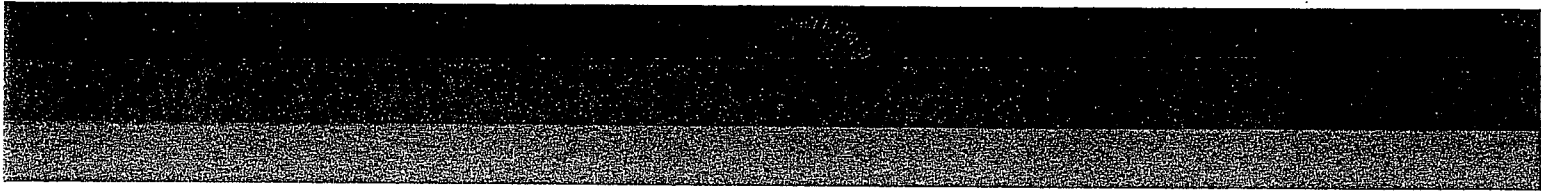




MALAWI



STATEMENT
BY
MS JANE ASANI-NDELEMANI, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF
THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON AGENDA ITEM 2(B) DURING THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

GENEVA

4TH JULY 2007

(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Mr. President,

Malawi associates itself with the statement delivered by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. As a Least Developed and Land-locked country, Malawi identifies with the theme of this groundbreaking session of ECOSOC because the greater percentage of its population is rural based and poverty is widespread.

Mr. President,

Malawi is committed to the eradication of poverty and hunger among its people. Through the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, the government of Malawi has determined priorities that would fast track socio economic growth for its people. These are agriculture and food security; irrigation and water development; transport and communications infrastructure; energy; integrated rural development; and prevention and management of HIV/AIDS.

Malawi has been hard at work to revive and rebuild the agriculture sector with a view to promoting sustainable national food security. This year, Malawi has produced more than the national grain requirement largely due to the implementation of a farm input and fertilizer subsidy programme by government which has empowered the poor to grow more food. The programme has resulted in significant increase in maize production from 2.6 million metric tons in 2005/06 season to an estimated 3.2 million metric tons in the 2006/07 growing season, representing an increase of 23%. The production of other food crops such as rice, beans, potatoes, cassava, groundnuts and pulses has also been increased as a way of dietary diversification.

Malawi is convinced that improvement of transport and communications infrastructure is critical for growth and development. The government therefore continues to develop its road networks with the aim of improving not only movement of goods and services from rural areas to the urban, but also to enhance domestic and international trade. Furthermore, Malawi is determined to open up access to the Indian Ocean through the existing Shire and Zambezi Waterway that is navigable all the way from an inland port in Malawi to the port of Chinde on the Indian Ocean, only 238 kilometres away. This waterway would benefit Malawi and other SADC countries.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme is yet another initiative under implementation by government with the aim of eradicating poverty among rural communities through the promotion of Rural Growth Centres.

One area that has witnessed strong partnerships is the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS. With the support of international development partners including the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Malawi has registered increased levels of AIDS awareness, increased supply of ARV drugs and voluntary testing and counseling centers as well as prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV.

Alongside these priorities the government continues to focus on the fight against corruption through the zero tolerance stance to corruption, free primary school education with focus on the girl child, the empowerment of women and gender equality, health,

water and sanitation, youth development and social groups such as the elderly, persons with disabilities as well as orphans and vulnerable children.

Mr. President,

As this August assembly may be aware, Malawi's external debt was cancelled under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). The external debt that was at US\$ 3 billion now stands at \$480 million and will go down further as government concludes its negotiation with bilateral creditors. We believe this is a true example of global partnership in development. With this debt cancellation, Malawi is on the way towards economic recovery and sustainable development. The objective now is to ensure that there is continued implementation of prudent economic, fiscal and financial management in order to consolidate the sound macroeconomic stability it has achieved.

Malawi applauds the efforts of the G8 in promoting the attainment of the MDGs in Africa. The June 2007 Summit held in Heiligendamm, Germany is further testimony of the group's intention to partner with the African continent in its quest for development. Malawi therefore welcomes the group's Summit Declaration which outlines further measures to promote sustainable growth in Africa.

The government of Malawi sincerely thanks its development partners, including the United Nations System, bilateral and multilateral donors for the financial and technical support that has enabled the advancement of its development agenda. A lot of works remains to be done in order to fully attain the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs. In this respect we look forward to the follow up to the Financing for Development Conference to be held in Doha in 2008. Our sincere hope is that our development partners will follow through with the promises they made in Monterrey.

In conclusion, Malawi would like to encourage all stakeholders within the international community, individually and collectively to continue supporting policies and programmes that have shown potential to deliver tangible results for the poor.

I thank you.