

Justice Department launches online service for deceased estates

The newly launched Masters' Deceased Estate Online Registration System is a milestone for how the Masters' office renders services to the public.



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This is according to Justice and Correctional Services Minister Ronald Lamola, who was addressing the launch of the system on Tuesday.

“This system will be a catalyst to changing this environment.... modernising it, digitising it, and making it accessible to members of the public and also all the professional bodies that operate in the space of the Master's [office] services,” he said.

The new online system will, amongst others, allow members of the public to register deceased estates either in the comfort of their homes, offices or anywhere in the world, without having to visit a Master's office (except with the lodgement of original wills). Online registrations will also speed up the registration process and ensure quicker availability of the details/particulars of the beneficiaries and trustees.

With the electronic booking of appointments - where a client needs to physically visit a Master's office - the client will be able to choose a suitable date and time slot for their appointment.

Lamola said the system will also protect clients from fraudulent activities.

"We are also aware of the challenges that you as stakeholders have also suffered not only in terms of accessing our services but also in terms of the manipulators of the system... such as fraudulent letters of authority and so forth. Already, the risks have been mitigated and we believe that if we all follow those systems, we'll be able to guard against further fraudulent activities by unscrupulous players out there.

"We hope that the LPC [Legal Practice Council] will play its role on the unscrupulous attorneys who also sometimes take their chances and also hopefully the accounting profession will do the same with the accountants who also sometimes take... advantage of the unsuspecting members of the public," he said.

Lamola said that the digitisation of services of the Master's office is the beginning of a migration of most of the department's services.

"It has been a long journey for the department to reach this milestone but we are very excited that we have reached it and there is a foundation that has been laid in terms of digitising and modernising the entire justice system.

"So what you see today is part of our vision not only for the Master's office but also in terms of online maintenance, in terms of liquidations... and all the services that the Master's provide [and] also the courts... We have already seen court online, cases online and the various platforms that the department is trying infuse to modernise the entire administration of the justice system," he said.

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