

The world's largest law firm to combine with an elite firm in Zimbabwe

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Washington, D.C. —Dentons, the world's largest law firm, is announcing today a proposed combination with MawereSibanda, a leading law firm in Zimbabwe. This combination builds on Dentons' strategy to become the first pan-African law firm owned and controlled by Africans. It will also give Dentons' clients access to the experience and talents of lawyers working in 79 countries, uniquely positioning Dentons to provide high-quality legal services to clients around the world.

Dentons' polycentric approach and "in and of the community" philosophy creates a competitive advantage in connecting talent to opportunity in Africa. In a country scarred by the legacy of colonial domination and in a market where the operations of every leading law firm are hierarchical, Dentons' unique polycentric and anti-colonial approach has been a stark differentiator, disrupting the traditional model for providing legal services in Africa. Dentons is the first global firm in which its African operations are 100% owned by local partners from the black indigenous community.

"The combination with MawereSibanda builds upon our strategy to become the first pan-African law firm owned and controlled by Africans", said Elliott Portnoy, Global CEO of Dentons. "As the world's first truly polycentric global law firm, we are able to meet client demands for a law firm that can deliver high-quality legal counsel and business solutions, informed by an in-depth understanding of the various cultures in which our clients operate."

"We are building a pan-African law firm through whole firm combinations of locally owned and controlled firms, that serve both local and global clients," said Joe Andrew, Global Chair of Dentons. "While I appreciate that this may sound like a nuance, it is the kind of small difference that other firms in Africa, that are truly in and of each community, will understand and appreciate."

The combination in Zimbabwe follows the firm's launch with Kenya's Hamilton, Harrison & Mathews and Mauritius' Mardemootoo Solicitors and Balgobin Chambers and builds on the strength of the brand Dentons has established in Egypt, Morocco, and South Africa. This move is part of Dentons' long-term strategy to become the first pan-African law firm owned and controlled by Africans, and provide the Firm's clients with legal services that reach further across the continent than Dentons' competitors.

MawereSibanda has 21 lawyers, a full range of practice areas and a presence in Botswana. It is consistently strong in key practice areas such as Banking and Finance, Corporate, Litigation and Disputes, Real Estate and Intellectual Property, advising in key industry sectors including Infrastructure and Telecommunications. The combination would lead to significant synergies in light of Dentons' strengths in each of these areas.

"The combination in Zimbabwe with a strong firm like MawereSibanda will help us continue to attract even more top talent and top law firms in Africa," said Noor Kapdi, CEO of Dentons Africa region. "Connecting talent to opportunity is Dentons' founding principle and we look forward to building more connections through this combination."

"We are enthusiastic about joining Dentons, their polycentric approach provides us with a unique platform." said

Tatenda Mawere of MawereSibanda. Co-founder, **V B Sibanda** said “This platform will allow us to offer our clients access to lawyers in all the places they do business.”

Zimbabwe is part of Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) - a free trade area with 20 member states stretching from Libya to Swaziland. COMESA is one of the pillars of the African Economic Community, as well as Southern African Development Community (SADC) - an inter-governmental organization headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana. Its goal is to further socio-economic cooperation and integration among 16 southern African states.

Zimbabwe is also a key player in African economic zones and has important trade relationships with South Africa and the UK, as well as with the wider African continent, ASEAN, Australia, China, Europe and the Middle East.

The combination, following approval by partners and subject to meeting regulatory requirements, is expected to launch in the next several months.

About Dentons

Dentons is the world's largest law firm, delivering quality and value to clients around the globe. Dentons is a leader on the Acritas Global Elite Brand Index, a BTI Client Service 30 Award winner and recognized by prominent business and legal publications for its innovations in client service, including founding Nextlaw Labs and the Nextlaw Referral Network. Dentons' polycentric approach and world-class talent challenge the status quo to advance client interests in the communities in which we live and work. www.dentons.com.

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