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# THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE WIPO CONVERSATION ON IP AND AI INVENTIONS

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# PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- URSB mandate
- Uganda's 4IR Strategy
- Role of IP
- Case Study- Sunbird AI
- Conclusion

# URSB MANDATE

- Government Agency with the mandate to inter alia promote, register and protect business enterprises, Securities interest in movable properties, Intellectual Property Rights, administration of marriages and provide insolvency services.

## Uganda's IP Legal Regime

- The Industrial Property Act 2014 and Industrial Property Regulations 2017
- The Trademark Act 2010 and Trademark Regulations 2012
- The Copyright and Neighboring Rights act 2006 and Neighboring Regulations 2012
- The Geographical Indications Act 2013
- The Trade secret Protection Act
- Uganda is also party to:
  - Banjul Protocol on marks
  - Harare Protocol on Patents, utility models and industrial designs
  - TRIPS Agreement
- National IP Policy 2019 that was launched in 2020
- Member of ARIPO, WTO and WIPO

# UGANDA'S 4IR STRATEGY

- The National IP Policy 2019 has a vision of a *Uganda where innovation and creativity stimulate sustainable development* and one of its policy goals is to establish appropriate IP infrastructure that supports innovation and creativity.
- Uganda concluded its National 4IR strategy with a mission to transform and accelerate Uganda's development into an innovative, productive and competitive society using 4IR technologies by 2040.

# UGANDA'S 4IR STRATEGY

## Opportunities:



# ROLE OF IP

- A strong and fair IP system is a key foundation to promoting innovation in any country.
  - Uganda has a favorable IP legal regime that can protect the different forms of IP including those from 4IR.
  - Gaps in existing laws (human inventors, disclosure requirements, data privacy etc.) can be managed through amendments based on existing circumstances.
- Availability of mechanisms to effectively integrate IP in the 4IR strategy focus areas as guided by the cross sectoral coordination of National IP Policy 2019.
- Active TISC program to support quality R&D in 4IR

## **Potential Challenges:**

- Weak institutional and regulatory framework related to 4IR e.g. privacy, security, disclosure requirements, human creators etc.
- Dominant informal sector with limited technology utilization.
- Emerging skill shortage and 4IR skills mismatch in key sectors.
- Limited access to high speed internet.

# CASE STUDY- Sunbird AI

<https://sunbird.ai/>

- Non-profit organization registered in 2019 to develop artificial intelligence systems for social impact in Africa and in turn generate evidence for decision making and policy through these systems.
- Creates resources (e.g. software or datasets) which enable others to create practical AI systems.
- Aims to be a neutral source of advice for African institutions on the practical possibilities, benefits and risks of AI technology.

## Challenges

- Unlike building a physical artifact, building a machine learning models takes building off of several other intermediate datasets, models etc. So understanding the particular IP to secure in this case is not clear.
- Practical AI systems work best with a human-in-the-loop, quantifying the related IP issues of machine-human is fairly ambiguous at this point.
- Lack of relevantly skilled IP staff for AI type products.
- Insufficient documentation on the process for IP for AI/ML(machine learning) products.
- A lot of building AI algorithms involves data collection - the IP issues around people providing data and how it translates to the final product are still unclear.
- The IP issues around data products for example for a case where one is collecting language data from different citizens are also hard to determine. Can the dataset collector fully own the IP of the dataset collected and used in an algorithm?

# CONCLUSION

- Need for diverse policy and development interventions to address the existing challenges in order to realize the benefits of the identified opportunities in 4IR.
- Requires cross-sectoral coordination at the national, regional and international level.



# THANK YOU

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