



**THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI**



**STATEMENT**

**BY THE**

**MINISTER OF GENDER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPEMENT AND  
SOCIAL WELFARE, HONOURABLE DR. PATRICIA KALIATI**

**PRESENTED AT**

**THE 6<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL REVIEW MEETING  
(ARRM)**

**ON**

**25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021**

**Chairperson,**

I am honored to speak on the topic '**Social and Human Development in the African LDCs: Reducing Inequality and Advancing Wellbeing and Opportunities**'.

**Chairperson,**

A number of factors contribute to the high prevalence of poverty and inequality in the LDCs. As for the case Malawi these include:

1. Floods and droughts due to climate change resulting to low agricultural productivity, increased food prices and food insecurity;
2. High levels of gender based violence: 34 percent women are either physically or sexually abused and 42 percent girls are married before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday affecting their productivity. Further, GBV prevents economic growth by diverting resources from their optimal use and are

spent on goods and services related to GBV.

3. Civil strife and political instability such as conflicts between political parties leading to loss life, loss enabling environment for businesses, ;
4. Rapid urbanization create slam conditions with limited access to essential services such as water, sanitation, waste management and electricity making urban dwellers increasingly vulnerable to various shocks such as pandemics;
5. Volatile energy availability and prices negatively affect small and medium enterprises thereby lowering their contribution to social and economic development of the country.
6. COVID-19 has affected development gains in LDCs. The pandemic has made things harder for women and girls in Malawi from loss of jobs, failed businesses, high rates of school drop outs and teenage pregnancies to increased

gender based violence particularly rape and defilement.

### **Chairperson,**

There are multiple factors that limit LDCs Poverty Eradication Efforts. For instance in Malawi the factors include:

1. Limited access to financial resources particularly by women and the youth who comprise a bigger population in the country thereby limiting their participation in the development agenda;
2. Inadequate support to women farmers and entrepreneurs. Women have limited access to markets as a result of transport costs and cultural norms that restrict women's travel outside their community. Limited access to processing or value adding technology results in most agricultural products from women farmers being of low value and quality.

3. Under-developed rural infrastructure. This challenge is a major constraint on agriculture and small scale and medium enterprises as it affects the cost and continuity of production and the quality of products;
4. Failure by to make international aid a catalyst for development by not utilizing it to develop financial services for the poor, improving infrastructure, implementing land reform, building mechanisms for good governance and supporting small and medium enterprises to create a diversified and modern rural sector and;
5. Lack of or limited understanding by multilateral donor institutions in the actual causes of poverty and how those causes have been and can be effectively addressed.

**Chairperson,**

I would like to conclude my remarks by highlighting how to accelerate progress towards human development through

addressing aspects contributing to poverty and inequality in the African LDCs. These include:

1. Addressing rapid population growth and high fertility through provision of sexual and reproductive health services, promoting female education and women economic empowerment; for example the Malawi government is constructing more boarding secondary schools to increase female enrolment;
2. On addressing GBV- it is critical to implement prevention strategies to reduce costs of services supporting survivor and on engaging men as change agents and as perpetrator such as engaging men on ending all forms of gender based violence and harmful practices and awareness on available laws. Malawi Government has developed a strategy champions in the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls at

work place, at home, in the community and in all spheres of life.

3. Addressing gender inequalities due to poor educational attainment, lack of infrastructure, limited access to information and communication technology, energy, and transport services, governments need to implement innovative and sustainable policies and programmes. For example, Malawi has launched a digital platform available on web and mobile device as an app called **“50 Million African Women Speak”** to improve women entrepreneurs’ access to local and international markets. Malawi is also empowering women in business cooperatives, loan and savings programme; and implementing early childhood development programmes. This is critical now that travelling physically is limited with the COVID-19 pandemic;

4. *Leveraging the food system, both on and off the farm, this includes by raising smallholder agricultural productivity, complementary public investment (in agricultural research and extension, irrigation, and rural infrastructure), inclusive value chain development and technological leapfrogging;*
5. *Mitigating fragility by having risk management solutions with roles for both the private and public sectors, and incentivizing the public and private actors to act before the shocks and conflict occur;*
6. *Addressing the poverty financing gap by having efficient, public financing focused on the poor. For instance, in line with the Social Protection for Sustainable Development (SP4SDGs) SDG Target 1.3, Malawi is implementing a number of micro finance projects and social protection programmes. For instance, the National Economic Empowerment Fund*



(NEEF) is empowering women and the youth to access entrepreneurship skills and finances for business ventures in rural and urban areas;

The social protection programmes target 20% of the population and has expanded the coverage of the Social Cash Transfer Programme (SCTP) from 28,000 households in 2012 to 293,000 households in 2021. This is aimed at improving health, nutrition and skills of the poorest thereby building their human capital for improved livelihoods.

**Chairperson,**

I am very confident that poverty and inequality in the LDCs can be dealt with if aspects contributing to both are addressed.