



MALAWI GOVERNMENT

**THE FOURTH UNITED NATIONS
PRE-CONFERENCE ON LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES:
Reducing Vulnerability due to Climate Change, Climate Variability
and Extremes, Land Degradation and Biodiversity Loss: Environment
and Development Challenges and Opportunities for Least
Developed Countries (LCD's)**

Monday, 28 February, 2011

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ROOM 7,
NEW LAWN BUILDING, NEW YORK, USA.**

**Session II: 10:45 – 13: 00: High Level Ministerial Panel on the Review of
the Brussels Plan of Action (BPoA) and Country Experiences**

**(b) High Level Ministerial Panel on Country Experiences: MALAWI
delivered by: Honourable Ephraim Mganda Chiume, M.P.,
Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, Energy and Environment**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a known fact, that, Climate Change affects people's lives, in many parts of the world. In Malawi, Climate Change has shown adverse impacts on: agriculture, infrastructural systems, energy, human health, fisheries, forestry, water, wildlife and gender sectors. These impacts, adversely affect, our socio-economic development, and are a threat to the attainment of goals, both, in our Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, and, the Millennium Development Goals.

The effects from these calamities, Mr. Chairman, include:

- 1. Poor crop yields or total crop failure, leading to serious food shortages, malnutrition and chronic ailments, associated with malaria, cholera, diarrhoea, and indeed, HIV/AIDS;**
- 2. Challenges, resulting from disruption of hydroelectric power generation, in critical watersheds, as a result of siltation, due to soil erosion and environmental degradation;**
- 3. Droughts and floods, which are responsible for, the declining or even drying up, of water bodies, resulting in low fish production, and loss of biodiversity. In Malawi, the fisheries industry, contributes about 4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and over 60%, of animal protein intake. In addition, the diversity of**

fish species, is of global significance, because, most of them are endemic to Malawi; and

4. Women are greatly impacted with drought, as they are involved in water collection, and hence, shortage of water means that, they have to travel long distances, to fetch water.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, Malawi, which is in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is part of the world that is most vulnerable, and yet, least prepared, to address the adverse effects of Climate Change.

This is because:

- Malawi has a narrow economic base, which is dominated by agriculture, and that
- Malawi's population is largely rural, and rain-dependent, for food production and survival.

In the last two decades, Malawi has experienced a variety of climatic hazards, such as intense rainfall, floods, seasonal droughts, multi-year droughts, dry spells, cold spells, strong winds, thunderstorms, landslides, hailstorms, mudslides and heat waves, among many others.

This situation has been compounded, by the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS, which has created a large number of dependent orphans, and the elderly. It has also, adversely impacted, on rural household food production systems, as well as, the quality of life and sustainable livelihoods. Hence, Malawi needs to prepare for the impacts of climate change now, and for the future.

Mr. Chairman, the Government of Malawi, showed its commitment, to addressing climate change issues, when it signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Malawi ratified this important Convention in 1994. In addition, Malawi acceded to the Kyoto Protocol, on 26th October, 2001.

Locally, Malawi has developed its own home-grown development blue print, called the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), which is in line with The Millennium Development Goals (MGD's). Our development strategy focuses, on nine priority areas, within the many priorities. Climate Change, Natural Resources and Environment Management, is one of the nine priorities, in the MGDS.

Furthermore, Mr. Chairman, the Malawi Government has restructured its Department of Meteorological Services, which has now become,

the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services, so that issues of climate change could be managed efficiently and effectively.

Mr. Chairman, this was just to exemplify, the importance which the administration of His Excellency the President, Ngwazi Professor Bingu wa Mutharika, attaches to issues of climate change.

In trying to address issues of climate change, Mr. Chairman, the Malawi Government has put the following initiatives in place:

- **Malawi Growth and Development Strategy**

As I mentioned earlier, the Malawi Government, treats climate change, as one of the priority areas, within priorities, in the government's development agenda. This national programming tool, realizes that climate change makes a contribution, to our development strategy. Our aim is to achieve economic growth and development, in a sustainable manner. Mr. Chairman, we realize that, the economy and society in Malawi can develop, to their full potential, within a well-protected and managed environment, especially that, over 80% of our population, relies on renewable natural resources, for their subsistence and household income.

Malawi has developed, a National Framework, for Managing Climate Change Responses, in the country. This framework has been prepared, jointly with our development partners, namely the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Royal Norwegian Embassy, and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

- **National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)**

Mr. Chairman, Malawi has also developed, a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA), to address issues of climate change. Again, to show political commitment, which is rare in most cases, the NAPA was officially launched by the President himself, His Excellency, Ngwazi Professor Bingu wa Mutharika, on 11th February 2008.

I wish to highlight some priority areas, in our NAPA, Mr. Chairman:

- 1. Improving community resilience, to climate change, through the development, of sustainable rural livelihoods;**
- 2. Restoring forests, in the river basin catchments, to reduce siltation, and the associated water flow challenges;**
- 3. Improving agricultural production, under erratic rains and changing climatic conditions;**

4. Improving Malawi's preparedness, to cope with droughts and floods; and
5. Improving climate monitoring, to enhance Malawi's early warning capability, and decision making, and sustainable utilization of Lake Malawi, and lakeshore area resources.

Mr. Chairman, the implementation of Malawi's NAPA, has seen us develop a Climate Adaptation, for Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture (CARLA) Project, with financial support, from the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This project is aimed, at supporting rural communities, with strategies and technologies, to cope with adverse effects, of climate change. The African Development Bank, has provided the technical support to the project.

With financial support, from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Malawi has also developed, a Sustainable Land Management (SLM) programme, for the Shire River Basin. This programme, has been designed, to promote soil and water conservation, and reduce climate-related impacts. This project is also being supported through the UNDP.

Both the CARLA and SLM projects, are in their first year of implementation. However, implementation of both programmes has been hampered, due to slow disbursement of resources, from the implementing agencies.

- Mr. Chairman, let me now talk about Specific Adaptation and Mitigation Programmes**

Besides the NAPA, the Malawi Government, with the support of development partners, has initiated various other activities:

- 1. Malawi has successfully, phased out more than 85 per cent, of its ozone depleting substances, under the Montreal Protocol. This is in the industry, like air conditioners; in agriculture, in the use of methyl bromide in the tobacco sector; and the use of refrigerants, such as R-12, in the refrigeration sector. We can safely claim that, Malawi is the leader in the phase out of ozone depleting substances, on the African continent.**
- 2. In our development strategy, the MGDS, Agriculture and Food Security, is one of the nine priority areas. The Government policy is that “no child in Malawi should go hungry and that no child should die of hunger or malnutrition”. As a result, Government introduced, a targeted fertilizer and farm in-put subsidy programme, which has made Malawi to be a self-reliant country in food, for the past 5 years. The programme**

targets poor smallholder farming families. During the current farming season, over 1.60 million people have benefitted from the programme. The country is, yet again, going to have surplus maize this year, hence, will still be food secure.

3. Mr. Chairman, the Malawi Government is embarking on the Greenbelt Initiative, which aims at, improving agricultural production and productivity, so that the country, should sustain food security. The Greenbelt Initiative, will be consolidating gains made from various interventions, by intensifying irrigation farming, for crop and livestock production, in a sustainable manner. The programme will be utilizing available water resources for irrigation, thereby, reducing the adverse effects of climate change, on agricultural production.

4. Malawi has a National Forestry Season Programme. Malawi has got a rainy season, which is about five months long. The President personally spearheads the launch, of the National Forestry Season, on 15 December, every year. The season runs up to 15 April, the following year. Again, this is a show of commitment to climate change issues by the political leadership of the country. The programme involves all communities, educational institutions, religious communities, traditional leaders, civil society, and many more, during which period, millions of trees are planted across the country. After

planting, co-management agreements, are entered into with communities, in order to ensure a high survival rate of the trees.

5. **Tree Planting and Management, for Carbon Sequestration and Other Ecosystem Services Programme**, was launched in Malawi in January 2007. The programme is country-wide, and targets farmers with at least 1 hectare of land, which they can spare, to plant trees for carbon sequestration. The aim of this Government-funded programme, is to support households, who spare some of their land, to plant trees, which sequester carbon.

6. **Around 93% of energy in Malawi is from hydro-power plants.** Plans are under way, to invest more in clean energy, such as geo-thermal, using hot springs; wind turbines; and solar energy.

7. **Government is running a Malawi Rural Electrification Programme (MAREP)**, which is meant to provide electricity to trading centres in the rural areas, in order to spur socio-economic development. A levy is incorporated in the price of fuel, to cater for this programme. The intention is to increase electricity penetration, to more than 10% as per today's estimate, so that people are weaned off from relying on firewood for cooking and heating.

8. **The Government has removed taxes on renewable energy technologies, in order to encourage people to utilize clean energy. All components for renewable energy technologies, are imported free of customs duty.**

 9. **A heavy tax is imposed on the importation of second hand vehicles. This is meant to reduce hazardous emissions.**

 10. **The country uses petrol blend, where 10% is ethanol and 90% is petrol. Government intends to increase the ethanol content to 20% while petrol will be 80%, with the intention of reducing hazardous emissions further.**

 11. **Promotion of Alternative Sources of Energy, in the rural and peri-urban areas, is encouraged. This particular programme's goal, is to increase the country's reliance on non-traditional fuels, for cooking and heating, thereby, improving the state of the country's environment, in these rural and peri-urban areas.**
- **Regarding Risk Management and Risk Reduction Strategic Programmes, Mr. Chairman, during 2005/06 farming season, Government developed a pilot project, of Crop Insurance Scheme, for smallholder farmers in Malawi. This project has laid**

groundwork, for future scaling-up, of the index-based insurance, which would cover more areas, more clients and more crops, in the country. The project is directly linked, to boosting financial incomes, of smallholder farmers. The Crop Insurance Scheme provides, good safeguards against losses, from climate change hazards. Let me hasten to add that, the premium is borne by the fund, and not the smallholder farmers.

- **Mr. Chairman, Government is also implementing, various Relief and Development Programmes, through the Department of Poverty and Disaster Management. The programmes cover many areas, prone to adverse impacts of climate change.**
- **In addition, Government has been implementing, several Environmental Micro-projects, in District Councils, supported by various development partners. The idea is for the communities, to develop their own environmental micro-projects, and resilience measures, which contribute to mitigation and adaptation, against climate change adverse impacts.**
- **Mr. Chairman, Building Social and Ecological Resilience in Lake Chilwa Basin, is another project, which is being implemented, in South-Eastern Malawi. The Lake Chilwa Basin was classified, as the Ramsar site, in 2007. The main aim of the project is, to develop and implement, basin-wide climate change adaptations,**

in support of the NAPA, that will enhance the capacity of communities, to adopt sustainable livelihood, and natural resource management practices. The project is, focussing on key hot spots, around the wetland, to target interventions, which address natural resource management practices, that severely limit communities' resilience, and threaten to make them more vulnerable, to the impacts of climate change.

- In terms of the Current and Future Vision, Mr. Chairman, Malawi has been engaged in planning and development of intervention projects, involving agroforestry; conservation agriculture; zero-tillage practice; programmes on reducing emissions, from forest deforestation and degradation (REDDplus); pilot programmes on climate-smart agriculture; and capacity building for thematic subject matter specialists, on adaptation, mitigation, technology development and transfer, and clean development mechanism, in order to advance work on climate change implementation.

Recognizing the active role, that Malawi plays, in climate change negotiations, and its political commitment to issues of climate change, the country was elected as member, of the following committees, at the 16th Conference of Parties, that was held at Cancun in Mexico, in December last year:

1. The Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG);

- 2. The Transitional Committee, of the Green Climate Fund, and**
- 3. The Joint Implementation Supervisory Committee (JISC), which oversees implementation of the Kyoto Protocol.**

We do not take this trust and confidence, which the global community has in the country, and its leadership, for granted and we are most grateful for such a kind gesture.

Following these elections, Mr. Chairman, Malawi will be hosting the following international meetings, in the first half of this year:

- The Cartagena Dialogue for Progressive Action on Climate Change, which will bring together, up to 80 delegates, from about 40 countries, both developed and developing in March;**
- The 19th meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), in March; and**
- The Southern African Development Community/Regional Climate Change Programme, in April. This will bring together, all the 14 countries, in the SADC group.**

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Malawi is committed, to addressing the issues of climate change, and is playing its part. However,

suffice to say that, issues of climate change, can only be addressed effectively, with the full cooperation of all countries, developed or least developed, because we are a global community living in a global village, and that ravages of climate change, affect us all.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you very much, for your attention.