

President Paul Kagame has warned that Africa risks falling further behind the rest of the world unless the continent addresses gaps in connectivity and technology adoption.

He made the remarks Tuesday at the launch of the Mobile World Congress (MWC) Kigali, a three-day international conference organized by the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA). The event brings together technology companies to showcase innovations in mobile and digital services.

Rwanda has embraced technology as a cornerstone of development, Kagame said, noting that mobile phones and networks have transformed how Africans connect and conduct economic activity.

“Broad networks and advanced mobile phones have become fundamental to everyday life, supporting business, education, and financial services across sectors. Mobile Money is a prime example,” he said.

Mobile Money has helped build a \$1 trillion economy in Africa over the past decade, giving more than 700 million people access to financial services through their phones. What began as a solution for the unbanked has grown into a model now studied globally for inclusive finance. Kagame said these digital solutions empower small businesses and entrepreneurs, including women, while connecting rural communities and fostering broader economic participation.

“These initiatives show that innovation is not confined to one sector or location; it can spread widely, giving everyone an opportunity,” he said.



The president also highlighted the role of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and smart connectivity tools, in driving progress across sectors and creating new opportunities worldwide.

“However, despite our progress, only a small portion of Africans have fully benefited from connectivity compared to other regions. If this gap persists, technology could deepen inequalities,” Kagame said.

He called on governments, the private sector, and partners to collaborate in ensuring citizens benefit from technological advances and that knowledge and tools reach all communities.

Rwanda has implemented projects integrating AI, research, and citizen capacity building to improve productivity and service delivery, Kagame said, underscoring the country's commitment to a knowledge-based economy.

The president added that collaboration will help facilitate secure cross-border payments and data transfer, further integrating Africa's economy. He noted that the African Union and other regional bodies are supporting this vision by lowering costs, reducing barriers, and creating a single, technology-driven market, positioning Africa to expand its solutions globally.