

Ghana's digital transformation requires skilled workforce

— CEO, Microdegree Programme

By Elizabeth Nyaadu Adu

WHILE Ghana's digital transformation holds significant potential, it will require a skilled workforce to fully leverage the opportunities, an industry expert has observed.

The Chief Executive Officer of Microdegree Programme for the Middle East, South Asia, and South America, Sayed Jawed, who said this observed that the country's tech workforce remained underprepared for the demands of the rapidly evolving global tech industry, a situation which had resulted in many graduates earning lower salaries than they deserved.

"The pathway to developing any country in this century is through digitalisation. Yet, many of the universities and higher education institutions are not providing graduates with the skill sets necessary to drive a digital economy," he said.

According to the World Economic Forum, by 2025, about 85 million jobs may be displaced due to the shift in labour between humans and machines.

However, 97 million new roles

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could emerge that require unique skills in digital literacy.

Additionally, there is a growing demand for skilled professionals in fields such as data science, artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity and cloud computing.

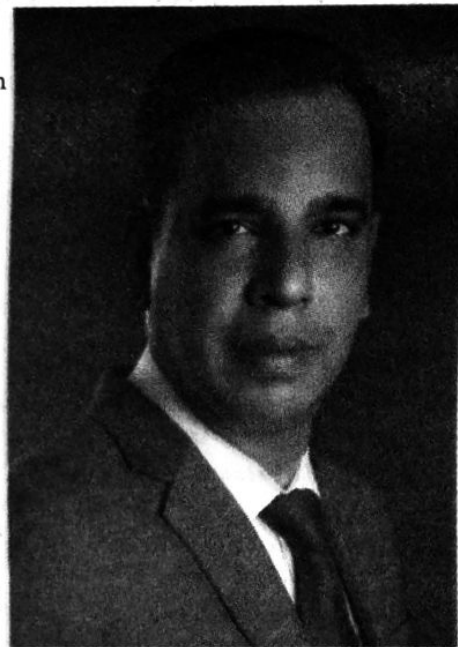
Sharing his thoughts in an exclusive interview with *Daily Graphic* following the introduction of a new certification programme in Ghana, Mr Jawed explained how the current skills gap limited Ghana's ability to tap into the growing global tech market.

His observations are also on the back of the pledges being made by two of the country's presidential candidates in the 2024 general election on December 7, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) in particular, to intensify training of the youth in digital skills.

Each of the candidates is pledging to train one million youth in digital skills to prepare them for the ready job market or take advantage of the opportunities to become tech entrepreneurs.

Microdegree programme

Dubbed the "Skills for Jobs Microdegree Programme," the programme aims to equip learners with in-demand technology skills through flexible, industry-



• Sayed Jawed, Chief Executive Officer of Microdegree Programme, Middle East, South Asia, and South America

recognised microdegree programmes, enhancing their employability and career prospects in the rapidly evolving tech industry.

Implemented by Microsoft in partnership with KAMK University and 0800Africa, a leading pan-African technology and digital solutions company, the programme is designed for students, recent graduates, jobseekers, engineers and professionals wanting to upgrade their IT skills.

Microsoft Skills for Jobs is a set of Microdegree Programmes comprising technology courses for skills in demand.

The programme coincides with the

promising growth in Ghana's tech ecosystem where several startups have gained attention in areas such as FinTech, e-commerce, and mobile technology.

Attractive destination

Mr Jawed said, "Ghana has immense potential, and labour is cheaper than in many developed markets, making the country an attractive destination for outsourcing tech services."

However, he said the country needed a workforce highly skilled in areas such as software development, cybersecurity, cloud computing and data science.

He added that the disconnect between educational curricula and workplace requirements posed a significant challenge, not just for Ghana but for many developing countries.

Mr Jawed noted that graduates from Ghanaian universities often entered the job market lacking practical, hands-on experience in key tech fields, putting them at a disadvantage in this fast-evolving industry.

To address these challenges, he said the Microsoft Skills for Jobs Microdegree Programme represented a strategic step towards equipping Ghana's tech workforce for global competitiveness, potentially driving the country's digital economy and creating new opportunities in the rapidly expanding tech sector.

Skills demand

The CEO of 0800Africa, Maame Efua Essel, said the Microsoft Microdegree programme directly addressed Africa's growing need for digital and professional skills by equipping learners with industry-relevant expertise.