

## **MAJOR INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) AND DIGITILIZATION DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PAST YEAR**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Malawi Judiciary through the ICT Department undertook several activities in the past year, i.e. 2023 as part of its efforts in increasing ICT awareness and digitalization in the institution. This report was prepared on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2024.

### **2. UNDP FUNDED ACTIVITIES**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has a project called *Spotlight Initiative*. The aim or theme of the project is to improve access to justice for vulnerable people as well as tracking progress of various cases of gender-based violence (GBV).

This project started in the year 2020. However, frequent and active engagements with the Malawi Judiciary started in the year 2021. The engagements subsequently led to the development of a Case Management Statistics System for subordinate courts, in particular, Magistrate courts. Most recently, the project has also led to installation of video conferencing facilities in some of the Magistrate courts as part of what is called, E-Justice.

#### **(a) Development of the Case Management Statistics System**

The development of this system started in the year 2022. As of today, 90% of the system development has been done which has led to the system being installed on a pilot phase in the following courts: Chief Resident Magistrate South, Chief Resident Magistrate East, Chief Resident Magistrate Central and in the district magistrate courts of Mulanje, Mwanza, Mangochi, Machinga, Nkhotakota, Karonga and Mzimba. Successful piloting will eventually lead to the system being deployed in all the other district magistrate courts as well across the country. The system has been developed to track progress of GBV cases and as such will be linked with another system in the National Statistics Office (NSO) for exchange of data. NSO is also one of the UNDP partners in the *Spotlight Initiative* and is the institution tasked with compiling the GBV data.

Apart from GBV cases, the system has been developed to also capture and track all other cases that are filed in the Magistrate courts. This system has been developed in-house by the ICT Department.



**UNDP/JUDICIARY,CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REVIEW MEETING  
21<sup>st</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> DECEMBER 2023 , CROSSROADS HOTEL - LILONGWE**



**(b) Installation of Video Conferencing Facilities as part of E-Justice**

The video conferencing facilities have been installed in the following courts: Chief Resident Magistrate North, Chief Resident Magistrate East, Chief Resident Magistrate Centre, Karonga, Chitipa, Uliwa and Thyolo Magistrate Courts.

The project is aimed at facilitating easy access to these courts from some areas such as Prisons and Police. 10 Zoom licenses have been bought by UNDP, which will be linked, to the Video Conferencing Systems. Once the UNDP team has done final inspection of the equipment, a date for launching the facilities will be announced.



**A Video Conference Facility Installed at CRM North**

**(c) Distribution of Computers in 20 District Magistrate Courts**

As part of capacitating the Magistrate courts in usage of the recently developed Case Management Statistics System, the UNDP supplied 26 desktop computers and 6 laptops. The ICT Department has managed to distribute the computers and laptops in 20 district Magistrate Courts so far.

**3. LOCAL AREA NETWORK INSTALLATION AT PHALOMBE, THYOLO AND DEDZA DISTRICT MAGISTRATE COURTS AS WELL AS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COURT AND CHILD JUSTICE COURTS**

The ICT department has managed to install Local Area Connection (LAN) in these courts, which has facilitated the courts to have access to internet services. The internet is tapped from District Commissioners' offices which utilize the Government Wide Area Network (GWAN). The ICT Department is also planning to distribute 28 routers in district Magistrate Courts to act as back up internet in courts that are already connected to GWAN and assist those courts that completely do not have access to internet services.

#### **4. STUDY TOUR TO ZIMBABWE JUDICIARY**

Some members of the ICT team in the company of Honourable Justice of Appeal Frank Kapanda, SC, the Senior Deputy Registrar His Honour Innocent Nebi and the Deputy Chief Courts Administrator Mr. Phikani visited the Zimbabwe Judiciary to appreciate the strides they have made in as far as digitization of their courts is concerned. The team learned a lot of things from its counterparts in Zimbabwe and look forward to implementing some of the ideas in a quest to improve delivery of ICT services and access to justice in the Malawi Judiciary.



**A Zimbabwe Judiciary Staff member demonstrated usage of a recently developed Electronic Case Management System for Zimbabwe Judiciary to the Malawi Delegation**