



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE

**CHIEF GUEST HON. AMONGI BETTY ONGOM, (MP)
THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF GENDER, LABOUR AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

AT THE

**OPENING OF A SKILLING FACILITY AT THE SMART GIRLS
FOUNDATION-KIRERIKA KU MBUZI 7, MILES ALONG
GAYAZA-KAMPALA ROAD**

15th JULY 2022

- ❖ The CEO, MTN Uganda – Wim Vanhelleputte
- ❖ The CEO, Smart Girls Foundation, Jamila Mayanja
- ❖ The staff of MTN and Smart Girls Foundation
- ❖ The students, the media, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to participate in the opening of the MTN Foundation's skilling facility at the Smart Girls Foundation to extend vocational and business skills to the girl child to transform their lives and that of their loved ones.

I am also pleased to witness a new beginning of this long-term partnership between MTN Foundation and Smart Girls Foundation driven by one aspiration: to empower the girl child.

I take this opportunity to thank MTN Uganda for inviting me to participate in this auspicious occasion.

Uganda has the youngest population in the world, with around 700,000 young people reaching the working-age per annum, according to World Bank. This figure is expected to rise to an average of one million in the decade from 2030-2040, and it is already creating a mismatch between labour demand and supply.

This implies that there's need to re-align youth employment initiatives in various sectors of our economy to prepare these young people especially girls and women for the few available work opportunities and entrepreneurship to ensure that there's inclusive growth in our communities, societies and the country.

As you are well aware, the Government has come up with various initiatives including the Presidential Initiative on Skilling Girl Child and equipping the Business and Technical Vocational Skills to enable girls and young women to acquire the necessary skills to secure jobs or start up their own businesses. But there's still hard work ahead.

I, therefore, commend MTN Foundation for taking this bold step to come up with this skilling initiative that will go a long way in helping our girls transform their lives and also be empowered. I also salute MTN for not only supporting the government in equipping the girl child with the much need skills and knowledge but also promoting women and girls into top positions of the company including now the incoming CEO. MTN Uganda, congratulations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am delighted to hear that this facility will enable the provision of vocational and business skilling in a number of disciplines including electricity installation, house painting, tailoring, carpentry, welding and catering, and demystifying the notion that these disciplines were meant for only males.

I have also been told that MTN Foundation has in the past been involved in other initiatives including extending support to the Smart girl's Foundation with a donation worth Shs 30 million in 2019 to enhance the girls' learning experience; Kyabazinga Girl Child program to improve the lives of women and youth in the Busoga region; and the Forum for African Women Educationalists Uganda Chapter (FAWEU) providing University Education scholarships for ten (10) Ugandan girls countrywide. I pray that other companies pick a leave from you.

As a government, we wish to reiterate our commitment to supporting MTN Foundation as it strives to transform the lives of our people. Once again, I wish to congratulate MTN Foundation and the collaborating partner Smart Girls Foundation for this great milestone. I wish you success in this new exciting journey.

For God and My Country.