

By Aloysious Kasoma
and Laura Nagaba

UCC RAISES SH162B UNIVERSAL ACCESS FUND FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

PHOTO BY LAURA NAGABA

The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) has raised over sh162b, boosting the Government's efforts on digital transformation and inclusion, targeting 2030 from the Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund (UCUSAF).

UCC says the fund, which represents a 2% levied off the gross revenue earned every year from the telecom sector, is playing a critical role in the country's digital inclusion.

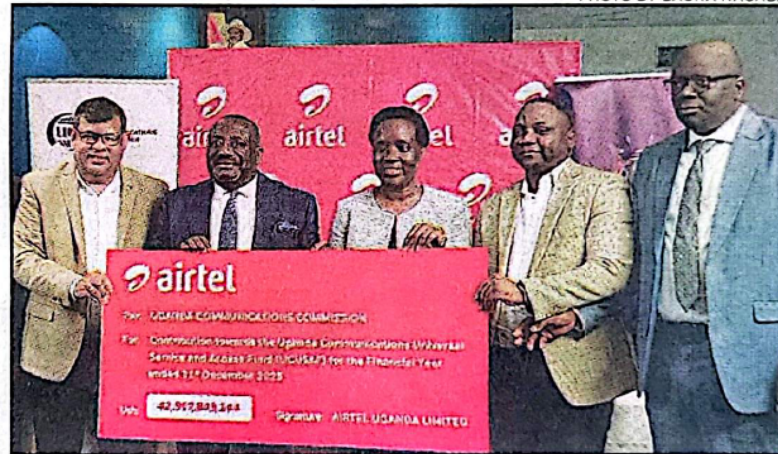
Telecom giants MTN Uganda and Airtel Uganda have contributed up to sh162b in the last two to three years to the UCUSAF.

Addressing journalists at the UCC offices in Bugoloobi, Kampala, last week, Airtel Uganda announced the payment of over sh42.9b to UCC, representing 2% of its annual gross revenue as required under the Communications Act.

UCC executive director Nyombi Thembo said the contribution will support Uganda's efforts to enhance access, equity, and sustainability within the telecommunications and ICT sector.

"When we look at connectivity, we are currently concluding the installation of 69 communication sites in underserved areas. This is a significant investment because each site costs over sh200m to establish.

Through this fund, we are ensuring



Airtel Uganda's managing director Soumendhra Sahu (left), Thembo (centre) and other officials during the press conference at the Uganda Communications Commission offices in Kampala, last week

coverage of the remaining 10% geographical area that telecom operators are not commercially obligated to cover, since licence obligations only require them to cover 90%," he said.

Thembo added that under the

new strategic plan of the Universal Service Access Fund (USAF), they intend to add another 150 towers within the next two-and-a-half years.

"This is very important for extending communication services to rural communities. We are also

providing computers to schools because computers are part of connectivity. Once schools receive computers, they are also connected to the Internet. In the last six to seven years, we have supported nearly 80% of all government-aided secondary schools in Uganda," he added.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Low smartphone penetration remains one of Uganda's biggest digital challenges, prompting continued interventions to expand digital inclusion nationwide and ownership.

HOW TELECOMS HAVE CONTRIBUTED

Airtel Uganda delivered sh42.9b, representing 2% levy off its gross revenue for 2026, sh37.9b to the UCUSAF.

This development reflects telecoms' deepening commitment to accelerating digital inclusion and supporting national efforts to expand

ICT infrastructure and services to all Ugandans, regardless of location or income level. The contribution from MTN Uganda recently represents a significant increase from sh42.5b in 2024 and sh36b in 2023, reinforcing MTN Uganda's resolve to go beyond compliance in fulfilling its obligations as a National Telecommunications Operator.

Soumendhra Sahu, the Airtel Uganda managing director, reaffirmed the company's commitment to connectivity to Ugandans across the country.

Sahu said the company had made two major commitments over the past year — accelerating investment in network infrastructure and improving customer experience — and had successfully delivered on both targets.

"By December 2025, we had rolled out 258 new 4G sites across the country. However, by the end of the first quarter of 2026, that number had increased to 448 sites, meaning we added 190 additional sites within just one quarter," Sahu said.