



MALAWI

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Check against delivery

Mr. Chairman

At the outset, Malawi joins the previous speakers in congratulating you for assuming the chairmanship of this 45th Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development. Let me also congratulate other Bureau members for the various roles this session has entrusted to them. Please be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation during the deliberations of this session.

Malawi aligns itself with the statements made by Algeria on behalf of the African Group, and to the statement made by Angola on behalf of SADC.

Mr. Chairman

The importance and relevance to Malawi, of the theme for this year's CPD session, cannot be overemphasized. As it is true in most developing countries that are at a state of demographic transition that is characterized by high but declining fertility and mortality rates, Malawi's population is youthful, with 46 percent aged below 18 and below. In addition, about 7 percent of the projected 14.4 million people as per projection for 2012 comprises of infants aged less than 1 year old. Let me also point out that 22 percent of the

population is aged under five, while 33 percent of the population is between the ages of 10 to 24 years.

Mr. Chairman

These statistics are more than just numbers; they represent human beings with needs, hopes and aspirations. The group aged 15 years and below is the largest generation of the youth, ever, which is preparing to enter into adulthood. Their educational, health status and livelihood as they prepare to take on adult responsibilities and the support they receive from the community, government and other stakeholders will determine their future and the future of the nation. In this regard, it is important to note that the youth are faced with risks and challenges that impact directly on their physical, psychosocial and mental well-being.

Investing in our youth will yield large returns for generations to come. On the other hand, failing do so, will incur tremendous and daunting costs to the nation. The youth are facing a cross section of challenges. Almost 3 million youths of Malawi are faced with the prospect of early marriage, teenage pregnancy, incomplete education, orphan hood, unemployment, violence, abuse, defilement and the threat of HIV and AIDS. About 22 percent of maternal mortality deaths occur among young mothers. It is also important to note that just like in other countries in the sub-

Saharan African region, in the reported cases in HIV infection in Malawi, young people that are aged 14 to 24 are the most affected.

In order to respond to the various challenges that youth and adolescent face; Malawi has laid out strategies and programmes aimed at promoting youth development. These include the following:

- Enhancement of economic activities through provision of loans as start up capital;
- Promotion of healthy life styles through the provision of appropriate awareness in Sexual and Reproductive Health;
- Creation of awareness on STIs and HIV and AIDS and the promotion of care among the affected and infected youth;
- Provision of appropriate social, vocational, physical and mental programmes for the rehabilitation of youth with special needs; and
- Provision of adequate recreational and sporting facilities for the youth in communities and schools.

Mr Chairman

Malawi has revised the 1996 National Youth Policy, whose goal is to develop the full potential of the youth and promote their active participation in national development. Other development frameworks and policies that have been adopted to contribute to youth empowerment can be found in the Malawi Growth and

Development Strategy (MGDS), the National Gender Policy, the Reproductive Health Policy and the HIV and AIDS Policy.

In conclusion Malawi wishes to point out that we remain committed to the ideals of this session's draft resolution among which is the improving the well being of youth and adolescents.

I thank you for your attention.