocational training, and labour market alignment. With projections indicating a significant rise in Uganda's youth population by 2050, the country is uniquely positioned to become a continental leader in economic productivity yet this demographic dividend can only be harnessed if urgent systemic challenges are addressed.

Dr. Robin highlighted the critical gap between education outputs and labour market demands, noting that approximately 700,000 young Ugandans enter working age each year, with a projected 13.5 million youth seeking employment by 2030. However, structural barriers such as early pregnancy, school dropout, and widespread youth unemployment-especially among adolescent girls and young women-undermine this potential. Citing the most recent National Household Survey, he delivered a sobering assessment: only 2% of adolescents are proficient in problem-solving and just 6% in collaboration, while 41% of youth aged 18–30-roughly 4.2 million individuals are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), with young women constituting the majority of this group.

In response to these stark realities, UNICEF called for urgent and targeted investments in equitable, market relevant skills development that includes formal, vocational, and informal pathways, and that prioritizes the unique needs of vulnerable populations, such as girls, refugees, persons with disabilities, and young mothers. He further stressed the importance of forging stronger partnerships with the private sector to ensure curricula reflect evolving labour demands and to expand access to apprenticeships and entrepreneurial support.

UNICEF reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to supporting the Government of Uganda in advancing its National TVET reform process and education reform agenda through evidence-based policymaking, stakeholder engagement, and sustained policy dialogue. The closing message was both a call to action and a message of hope: Together we can support updated relevant and future market-ready skills development curriculum and pedagogy in formal, vocation and non-formal education. UNICEF Uganda will continue to support the Ministry of Education and Sports by contributing towards the goals of the NDP-IV outlined under the Human Capital Development program where Education, skills and employment for young people, including children with disabilities are key priorities. Uganda can cultivate a generation of empowered, skilled, and resilient young people ready to thrive in a fast-changing global economy and contribute meaningfully to a more equitable and dignified national future. He then concluded that as UNICEF it's our prayer that the programme budgeting introduced by the National Planning Authority several years ago and the coordinating role of the MOES as Chair of Human Capital Development will increase collaboration across Ministries and District Local Governments to advance learning and skilling for children and young people.

Remarks from Head of Cooperation, European Union, Karolina Andrzejewska



Ms. Karolina expressed honor at joining the high-level policy dialogue on TVET, noting its connection to the International Day of Education commemorated on 29 April, during which the EU took a leading role on behalf of the Education Development Partners' Group. Karolina affirmed that the EU was pleased to participate alongside key partners, reaffirming its commitment to promoting local job creation through skilling. This was framed against the backdrop of a rapidly growing youth population, with approximately 700,000 young Ugandans entering working age annually.

The EU's full support was expressed for the event's theme, "Promoting an employer-led TVET system," which is described as aptly capturing the national skilling challenge. A call was made for a TVET system that is flexible, practical, and modern, to harness Uganda's expanding labour supply.

To meet this challenge, she emphasized the need for strategic partnerships with the private sector to design employer-responsive curricula and facilitate accessible, work-based learning opportunities. Attention was drawn to the Team Europe supported WeWork programme, co-financed by the EU and Belgium, valued at EUR 50 million (approx. UGX 200 billion). Its overarching goal was outlined as creating green and decent jobs for youth. Within this initiative, she supplemented, the EU reportedly partners with Vocational Training Institutes (VTIs) to strengthen institutional capacity and support the development of Centres of Vocational Excellence. Efforts include enabling self-reliance among VTIs and securing structured employer partnerships for direct placement opportunities.

It was further stated that the programme delivers work-readiness training, with a focus on soft skills across all sectors. Collaboration with the Private Sector Foundation Uganda and the Federation of Uganda Employers enables paid six month placements leading to sustainable employment pathways. Partnerships with lead firms were also highlighted, particularly those connecting skilled farmers with consistent supply chains, supporting both agribusinesses and farmer incomes.

She welcomed the partnership with the Government of Uganda, through WeWork, notably under the stewardship of the Ministry of Education and Sports, focusing on TVET policy implementation and supporting sector skills councils. The adoption of the 2025 TVET Act was described as a renewed framework to guide transformative reforms.

Marking World Youth Skills Day, the EU noted the importance of such occasions to promote TVET as a viable employment pathway. Reference was made to the ongoing collaboration with WorldSkills Uganda, which organizes regional skills competitions to inspire and showcase youth talent.

The WeWork programme was also presented as part of the broader Team Europe effort under the Sustainable Business for Uganda (SB4U) flagship, within the Global Gateway Strategy. A dedicated focus on self-employment and entrepreneurship was described as central to addressing youth unemployment.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Karolina reiterated the commitment of the EU to strengthening opportunities for Ugandan youth to access employment or create enterprises, through a private-sector-led, inclusive TVET system.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports Representative, Ms. Atima Frances, Head of the Directorate of Education Standards.



In her opening remarks, Ms Atima Frances, head of the Directorate of Education Standards and Chairperson of the Organizing Committee, extended a warm and heartfelt welcome to all attendees at the joint commemoration of the International Day of Education (IDE) and World Youth Skills Day (WYSD).

She began by expressing gratitude to the diverse and distinguished audience, which included government ministers, Members of Parliament, ambassadors, development partners, students, educators, institutional leaders, and sector representatives, acknowledging their timely presence and unwavering support for Uganda's education and skills development agenda. She contextualised the significance of the event by referencing the United Nations General Assembly's declaration of January 24th as the International Day of Education, a global recognition of education's foundational role in achieving sustainable development and social resilience as the day is intended to highlight transformative power of education in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 Inclusive, Equitable & Quality Education for All.

She elaborated on this year's global theme, "Artificial Intelligence and Education," emphasizing its potential to enhance learning for both educators and students in a digital world, while also cautioning against uncritical adoption that could marginalize the essential role of teachers and human interaction. Reflecting Uganda's national priorities, she noted that the theme had been localized to focus on "Promoting an Employer-Led TVET System that is Effective and Responsive to Labour Market Needs," in alignment with the country's ongoing TVET reforms and the enactment of the new TVET Policy and upcoming TVET Act.

She outlined the three-phased structure of the celebrations: Phase One, which showcased a nationwide exhibition of innovation and capacity within the TVET sub-sector; Phase Two, the National Celebration officiated by the President and First Lady, who also serves as the Minister of Education and Sports; and Phase Three, the current High-Level Policy Dialogue designed to consolidate the event through in depth policy discussions and to generate actionable policy recommendations to sustain and strengthen ongoing TVET reforms.

She proudly welcomed the Chairperson of the newly constituted TVET Council, Ms. Allen Kagina, and highlighted the critical importance of the Council's leadership in advancing Uganda's TVET reform agenda.

In closing, Madam Atima recognized the contributions of students and their teachers who had travelled from various regions, reaffirming their central role in shaping future policies. She urged all participants to remain actively engaged throughout the day, as the insights and decisions from this dialogue would be instrumental in influencing the trajectory of education and skills development in Uganda, and concluded by appreciating the support of all stakeholders and looking forward to a meaningful and impactful engagement.

Remarks from the Ambassador of Belgium to Uganda on Innovation, Digital Skills, and Labour Market Relevance



In his address during Plenary Session 2 on the theme “Innovation, Digital Skills, and Labour Market Relevance,” the Belgian Ambassador delivered a thoughtful, candid, and future-oriented statement that underscored Belgium’s enduring commitment to education and skills development in Uganda, with a particular emphasis on youth empowerment and economic transformation through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

He emphasized that a nation without a skilled workforce cannot prosper, drawing comparisons to unstable structures and birds with only one wing. He stated that Belgium values the education sector highly and prioritizes youth skills development, both domestically and through international cooperation.

Speaking with both conviction and humility, he affirmed Belgium’s longstanding development partnership with Uganda, notably through the work of Enabel, its development agency, which has, over the past two decades, invested in key sectors such as secondary education, defense, and more critically, skills development. This support extends beyond financial contributions to deep technical cooperation, including capacity building for local institutions, the co-creation of relevant and modern learning resources, and close alignment of curricula with labour market demands. Their focus remains on equipping young people with marketable skills for decent employment or entrepreneurship especially in sectors such as tourism and sustainable agriculture.

He highlighted Belgium’s efforts in supporting teacher colleges and TVET providers with technical expertise, management improvements, and material development. Stressing teamwork, accountability, and transparency, he underscored Belgium’s commitment to working closely with the Ugandan government and development partners.

He acknowledged the progress Uganda has made in the TVET space, particularly referencing the adoption of the TVET Act 2025 and the establishment of the TVET Council and related bodies. He also pointed to the ongoing “WeWork” programme, implemented with the European Union, which aims to enhance skills and promote employment and entrepreneurship.

While commending Uganda’s demographic strength, he recognized that more needs to be done and encouraged continued investment in education and human capital. He praised the Government’s ongoing efforts to improve tax revenue and local financing, which he believes will help bridge existing gaps such as staffing in schools and TVET institutions. He emphasized that Uganda’s goal of a tenfold economic growth by 2040 is achievable, provided the country builds a skilled, educated, and healthy population. He also acknowledged Uganda’s focus on science, technology, and innovation as a pathway to development.

Turning to the theme of Artificial Intelligence and Education, he humbly admitted his limited expertise in the field but affirmed his belief in AI's potential to boost productivity, creativity, and security. He suggested that AI, when responsibly applied, could greatly benefit TVET by enhancing learning, making curricula more relevant, and automating processes.

He concluded with a powerful reaffirmation of Belgium's intention to continue supporting AI-focused and innovation-driven programs in Uganda as foundational pillars for sustainable development, national competitiveness, and equitable growth across the region as well as firm belief that Ugandan youth will rise to meet these technological advancements and that the collaborative TVET efforts will successfully equip them with the necessary skills.

Keynote Address: Ms. Allen Kagina, Chairperson, TVET Council.



In her powerful keynote address, Ms. Allen Kagina, Chairperson of the TVET Council, delivered a compelling and deeply insightful narrative that placed Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) at the core of Uganda's socio-economic transformation strategy.

She emphasized that this transformation is not achievable without a skilled and adaptable workforce; in other words TVET is not simply an educational pathway

but a national development imperative that responds directly to the country's economic and investment landscape, where investors increasingly prioritize a skilled and adaptable workforce over traditional incentives like tax breaks.

Drawing from her fresh yet enthusiastic entry into the TVET sector, Ms. Kagina articulated a vision in which TVET fuels inclusive growth by offering practical, entrepreneurial, and industry-relevant competencies to diverse segments of Uganda's population which include women, youth, persons with disabilities and those in rural or underserved areas. She situated Uganda's efforts within the broader global discourse, referencing the themes of the International Day of Education-which this year focuses on Artificial Intelligence and the Preservation of Human Agency-and World Youth Skills Day, which underscores the urgency of equipping youth with forward-looking, purpose-driven skills.

She pointed out that TVET is not a peripheral stream but a central pillar in the realization of Uganda's long-term development agenda. Reference was to Uganda Vision 2040, launched in 2013, which aspires to transform the country into a modern and prosperous nation within a 30 year timeframe. With 15 years remaining to achieve the vision, the urgency to deliver on its strategic commitments-particularly in human capital development, industrialization and value addition was strongly emphasized. At the global level, attention was drawn to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, adopted in 2015, which has less than years remaining. Urgent progress is required on Sustainable Development Goal4 (quality education and lifelong learning) and Goal 8(decent work and economic growth) both of which heavily rely on the successful implementation of TVET initiatives. Nationally, it was reported that Uganda has just commenced implementation of the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), covering the period 2025 to 2030. As the final implementation plan under Vision 2040, NDP IV places a strong focus on enhancing productivity, promoting industrial transformation and ensuring inclusive growth-goals that depend on a well-equipped and skilled workforce. Additionally, it was noted that efforts are being aligned with the 10 fold growth strategy, which seeks to exponentially expand Uganda's GDP through key sectors such as manufacturing, agro-industrialization, IVT, and services.

The Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), covering 2025 to 2030, was highlighted as the final implementation plan under Vision 2040. It prioritizes productivity, inclusive growth, and industrial transformation. These goals are further aligned with the 10-fold growth strategy targeting sectors such as manufacturing, agro-industrialization, ICT, and services. Internationally, it was noted that the global Agenda 2030 and Uganda's participation in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) present urgent calls for aligning national

skills development with global and continental standards. The success of AfCFTA hinges on a labour force that meets the demands of a competitive and integrated African market.

The dialogue emphasized that repositioning TVET is not only strategic but also urgent. It is the pathway through which Uganda can harness its demographic dividend, fulfill international commitments, and achieve structural transformation.

This discussion was framed within the context of recent global observances, including the International Day of Education and World Youth Skills Day, which underscored the growing importance of equipping young people with future-ready, values-driven skills. In an era of automation and AI, the enduring relevance of human agency, creativity, and adaptability was reiterated.

It was concluded that Uganda's TVET reforms must be both technologically forward-looking and people centred, anchored in values, adaptability, and purpose. The policy dialogue forms part of a broader national and global effort to prepare youth for meaningful and dignified work in a rapidly evolving world.

Against the backdrop of a fast changing technological landscape, she argued that human creativity, dignity, and adaptability will determine the future of work, and as such, Uganda's reforms must move away from outdated supply driven models to a more agile, demand led skills ecosystem rooted in values and national competitiveness. Highlighting the sobering reality that over 400,000 young Ugandans enter the labor force annually-many of whom face unemployment despite glaring skill gaps in key sectors like agriculture, tourism, ICT, construction, and energy Ms. Kagina called for an urgent recalibration of the country's training architecture to align better with market needs.

She underscored that policy alone is not enough; the real transformation will depend on genuine industry participation in co-creating curricula, providing work-based learning, validating skill certifications, and offering real time feedback on graduate performance. She acknowledged the structural progress made, including the 2019 TVET Policy and the anticipated 2025 TVET Act, which together have established a strong legal and institutional framework with the TVET Council and Secretariat now in place to coordinate quality assurance and drive accountability.

However, she stressed that successful implementation must go further, especially in addressing equity by deliberately including women and marginalized groups, promoting innovation and digital skills, and building soft competencies through blended learning and simulation platforms. Ms. Kagina made it clear that results,

not rhetoric, will define the success of these reforms, urging for performance monitoring grounded in data, robust application of the National TVET Qualifications Framework, and deep employer engagement.

She closed her address with a firm pledge from the Council to pursue measurable progress, stating unequivocally that Uganda's ability to achieve sustainable economic transformation rests on the strength of its human capital. By investing in a responsive, modern, and inclusive TVET system, Uganda can unlock the potential of its youth to innovate, produce, and compete globally. With those stirring words, she invited the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Forum on Technical Education to usher in the Honourable Minister, reaffirming a shared commitment to action, partnership, and impact.

Opening remarks by Hon. Minister of State for Higher Education JS MUYINGO



In his official opening remarks at the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Musingo, Minister of State for Higher Education, speaking on behalf of the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, delivered a compelling and visionary address that underscored both the urgency and opportunity of transforming Uganda's TVET sector into an inclusive, future-ready system that is deeply aligned with the demands of the labour market.

Extending warm greetings and appreciation to a cross-section of stakeholders-ranging from policy makers, educators, students, employers, innovators, and development partners,-he emphasized that this convening was not merely ceremonial, but a critical platform for collaborative problem-solving and strategic reform aiming to transform TVET into a relevant, inclusive and demand-driven system-anchored by the TVET Act 2025. Against the backdrop of profound global shifts driven by technological change, automation, and artificial intelligence, the Minister reiterated the importance of maintaining human dignity, critical thinking, and empathy at the heart of Uganda's education system.

He highlighted that the Ministry's Digital Agenda Strategy seeks to ensure that Uganda does not fall behind but instead leads by embedding technology

meaningfully into education and training. Citing Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan IV, Hon. Musingo reaffirmed the government's commitment to TVET as a linchpin for productivity, employment, and socio-economic transformation. He called for a paradigm shift in which training institutions, employers, and learners become co-creators of solutions-transforming graduates from passive job seekers into active entrepreneurs and innovators.

He called for:

1. Updating training curricula to match current industry needs
2. Actively involving employers in shaping and assessing training
3. Equipping graduates with entrepreneurial and job creating capacities.

He referenced the 2024 National Population Census, highlighting the predominance of youth and the urgency of skills development to address unemployment. He further acknowledged Progress in TVET expansion, including efforts to establish at least one public institution per district. Hon. Musingo also highlighted structural gaps, such as the fact that 145 of Uganda's 178 districts still lack a public TVET institution, underscoring the need for both public and private sector expansion, alongside parental support for enrolment in skills-based education.

He reported the enactment of the TVET Act 2025 (effective 15th March 2025), and noted steps to establish structures like the Uganda TVET Council and TVET Assessment Boards. On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports, he reaffirmed their commitment to:

Operationalize the TVET Council, Harmonize training under the Uganda Qualifications Framework, Transition to an employer led governance model; strengthen Centers of Excellence in key sectors and Align with the Fourth Industrial Revolution through digital and green skills.

He issued a call to action, stressing the need for cross-sector collaboration, and reminded participants that the future of TVET depends on the engagement of government, private sector, development partners, academia, and youth.

He concluded by urging participants to reflect boldly, engage honestly, and act decisively—stating that Uganda's youth deserve a TVET system that restores hope, upholds dignity, and delivers opportunity.

He then declared and launched the High-Level Policy Dialogue on TVET officially open, calling upon all participants to make the ensuing deliberations bold, focused, and transformational.

Special Remarks from: H.E Kevin Colgan, Ambassador of Ireland to Uganda.



During Plenary Session 2 on “Innovation, Digital Skills, and Labour Market Relevance,” the Irish Ambassador to Uganda delivered heartfelt and reflective special remarks, centered on the significance of World Youth Skills Day and the urgent need to prioritize inclusive youth skilling as a cornerstone for sustainable development.

With a clear focus on real-world solutions, the Ambassador acknowledged that TVET is now recognized as a vital pathway integral to the national strategy for skills development and inclusive growth in alignment with Uganda Vision 2040. Considering the country's large and growing youth population and drawing on international lessons-including from Ireland, Uganda's prioritization of TVET is commendable.

The speaker applauded the Government of Uganda for its commitment to strengthening the TVET ecosystem through policies such as the 2019 TVET Policy and the forthcoming 2025 TVET Act, alongside the establishment of an employer-led National TVET Council. These efforts were credited with enhancing employability, national transformation, and public-private partnerships.

The event was described as a valuable opportunity for key stakeholders including policymakers, TVET experts, development partners, academia, the private sector, and civil society to engage in strategic dialogue on the future of TVET, particularly in light of the 2025 World Youth Skills Day.

Attention was drawn to this year's theme, 'Youth Empowerment through AI and Digital Skills', which was said to highlight the urgency of equipping Uganda's youth with modern competencies relevant to the evolving digital economy. He further emphasized that Uganda's youthful population 78% of whom are under 30—represents a tremendous resource. Proper skilling was presented as the key to unlocking this demographic potential and fostering national development.

It was noted that Ireland continues to invest approximately €6 million annually in education and skilling programmes in Uganda as central elements of its 2023-2027 Mission Strategy, with a focus on underserved regions such as Karamoja. This investment reflects Ireland's commitment to building a sustainable future based on shared values.

He also highlighted Ireland's contributions to national policy dialogues, including gender-sensitive programming and youth skilling, alongside its active participation in national TVET platforms to enhance evidence-based decision-making.

H.E Kevin identified the IDE Post-Event Dialogue as a potential annual multi-stakeholder platform for collective policy and practice advancement in Uganda's TVET sector. It was reiterated that training youth in quality, relevant technical and vocational skills and linking them with employers is crucial. The need for widespread digital skills was strongly emphasized.

Drawing on Ireland's own reforms, he underscored the importance of close consultations with the private sector, noting that such collaboration had been instrumental in transforming Ireland's own workforce capabilities. Communities and young people were urged to embrace TVET not as an alternative, but as a key driver of economic transformation with international opportunities.

A call was made to the Government of Uganda and development partners to increase investment in TVET, not only through funding but also through effective, transparent spending and collaboration with the private sector to meet national and global development goals.

In conclusion, H.E Kevin expressed deep appreciation to the Government of Uganda particularly the Ministry of Education and Sports alongside private sector actors, development partners, UN agencies, CSOs, faith-based organizations, and the youth, for their continued commitment to building a transformed

economy. He concluded with a note of optimism: that if the momentum of reform continues, the next two decades will yield even more remarkable progress. His remarks were both a call to action and a tribute-urging all stakeholders to maintain focus, deepen collaboration, and continue investing in the skills and aspirations of Uganda's young population as the nation charts a bold and inclusive path toward its future. Gratitude was also expressed for the opportunity to participate in the event.

Panel Discussion: Attracting Youth to TVET: TVET Innovation and Entrepreneurship: Stakeholders identified strategies to enhance inclusive access into TVET.

1. Dr. Julius Byaruhanga, Director Policy and Business Development, PSFU.

The session was Moderated by Dr. Julius Byaruhanga, Director of Policy and Business Development at the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, the session brought together a dynamic group of panelists whose exchanges set the stage for the Director's comprehensive intervention. He began by recognizing the invaluable contributions of Uganda's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) within the TVET ecosystem, stressing that their sustained growth is deeply interconnected with the capacity of the TVET system to deliver work-ready graduates.

Echoing earlier discussions from the afternoon workshop on TVET Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the moderator reiterated the critical importance of embedding entrepreneurship and innovation into curricula, noting that access must go beyond physical enrollment to encompass quality, relevance, and equity. He pointed out persistent barriers that hinder marginalized groups-particularly young women, persons with disabilities, and refugees-from fully participating in TVET, and called for deliberate policy and institutional actions to dismantle these barriers.

Among the strategies proposed were the expansion of community-based training centers in underserved areas, introduction of flexible entry points and modular certification to accommodate non-traditional learners, and integration of soft skills and career guidance into every training pathway. The moderator emphasized that attracting youth to TVET is not merely about promoting it as a viable alternative to university education, but about rebranding it as a powerful, aspirational platform for innovation, dignity, and self-reliance.

Drawing from global and local examples, he advocated for stronger linkages between industry and training providers, insisting that employers must play a leading role in defining competencies and assessing learner outcomes. He argued that qualifications like “Plumber Grade One” or “Certified Auto Mechanic” should hold consistent national and regional weight-backed by rigorous assessment and a trusted qualification framework-to guarantee mobility and employability across sectors.

Acknowledging the leadership of Dr. Julius Byaruhanga in skilfully moderating the session, the Director also thanked development partners such as Mastercard Foundation, UNICEF, and UNDP for supporting inclusive skilling initiatives. As he concluded, he called on all stakeholders to embrace TVET reform as a shared journey anchored in clarity, relevance, and opportunity-and to approach access not as a checkbox but as a moral and developmental imperative. With infectious enthusiasm and a touch of humor, he reminded the audience that transforming perceptions of TVET begins with how leaders speak about it and act upon it, setting the tone for a future where every Ugandan youth sees TVET as a gateway to purpose-driven success.

2. Country Director, ADRA Uganda

In an impassioned and forward-thinking contribution during the Panel Discussion, the Country Director of ADRA Uganda presented a compelling case for enhancing inclusive access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training

(TVET), grounded in the organization's longstanding commitment to equity, empowerment, and resilience-building among vulnerable communities. He began by acknowledging the transformative power of TVET when delivered with intentional inclusion, particularly for youth from marginalized backgrounds such as refugees, internally displaced persons, adolescent girls, and persons with disabilities.

He emphasized that access must be understood holistically-not merely in terms of physical enrollment-but also in terms of affordability, relevance, cultural acceptability, and alignment with market realities. Drawing from ADRA Uganda's grassroots experience in refugee settlements and underserved rural areas, he highlighted successful models where vocational training was integrated with life skills, psychosocial support, and enterprise development, thereby enabling young people to transition not just into employment, but into meaningful livelihoods with dignity and purpose.

The Director advocated for the use of mobile training units and community-based outreach centers to reach learners in remote areas, as well as the incorporation of flexible training schedules and contextualized curricula to accommodate youth who may be caregivers, survivors of trauma, or otherwise constrained by socio-economic pressures. He urged policymakers and training institutions to actively co-create TVET strategies with youth themselves, ensuring their voices and lived experiences inform program design and delivery.

Recognizing the important role of public-private partnerships, he called for deeper engagement with local enterprises to provide on-the-job training, mentorship, and start-up incubation-especially for youth-led initiatives in agribusiness, digital services, and green economy sectors. With particular emphasis on gender inclusion, he stressed the need to counter deeply entrenched stereotypes that discourage young women from enrolling in

technical fields like construction, mechanics, and welding, by investing in role models, mentorship networks, and safe learning environments.

The Director also noted the necessity of harmonizing certification and accreditation across regions to facilitate mobility and employment within the East African labour market, while urging the government to strengthen investment in TVET infrastructure and trainer capacity, particularly in districts hosting large displaced populations.

In his closing, he reaffirmed ADRA's commitment to working alongside government, civil society, private sector actors, and development partners to ensure that no young person is left behind in Uganda's journey toward inclusive, skills-led growth. His address was warmly received, leaving participants with a renewed sense of urgency and shared responsibility to dismantle barriers, unlock potential, and reimagine TVET as a cornerstone of sustainable development for all.

4. Education lead specialist, Finn Church Aid

While representing the Country Director of Finn Church Aid, Mr. Filbert Idha delivered a deeply insightful and action-oriented address that drew from years of experience supporting youth skilling across Uganda and the broader East African region. Speaking under the skilled moderation of Dr. Julius Byaruhanga, Director of Policy and Business Development at the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, Mr. Filbert emphasized that attracting youth to TVET requires a systemic, inclusive, and youth-centered approach that challenges outdated perceptions while expanding access, quality, and relevance.

He began by acknowledging the growing youth population in Uganda and the critical need to turn this demographic trend into a development opportunity through equitable investment in skills that match the demands of a dynamic and digitalizing labor market. He stressed that many young people—especially girls, youth with disabilities, and those from refugee or marginalized communities—still

face significant barriers in accessing vocational training, ranging from financial constraints and social stigma to the absence of nearby training centers.

To address these challenges, he advocated for the expansion of decentralized and mobile training programs that bring TVET directly to underserved communities, alongside the introduction of more flexible learning pathways, including blended and modular training models that allow youth to learn at their own pace while managing other responsibilities.

Drawing on Finn Church Aid's innovative youth skilling programs, he highlighted success stories from refugee settlements where competency-based, employer-informed training has enabled both host and displaced youth to launch income-generating ventures and access formal employment. He further emphasized the importance of embedding entrepreneurial thinking across all TVET curricula, ensuring that graduates are not only job-seekers but also job creators equipped with business acumen, digital literacy, and life skills.

Moreover, he stressed the value of forging stronger partnerships between TVET institutions, the private sector, and development partners to co-design demand-driven training aligned with real economic opportunities, particularly in growth sectors such as renewable energy, construction, agribusiness, and ICT. He called for increased investment in teacher training, learning infrastructure, and inclusive pedagogy that recognizes the diverse needs of learners, while also urging the government to simplify certification processes to allow greater recognition of skills acquired both formally and informally.

In a powerful closing, he challenged stakeholders to not merely celebrate youth on World Youth Skills Day, but to commit to structural reforms and bold, inclusive action that ensures every young Ugandan—regardless of background—has a fair chance to thrive through skills development. His remarks were met with resounding support, reinforcing the urgency and collective responsibility of all

actors in transforming TVET into a more inclusive and aspirational pathway for youth empowerment and national progress.

5. Country Director, Aga Khan Foundation

The representative of the Country Director of the Aga Khan Foundation delivered a thought provoking and strategic speech that underscored the urgency of re-imagining Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as a powerful vehicle for inclusive socio-economic transformation. The session provided a platform for the Country Director to share both global insights and locally grounded experiences from the Foundation's longstanding engagement in education and youth development.

He began by acknowledging that while TVET holds immense potential for addressing youth unemployment and underemployment in Uganda, access remains deeply inequitable-particularly for girls, young women, persons with disabilities, and youth in rural and marginalized communities. Drawing from the Aga Khan Foundation's integrated approach, he emphasized that inclusive access to TVET must go beyond infrastructure or enrollment statistics and instead focus on building learning environments that are safe, gender-sensitive, learner-centric, and deeply connected to local economic realities.

He called for the design of holistic training models that combine technical skill acquisition with soft skills, mentorship, digital fluency, and psychosocial support to better prepare young people-not just for employment, but for leadership and community engagement. He shared successful examples from Aga Khan Foundation projects that embed work-based learning into vocational curricula through apprenticeships and internships, enabling youth to gain hands-on experience while building relationships with potential employers.

He also highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships, where TVET providers collaborate with businesses, community leaders, and NGOs to ensure that training is demand-driven and contextually relevant. Recognizing the

foundational role of quality instruction, the Country Director emphasized the need to invest in continuous professional development for TVET instructors, particularly in emerging sectors like climate-resilient agriculture, digital services, and renewable energy.

Furthermore, he advocated for inclusive policy reforms that acknowledge non-formal and informal learning, allowing youth who have gained skills through traditional apprenticeships or lived experiences to access certification and career pathways. In closing, he issued a powerful call to action: for Uganda to unlock the full potential of its youth, it must elevate TVET as a first-choice pathway, not a fallback, and ensure that every young person—regardless of gender, geography, or background—has the opportunity, dignity, and support to learn, grow, and lead. His remarks were met with strong affirmation from participants, reinforcing the shared resolve among stakeholders to make TVET more accessible, inclusive, and aspirational across the country.

6. Director, Presidential Initiative on Skilling

The Director of the Presidential Initiative on Skilling the Girl-Boy Child delivered an impassioned and visionary speech that centered on Uganda's urgent need to democratize access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for all young people, especially those traditionally left behind by the mainstream education system. Drawing from the Initiative's grassroots work in informal settlements and underserved urban areas, the Director began by emphasizing that the foundation of inclusive TVET access lies in taking training directly to the communities that need it most—particularly out-of-school youth, teenage mothers, school dropouts, and unemployed boys and girls navigating daily survival.

He noted that the Presidential Initiative has successfully demonstrated how low-threshold, community-based skilling centers can empower youth with practical,

income-generating competencies such as tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry, shoemaking, baking, and mechanics. He passionately advocated for the decentralization of TVET services and the customization of curricula to reflect local market realities, cultural contexts, and available livelihoods.

Recognizing that many youth face barriers not only due to poverty but also stigma, gender norms, and violence, the Director called for holistic programming that integrates life skills, counseling, financial literacy, and gender-responsive mentorship into every training cycle. He shared examples of how the Initiative has partnered with religious and cultural leaders to mobilize parental support and shift community perceptions, rebranding TVET from being a “last resort” to a launchpad for dignity and self-reliance.

Furthermore, the Director underscored the need to rethink entry requirements for formal TVET institutions, allowing non-literate and semi-literate youth to gain access through practical assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanisms. He stressed that inclusive access must also address structural factors like transportation, meals, toolkits, and safe spaces for girls, which are often the hidden but decisive factors in whether a young person completes their training. Highlighting the Initiative's collaboration with the private sector, he urged stronger employer engagement to provide apprenticeships, equipment donations, and job matching opportunities.

The Director concluded with a firm appeal to government agencies, development partners, and the private sector to invest more deliberately and equitably in grassroots skilling models that leave no youth behind. He reaffirmed that the girl-boy child, when equipped with relevant and dignified skills, holds the key to transforming households, communities, and Uganda's economy at large—making the case that inclusive TVET is not just a policy goal, but a moral and national imperative.

7. Project Coordinator ISDB, OPEC and Arab Funded Projects MoES (Ministry of Education and Sports)

The Project Coordinator for ISDB, OPEC, and Arab Funded Projects at the Ministry of Education and Sports delivered a deeply reflective and technically grounded speech that underscored the Ministry's ongoing commitment to broadening inclusive access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) through strategically implemented infrastructure and policy reforms. He began by highlighting the catalytic role of the multilateral partnerships-particularly with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), OPEC Fund, and Arab Development Funds-in accelerating the modernization of Uganda's TVET landscape.

These collaborations, he noted, are enabling the construction and equipping of state-of-the-art technical institutes in hard-to-reach and underserved regions, thereby reducing regional disparities and directly expanding access to quality training for rural youth, girls, and persons with disabilities. He emphasized that inclusivity starts with intentional planning, which is why new projects are being designed with disability-accessible facilities, gender-sensitive dormitories, and proximity to marginalized communities.

The Coordinator passionately argued that infrastructure alone is insufficient unless accompanied by deliberate outreach, mobilization, and alignment with labor market trends. He cited successful pilot programs where career guidance campaigns, school-community sensitizations, and use of local languages have led to increased enrolment of girls and disadvantaged boys into vocational programs. Importantly, he stressed the role of community ownership in sustaining enrollment and retention-explaining how school boards, parents, religious leaders, and private sector actors have been co-opted into participatory project implementation frameworks.

Reflecting on key data trends, he shared that the ISDB-supported skills development projects now prioritize tracer studies and labor market assessments,

ensuring that curriculum design responds to real economic needs. He further advocated for flexible learning pathways-including Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and short-term modular courses-so that working youth and those without formal academic qualifications can still access and benefit from the TVET system. Speaking from a systems-level perspective, he addressed the importance of institutionalizing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure inclusivity not just by enrollment, but by completion rates, gender parity, employment outcomes, and entrepreneurial success.

He also applauded the alignment of these funded projects with Uganda's National Development Plan IV and the upcoming TVET Act, expressing confidence that through sustained investment, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and learner-centered innovations, Uganda will foster a truly inclusive and employer-responsive TVET system. The speech concluded with a strong reaffirmation of the Ministry's resolve to transform TVET from a peripheral alternative into a central pillar of youth empowerment, economic resilience, and national progress ensuring that no young Ugandan, regardless of background or circumstance, is left behind.

8. Executive Director, Federation of Small and Medium Size Enterprises

The Executive Director of the Federation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (FSMEs) delivered a deeply insightful and forward-looking intervention that underscored the urgent need to reimagine Uganda's TVET system through the lens of accessibility, inclusion, and entrepreneurial opportunity. In his remarks, he acknowledged the growth and challenges facing Uganda's small businesses and start-ups-many of which struggle to find technically skilled employees who are not only competent but also adaptable and entrepreneurial in mindset.

Building on insights from the day's earlier workshop on TVET Innovation and Entrepreneurship, he emphasized that the true engine of Uganda's economy lies in its MSMEs, which absorb the bulk of youth entering the labor market. However,

he pointed out, the disconnection between training institutions and the demands of small businesses has led to a mismatch that continues to frustrate both employers and job seekers. To bridge this divide, he proposed strategies grounded in realism and innovation: embedding entrepreneurial thinking across all TVET programs; scaling up practical training modules that reflect local business environments; increasing access to mobile and flexible training formats in underserved areas; and leveraging digital tools to democratize learning.

Drawing from his Federation's experience, he shared successful models of public-private partnerships where business owners co-create curricula, provide short-term apprenticeships, and mentor youth-particularly girls and young people from marginalized communities. He stressed the need to move beyond sporadic success stories and toward systemic reforms that include competency-based certification, structured validation of skills, and recognition of informal sector training, ensuring qualifications such as "Plumber Grade One" have consistent meaning nationally and internationally.

He passionately argued that inclusive access must be hardwired into the system-not as a checkbox, but as a transformative principle-and this means intentional efforts to remove financial, cultural, and geographical barriers to participation. Referencing Dr. Byaruhanga's earlier facilitation, he reiterated the power of collective action and coordination in implementing an inclusive skills development agenda that respects equity, dignity, and opportunity for all.

In conclusion, he made a compelling call for TVET to be positioned not as a fallback but as a prestigious and strategic pathway to sustainable livelihoods, urging all stakeholders to build a TVET system that delivers not just technical know-how, but clarity, identity, and future-focused ambition for Uganda's youth.

Workshop Panel: TVET Innovation and Entrepreneurship

1. Country Director, Norwegian Refugee Council

The representative of the Country Director of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) delivered a compelling and solutions-oriented address centered on actionable strategies to integrate entrepreneurship more intentionally into Uganda's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs, with a particular emphasis on inclusion, resilience, and relevance for both host and refugee communities.

Drawing from NRC's extensive experience working at the intersection of education, livelihoods, and humanitarian response, the Country Director emphasized that entrepreneurship is not merely a career option-it is a survival tool and a dignity enabler for thousands of young people living in contexts of displacement, uncertainty, and constrained formal employment. He advocated for TVET systems to adopt a more adaptive and contextualized entrepreneurship model-one that equips learners with foundational business skills such as financial planning, market analysis, supply chain navigation, and customer engagement, while also offering psychosocial support, legal literacy, and pathways to capital access, especially for youth in fragile contexts.

The Country Director highlighted the value of modular, competency-based entrepreneurship training, which allows learners to progress flexibly and build their skills incrementally even amid mobility or disruption. He called for stronger partnerships with microfinance institutions and local savings groups to develop accessible financing models that can seed microenterprises for youth upon graduation.

Additionally, he urged that curricula be designed with gender sensitivity and trauma-informed approaches in mind, ensuring that female learners and conflict-affected youth are not just included, but actively empowered. Recognizing the critical role of role models and peer learning, he proposed embedding local

entrepreneurs-particularly those who emerged from refugee or low-resource backgrounds-into the training process as mentors and co-trainers to bridge the trust and relevance gap between institutions and learners.

The Country Director also stressed the importance of leveraging technology to scale entrepreneurship education, recommending the use of mobile platforms for delivering micro-learning, accessing digital marketplaces, and tracking graduates' enterprise development over time.

He concluded by urging government and development stakeholders to co-create a national entrepreneurship integration framework within TVET that is inclusive, context-responsive, and grounded in the lived realities of learners-so that entrepreneurship becomes a catalyst for resilience, self-reliance, and inclusive economic growth, especially in regions grappling with displacement, youth unemployment, and poverty.

2. Country Representative UNDP

The representative of the Country Representative of UNDP delivered a compelling and evidence informed speech that underscored the urgency of embedding entrepreneurship meaningfully and systematically into Uganda's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) landscape to catalyze inclusive development and youth empowerment. He began by applauding the Ministry of Education and Sports and all development partners for fostering a platform that bridges policy, practice, and innovation.

The Country Representative emphasized that while TVET has long been recognized for its potential to deliver hands-on, marketable skills, its full transformative power can only be realized when coupled with entrepreneurial thinking that nurtures resilience, creativity, and problem-solving. Drawing from global best practices and lessons from UNDP supported youth skilling projects

across Uganda, he proposed actionable recommendations centered around three key pillars: systems strengthening, innovation enablement, and policy coherence.

He called for the formal integration of entrepreneurship modules across all levels of TVET curricula-modules that go beyond theory to include experiential learning, simulations, and real-time business challenges in partnership with local enterprises. He advocated for capacity-building of TVET instructors not only in pedagogy but also in entrepreneurial mindset development, supported by a national network of mentors and innovation champions. To drive innovation, he proposed the establishment of regional TVET entrepreneurship hubs that are digitally enabled, gender-responsive, and accessible to vulnerable populations-including youth with disabilities and refugees-thus fostering equity and social cohesion.

He also urged for institutional linkages between TVET institutions, microfinance entities, and local governments to ensure learners gain access to start-up capital, incubation services, and business formalization pathways. At the policy level, the UNDP representative emphasized the need to harmonize TVET standards with Uganda's National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), and SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure).

3. Education Specialist, Plan International Uganda

Mr. Martin Obwoya from Plan International Uganda delivered a passionate and insightful speech emphasizing the critical role of entrepreneurship integration within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to foster youth empowerment, gender equality, and inclusive economic growth. He began by

acknowledging the progress made by the Ministry of Education and Sports and partners in advancing TVET as a pivotal pathway for skills development in Uganda, while noting the persistent barriers that limit equitable access-especially for marginalized groups such as girls, young women, and persons with disabilities.

Stressing that entrepreneurship education must be intentionally designed to address these disparities, he proposed actionable recommendations centered on embedding entrepreneurship competencies that are contextually relevant and gender-responsive throughout the TVET curricula. This includes practical, hands-on learning opportunities that develop not only business management skills like financial literacy, marketing, and planning but also build confidence, leadership, and negotiation capabilities essential for female and marginalized youth to thrive.

He underscored the necessity of establishing mentorship programs and peer networks, which provide ongoing psychosocial support and link learners with role models from similar backgrounds who have successfully launched enterprises. Furthermore, the Director called for the scaling of innovation hubs within TVET institutions that serve as safe, inclusive spaces where youth can experiment with ideas, access seed funding, and receive coaching tailored to their unique challenges and ambitions.

Recognizing the transformative potential of digital technologies, he urged the integration of digital literacy and e-commerce skills to enable young entrepreneurs to compete in increasingly digital markets. The speech also highlighted the importance of fostering partnerships with the private sector, community organizations, and local governments to create pathways for market linkages, apprenticeships, and access to finance, with a special focus on supporting female-led microenterprises and youth-led social enterprises.

Emphasizing that these strategies align with Uganda's National Development Plan and global commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals-particularly SDG

5 on gender equality and SDG 8 on decent work-the Director concluded with a call to action for all stakeholders to commit to an inclusive, holistic approach to entrepreneurship integration in TVET, ensuring that no young person is left behind in Uganda's journey toward sustainable economic transformation.

4. Chief of Education UNICEF

The Chief of Education at UNICEF delivered a comprehensive and forward-looking speech that underscored the urgent need to integrate entrepreneurship robustly into TVET programs to unlock sustainable pathways for youth empowerment and socio-economic development. He began by applauding Uganda's strategic commitment to advancing TVET as a key lever for national growth and poverty reduction, emphasizing that entrepreneurship education is not just an add-on but a core component necessary to equip young people with the skills to innovate, create jobs, and adapt in an increasingly dynamic labor market.

Highlighting UNICEF's focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups, including girls, refugees, and children with disabilities, the Chief of Education stressed that entrepreneurship curricula must be designed with inclusivity at their heart, ensuring that these youth can access tailored support that nurtures both technical skills and entrepreneurial mindsets. He advocated for a holistic approach that combines practical, experiential learning-such as business simulations, apprenticeships, and mentorship programs-with critical life skills like financial literacy, problem-solving, communication, and digital competence, which are essential for navigating modern economies.

The Chief further emphasized the importance of creating enabling environments within TVET institutions, including innovation hubs and incubators that provide resources, seed funding, and networking opportunities, thus transforming

theoretical knowledge into viable business ventures. He underscored the pivotal role of partnerships across government agencies, private sector players, civil society, and international development partners to ensure entrepreneurship training aligns with labor market demands and fosters pathways to formal employment and self-employment.

Addressing the gender gap, he called for deliberate strategies to empower young women and girls through targeted entrepreneurship programs and mentorship that challenge societal norms and build confidence. The Chief concluded with a compelling call to action, urging all stakeholders to prioritize sustained investment, policy coherence, and monitoring frameworks to track the impact of entrepreneurship integration in TVET, thereby ensuring that Uganda's youth are not only skilled but also equipped with the entrepreneurial capacity to drive inclusive economic transformation and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. Country Director, War Child Canada

Ms. Onen from War Child Canada started from Drawing on War Child's extensive experience working with marginalized populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons, she highlighted the urgent need for TVET curricula to go beyond traditional skills training by embedding entrepreneurship education that fosters creativity, resilience, and economic self-reliance. He stressed that entrepreneurship integration must be practical and context-specific, offering hands-on learning opportunities such as business incubation, mentorship schemes, and access to seed funding, which enable young people to transform their skills into viable income-generating ventures.

Recognizing the barriers faced by war-affected youth-such as trauma, limited networks, and restricted access to finance-the director advocated for comprehensive support systems within TVET institutions, including psychosocial

services and tailored entrepreneurship guidance, to address these challenges holistically. He underscored the value of digital literacy and innovation as critical components for entrepreneurship in today's fast-evolving market landscape, urging the incorporation of emerging technologies into training programs to prepare youth for competitive, tech-driven economies.

The director also called for strong partnerships between government agencies, private sector actors, NGOs, and international donors to create enabling environments that link TVET graduates to markets and financial resources, ensuring the sustainability of entrepreneurship initiatives. Importantly, he highlighted the need for inclusivity and gender-sensitive approaches that prioritize girls and young women, who often face compounded vulnerabilities but hold immense potential as entrepreneurs.

Concluding his remarks, the War Child Canada Country Director reiterated that integrating entrepreneurship into TVET is not merely about economic outcomes but about restoring dignity, hope, and agency to youth affected by crisis, thereby contributing to long-term peace-building and social cohesion in Uganda and beyond.

Feedback Session by Dr. Eddy Turyatemba, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Education and Training (VET) at the Ministry of Education and Sports

The Feedback Session held from 4:30 PM to 5:00 PM, facilitated by Dr. Eddy Turyatemba, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Education and Training (VET) at the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), served as a crucial closing segment to the day's extensive dialogue on TVET reforms and youth skills development. Dr. Turyatemba provided a comprehensive summary that encapsulated the key themes, insights, and commitments arising from the various plenary discussions, keynote addresses, panel sessions, and workshops held throughout the day.

His summary highlighted the collective recognition of the imperative to align TVET curricula with labor market demands, the growing importance of integrating entrepreneurship and digital skills into training programs, and the necessity of fostering inclusive, gender-sensitive approaches to skills development. Emphasizing the productive collaboration among government representatives, development partners, private sector stakeholders, educators, and youth participants, Dr. Turyatemba underscored the shared sense of purpose and responsibility demonstrated by all attendees in advancing Uganda's national TVET reforms.

Participants responded positively to the feedback, expressing satisfaction with the depth of engagement, the clarity of strategic priorities, and the practical nature of the commitments discussed. The session reinforced a forward-looking mindset focused on actionable outcomes, continuous stakeholder collaboration, and measurable progress. It concluded by setting a tone of optimism and resolve for the ongoing implementation of reforms aimed at making Uganda's TVET system more responsive, sustainable, and impactful in addressing youth unemployment and driving socio-economic transformation.

Closing Segment

The closing segment of Day 1 of the TVET policy dialogue was marked by a relaxed yet purposeful tea break and networking session, allowing participants to engage in informal discussions, consolidate professional contacts, and reinforce collaborative relationships established during the day's intense engagements. This social interlude blended announcements, expressions of appreciation, and light entertainment, creating an atmosphere that balanced reflection with conviviality as the first day wound down. Following this, a formal feedback and closing address succinctly encapsulated the day's key themes and responses to participant concerns, notably those raised by students.

The speaker clarified misconceptions about TVET, emphasizing that it extends far beyond technical and vocational training alone to include general education, applied technologies, practical skills, attitudes, and knowledge vital for social and economic development. Importantly, TVET is framed as a means not only to produce skilled employees but to cultivate self-driven, responsible citizens capable of innovation and entrepreneurship—an approach necessary to prevent youth frustration and risky behavior often stemming from gaps in mindset rather than lack of opportunity.

The address also updated attendees on the transition from outdated terminology such as “BTVET” to the unified term “TVET” under the new policy and the forthcoming TVET Act of 2025. Central to the speaker's message were five strategic recommendations: first, embedding entrepreneurship competencies—including planning, management, marketing, innovation, and digital literacy—across all training programs to complement technical skills; second, establishing business incubation hubs within training institutions to provide mentorship, seed funding, and practical experience; third, making competence-based entrepreneurship projects mandatory for all final-year trainees as individual, real-world ventures to ensure readiness for self-employment; fourth, investing in continuous professional development for instructors through exposure to live business environments to enable experiential learning; and fifth, fostering strong partnerships between training institutions and industry or SMEs, incorporating flexible modular training pathways that allow learners to accumulate qualifications progressively without losing momentum.

These recommendations underscore a commitment to positioning TVET as a dynamic driver of employment, innovation, and inclusive economic growth. The address closed with gratitude to all participants and an invitation to continue the critical discussions on the following day, complemented by a warm gesture inviting attendees to enjoy the served tea. The closing session highlighted both the challenges and promising directions of Uganda's TVET reforms, reinforcing a shared dedication to transforming skills development into a cornerstone of national socio-economic progress.

The first day of the IDE 2025 Post-Event & World Youth Skills Day High-Level Policy Dialogue therefore, succeeded in creating a platform for multi-sectoral dialogue on the transformation of Uganda's TVET system. The program was meticulously structured to balance thought leadership, policy input, and practical innovation. Stakeholders were unanimous in recognizing the need for an employer-led model that aligns TVET outputs with labor market demands. The foundation was firmly laid for continued policy co-creation, investment mobilization, and public awareness efforts in the build-up to IDE 2026.

DAY 2, Shaping Policies and Fostering Partnerships

Overview

Day Two of the International Day of Education (IDE) 2025 Post-Event and World Youth Skills Day High-Level Policy Dialogue focused on Shaping Policies and Fostering Partnerships. The day's sessions delved into strategic themes including inter-ministerial coordination, artificial intelligence (AI) integration in TVET, industry-led curriculum development, student voices, and the presentation of inclusive TVET policy recommendations. The program emphasized multi sectoral collaboration and the importance of aligning TVET with technological advancements and labor market realities.

Presentation: Integration of Artificial Intelligence in TVET Delivery and Learning by the AI / Digitalization Experts from HUAWEI, CEO AI Studio Uganda and Lead at Crane Models Project.

During the session on the integration of Artificial Intelligence in TVET delivery and learning, the Artificial Intelligence and Digitalization Experts delivered a compelling and forward looking discussion aimed at demystifying the TVET pathway through the lens of AI and digital tools, urging stakeholders to embrace the transformative potential of emerging technologies in reshaping skills development across Uganda and the wider region.

They explained and showed how AI can make the skilling system more practical, clearer, and easier for every stakeholder in Uganda. They outlined the challenges they were tackling and the opportunities that AI brings while describing how AI can translate lessons into local languages so every child learns in the language they understand best. They Added that AI simplifies complex topics by breaking them down into everyday language that is easier to understand.

One of the panelists mentioned that AI works offline, making it perfect for rural training hubs with limited connectivity, and that it automates tasks such as marking and record keeping, freeing trainers to focus on hands on mentoring.

Regarding their work, Crane Models spoke their Ugandan AI models trained on local languages and cultural knowledge such as Luganda and Runyankole. He also discussed offline ready tools, which are AI applications that can run on simple devices without constant internet. Additionally, he referred to an open data platform they are building to provide relevant digital content for Uganda's unique trades. He gave practical examples, including a student at an industrial hub who asks the AI how to safely fix a machine part and receives an answer in Luganda, a young hairdresser who asks how to market services on social media and gets an explanation in plain Runyankole, and a trainer who saves hours each week because AI marks quizzes automatically.

He outlined the expected outcomes of these efforts as clearer delivery with complex skills broken down into understandable components, local language learning where skills are taught in languages students understand best, empowered trainers who can focus on mentoring rather than administration, and job-ready youth prepared for real employment opportunities.

The speaker from AI Studio Uganda pledged to partner with the Ministry, the Presidential Industrial Skilling Program, and development agencies like Enabel to pilot, test, and scale these solutions. He called for collective effort to make TVET simpler, clearer, and to unlock Uganda's workforce potential one skill at a time, and he ended by thanking the audience.

Inter-Ministerial Round Table

1. Ministry of Education and Sports

During the Inter-Ministerial Round Table session, Dr. Eddy Turyatemba, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Education and Training (VET) represented the Ministry of Education and Sports. He delivered an incisive and strategic discussion that emphasized the pivotal role of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in promoting effective and coordinated skills delivery across the country.

He began by acknowledging the persistent fragmentation in TVET programming, characterized by parallel skilling initiatives housed within various MDAs—each operating under its own mandate, budget lines, and implementation strategies—thereby weakening the potential impact of national skills development efforts. He

stressed the urgent need to move from isolated interventions to a harmonized national framework guided by shared priorities, integrated data systems, and mutually reinforcing accountability structures.

Drawing from sectoral experiences, he cited how ministries like Agriculture, Energy, and Trade have made commendable strides in agricultural skilling, green energy trades, and industrial apprenticeship programs, respectively-but noted that without coherent planning and cross-sectoral coordination, these initiatives risk duplication, inefficiency, and limited scalability. He proposed the establishment of a centralized inter-ministerial coordination mechanism to ensure alignment between TVET supply and labor market demand, along with standardized competency frameworks and quality assurance systems that cut across all sectors.

Furthermore, he called for stronger policy coherence through the development of a national skills development strategy that defines the roles of each MDA, promotes the pooling of resources, and links skills programming directly to Uganda's socio-economic transformation agenda under Vision 2040 and the NDP III. The Commissioner also highlighted the importance of joint monitoring and evaluation systems, emphasizing that collective accountability will not only improve transparency but also incentivize performance across sectors.

He urged that ministries should no longer view skills development as the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Sports but rather as a shared national endeavor requiring synchronized efforts, robust institutional partnerships, and a unified commitment to equipping Uganda's youth with market-relevant competencies. He concluded with a call to action, inviting all MDAs to come together under a harmonized planning and reporting architecture that bridges gaps, builds synergies, and repositions TVET as the engine of inclusive and sustainable development in Uganda.

2. Ministry of Local Government

A representative from the Ministry of Local Government delivered a thoughtful and impactful discussion on the essential role of local governments in strengthening the coordination and delivery of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) across Uganda. He began by affirming that the Ministry of Local Government occupies a uniquely strategic position as the closest administrative arm to communities, making it a critical player in translating national TVET policies into context-specific, demand-driven skills programs at the grassroots level.

He highlighted that many skills gaps in Uganda are hyper local, rooted in region-specific economic activities such as fisheries in island districts, agro-processing in rural communities, or construction in urbanizing centers, and emphasized that local governments are best placed to identify and address these unique skill demands. However, he acknowledged the fragmentation of efforts across MDAs and the marginalization of local governments in national TVET planning and budgeting processes, which has led to missed opportunities in tailoring training to local labor market realities.

He proposed the formal integration of local government structures into the national TVET governance framework through devolved budgeting, capacity-building for district production departments, and a standardized mechanism for collecting and feeding local labor intelligence into central planning. The speaker also pointed out successful pilots of district-level youth skilling initiatives supported by development partners, but warned that these remain isolated unless embedded into a harmonized national strategy with clear inter-ministerial coordination.

He advocated for the strengthening of partnerships between local governments, training institutions, private sector employers, and civil society to operationalize

TVET hubs that provide mentorship, startup incubation, and apprenticeship linkages. Additionally, he stressed the need for inclusive outreach programs targeting vulnerable youth-including young women, refugees, and persons with disabilities-ensuring that local TVET delivery is not only accessible but also equitable.

In conclusion, he echoed the session's central call for a unified, labor market-responsive TVET system and emphasized that local governments must not be viewed merely as implementers, but as co-creators of Uganda's skills development agenda. Only by embedding local government participation into inter-ministerial accountability structures, he argued, can Uganda realize a truly decentralized, inclusive, and sustainable TVET delivery system that leaves no one behind.

3. Ministry of Finance, Planning & Economic Development

The representative from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED) delivered a compelling and data-informed discussion on the centrality of coordinated financing and economic planning in advancing Uganda's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) agenda. He emphasized that while various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) have made commendable strides in developing sector-specific skills programs, the lack of a harmonized funding framework and aligned priorities has resulted in fragmentation, inefficiency, and duplication of efforts across the TVET landscape.

From a planning and macroeconomic perspective, he argued that TVET should not be treated as an isolated education sector issue but rather as an economic development instrument critical for national competitiveness, job creation, and inclusive growth. He presented evidence showing that countries with strong employer-led, skills-driven economies consistently outperform their peers in productivity and youth employment indicators, and he reiterated the Ministry's

commitment to repositioning TVET as a national investment priority within Uganda's medium-term expenditure framework.

He highlighted the need for cross-sectoral budget tagging, performance-based funding, and results-oriented programming to ensure that all public and donor resources towards skills development are integrated, efficiently allocated, and transparently monitored. Furthermore, he called for an overhaul of financing modalities to incentivize public-private partnerships, industry co-financing of training programs, and scalable models of enterprise-based learning that reflect actual labor market demands.

In terms of planning, he emphasized the need to embed TVET in the core of Uganda's national development frameworks, including the third National Development Plan (NDPIII) and upcoming NDPIV, and ensure that all MDAs integrate measurable skilling outcomes into their sector strategies. Importantly, he advocated for the institutionalization of an inter-ministerial coordination platform- anchored in MoFPED's Public Investment Management and Results Framework- to facilitate synchronized policy implementation, joint accountability, and continuous learning across government.

Finally, he underscored that to unlock the demographic dividend and meet the aspirations of the Parish Development Model and Vision 2040, Uganda must urgently move from isolated interventions to a whole-of-government skills delivery system, with MoFPED actively playing a catalytic role in resource mobilization, planning, and oversight for a dynamic, inclusive, and future-ready TVET ecosystem.

4. Ministry of Trade, Industries and Cooperatives

During the Inter-Ministerial Round Table session moderated by the Executive Director of the National Planning Authority, the representative from the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives delivered a compelling and strategic intervention that underscored the Ministry's integral role in driving skills

development aligned to Uganda's industrialization and trade agenda. He began by reaffirming that Uganda's Vision 2040 and the third National Development Plan (NDP III) prioritize industrialization, export development, and value addition, which require a technically skilled workforce to sustain growth and global competitiveness.

The speaker elaborated that the Ministry's mandate encompasses the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the development of industrial parks, and the regulation and support of cooperatives, all of which are fertile grounds for embedding Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). He noted that many industrial and trade sectors-including agro-processing, leather and textile manufacturing, furniture making, and metal fabrication-require hands-on, job-ready skills, yet the current TVET delivery remains fragmented, with curricula often disconnected from enterprise needs. Highlighting some progress, he cited the Ministry's support towards Business Incubation Centres, skilling initiatives under the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI), and vocational capacity-building through cooperative unions.

However, he also acknowledged challenges such as limited inter-ministerial coordination, underfunding of industrial training institutions, and lack of harmonized qualification frameworks. He called for urgent action to integrate entrepreneurship education and innovation modules within TVET curricula, enabling learners to not only gain technical skills but also start and sustain their own businesses. He emphasized the need to strengthen linkages between TVET institutions and the private sector, particularly manufacturers, traders, and cooperatives, through formalized internship programs, industry advisory boards, and joint curriculum development.

The Ministry recommended the establishment of sector-specific Centres of Excellence for industrial trades, greater investment in industrial apprenticeships, and the mainstreaming of cooperatives as vehicles for collective skills

development and enterprise growth. Additionally, the speaker advocated for harmonized national frameworks that align all MDAs under a single, labor-market responsive TVET strategy and introduced the idea of a national skills observatory to track and match training with market demands.

He concluded by stating that Uganda's path to inclusive economic transformation lies in empowering its citizens with the practical skills and entrepreneurial capabilities needed to drive the country's trade, industry, and cooperative movements forward—calling on all ministries to move from parallel efforts to integrated action in delivering a unified TVET system.

Technical Session: Promoting Employable Skills through Industry-Led Curriculum Design and Assessment by the Executive Secretary, Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB)

During the session on Promoting Employable Skills Through Industry-Led Curriculum Design and Assessment, the Executive Secretary of the Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB) delivered an insightful and forward-looking discussion that centered on UVTAB's strategic transition to industry-led, competency-based assessments within Uganda's evolving Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. He began by acknowledging the persistent mismatch between skills imparted by training institutions and the actual demands of the labor market, emphasizing that traditional assessment models-rooted in theoretical testing and rigid grading systems-are no longer sufficient to equip learners for dynamic, industry-driven work environments.

The Executive Secretary then introduced UVTAB's reform agenda, which is grounded in a vision of aligning TVET certification with labor market competencies through a rigorous, inclusive, and employer-anchored approach. He walked delegates through the Board's systematic shift from input-based assessment to performance-oriented evaluation, where skills are demonstrated in real-world or

simulated industry settings, and learners are certified based on their ability to meet occupational standards.

He further highlighted the centrality of employer participation in curriculum development and assessment frameworks, noting that this partnership enhances the credibility and relevance of certification while building employer confidence in graduates' capabilities. To achieve this, UVTAB has initiated multi-sectoral consultative platforms that bring together industry players, trainers, and curriculum developers to co-create assessment tools that reflect current industry technologies, workflows, and safety standards.

The speaker underscored that under the new TVET assessment system, the assessment cycle now includes formative and summative evaluations, workplace-based projects, skills demonstrations, and digital portfolios, with a deliberate focus on continuous learning and industry validation. He clarified that UVTAB is standardizing assessment instruments across all accredited TVET institutions, ensuring that certification represents nationally and regionally recognized competencies.

Furthermore, the Executive Secretary emphasized the importance of decentralizing assessment centers to improve access and affordability, especially in rural areas, while also investing in assessor training to uphold quality assurance and credibility. Delegates were also introduced to UVTAB's digital certification system, which increases transparency, reduces fraud, and allows employers to verify graduate competencies with ease.

Concluding his remarks, he called for a sustained national effort to institutionalize employer involvement not only at the level of assessment but throughout the entire TVET delivery chain—from curriculum design to post-certification feedback—arguing that only through such systemic collaboration can Uganda produce a competitive, employable, and innovation-ready workforce.

Panel Discussion: Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in TVET

1. Dr. Eddy Turyatemba, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Education and Training (VET) at the Ministry of Education and Sports.

During the session on Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in TVET, moderated by the Federation of Uganda Employers, the Dr. Eddy Turyatemba delivered a comprehensive and results-oriented speech underscoring the critical role of PPPs in transforming Uganda's TVET landscape to meet 21st-century workforce demands. He began by highlighting the persistent challenges facing public TVET institutions-limited infrastructure, outdated equipment, and insufficient industry linkages-which continue to hinder the effectiveness and relevance of training delivery.

In addressing these bottlenecks, the Commissioner emphasized the urgent need for a structured and institutionalized public-private partnership model that leverages the strengths of both government and the private sector to co-invest in and co-deliver TVET. He elaborated on practical mechanisms for mobilizing private sector investment, including the development of skills laboratories jointly managed by industries and institutions, co-funding of TVET infrastructure projects such as regional centers of excellence, and expanding structured internship and apprenticeship programs that allow learners to gain hands-on experience in real production environments.

He proposed that employers be directly engaged in curriculum design, assessment validation, and mentorship programs to ensure that the skills being taught are not only current but also aligned with workplace demands. The Commissioner advocated for the creation of a dedicated TVET PPP Policy Framework to formalize collaboration structures, clarify the roles of stakeholders, and provide guidelines for cost-sharing, risk management, and sustainability of joint initiatives. He noted that such a framework should include tax incentives for

companies that host apprentices, provide equipment to institutions, or invest in trainer capacity building.

Furthermore, he shared that the Ministry is exploring performance-based financing models where industries can access government subsidies or matching grants based on measurable contributions to skilling outcomes. The Commissioner stressed the importance of trust-building between the public and private sectors through transparent reporting, regular policy dialogue, and joint monitoring of PPP outcomes.

He also highlighted successful pilot models such as the Uganda Hotel and Tourism Training Institute's partnership with hospitality chains and the dual training programs in the automotive and construction sectors.

In conclusion, he called upon the private sector to shift from being passive beneficiaries of TVET graduates to becoming active co-creators of a future-ready workforce, while reaffirming the government's commitment to creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment that fosters innovation, investment, and long-term sustainability in TVET through meaningful PPPs.

2. Executive Director - PPP Unit, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Dev't

The Executive Director of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Unit at the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development delivered a detailed and forward-looking address that underscored the vital role of structured PPPs in unlocking sustainable financing and improving the relevance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) across Uganda. He began by acknowledging the growing recognition that TVET cannot thrive on public financing alone, especially in an era where technological shifts, youth

unemployment, and skills mismatches demand faster, market-responsive training solutions.

Drawing from both local and international best practices, the Executive Director outlined how Uganda's PPP framework-historically used for infrastructure-can be adapted to serve the evolving needs of the TVET sector. He explained that the Ministry, through its PPP Unit, is now working closely with sectoral agencies to establish bankable PPP project pipelines focused on TVET centers of excellence, smart classrooms, industry-grade equipment, and residential training facilities in underserved regions.

Emphasizing the principle of shared value, he urged the private sector to view TVET partnerships not merely as corporate social responsibility but as strategic investments in workforce competitiveness and supply chain development. He proposed the use of performance-based PPP contracts where private partners co-develop curriculum, host apprentices, and maintain training facilities under agreed service levels in exchange for government support through viability gap funding, tax incentives, or long-term lease agreements.

Furthermore, he recommended the development of a tailored PPP Policy Framework for TVET to address specific sectoral dynamics, including curriculum flexibility, quality assurance, and certification standards aligned with labor market needs. The Executive Director stressed the need for a central coordination mechanism that brings together TVET institutions, line ministries, industry bodies, and financiers to design PPP models that are context-sensitive and scalable.

He also introduced a proposal for the creation of a TVET PPP Advisory Platform that would offer technical support, due diligence services, and pre-feasibility funding to de-risk private investments in skills development.

In closing, he reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to working with all stakeholders to unlock blended financing for TVET, formalize employer

participation in training ecosystems, and ensure that PPPs deliver tangible results in terms of employability, innovation, and regional equity. He called upon employers to embrace co-ownership of the skilling agenda, and for development partners to align their support with Uganda's emerging PPP-driven TVET financing model as a pathway to inclusive and resilient economic transformation.

3. Executive Secretary, RUFORUM

The Executive Secretary of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) delivered a thought-provoking and forward-looking presentation that emphasized the indispensable role of academia, research, and private sector collaboration in reimagining Uganda's TVET landscape to meet 21st-century skills demands. He began by acknowledging that while RUFORUM primarily works with universities and higher learning institutions across Africa, the forum has increasingly recognized the urgent need to bridge the gap between theory and practice by integrating Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) into national innovation and development frameworks, especially in agriculture and agro-industrial value chains.

He highlighted that the agricultural sector, which employs the majority of Uganda's population, presents immense opportunities for creating youth employment, but this requires deliberate investment in modern skills delivery systems that are aligned with technological advancement, market trends, and climate resilience. The Executive Secretary emphasized the value of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as critical instruments not only for funding TVET infrastructure and centers of excellence but also for fostering an agile and inclusive training ecosystem driven by industry needs.

He presented RUFORUM's experience in collaborating with agribusinesses, farmer cooperatives, and regional industries to co-develop competency-based training modules, facilitate internships, and co-finance innovation hubs and skills labs

within institutions. He also proposed a model where agricultural enterprises co-own and co-manage TVET incubation centers that provide learners with hands-on experiences, mentorship, and business startup support.

A key recommendation from his intervention was the need to create an enabling PPP Policy Framework tailored for TVET that incentivizes the private sector through tax breaks, recognition schemes, and participation in certification and curriculum review bodies. He stressed that research and data should guide PPP initiatives, with universities and TVET institutions working closely to produce labor market analytics, tracer studies, and real-time feedback loops for continuous improvement.

Furthermore, he advocated for regional integration of TVET efforts, particularly through cross-border partnerships that allow for the mobility of skilled labor, mutual recognition of qualifications, and shared investment in specialized infrastructure.

In closing, he reaffirmed RUFORUM's commitment to supporting national efforts to revitalize TVET through evidence-based approaches, cross-sector collaboration, and a firm belief that Uganda's path to inclusive growth, food security, and economic transformation lies in nurturing a generation of practically skilled, entrepreneurial, and innovation-oriented youth, empowered through well-funded, relevant, and industry-responsive TVET systems.

4. Project Director, GROW

The Project Director of the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project delivered a deeply insightful and inclusive address that highlighted the critical intersection between gender-responsive programming and private sector engagement in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

She began by underscoring GROW's overarching goal of economically empowering women through skilling, enterprise development, and access to market opportunities, emphasizing that any robust TVET strategy must integrate gender considerations to ensure that women and marginalized groups are not left behind in Uganda's development agenda.

The Director detailed how GROW has been working with both public institutions and private actors to support skills development for women in non-traditional trades such as construction, automotive repair, ICT, and green energy-sectors traditionally dominated by men but increasingly open to diversification through deliberate policy action. She noted that PPPs offer an ideal platform to unlock private investment into women-focused skills labs, innovation hubs, and mentorship networks, particularly when the incentives align with broader corporate social responsibility and diversity goals.

Drawing from GROW's operational experience, she illustrated how partnerships with private firms have led to the co-design of women-centric training modules, the provision of toolkits for self-employment, and employer-led internship placements that have substantially increased post-training absorption rates for female trainees. The Director also stressed the importance of integrating life skills, financial literacy, and gender sensitivity training into TVET curricula to enhance the socio-economic resilience of women entrepreneurs.

A key recommendation from her remarks was the establishment of a TVET-specific PPP Policy Framework that includes gender equity targets, encourages affirmative procurement by industries, and supports the creation of inclusive TVET centers of excellence that are accessible, safe, and responsive to the unique needs of women and girls. She further urged the government and development partners to de-risk private sector investment through matching grants, performance-based incentives, and blended financing mechanisms that catalyze co-investment in skilling initiatives.

5. Senior Development Officer, UNHCR

During the Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships in TVET session moderated by the Federation of Uganda Employers, the Senior Development Officer from UNHCR delivered a compelling and forward-looking discussion on the role of

inclusive partnerships in scaling TVET access, quality, and equity-particularly for refugee and host community youth in Uganda. He began by acknowledging Uganda's progressive refugee policy and commended the Government's openness in integrating displaced populations into national development systems, including education and skills development.

The speaker emphasized that TVET holds immense potential as a pathway for both refugee and national youth to gain employable skills, transition into meaningful livelihoods, and contribute to socio-economic resilience. However, he noted that access to quality TVET among forcibly displaced populations remains limited due to infrastructure gaps, high training costs, limited private sector linkages, and inadequate recognition of non-formal skills. In this context, he proposed that Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) be intentionally designed to be inclusive of refugee-hosting districts, ensuring that private sector investments in TVET infrastructure, internship programs, and skills labs are also extended to underserved and remote settlements.

He shared successful pilot models supported by UNHCR in collaboration with private enterprises and local governments, including co-funded training hubs in Bidibidi and Nakivale that integrate refugees, nationals, and employers in hands-on vocational programs in areas such as tailoring, welding, solar installation, and agribusiness. The speaker called for a PPP Policy Framework that embeds principles of inclusion, equity, and mobility-allowing TVET graduates, including refugees, to receive nationally recognized certification and access formal labor markets.

He also highlighted the opportunity for industries operating near refugee settlements to benefit from a growing, youthful, and diverse labor pool, and encouraged businesses to co-develop market-responsive training curricula and mentorship schemes in partnership with local training providers.

The speech concluded with a strong appeal for collaborative investment across humanitarian, public, and private sectors to create integrated TVET ecosystems that not only bridge the skills gap but also foster social cohesion, economic integration, and dignity for all learners, regardless of status.

TVET Student Beneficiaries Panel Discussion

1. Beneficiary from ELECU

During the TVET Student Beneficiaries panel discussion session, moderated by the Principal of Nakawa Vocational, the beneficiary from ELECU delivered a heartfelt and inspiring testimony that vividly illustrated the transformative power of skills training. Speaking with genuine emotion and pride, the student recounted how joining ELECU's program had not only equipped them with practical and industry-relevant skills in electrical installation and maintenance but also instilled confidence, discipline, and a new vision for their future.

They detailed the rigorous hands-on training, mentorship, and exposure to real-world work environments that bridged the gap between classroom learning and labor market demands. Highlighting their journey from uncertainty and limited opportunities to securing a formal apprenticeship with a reputable electrical company, the beneficiary shared how this pathway opened doors to sustainable employment and financial independence.

They further described entrepreneurial ventures sparked by the training, including starting a small electrical repair business in their community, which empowered them to create jobs for others and contribute economically to their family and neighborhood. Importantly, the student underscored the inclusivity of the program, which welcomed learners from diverse backgrounds, including those from marginalized and refugee communities, fostering a sense of belonging and purpose.

Their testimony powerfully humanized the ongoing policy debates around TVET, emphasizing that the real impact of skills development lies in learner-centric approaches that prioritize practical, adaptive training responsive to both individual aspirations and evolving industry needs.

Closing with heartfelt gratitude to ELECU and partner organizations for their unwavering support, the beneficiary's story served as a compelling call to deepen investment in quality TVET programs that transform lives and build resilient, skilled youth ready to drive Uganda's socio-economic development.

2. World skills Alumni

During the TVET Student Beneficiaries panel discussion moderated by the Principal of Nakawa Vocational, the World Skills Alumni delivered a deeply moving and insightful speech that vividly captured the transformative journey from trainee to skilled professional and community leader. Reflecting on their time in the World Skills program, the alumnus shared how the rigorous, hands-on training not only honed their technical expertise in fields such as carpentry, welding, and digital technologies but also fostered critical soft skills like problem-solving, teamwork, and resilience-qualities that proved indispensable in navigating Uganda's competitive labor market.

They recounted the pride of representing Uganda in regional and international competitions, which expanded their horizons and boosted their confidence, motivating them to pursue excellence beyond the classroom. The alumnus highlighted how these experiences translated into tangible career advancements, securing gainful employment in reputable companies and successfully launching entrepreneurial ventures that create jobs within their communities, thereby contributing to local economic growth.

Emphasizing the inclusivity of the program, they acknowledged the opportunities afforded to marginalized youth, including women and refugees, who often face barriers to education and employment, and stressed that such learner-centric, industry-aligned TVET models are essential for equitable development. Their testimony reinforced the crucial link between skills acquisition, employability, and self-empowerment, vividly demonstrating how practical, competency-based training delivers not just certificates but life-changing opportunities.

The alumnus concluded with a passionate call for continued investment in TVET innovation and collaboration between stakeholders to ensure that Uganda's youth are equipped with future-proof skills that meet evolving industry needs, ultimately driving sustainable national development and fostering a culture of excellence and entrepreneurship.

3. Presidential Initiative on Skilling

The representative from the Presidential Initiative on Skilling delivered an inspiring and comprehensive speech that highlighted the profound impact of the initiative's programs on the lives of countless young Ugandans across the country. Drawing from numerous success stories, the speaker emphasized how the initiative's commitment to inclusive, practical, and demand-driven skills training has empowered youth from diverse backgrounds-especially those from marginalized and underserved communities-to acquire relevant competencies that directly translate into employment opportunities and entrepreneurship ventures.

He shared how the Presidential Initiative has worked closely with partner organizations to design curricula that reflect real industry needs, ensuring graduates are job-ready and capable of contributing meaningfully to the

economy. The speaker detailed examples of beneficiaries who, through the initiative, have secured stable jobs in sectors ranging from construction and manufacturing to ICT and agribusiness, while others have successfully launched small businesses that have generated income and employment for their peers.

Emphasizing the transformative power of hands-on learning, mentorship, and continuous support, the discussion underscored the importance of placing the learner at the center of skills development strategies-recognizing individual aspirations, challenges, and potential. The speaker also highlighted the initiative's ongoing efforts to foster gender equality and youth empowerment, ensuring that young women and men equally benefit from these opportunities.

Concluding with a call to action, the representative stressed the necessity for sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration-including government ministries, private sector partners, and development agencies-to scale up these successes, innovate training delivery, and embed entrepreneurship as a core pillar of TVET. This testimony powerfully reinforced the value of learner-focused approaches in driving Uganda's socio-economic transformation through a skilled, confident, and resilient youth workforce.

4. ADRA Uganda

The speaker began by affirming ADRA Uganda's mission to uplift vulnerable and underserved populations-especially youth, women, and refugees-by equipping them with practical, market-relevant skills that not only promote self-reliance but also enhance their ability to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader economy. Highlighting several testimonies from beneficiaries of ADRA-supported TVET programs, the speaker illustrated how young people who once faced barriers such as poverty, displacement, or lack of formal education are

now thriving as skilled artisans, technicians, agripreneurs, and small business owners.

These stories, shared in powerful first-person accounts during the session, reflected significant personal growth, confidence, and dignity gained through vocational education. The ADRA representative emphasized the organization's learner-centered approach, which combines hands-on training with psychosocial support, mentorship, and linkages to employment or seed capital, thereby addressing both the technical and human dimensions of development.

He also noted the importance of tailoring curricula to local labor market demands and involving community stakeholders in program design to ensure contextual relevance and sustainability. Calling attention to the ripple effects of successful skilling programs, the speaker shared how some graduates have become trainers or mentors themselves, thus creating a multiplier effect within their communities.

In closing, the representative advocated for greater inter-agency collaboration, sustainable financing for skills initiatives, and policies that institutionalize inclusivity, gender equity, and learner voice within the TVET ecosystem. This contribution, deeply rooted in grassroots impact, reinforced the overarching message of the session: that real development happens when training is practical, accessible, and centered on the learner's journey.

5. Enabel

The representative from Enabel delivered a deeply reflective and insightful address that underscored the agency's commitment to fostering inclusive, learner-centered, and market-responsive vocational education. Speaking after several moving testimonies from TVET graduates supported by Enabel and its partner institutions, the representative highlighted the organization's core belief

that empowering young people with practical, employable skills is key to unlocking their potential and transforming entire communities.

The speaker reflected on the journeys shared by beneficiaries—young women who defied gender stereotypes to become welders, refugees who turned carpentry training into entrepreneurial ventures, and youth from marginalized regions who, through Enabel-facilitated apprenticeships, transitioned directly into formal employment. These real-life success stories, the representative emphasized, reflect the intentional design of Enabel's approach: integrating life skills, entrepreneurship, and digital competencies into hands-on training, while collaborating closely with local employers to align curricula with labor market demands.

The speaker further acknowledged that while policy frameworks are vital, it is the voices and experiences of learners that validate the system and serve as the ultimate measure of effectiveness. He praised the courage and determination of the panelists, many of whom overcame personal and systemic barriers to achieve professional success, and called on all stakeholders to ensure that vocational training continues to be inclusive, gender-responsive, and embedded in real economic ecosystems.

Finally, the Enabel representative reiterated the importance of sustained multi-stakeholder collaboration, scalable funding models, and stronger feedback loops between learners, training institutions, and industry actors to ensure that the TVET system evolves to meet the aspirations of Uganda's youth. Their contribution powerfully echoed the panel's overarching theme—that effective vocational training is not just about teaching trades but about transforming lives through dignity, opportunity, and purpose.

6. Windle International Uganda

The representative from Windle International Uganda delivered an impassioned and reflective speech that echoed the core theme of the session-placing learners at the center of TVET transformation. Drawing from the powerful testimonies shared by beneficiaries supported through Windle's programs-many of whom were refugees, internally displaced persons, and youth from underprivileged backgrounds-the representative emphasized how vocational training has not only equipped these young people with marketable skills but also restored their sense of dignity, hope, and purpose.

The speaker detailed how Windle International Uganda has strategically partnered with government institutions and private sector actors to deliver inclusive and context-sensitive TVET programming, particularly targeting refugee-hosting districts. These programs have provided learners with competency-based training in trades like motor vehicle mechanics, tailoring, welding, ICT, and hairdressing, complemented by life skills, financial literacy, and business development support.

The representative highlighted inspiring stories of learners who, after graduation, successfully started their own businesses, secured employment with local companies, or returned to their communities to train others-demonstrating the multiplier effect of empowering one learner. He stressed that these successes were not accidental, but a result of deliberate, learner-centric planning that takes into account the unique realities of marginalized youth.

The Windle representative underscored the need for sustained investment in accessible training infrastructure, culturally responsive curricula, and scalable public-private partnerships to ensure that no learner is left behind. He concluded by calling on all stakeholders to treat the voices of beneficiaries not just as success stories, but as guiding insights for policy and program development. Through this

heartfelt contribution, Windle International Uganda reaffirmed that TVET, when inclusive and purpose-driven, is not merely a tool for employment-it is a catalyst for resilience, integration, and lifelong transformation.

7. War Child Canada

The representative from War Child Canada delivered an impactful and emotionally resonant reflection on the power of vocational education to transform the lives of conflict-affected youth and marginalized communities in Uganda. Drawing from firsthand testimonies of student beneficiaries supported under War Child Canada's livelihood and skills training programs, the speaker emphasized how TVET has provided not just technical knowledge but also dignity, confidence, and economic independence to young people who had previously been displaced, orphaned, or exposed to trauma.

The representative highlighted how War Child's approach to TVET goes beyond skills acquisition-it incorporates psychosocial support, mentorship, entrepreneurship training, and job placement services to ensure holistic development and sustainable integration into the workforce. With stories of beneficiaries who have now become carpenters, tailors, beauticians, and small business owners in districts such as Yumbe, Arua, and Isingiro, the speaker painted a compelling picture of resilience and empowerment.

These graduates, many of whom once felt invisible, are now active contributors to their communities and agents of change. The War Child Canada representative commended the strong collaboration with local training institutions and private sector actors who have opened up apprenticeship opportunities and provided startup kits, reinforcing that multi-stakeholder partnerships are critical to the success of youth-centered TVET.

She echoed calls for the institutionalization of inclusive training models that prioritize vulnerable populations, especially young women, youth in refugee settlements, and persons with disabilities. As the room listened to the students recount how the training helped them reclaim agency over their futures, the War Child Canada speaker underscored the importance of learner-centric planning, contextualized curricula, and trauma-informed approaches.

In her closing remarks, she called upon government and development partners to invest not only in infrastructure but also in the social support systems that make skilling sustainable for the most at-risk youth, affirming that when we equip young people with the right tools and support, they do not just survive—they thrive.

Closing Remarks by Dr. Eddy Turyatemba, Assistant Commissioner for Vocational Education and Training (VET) at the Ministry of Education and Sports.

In delivering the closing remarks of what had been a deeply insightful and action-driven engagement, Dr. Eddy Turyatemba rose to the occasion with a speech that masterfully blended gratitude, reflection, and forward-looking resolve. He began by warmly commending all delegates—government officials, private sector representatives, development partners, TVET instructors, students, and civil society actors—for their energetic participation, robust deliberations, and the spirit of collaboration that had defined the workshop from start to finish.

He emphasized that the Ministry remains fully committed to steering Uganda's TVET reform agenda towards an inclusive, responsive, and employer-led system—one that prepares youth not just for jobs, but for lifelong relevance in a fast-evolving economy. Reflecting on the rich sessions held, he noted the emerging consensus around key priorities: from integrating entrepreneurship into curricula and building strategic Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), to scaling centers of excellence and reinforcing learner-centric models.

With conviction, he outlined the Ministry's concrete next steps, including the piloting of new industry-based assessment models that will align certification with actual workplace competencies; enhancing inter-Ministerial coordination among MDAs to avoid duplication and optimize resource use; and the phased rollout of regional TVET centers of excellence that will anchor innovation, training quality, and sector-specific specialization. He highlighted the critical need to maintain the momentum built during the forum, urging all actors to translate discussions into action and deliver visible, measurable outcomes before the next International Day of Education in 2026.

In closing, the Permanent Secretary reminded all stakeholders that the future of Uganda's human capital lies in a TVET system that works for all industry, communities, and most importantly, the learners themselves-and he called upon each partner to remain steadfast, innovative, and accountable in their roles. With a note of optimism and purpose, he officially closed the event, affirming the Ministry's readiness to lead from the front and inviting all present to walk together on this transformative journey.

Conclusion of Day 2

Day Two of the IDE 2025 Post-Event and World Youth Skills Day policy dialogue was action-oriented, inclusive, and highly participatory. Through diverse voices and rich discussions, it became clear that building a responsive, inclusive, and employer-driven TVET system requires a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Concrete policy recommendations were made, and stakeholder commitments were secured to sustain momentum.