

STATEMENT FOR

HONOURABLE PATRICIA WISKES, MP

MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DELIVERED AT

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (COP31)

Antalya, Republic of Türkiye |15:00 am|17/18 November 2026

- **Mr. President,**
- **Your Excellencies,**
- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Distinguished Heads of Delegations,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. It is a great honour to address this High-Level Segment on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Malawi.

2. Let me begin by congratulating the Government of Türkiye and the COP31 Presidency for hosting this important gathering.

Mr. President,

3. COP31 comes at a critical juncture in the global climate agenda. We have made important commitments through the Paris Agreement, the Global Stocktake and subsequent decisions of the Conference of the Parties. However, the central question before us is "whether our actions are in line with the urgency of the climate crisis".

4. For Malawi, climate change is not simply a matter of international negotiations or long-term projections. It is a development challenge that is already affecting our people, our economy and our ability to achieve sustainable development.

5. Our communities are experiencing increasingly unpredictable rainfall, prolonged droughts, floods, rising temperatures and destructive tropical cyclones. The impacts of Tropical Storm Ana, Cyclone Gombe and the devastating Cyclone Freddy have demonstrated how quickly climate disasters can undermine years of development progress.

6. Today, we are particularly concerned about the forecast El Niño phenomenon during the 2026/2027 rainfall season. The anticipated below-normal rainfall across much of central and southern Malawi presents serious risks to agricultural production, food security, water availability and energy generation. These threats come at a time when many communities are still recovering from previous climate shocks.

7. This is a reminder that the climate crisis is accelerating, while the capacity of vulnerable countries to respond remains constrained.

Mr. President,

8. Malawi believes that COP31 must be a Conference of implementation, accountability and renewed political commitment.

9. First, we must preserve the ambition of the Paris Agreement and keep the 1.5°C temperature goal alive. The continued rise in global temperatures threatens the very survival and development prospects of countries such as Malawi. We therefore urge Parties, particularly major emitters, to strengthen their mitigation ambition and accelerate the implementation of their Nationally Determined Contributions. We cannot allow the 1.5°C goal to become an aspiration without a credible pathway for achieving it.

10. Second, we must fundamentally strengthen the global response to adaptation. For Malawi, adaptation is not optional; it is an immediate necessity. We need investments that protect agricultural systems, secure water resources, build climate-resilient health services, strengthen infrastructure and safeguard vulnerable communities. We call for the Global Goal on Adaptation to translate into practical action, with appropriate indicators, adequate resources and support for national implementation. We also emphasize the importance of locally led adaptation, where communities are empowered to determine and implement their own resilience priorities.

11. Third, climate finance must become more accessible, predictable and responsive to the needs of vulnerable countries. The financing gap continues to undermine the implementation of national climate commitments. We call upon developed country Parties to honour their climate finance obligations and commitments, with increased provision of grant-based resources, particularly for adaptation and loss and damage.

12. Access procedures under international climate finance mechanisms must be simplified to enable LDCs to secure resources without administrative and institutional burdens. Furthermore, Malawi calls for a greater proportion of climate finance to reach local communities. Our position is that at least 70

per cent should support community-level and locally led adaptation, rather than leaving vulnerable communities with only marginal allocations.

13. Fourth, we must give practical meaning to climate justice by addressing loss and damage. For countries such as Malawi, the consequences of climate change are already resulting in lost lives, destroyed infrastructure, reduced agricultural production and displacement of communities. We call for the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage to be adequately and sustainably capitalized, with accessible arrangements that ensure support reaches affected countries and communities when it is most needed.

Mr. President,

Malawi remains firmly committed to addressing these challenges. We are strengthening our national climate governance framework and advancing implementation of our Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans.

14. Nevertheless, the scale of the climate crisis exceeds the financial and technological capacities of countries like Malawi. We therefore call for stronger partnerships that go beyond traditional development assistance towards genuine climate cooperation, technology transfer and capacity-building.

15. We also urge development partners and international climate finance institutions to recognize the urgency of the El Niño threat and provide all necessary support in vulnerable countries.

Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers,

16. Let us use this High-Level Segment to bridge the gap between our commitments and the realities confronting our people. We must demonstrate that multilateral climate cooperation can deliver tangible results, particularly for those who have contributed least to the problem but are experiencing its most severe consequences.

17. Malawi remains committed to working constructively with all Parties to advance a fair, ambitious and implementable global climate response.

18. Our message from Malawi is simple: climate ambition must be matched by climate finance; adaptation commitments must translate into resilience on the ground; and the pursuit of 1.5°C must be backed by urgent and measurable action.

19. The people of Malawi, and millions of others facing the consequences of climate change, cannot afford another cycle of promises without delivery.

20. I thank you.