New laws to control social media on the cards

The Zimbabwean government is reportedly in the process of drafting new cyber laws to regulate the activities of social media, NewZimbabwe.com heard this week.

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Potraz legal director, Caecilia Nyamutswa, told a parliamentary committee on ICT that the Bills to regulate cyber space are now ready to be tabled before the Attorney General's office for final drafting before being taken to Cabinet and subsequently to parliament.

"But even if we were to come up with these laws, there is no consensus in the international community under the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on how to regulate ICTs," she said. "We are part of a study group of the ITU understudy the issue of regulations but we are failing to find a common ground."

Nyamutswa said in drafting the new laws, they needed to be always a step ahead because of the ever-changing technology.

"We need to agree globally"

"It is an issue that is worrying because we could regulate here as government, but attacks could be made from outside state and what is a prosecutable offence here could not be an offence in another country, so we need to agree globally," Nyamutswa said.

Potraz acting Director-General, Alfred Marisa, told the committee that mobile penetration had reached the 100% mark although this did not translate to every citizen having a mobile phone.

Marisa said the country's network coverage is at 75% while internet coverage is above 40%, a figure above the continental average.

"We are really happy with that because it is above the continental average statistic."

He said the current mobile tariffs are high compared to what is experienced in the region adding his organisation had since engaged mobile operators with a view to slash them down.

"We hope this will be done before year-end. But this is only with voice calls, as for the data, it is fair and competitive."