



REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

SPEECH

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR
ARTHUR PETER MUTHARIKA,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
MALAWI**

**DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF
THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE
POLICY AND NATIONAL IRRIGATION
POLICY**

**AT THE
BINGU INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
CENTRE, LILONGWE**

30th NOVEMBER, 2016.

- Your Excellency **Madam Dr. Gertrude Mutharika**, the First Lady of the Republic of Malawi;
- **Right Honourable Dr. Saulos Claus Chilima**, Vice President of the Republic of Malawi;
- The Speaker of the National Assembly, **Right Honourable Richard Mswoya, MP**;
- **Your Excellency Virginia Palmer**, Ambassador of the United States of America to Malawi;
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps here present;
- All protocols observed;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted that we have come this far. And before I proceed, I want to thank all of you who have worked hard to develop the policies we launch today. I also want to thank our developing partners for being on our side, supporting us to achieve what is best for our people and our country.

That said, I want to proceed with a saying from the wisdom of our people. *“The road to the future begins with planning.”*

The better we plan, the better we get equipped to march to a better Malawi. The amount of our planning, and the dedication in executing our plans will determine how high we go in progress.

Our present is a product of our past planning. Our future will be the product of how we plan today. As a country, we are where we are because we have been thinking small and planning small. And I say, we must **think big** and **plan big**. That is how we will **grow big** as a nation.

The growth of our economy largely depends on the way we plan in our agriculture sector. Agriculture remains the backbone of our economy and development.

The impact of agriculture on our economy is always felt in our homes, our work places, and wherever we are. A year of a good harvest means everything to us. High productivity means so much to us. And as the last two years of hunger have eloquently spoken, bad years in our fields mean everything to all of us. Every farmer,

carpenter, minibus driver or passenger feels the importance of agriculture in our economy.

Most of our macro-economic indicators are often positive whenever the agriculture sector performs well. And the opposite is also true. Good planning in our agriculture sector is good planning for our economy.

However, we can only make the most out of our agriculture sector if we plan well. But our past years tell

a different story. We did not plan well.

We have not maximised the potential of the agriculture sector for a number of reasons. This sector has been characterised with policies that lacked clarity. Sometimes, there have been conflicting policy positions on key issues.

We have been using out-dated agricultural production technologies. We have a sector that has been characterised with underdeveloped

irrigation, mechanization and commercialization.

Ladies and gentlemen, time has come to address these policy problems. We have often asked how best we can as a country, drive agriculture to the best results. We have wondered whether we, as a country have a clear vision in agriculture. Today is our answer!

The National Agriculture Policy is our **policy roadmap**. This policy will

guide our operations in this sector for the next five years.

The **National Agriculture Policy** builds on that long-term development strategy called ***Vision 2020***. It draws from the ***Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II*** (MGDS II). The Policy further builds on other existing frameworks such as the ***Agriculture Sector Wide Approach*** (ASWAp) and the ***National Export Strategy*** (NES). On the international level, this policy heeds the call of the **African Union**

Malabo Declaration and the **Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)** framework. This policy is an integral part of our **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. This collective policy is the culmination of our national planning in agriculture.

If you ask: ***what is our vision?*** Our vision is to transform agriculture. If you ask: ***what is our goal?*** Our goal is to **increase productivity, people's incomes,**

food security, and nutritional status of all Malawians. This plan is for every Malawian, every farmer, every household. If you ask: ***how shall we achieve this collective goal?*** Our answer is in eight priorities.

The National Agriculture Policy will guide us to achieve our collective goal through the following policy priorities:

1. Sustainable Agricultural Production and Productivity;

2. Sustainable Irrigation Development;
3. Mechanisation of Agriculture;
4. Agricultural Market Development, Agro-processing and Value Addition;
5. Food and Nutrition Security;
6. Agricultural Risk Management;
7. Empowerment of Youth, Women and Vulnerable Groups in Agriculture; and
8. Institutional Development, Coordination and Capacity Strengthening.

Within each priority area, there are specific policy statements and strategies indicating what will be done to achieve every goal.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen; there is one more thing. We know that we can no longer leave our agriculture at the mercy of rainfall. Times have **changed**. Climate change has made rainfall too **unpredictable**. Given these threats, my Government has also decided to develop a **National Irrigation**

Policy. I believe that a sustainable national vision must be comprehensive.

Ladies and gentlemen; the **National Irrigation Policy** operationalizes the **National Agriculture Policy**, which is the overarching policy for the agriculture sector.

Malawi has high irrigation potential. This country can irrigate up to about **408,000 hectares**. But we have only developed **108,000 hectares** for irrigation. We have only

developed 26% of our irrigation potential. The question is: *why?* **We needed a comprehensive policy for irrigation. We needed to invest in irrigation.**

This policy will address spatial and temporal water shortages. It will deal with customary land issues that affect irrigation. And it will deal with the operation and maintenance of irrigation infrastructure.

The next question is: ***how shall this policy achieve its goals?*** We will achieve our irrigation goals by addressing three priority areas. These priority areas are:

- I. Sustainable irrigation development;
- I. Sustainable irrigation management; and
- II. Capacity development.

Again, each priority area has guiding policy statements, objectives

and strategies that indicate how we shall achieve our goals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The combination of the two policies we launch today means a revolution in agriculture. Let every Malawian see change in their life because of these policies. Every farmer and household must see that change. The woman who toils in her garden with a baby on her back must see that change. And when that child

grows up, that child must remember that – **this day**, we planned well for our future.

And on this day, I declare the National Agriculture Policy and National Irrigation Policy **officially launched.**

Thank You Very Much, and may God bless us all.