

IP AFRICA NEWS

JANUARY, 2026

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- Sudan Suspends IP Administrative Operations Amid Office Relocation
- Implementation of the South African Plant Improvement Act, 2018
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- Increase in Official Fees for Trademarks, Patents and Designs



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Welcome to **Volume 4, Q1, Issue 1 of JEE IP Africa News**. In this edition, we highlight a series of notable IP and regulatory developments across the continent, including Zambia's operationalisation of its Trade Marks Act No. 11 of 2023 which replaces the country's previous trademark regime, the suspension of administrative operations in Sudan due to relocation of the Registry, the Nigerian Copyright Commission's suspension of multiple .ng domain names implicated in online piracy, Gabon's progression toward securing Geographical Indication status for Mbigou stone, the commencement of South Africa's Plant Improvement Act No. 11 of 2018 and the Increase of official fees for IP services in Algeria.



Zambia has ushered in a new era in intellectual property protection. The country's **Trade Marks Act No. 11 of 2023** came into operation on 31 December 2025, following the signing of Statutory Instrument No. 86 of 2025. This commencement repeals the Trade Marks Act of 1958 and introduces a modernised legal framework for trade mark protection in Zambia, aligning with international systems.

Some of the Act's notable introductions include

- **registration of service marks**, providing legal protection for marks used in connection with services.
- **domestication of Zambia's accession to the Madrid protocol**, bringing Zambia in line with international trademark systems and enhancing its global IP integration. Consequently, companies can designate Zambia in International Registrations.
- **uniform term of protection** for registered marks. As opposed to the former 7year initial term and 14year renewals, marks will now enjoy 10year protection from the date of filing and 10year renewals thereafter. Existing trademarks will continue under the old regime until their current terms expire, and subsequent renewals will be in conformity with the new Act.
- **protection for geographical Indications**, thereby allowing producers to register and protect names linked to specific geographic locations and associated quality or reputation.

- **single application for multiple classes**, bringing about ease of registration.
- **recognition of wellknown marks** with enhanced protection
- **stronger enforcement and procedural mechanisms** including clearer grounds for opposition, cancellation, and infringement actions, as well as enhanced civil, criminal, and border control measures to combat counterfeiting and protect trademark rights.

While regulations accompanying the new Act are yet to be enacted, all existing regulations under the previous Act remain in force. Consequently, current forms and fees continue to apply until the new regulations are published.



SUDAN

SUDAN SUSPENDS IP ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS AMID OFFICE RELOCATION

The Registrar General of Intellectual Property in Sudan has announced the immediate suspension of all administrative activities, effective 14 December 2025. The suspension affects the filing of all categories of intellectual property applications and the collection of official fees at the Registry's temporary office in Port Sudan, following the planned relocation of the Trademarks Office to Khartoum.

The announcement did not specify a timeline for the resumption of operations in Khartoum. In accordance with established practice, all official deadlines falling within the suspension period will be automatically extended to the first working day after operations officially resume, ensuring that applicants' rights remain protected.

Stakeholders are advised to monitor developments closely, as further updates are expected once the Registry confirms the reopening date and operational arrangements in Khartoum.



The South African Plant Improvement Act No. 11 of 2018 (the Act) became effective on 1 December 2025, formally replacing and repealing the former Plant Improvement Act No. 53 of 1976.

This legislation establishes a modern regulatory framework governing specified plant species identified in the supporting regulations, as well as their propagating material within South Africa.

Among other things, the Act introduces requirements for the registration of certain businesses and physical premises, the national listing of eligible plant varieties, official examinations and inspections, and regulatory controls relating to importation and exportation of plants and propagating material.

The Act further makes provision for the creation of certification schemes for plants and propagating material of prescribed plant types, to maintain quality standards for such plants and materials.

Under the Act, any prescribed plant variety intended for sale or importation into South Africa for cultivation must first be entered on the national varietal list, a process that may take several years to complete. To be eligible for listing, the variety must have an acceptable denomination, be clearly distinguishable from existing listed varieties, demonstrate sufficient uniformity in its characteristics, and remain stable through repeated propagation.



NIGERIA

NIGERIAN JOINS UPOV PRISMA ONLINE FILING SYSTEM

The Nigerian Trademarks Registry has released **Trademark Journal Vol. 1, No. 4 (Online/Pre-IPAS)**, dated **10 October 2025**. In line with the statutory two-month opposition period, interested parties may file a notice of opposition against any of the advertised marks from 10 October 2025 to 10 December 2025. Please note that the opposition period is strictly non-extendable.



GABON

GABON ADVANCES EFFORTS TOWARD INTERNATIONAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MBIGOU STONE AS A GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

The Gabonese Office of Industrial Property (OGAPI) has noted the recent decision of the National Committee for Geographical Indications (CNIG) approving the formal recognition of Mbigou stone as a product eligible for Geographical Indication (GI) status. Mbigou stone, quarried in the Ngounié province, has been used for many years in traditional artistic carving.

The CNIG's validation of the Mbigou stone constitutes the final procedural step before the formal submission of its dossier for registration as a geographical indication, bringing it closer to official GI recognition.

The CNIG is expected to oversee compliance with detailed product specifications, to ensure traceability and quality for goods produced from Mbigou stone.



ALGERIA

INCREASE IN OFFICIAL FEES FOR TRADEMARKS, PATENTS AND DESIGNS

The Algerian National Institute of Industrial Property (INAPI) has announced an increase in official fees applicable to intellectual property matters, following amendments to the Algerian Finance Law published in the Official Gazette in December 2025.

The revised fee schedule applies to trademark, patent, and industrial design filings. The adjustments form part of broader legislative measures intended to update administrative costs and align IP service fees with recent legal reforms.

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