



MUFUKA & ASSOCIATES
Legal Practitioners

Weekly NewsFlash

Friday, 10th of April 2026

The Digital Gavel: Navigating Zimbabwe's Legal Frontier in an Era of Connectivity

The Great Leap: A Celebration of Efficiency

Zimbabwe is witnessing a seismic shift as the "New Dispensation" drives a comprehensive digitization program across the legal value chain. This evolution is more than a technological upgrade; it is a constitutional imperative to enhance the ease of doing business, promote transparency, and systematically erode the shadows where corruption once thrived. By minimizing human intervention, these digital systems are designed to foster a culture of accountability.

The Digital Roadmap: Key Platforms & Legislation

Supporting this transition is the **Cyber and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07]**, providing the legal safeguards necessary for a digital economy. Key milestones include:

- **The Judiciary (IECMS): The Integrated Electronic Case Management System (IECMS)** has revolutionized litigation. From the Constitutional Court down to the High and Labor Courts, filing, tracking, and virtual hearings are now the standard, aimed at eliminating case backlogs and the physical hurdles of legal service.
- **The Deeds Office (DLAP):** Launched as a pilot in April 2026, the **Digital Land Administration Platform (DLAP)** is transforming property law. The Ministry of Justice has mandated a two-year window for property owners to convert paper-based deeds into secure digital formats, drastically reducing the risk of fraudulent title transfers.
- **Saw The Procurement Regulatory Authority (e-GP):** The **Electronic Government Procurement (e-GP)** system through **PRAZ** has streamlined the tender process. Bidding is now conducted online, ensuring that public procurement is transparent and compliant with the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act.

The Connectivity Paradox: Efficiency vs. Access

While we celebrate these strides, we must confront the "Digital Divide." In a country where **internet penetration stands at approximately 38.4%** as of late 2025, the transition risks leaving behind those in underserved or rural areas.

The Infrastructure Hurdle

Efficiency is a promise only if the lights stay on. Zimbabwe's persistent energy challenges create a fragile environment for digital-only services. When the grid fails, and solar backups are absent, connectivity vanishes. This raises a critical legal question: **What happens when the system is ready, but the citizen is not?**

Case in Point: You are a contractor working on a multi-million-dollar tender. The clock is ticking toward the 10:00 AM deadline. Your fiber is down, the mobile data signal is weak due to load shedding, and the bid fails to upload. What is your right of recourse?

Under Section 73 of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, bidders can challenge proceedings. However, proving that a failure was due to systemic connectivity issues rather than personal negligence remains a complex legal gray area.

Mitigating the Burden: Our Collective Responsibility

The Constitution of Zimbabwe (Section 62) guarantees the right to access information. If digitization becomes a barrier to this right, it becomes a burden rather than a solution. To ensure an inclusive transition, we must consider:

1. **Digital Hubs & Kiosks:** Converting Community Information Centres into fully-equipped Digital Hubs to serve those without smartphones or personal computers.
2. **Zero-Rating Legal Portals:** Engaging telecommunications providers to provide free data access to essential government and legal portals (IECMS, DLAP, PRAZ).
3. **Hybrid Contingencies:** Maintaining "manual windows" or physical submission kiosks at District Offices for citizens in areas with zero network coverage.
4. **Legislative Buffers:** Introducing regulations that allow for "Connectivity Tolling"—extending deadlines automatically during verified national network or power outages.

Food for Thought

As we embrace the **Sneaker Executive era**—where leadership is agile and tech-driven—we must not lose sight of the masses. If the legal system moves into the cloud, we must ensure every Zimbabwean has a ladder to reach it. Are we building a digital highway for the few, or a resilient infrastructure for the many?

Written By: Chenesai Mukora-Mangoma LLM International Trade and Investment Law in Africa (UP)
Justice through Innovation, Integrity through Transparency.