



MALAWI

STATEMENT

BY

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THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

AT THE 47TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

ON

AGENDA ITEM 3(B): REVIEW OF RELEVANT UN PLANS
AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION PERTAINING TO THE
SITUATION OF SOCIAL GROUPS

- i. World programme of action concerning the disabled persons
 - ii. World Programme of action for youth
 - iii. Madrid international plan on ageing, 2002
 - iv. Family issues policies and programmes

UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

6 FEBRUARY, 2009

(Check against delivery)

Madam Chair,

As my delegation is taking the floor for the first time during this session, I would like to begin by congratulating you and your bureau for being elected to guide this commission. Let me assure you of our full cooperation throughout your term of office.

Let me associate my delegation with the statements delivered by Sudan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Namibia on behalf of the African Union and South Africa on behalf of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). However, I wish to make the following remarks with regard to the situation in Malawi.

Madam Chair,

One of the themes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly is "*Social Integration*", a critical element in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

As such, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), Malawi's overarching national policy strategy, recognizes the importance of social inclusion of the vulnerable groups such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, orphans and vulnerable children, and destitute families in the fight against poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and unemployment; and in the promotion of the enjoyment of their rights and freedoms.

In this regard, the Malawi Government, in collaboration with its development partners and civil society, is developing a social protection policy to promote and enhance the welfare of the poorest, particularly the vulnerable groups.

As part of this process, the Government is implementing a Social Cash Transfer scheme in seven districts in order to reduce income poverty and address other broader developmental challenges hampering rapid social development and economic growth. The lessons from the pilot have been instrumental in informing the process of formulating the social protection policy.

In addition, the Malawi Government is implementing several other special programmes targeting the most vulnerable people. The first is the "Public Works Programme under the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF). This is a conditional cash transfer scheme where beneficiaries are given cash if they participate in various designated jobs. The second is the Village Savings and Loans Programme which is aimed at encouraging the poor to save and use the accumulated savings to lend within the same group at interest. This is intended to complement micro-financing.

Thirdly, the Malawi Government is also implementing the school meals programme in selected schools across the country with technical support from WFP and UNICEF. This programme is presently supporting 623,000 school children in over 500 primary schools across the country. Its aim is to encourage children to attend and remain in school.

Madam Chair,

With regard to the elderly, the Malawi Government has formulated a National Policy for Older Persons whose objective is to increase older people's productivity, independence and active involvement in the development of their communities and the country. The policy recognizes the need to harness the skills and experience of the elderly in the socio-economic development of the country.

Madam Chair,

Given the role of the family in socio-economic development, the Government is currently reviewing family-related laws to ensure that the family is at the centre of national development. Out dated laws will be replaced by laws that prohibit all forms of neglect, exploitation, and gender-based violence. The review will also address issues of marriage, divorce, child maintenance, custody and adoption of children.

Madam Chair,

Malawi believes that engaging youth in the national development is not a matter of choice, but rather an imperative for national development. In this regard, the Malawi Government has put in place strategic programmes in areas such as Youth Participation and Leadership, Youth Economic Empowerment, Youth Health, and Youth Guidance and Counseling.

In the area of Skills, Training and Employment Creation, Malawi has a Youth Economic Empowerment Program that attempts to address issues of unemployment and poverty among out-of-school youth. The programme provides vocational and entrepreneurship skills training and start-up capital to enable trained youth start their own small-scale business ventures.

Madam Chair,

The Malawi Government will continue to focus on social integration as a tool for sustainable development and poverty reduction, and for improving the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society, namely, the elderly, persons with disabilities and women and children.

I thank you.