

PEOPLE'S SCORECARD FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Malawi, 2022



Acknowledgements

CONGOMA is pleased to present the 2022 People's Report on Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs. The report is a product of a participatory process which involved citizens, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Government structures at local and national levels. This is a third consecutive year that CONGOMA has led consultations on the report, as guided by the National Civil Society Taskforce on SDGs.

As an advocacy tool, the report is expected to inform CSOs on policy demands related to implementation of SDGs in Malawi. Through the report, the coalition expects a fruitful policy dialogue on actions that need to be taken in order to reduce poverty, reduce inequality and protect the planet in tandem with the SDGs. The report contains citizen perspectives on the status of the SDGs and reasons for rating; presents challenges in meeting the SDGs; and makes recommendations for improvement.

CONGOMA would like to thank immensely the people of Dowa, Kasungu, Nkhotakota, Chikwawa and Chiradzulu for providing their views on the status of SDGs, CSOs for their inputs into the process; the National Planning Commission, Mr. Kennedy Rashid and Mr. Nicolas Sautejeau for the technical support. CONGOMA is also grateful to World Vision International – Malawi for designing and printing the report.

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Foreword

The Council for NGOs in Malawi – CONGOMA in partnership with the National Planning Commission - NPC, Action for Sustainable Development – Action4SD and the Global Call to Action Against Poverty conducted community consultations to complement Malawi's 2022 Voluntary National Review – VNR reporting. Community consultations during the VNR process accorded citizens an opportunity to input into development policy and legal framework; provide strategies for institutionalizing SDGs implementation; and offer views on how SDG implementation can be inclusive and legally anchored in community development plans such as the Village Action Plans (VAP), Area Development Plans (ADP) and District Development Plans (DDP). The consultations enabled CONGOMA to create a platform for citizens to discuss topical issues and make recommendations towards ensuring SDG implementation responds to their needs at local level. Other than contributing to the 2022 VNR, the report is envisaged to motivate Government of Malawi and development partners to put in place sustainable financing mechanisms tailor-made for community development initiatives.

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Acronyms

ACB	Anti-Corruption Bureau
ADC	Area Development Committee
ADP	Area Development Plan
ADMARC	Agricultural Development and Marketing Cooperation
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AMP	Aid Management Platform
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CONGOMA	Council for NGOs in Malawi
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAD	Debt and Aid Division
DDP	District Development Plan
MDG(s)	Millennium Development Goal(s)
MGDS	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MIP-1	Malawi 2063 First Implementation Plan
MNSSP (II)	Malawi National Social Support Programme
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
MW2063	Malawi 2063
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	National Planning Commission
NSO	National Statistical Office (Malawi)
PPDA	Public Procurement and Disposal of Assets Authority
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
VAP	Village Action Plan
VDC	Village Development Committee
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Executive Summary

Citizens acknowledge Government's zeal to put in place policies and frameworks to achieve SDGs. Despite the favorable policy and legal terrain, the citizens note weaknesses in the implementation process. They cited lack of commitment from duty bearers to actualize what the instruments dictate to address the challenges they face. Government is yet to demonstrate serious commitment towards disclosure of public information as stipulated in Malawi's Access to Information Act. The National Budget allocations to some high performing sectors such as social protection remain meager compared to the number of vulnerable citizens that deserve the interventions. Limited awareness on the national instruments has exacerbated poor implementation of development programmes.

Civic participation and empowerment remain feeble. This status quo implies limited lack of monitoring skills for public services among citizens, calling for concerted efforts in citizen empowerment through dissemination of the legal and policy instruments and translating them into local languages. The decentralization and devolution drive has not been entirely embraced as most development planning is still happening at the central level. Being a top down approach, less impact is expected at the local level. The report shows people in communities value the Village Action Plans and Area Development Plans. These feed into the District Development Plans. However, citizens indicate they no longer see the importance of development plans which are not prioritized when it comes financing. In their view, it is important for the district councils and Central Government to declare levels of financing for particular districts and ask them to develop relevant plans.

Corruption continued to erode confidence of citizens in the way public services are offered.

They observed that corruption is happening through bad procurement and demanding funds for free public services. This has denied citizens from accessing public services and resulted in sub-standard services being offered. Citizens are being subjected to inhumane conditions in an era inequality is getting worse due to corrupt individuals in privileged positions. A call for serious review of public systems was made to reverse the trend, including building capacity of oversight institutions such as the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Financial Intelligence Unit, Fiscal Police, Auditor General and Office of the Ombudsman. It is hoped that adequate capacity of these institutions might contribute to prudent utilization of public resources.

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of citizens and national development cannot be overemphasized. The pandemic disrupted and affected development efforts over the reporting period from 2021/2022 in all sectors including education, health and agriculture. Consequently, mobilisation of resources by public institutions was affected, which is likely to impact on implementation of the SDGs. However, citizens have indicated that duty bearers should not use the pandemic as an excuse for failing to provide basic services to them.

The devaluation of the Malawi Kwacha which has triggered rise in prices of goods and services is impacting negatively on the citizens. Most citizens indicated failure to meet basic needs, a threat to achieving the SDGs by 2030. The report shows many groups are being left behind including citizens in remote areas, women, girls, persons with disability, refugees, the elderly persons, chronically-ill and children. Deliberate efforts are hence required to avoid the leaving these groups behind.



Politicization of development programmes is derailing implementation. The rights holders point out that other areas are being neglected on the pretext that they hold dissenting views on the political front. Additionally, there is poor harmonisation and fragmentation of programmes at local level due to competition for visibility, resources

and beneficiaries; and lack of enforcement among partners to adhere to available development instruments such as the VAPs, ADPs and DDPs. Such situations not only affect joint implementation and monitoring of programmes, but also weaken systems for capturing data for reporting at local and national levels.



Part of the community Scorecard consultations in Kasungu district.

1.0 Assessment Methodology

The main community consultation took place in Dowa District using focus group discussions. However, the information used in this report also benefited from NPC-led consultations which took place in Kasungu, Nkhotakota, Chiradzulu and Chikwawa conducted by CONGOMA. District civil society networks and district Councils identified communities where consultations took place. Critical to identification of communities were level of engagement with citizens in decision making by the Area Development Committee, and availability of community projects being implemented by civil society.

Communities that were selected for the consultation included Traditional Authorities Mponela in Dowa; Wimbe and Lukwa in Kasungu; Malengachanzi and Mphonde in Nkhotakota, Mpama and Onga in Chiradzulu; and Mulilima and Maseya in Chikwawa making a total of 9 consultations. To ensure the consultations reflected views from various groups in the communities, contingents of 15 people per Traditional Authority were constituted comprising 4 members of the

Area Development Committee, youth, primary school pupils, the elderly, the disabled, women and business community, among others. This composition enabled the conversation around the SDGs encompassing and balanced.

Prior to the community consultations, planning meetings were conducted involving 4 members from each Area Development, 2 officials from NPC, 2 officials from CONGOMA, at least 2 members from each CSO district network and at least 1 official from the district councils. Planning meeting discussions revolved around sharing the gist behind the consultation, reviewing the questionnaire, developing programme for the community consultation and agreeing on composition of the community groups to be engaged.

Information gathered from the community consultations was triangulated with a CSO consultation and literature review. This process strengthened the community perspectives by availing data and deepening the understanding on key parameters that were being assessed.



2.0 SDGs overview

In September 2015, Malawi was one of the 186 United Nations Member States that adopted and ratified the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs, which focus on fostering peace and prosperity for citizens in all member states of the UN and enhancing global partnership for development for developed and developing member states. The 2030 agenda hinges on boosting economic growth through ending poverty and various forms of deprivations, tackling climate change and preserving natural resources. The common beliefs and principles behind the Agenda include People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership.

The SDGs require key transformation of key sectors of development and leaving no one behind, starting with the furthest behind. To achieve SDGs, a high level of cooperation from member states and local mobilisation of resources are necessary.

Government of Malawi is domesticating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its current ten year national development plan, the MIP-1, which has replaced the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III. Additionally, the State adopted the Malawi 2063 to accelerate the pace of economic growth and wealth creation for the citizens. MIP-1 has an average alignment of 81.62% to the SDGs.

2.1 Achievements

The Government of Malawi has so far produced one progress report published in 2018 and two Voluntary National Review reports produced in 2020 and 2022. The VNR process involves countries assessing themselves on SDG implementation and sharing findings with fellow member states of the UN for peer review.

The 2022 VNR report shows Malawi has registered significant progress on SDG 2: Zero hunger; SDG 3: Good health and well-being; SDG 4: Quality education; SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation; and SDG 14: Life below water. Moderate progress has been observed under SDG 5: Gender equality; SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy; SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth; SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure; SDG 13: Climate action; and SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals. Some of the targets Malawi is making significant progress on include Target 3.2 where under-five mortality rates are significantly declining and likely to be met by 2030; Target 4.5 showing gender parity in primary schools

is already equal to parity, and net enrolment in Primary Schools which is close to desired target. Some of the programmes that have contributed to the progress on SDG 2 are Affordable Inputs Programme and social protection interventions including social cash transfers to vulnerable families and school feeding programme. SDG 3 has yielded from support provided by various bilateral / multilateral institutions in the health sector. SDG 4 has benefited from free primary school education, provision of school fees for vulnerable girls in secondary schools, and construction of new school blocks.

Little or no progress has been registered under SDG 1: End Poverty; SDG 10: Reduce inequalities and SDG 15: Life on Land, with most targets towing the negative end. As a result, the proportion of the population below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day is distressing as it stood at 71.4% in 2016, 51.5% in 2017 and 50.8% in 2020. The reports, however, show that extreme poverty is a mixed bag i.e. 24.5% in 2010, 16% in

2017 and 20.5% in 2020. Inequality degree has worsened from 0.423 in 2017 to 0.379 in 2020. Some of the factors attributed to the negative trends include insufficient investment in empowerment programmes for the impoverished; recurring disasters; poor policies on COVID 19; compromised war against corruption; and poor harmonisation of efforts among stakeholders.

The 2022 report reveals some goals have no sufficient data to determine whether progress has been made or not, such as SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities; SDG 12: Responsible production and consumption and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and strong institutions. This implies more support towards data generation is required.

With the foregoing, it is evident that implementation precursor for SDGs is mobilisation of resources at local level. Domestic revenue is of prime importance if Malawi is to attain the SDGs. The 2018 UNDP Audit, however, revealed significant financing gaps which should be addressed if the country is to achieve the SDGs. The domestic revenue should be coupled with targeted budget allocations to SDG targets through local

development blueprints such as MIP-1 and the Malawi 2063. Further, Official Development Assistance should be primarily aligned to national frameworks for synchronised financing efforts on SDG targets. This emerges from the understanding that Malawi's Development Budget has been significantly benefiting from Official Development assistance - ODA since the advent of democracy (Government of Malawi 2014).

The foregoing is bound to work well if Malawi truly establishes a multi-stakeholder platform for development planning, designing, implementing and monitoring involving Government, civil society, faith based organisations, development partners, private sector and the citizens themselves. Most stakeholders are left out in these processes, a situation which creates challenges to harmonise efforts amidst the meager resources generated at local level. The National Planning Commission is better placed to host the stakeholders under the proposed platform. However, its ability to convene such a platform is yet to be established. The stakeholders needed to meet on quarterly or biannual basis to assess harmonization efforts and recommend improvements.



3.0 Key findings from the Scorecard

3.1 Creation of Ownership

Citizen awareness and understanding have implications on the realization of SDGs. Community leaders who are well furnished with the information on SDGs have higher chances of contributing effectively to the achievement of SDGs through community mobilization, advocacy and development of relevant plans at local level. Except for around 5% of the citizens consulted, the rest did not know anything about the SDGs. Those that promulgated knowledge about the SDGs hinted they came to know about them through the radio. Upon sharing information on the SDGs with the communities, those that did not know anything about the SDGs indicated they were familiar with the projects which Government of Malawi is implementing to address some of the SDGs, with most of them involved in the implementation.

With almost 7 years gone in the implementation of SDGs, there is a long way to go for communities to embrace the SDGs. Communities expressed worry that the policy makers are talking to themselves instead of taking such information to them

for ownership. Failure to own SDGs means citizens cannot hold duty bearers accountable for the SDGs and various instruments that support implementation of sustainable development. As such, efforts need to be scaled-up and scaled-out by civic educating the masses through the Village and Area Development Committees to influence their development planning; monitoring councils on incorporation of SDGs in their plans; and collaborating with district CSO networks on raising awareness in the communities they work.

The approach taken by the NPC in popularizing the Malawi 2063 (MW2063) should be applauded and rippled to the SDGs. Deliberate mechanisms should be put in place to emphasise that MIP-1 specifically is aimed at catapulting Malawi into achieving the SDGs. Essentially, the MW2063 and MIP-1 booklets being given to the communities and councils need to be accompanied by translated summaries, which establish congruency between and among the MW2063, MIP-1, African Union's Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

3.2 SDG Incorporation in Local Development Plans

3.2.1 Local frameworks integrating SDGs

The communities indicated that their local development plans, specifically at Village and Area Development levels incorporate the SDGs. Development of the plans entails engaging communities at village, group village and Traditional Authority levels. Upon conclusion of the consultations on developing local plans, the Area Development Committees consolidate the plans and submit to the councils. The councils further consolidate the plans and feed them into

district development plans.

For pupils that participated during the consultations, their teachers do not specifically mention the SDGs, but relevant development programmes meant to achieve the SDGs. It would not do any harm, however, if the teachers go through an orientation at Teacher Development Centre level on the SDGs for them to regularly refer to SDGs during lessons for the pupils to internalize.

Other than the local plans, communities highlighted interventions they are pursuing likely to support achieving SDGs. Notable initiatives include:

- Back-to-school initiatives where girls who fall pregnant while schooling are being sent back to school after giving birth to further their education with the support of mother groups and relevant groups i.e. NGOs. However, some of the girls become frustrated when there is

no financial support for their children and education. As such, financial support from Government or its structures is required to keep them in school.

- Instituting bye-laws that protect the environment, life on land and life in water. Though working perfectly, the citizens requested Government to embrace some of the bye-laws and turn them into laws so they cannot be disputed.

3.2.2 Challenges being faced in incorporating SDGs at local level

The communities expressed concern over the tendency by the district councils not to give them feedback on how they plan to implement the consolidated plans, thereby detaching the citizens from the entire implementation process. The citizens observed that they submit their development plans as required, but what is financed is less than 10%. Expressing fatigue and frustration with the cumbersome process involved in the development of the plans with little or nothing getting financed, the communities are demanding that councils declare to them how much is available financially for a particular year, so they could plan in line with the available funds.

The top-down imposition of projects at local level has not borne the desired results when it comes to empowerment of the local structures. Duty bearers finance what is viable to them, not what communities feel should be financed as outlined in their local plans. This poor harmonization between what is desired at community level and what is financed disempowers communities from pursuing long term plans such as the SDGs. It is hoped that bottom up approach is capable of triggering ownership of such long term development plans at local level.

Furthermore, the citizens regretted the conduct of some politicians, mainly Members of Parliament – MP who bypass the Area Development

Committees and implement projects using Constituency Development Fund – CDF without reference to the Area Development Plans. The citizens indicated that this behavior has resulted in saturating development projects in places where the MPs received more votes during the elections, at the expense of other areas in dire need of similar development initiatives. As long as MPs continue to have a strong grip over CDF, some communities will continue being deserted against the SDG benchmark of leaving no one behind. Communities opined that all development initiatives coming to the districts should be guided by the full council in line with the village, area and district development plans.

Similarly, the communities noted that politicians use parallel structures when they want to implement development projects. MPs use their own people who procure items on their behalf instead of the ADCs. The same applies to ward committees which do not auger well with the Local Government Structures. Such politicization of development programmes is said to have made local structures redundant, thereby affecting devolution and decentralization as critical tenets of democracy and good governance. Additionally, it becomes difficult for the communities to conduct monitoring for the projects initiated by the parliamentarians.



3.3 Integration Dimensions in Local Plans

Beginning with the most integrated in Village Action Plans and Area development Plans, the dimensions were ranked as follows: Environment, Economic and Social. The dimensions are critical to achievement of SDGs as their importance cuts across indicators being used to gauge progress. Failure to address any of the three in development planning has serious repercussions on achieving the rest.

a) Environment:

The communities mentioned protecting natural resources as key in the environment dimension. Some of the actions they focus on to enhance environment dimension include avoiding cultivation in river banks, preventing land degradation, generating by-laws that protect trees from being wantonly cut, discouraging charcoal burning, and promoting family and community woodlots. The communities indicated they are struggling with access to portable water. Although the relevant plans are generated every year, there are communities without boreholes which are accessing water from unprotected sources, while others have more than one borehole. This uneven distribution of boreholes is affecting progress in affected communities as they are prone to water-borne diseases year-in-year-out. It was observed that community activities that directly reduce carbon emissions were almost non-existent.

b) Economic:

Construction of markets to promote trade, construction of rural roads to ease movement challenges, social cash transfers, and village savings and loans were some of the activities featured in community plans. However, the communities indicated that most of the economic activities require huge amounts of money to be actualized. As such, they rely on district councils and Central Government for financing. So far, there are challenges associated with Government's inability to set aside funds that can address the economic challenges being faced by Malawians. More opportunities for generating income such as employment are not being met as expected.

Government needs to step up efforts in achieving these economic initiatives for citizens to realize sustainable development at individual, family and community levels.

The communities viewed promoting economic activities as critical in ending poverty among various vulnerable groups. For example, they asked Government to let farmers and SMEs in the community to supply to public institutions in the districts, unlike importing supplies from other districts. Consequently, they requested Government of Malawi to put more resources towards these initiatives to empower citizens meet basic amenities for their well-being.

c) Social:

Citizens highlighted activities that promote peace, security or safety (i.e. community policing), social investment and cultural social protection as being central to the social dimension. They further indicated that reconciliation through traditional courts, punishing gender based violence, promoting gender equality and equity, and inculcating a culture of inclusive decision making are some of the initiatives they value in achieving social cohesion. However, it was noted that public institutions that facilitate the social dimension are inadequate. The Malawi Police Service does not have adequate presence in the areas. The absence of Government extension officers to facilitate aspects of the social dimension in the communities has induced the communities to unwillingly forego important activities that would promote the social wellness of the citizens i.e. health and education.

4.0 Leaving no one behind

4.1 Prioritizing those left behind

The central and transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda is leaving no one behind. Through this promise, the leaders committed to target the furthest behind, by addressing discrimination; place of residence; socio-economic status; governance; and vulnerability to shocks. With the help of various instruments at local and national levels, the communities have taken measures to ensure those left behind are brought on board. Some of the initiatives undertaken include incorporating the groups in development committees, consulting them when developing plans and engaging them to participate in implementation of various programmes. The communities further indicated that citizens considered to be left behind are not discriminated against when accessing social protection intervention such as Affordable Input Programme, Social Cash Transfers and Public works.

The communities identified the following as being incorporated in the planning and implementation of programmes, beginning with the most incorporated to the least:

- a.** Persons with disability: they are mostly incorporated in committees in compliance with calls from various stakeholders such as civil society and issue based campaigners. This was confirmed by the presence of persons with disability during the consultations who attested to their inclusion.
- b.** The elderly: the elderly are included in various structures, provided they are above 60 years and able to attend meetings. The elderly people who are frail are not incorporated in structures due to mobility challenges and psychological reasons.

- c.** Youth: the youth are represented in local structures, though in most cases the age of the youth representatives matter. If they are too young, they are not taken seriously by the other members of the structures.
- d.** Women and girls: inclusion of women was notable in the structures. They are not just given an opportunity to seat at the table, but a voice and position that allows them to contribute to all development processes in the communities.
- e.** People with albinism: though fewer in numbers, efforts to deliberately incorporate them in community structures are being made. In the communities consulted, one person with albinism participated. This was so because the communities put them in the group of persons with disability.
- f.** People living with HIV and AIDS: organized groups of people living with HIV and AIDS have representation in the community development committees. This is a result of rigorous campaign on human rights and other community empowerment initiatives championed by both civil society and Government.
- g.** Citizens from hard to reach areas: the communities indicated they engage citizens from hard to reach areas. Some of these areas require over 6 hours of travel to meetings within the district due to topography and poor road infrastructure or network.
- h.** Mentally challenged persons (people living with mental illness): One area (Malengachanzi) has gone further by incorporating a representative of mentally challenged people. It was reported that the representative presents good facts during meeting.



4.2 Groups not incorporated

The consultations showed that communities do not incorporate other groups in their initiatives, either due to lack of motivation to engage them or social status. The groups are as follows:

- a.** Refugees: there is presence of foreigners and Malawians of other races in the communities. Specifically, the citizens identified refugees from Burundi and Rwanda, and Malawians of Indian origin, who are plying trade in the areas. These groups are not consulted as they are perceived as a group that has no regard for community welfare. However, the communities acknowledged what they miss out by not engaging them particularly that the refugees have percolated into rural communities.
- b.** Child headed families: most of the child headed families are supported by close relatives, so they are not considered as a group that requires representation. Further, most of them are underage, and may not be able to contribute effectively. However, the communities

promised to look into the issue in the future to ensure heads of the child headed families are engaged.

- c.** Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI): Citizens feel LGBTI are left behind because they do not come out in the open in the communities. They further opine that the laws in Malawi do not favour disclosure of their status.

To ensure all vulnerable groups are consulted in the implementation of initiatives to achieve SDGs, the communities highlighted the need to implement empowerment programmes of citizens being left behind or those who risk falling behind due to various vulnerabilities; reviewing frameworks that promote inclusion of vulnerable groups; and examine all disadvantaged groups and isolate ways of enhancing their participation. This can be advanced by NPC in partnership with the Ministry of Gender and NGOs.

4.3 Structural issues

Citizens shared deep rooted social and structural issues which are negatively affecting or are likely to affect implementation of the SDGs at local level. Some of these structural issues are influenced by social norms, politics and vulnerability. It was noted that some of the initiatives meant to address the structural issues started way back before adoption of the Agenda 2030, but limited progress has been registered to completely address them. The initiatives are highlighted below:

- a.** Child marriages: citizens observed that child marriages (those under age 18) were deeply entrenched prior to the SDGs. These marriages were either consensual or forced, depending on circumstance. For the past 10 years, the

practice is fading away due to bye-laws being promulgated at community level with technical support from Government and human rights organisations. Key factors which perpetuate child marriages include high poverty levels, prioritizing education for the boy child at household level and lack of role models.

- b.** Harmful cultural practices: communities noted positive progress made towards ending major harmful cultural practices such as initiation ceremonies, property grabbing and 'cleansing' widows. However, the citizens indicated that there are silent cultures which are considered normal, but are jeopardising efforts to achieve sectoral development. One of the norms involves older men supporting impoverished families with the intention of being 'rewarded'

a girl child. Through this practice, the parents of the girl child are compelled to return the 'favour' given to them by the richer men.

- c. Witchcraft: due to popularization of the laws of Malawi that do not recognize witchcraft, instances of citizens accusing others of practicing witchcraft are drastically reducing. The citizens are afraid of being imprisoned once found accusing an individual. However, there are still pockets of citizens who go flat out to accuse others of practicing witchcraft. The biggest victims have been the elderly, with most of them killed once accused. Despite existence of the laws that criminalise violence, any rumours on practicing witchcraft are received with anger and violence from the public.
- d. Corruption: the vice is being practiced at all levels of the society resulting in loss of funds and compromised quality of projects. The communities noted that most of the corruption takes place during procurement of goods for projects. As a result, substandard projects or goods are delivered. This implies doing the projects over and over again, or leaving some projects incomplete. From citizens'

perspectives, procurement of goods and services should not be done by politicians only. Various stakeholders should be involved in procurement processes to ensure the goods are bought on time, with good quality and in right quantities. The communities have further called for punitive measures against the vice. According to the citizens, there is selective justice as only poor people get the deserved punishment while the rich not.

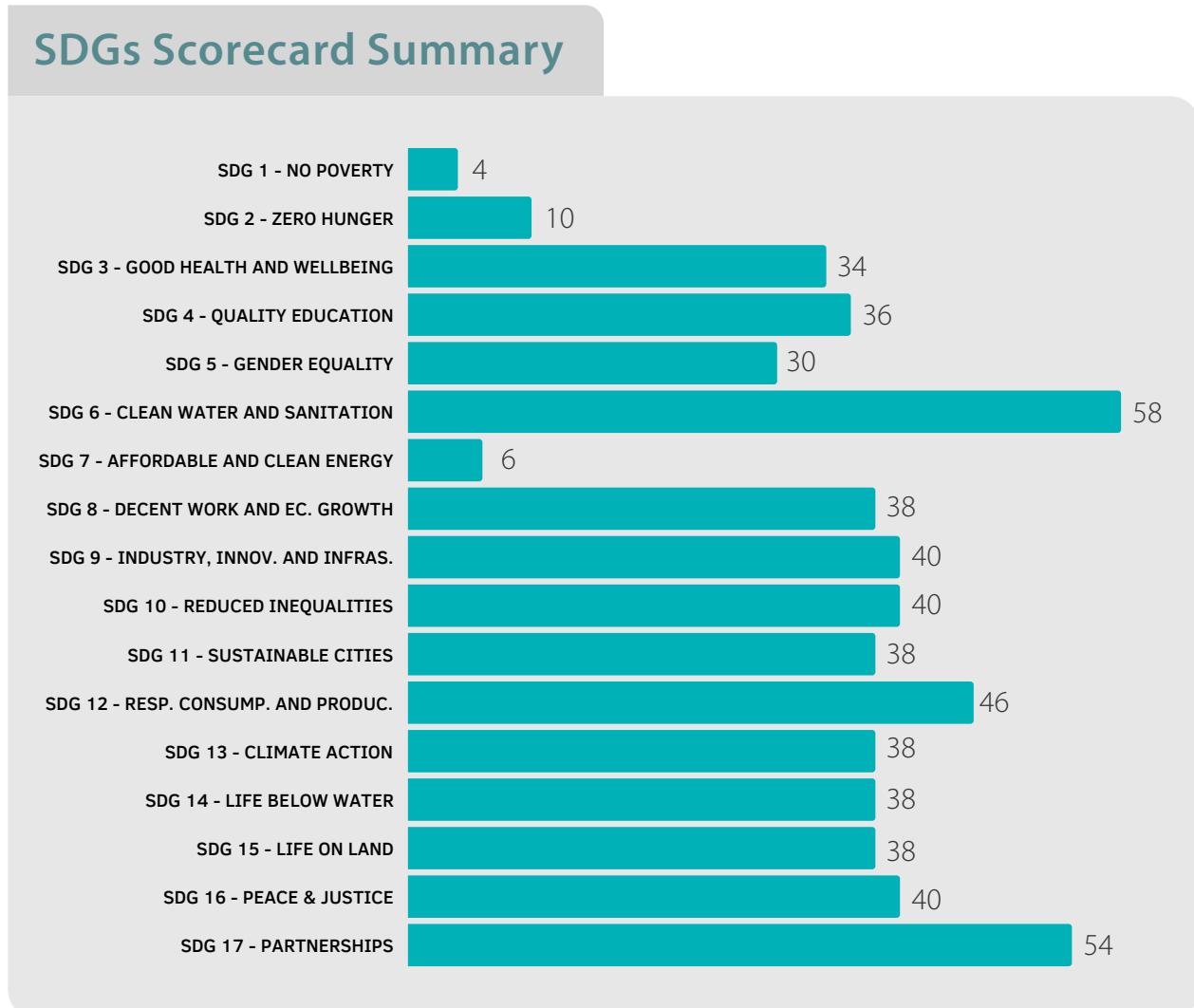
- e. Religious beliefs: Some religious beliefs abound in the communities which prohibit followers from accessing public health care such as vaccines for pandemics and medicines for illnesses. The victims are prone to infections, with some dying. Other beliefs do not promote women to take leadership positions when men are around. The communities perceive such belief as retrogressive and likely to retard achievement of the SDGs. Although measures are being taken by the community leadership to address these beliefs, citizens noted that some of these beliefs are so entrenched and complex requiring long term systematic engagement.



5.0 Detailed Information On The Scores

5.1 Summary Scorecard

This section presents scores for the 17 SDGs indicating citizen perspectives. Graph 1: SDG Summary score card below presents summarized details of the scores. The scores are averaged calculations on the detailed information that follows calculated as percentage.

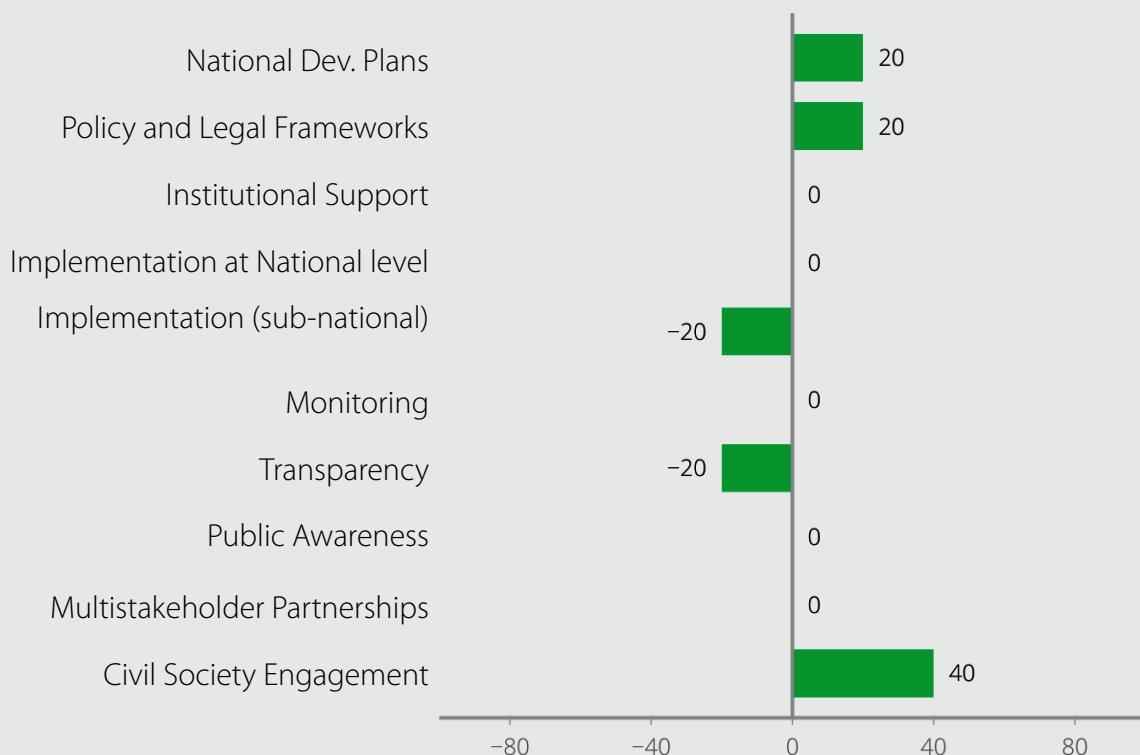


5.2 Detailed Scorecard for the SDGs



SDG 1: End Extreme Poverty In All Forms By 2030

SDG 1 - Scores





- a.** The average score of 4% signifies dissatisfaction with the level of poverty in the communities, despite funds pumped into their communities by Government, NGOs, business community and development partners. This perspective aligns with the understanding that poverty in Malawi is deep, wide spread and worsening. Citizens cited intergenerational poverty as main cause, but acknowledged that they are capable of turning the situation around if empowered. Some of the indicators of poverty as shared by citizens included unemployment among the youth, most citizens not able to afford basic necessities, far apart public infrastructure (e.g. Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation - ADMARC markets, schools, health centres etc), poor roads and high levels of corruption.
- b.** Citizens observed that the poverty situation is escalating. They presented the rising cost of living which does not match their earnings; the dwindling buying power; and the daily survival struggle as main reasons for the increasing poverty levels. The communities faulted Government for being slow in providing welfare support to citizens. For most vulnerable citizens who are benefiting from social security programmes such as Social Cash Transfer, they receive the funds after the designated period has way expired. This exposes the beneficiaries to loan shacks, who usually get the funds immediately they get the transfers. They also complained that the transfers are too little compared to their daily needs. Under such circumstances, they indicated that graduating them might not be practical just as those employed by Government and other employers do not graduate until they retire.
- c.** Communities called for universal social protection to avoid triggering more inequality and marginalisation. The rising cost of goods due to Malawi currency devaluation in May 2022 and rising fuel cost is pushing more families into vulnerability, which requires cushioning from the Government and stakeholders in form of social cash transfers, loans for small and medium enterprises and public works, among others. The communities attested that most families can no longer afford the life style they enjoyed 12 months back such as buying sugar, bread or cooking oil. Some complained that they no longer patronize tea rooms, a common trend in rural areas when the economy is good.
- d.** The poverty situation is worsening at the time Government has put in place various development plans and strategies. Some of these include the Malawi National Resilience Programme (2018-2030) aimed at breaking the cycle of food insecurity; Social Cash Transfer Programme which is unconditional programme targeting the ultra-poor and the labour constrained; and the Public Sector Reforms Programme which was formulated to address bottlenecks in service delivery. Others include the National Agriculture investment plan; National Strategy for Financial Inclusion; and annual development plans through local structures to respond to the needy of the poor e.g. District Development Plan, Area Development Plan and Village Development plan. However, some strategies are not locally owned like Malawi Social Support Programme II which Malawi Government contributes 10% of the whole programme while the rest come from donors. The Government has also developed a number of Policy documents to localize the SDGs including the Malawi Implementation Plan (MIP 1 2021-2030), the National Agriculture Policy (2017) and Malawi National Social Support Programme II (2018). Various Government agencies with clear mandate on SDG 1 include the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, National Planning Commission, Sector Wide Approaches, Sector Working Groups and Technical Working Groups. However, there is poor coordination and exchange of information among these Government Agencies which has made implementation weak.
- e.** To ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting of SDGs in Malawi, Government



Economic empowerment is key to achieving SDGs

developed a National Statistical System Strategic Plan (2020-2023) to enable evidence-based planning and timely availability of official statistics for monitoring and evaluation of MIP 1 and SDGs. However, there is no effective implementation and monitoring systems in place of all global, regional, national obligations and commitments. Public officers and relevant institutions require adequate capacity and financing to enable them monitor public programmes and their efficiency.

- f. Poor implementation of programmes has been characterized by inadequate resource allocation, weak capacity and coordination among stakeholders implementing the SDGs in Malawi. Implementation lacks inclusive, cross-cutting and multi-stakeholder approach

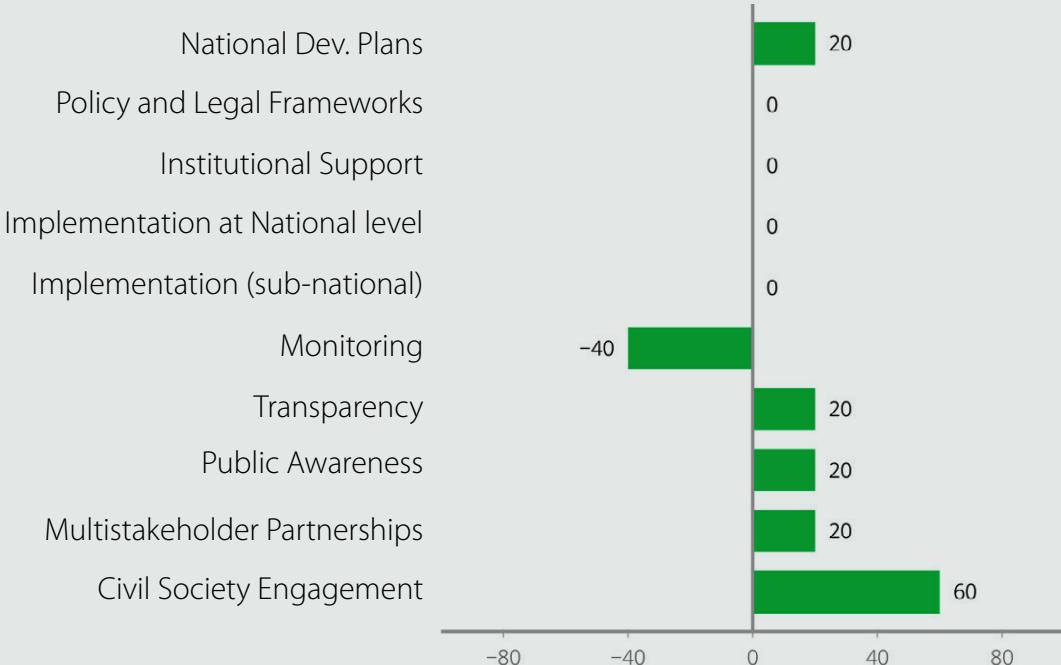
which results in poor coordination and systems. The implementation lacks transparency and accountability as there is inadequate systems and strategies to strengthen capacity of Government and implementing stakeholders to access and track SDG progress in Malawi. Hazy implementation of the Access to Information Act has contributed to this lack of transparency and accountability.

- g. Despite capacity to develop plans, strategies and policies, Malawi lacks implementation capacity to guarantee a labour force that is well educated, skilled and economically engaged. In this regard, there is need for adequate capacity for all public officers and institutions, including civil society organisations and citizens.



SDG 2: End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture

SDG 2 - Scores



a. Citizens viewed quality and access to food at 10% due to lack of tangible results on the ground. Climate change affected the harvest for 2020/21 and 2021/22 seasons, leaving more families with insufficient food. The climate change brought significant changes in weather patterns manifested through dry spells and sporadic rains. The other factor which has made citizens to experience hunger was that few vulnerable farmers benefited from the Affordable Input Programme - AIP. For those that accessed the AIP coupons, the inputs were not readily available in the depots where the commodities were being sold. Additionally, the markets where the commodities were being accessed were far away which prompted the beneficiaries to hire transport, whose operators charged exorbitantly. This made the inputs even more expensive on the part of vulnerable families. With such circumstances, citizens expressed worry that the hunger situation will aggravate. The rains started late in January 2022 and experienced a dry spell at the time crops were about to mature towards the end of March 2022. For the AIP, not all who received the AIP coupons accessed the inputs as they were mostly unavailable. Most beneficiaries were subjected to corruption peddled by the officers manning the selling points. The limiting of outlets where the farmers accessed the inputs colossally affected vulnerable subsistent farmers as they could not travel long distances to access the markets. To avoid hunger, malnutrition and stunting in the communities, the citizens requested Government to make sure adequate food is provided to the vulnerable families or at least stock ADMARC depots with enough maize during the lean period (October 2022-March 2023). Citizens further asked Government to match AIP with the selling season i.e. the period farmers sell farm produce; after noting that bringing AIP after farmers have already sold produce incapacitates them from buying.

b. Malawi has adequate National Development

Plans and Strategies for SDG 2 which include the Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP), National Extension plan and Agriculture Investment plan and projects such as the Agriculture Commercialization Project. These plans are not well popularized to the general populace and they do not solve the problem of scarcity of extension workers in rural communities, Agricultural industrialization and poor mechanization of agriculture. Other interventions include Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), Micronutrient; Adolescent Nutrition, School Health and Nutrition, Early Childhood Development, Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), Nutrition Care Support and Treatment (NCST), Prevention and Treatment of nutrition-related Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and the 2019-2023 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

c. Available legal and policy frameworks include the National Agriculture policy, National Agriculture Extension Policy and Agriculture Sector Plans are some of the frameworks in ending hunger. However, rolling out these policies is on demand-driven basis, contrary to what used to happen in the past two decades where extension officers were the ones visiting farmers in communities. Some instruments meant to improve nutrition are the National Multi-Sector Nutrition Policy 2018–2022 and Malawi National Social Support Programme II 2018-2023 (MNSSP II). However, Government's commitment towards implementing these remains implausible. These instruments are overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture, Department of Extension Services, Research Department, Livestock and Diseases Control Department and flagship projects jointly supported by donors and Government. Despite the readily available and accessible data and reports, Agriculture programmes are not well monitored by all stakeholders. So far monitoring reports have not been shared to stakeholders and to the general public



for them to understand and take action on matters that concern them.

d. Although strategies and policies abound, implementation has been lacking. Most of the frameworks are dependent on funds from donors, who mostly do not focus on local needs as stipulated in the documents. For initiatives that are largely supported by Government such as AIP, politics and corruption have crept in resulting in poor implementation. In addition, there are poor extension services as small holder farmers are not adequately assisted in the rural areas. Research findings are not well disseminated to various stakeholders and reports are not simplified for end users. On transparency and accountability in the sector, majority of stakeholders and Community members are not provided with relevant information. Operations of Agriculture Agencies such as

the Agricultural Development and Marketing Cooperation (ADMARC) are questionable as they are not usually focused on needs of the vulnerable.

e. On public awareness, the Lead Farming concept seems to be yielding positive results. However, most stakeholders including farmers, CSOs and policy makers (i.e. Members of Parliament) have less capacity to understand agriculture policies and strategies. Most of these are not even aware of the instruments in the sector. These issues impact negatively on implementation. Despite capacity to develop plans, strategies and policies, Malawi lacks implementation capacity to guarantee a labour force that is well educated, skilled and economically engaged. In this regard, there is need for adequate capacity for all public officers and institutions.

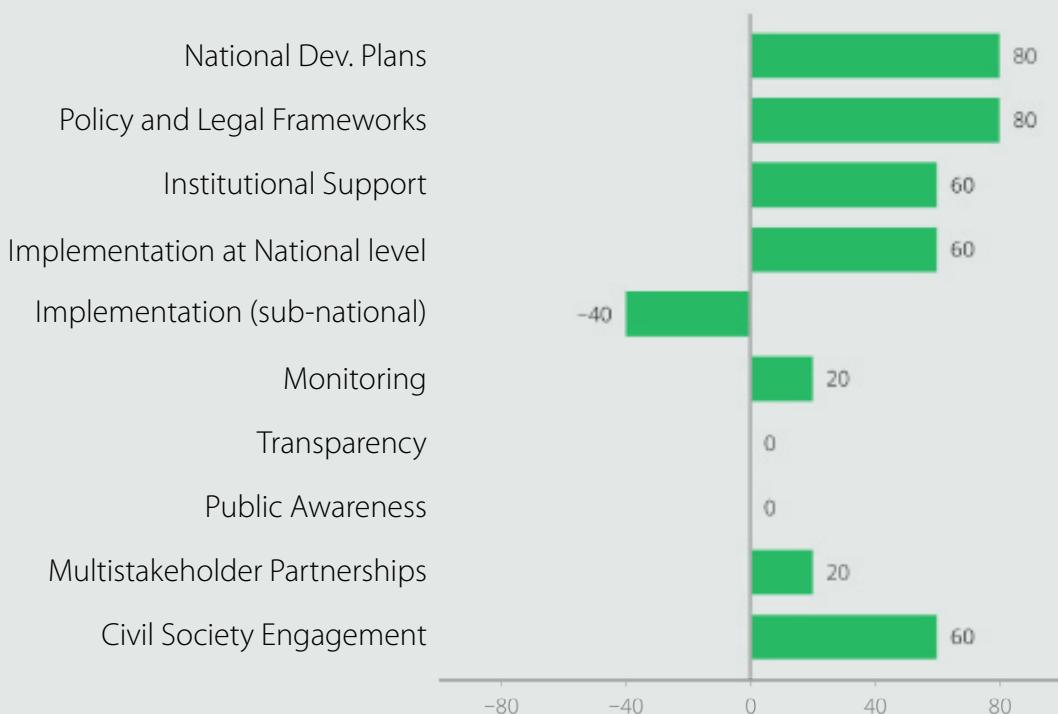


Nutrition is key to achieving SDGs.



SDG 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All at All Ages

SDG 3 - Scores





- a.** Health and wellbeing were found wanting by the citizens, hence the 34% average rating. Health facilities are sparsely distributed. There are frequent drug stock-outs, with most people advised to buy medicines from pharmacies, with majority of citizens not able to buy due to high poverty levels and competing priorities. Citizens observed limited staff in health facilities which causes fatigue to health personnel, and absence of ambulances. In other health facilities, some health personnel open and close the facilities at will i.e. open late at 9:00am and close early at 2:00pm despite long queues waiting for help. These factors have contributed to poor health care systems, especially for vulnerable mothers and children. Preventable and treatable illnesses such as influenza, malaria and diarrhea are left untreated due to long distances to clinics or exorbitant prices in pharmacies. It is even worse for pregnant mothers who struggle to access health care. Some of the women deliver on their way to the health facilities due to long distances, a situation that can be avoided if health posts with maternity wings are close-by to each community. The lack of readily available ambulances to assist communities during emergencies has far-reaching consequences on the lives of citizens. They hence asked Government to consider allocating adequate ambulances to more health facilities in the rural areas to ease transport problems when crisis strikes.
- b.** Some of the National Development Plans and strategies in the health sector are the Health Sector Strategic Plan II (HSSP II) 2017-2022, Demographic and Health Survey Reports, the National Community Health Strategy, the National Strategy for Adolescent Girls and Young Women, National HIV and AIDS Policy, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) Option B+ Policy, the Health Sector Strategic Plan II (HSSP II) 2017-2022, Demographic and Health Survey Reports Cancer Strategy, Condom Strategy, TB Strategy and Maternal Health Strategy, among others.
- However, not all these are availed to partners on the ground.
- c.** Policy and legal frameworks include the Public Health Act, HIV and AIDS Act of 2018, Mental Treatment Act of 1948 Community Health Policy, Maternal Health Policy, Reproductive Health Policy, SRHR policy and TB policy among others. However, effectiveness of these policies has been questioned in some public health instances i.e. early pregnancies, high staff turn-over, failure to recruit trained officials timely, limited human resource, drug stock outs, delayed procurement and poor infrastructure for specialized treatment. Government agencies entrusted with the sector include the Ministry of Health, Medical Council of Malawi, TB Control Program, District Health Offices and Office of the Ombudsman. Support in the sector also comes from Christian Health Association of Malawi and various private institutions which provide services on behalf of Government.
- d.** The health sector is more organized on reports and data, though limited dissemination is made to stakeholders, including the citizenry. However, stakeholder involvement in monitoring the Government programmes is a challenge. i.e. TB and Maternal Health Programme. There is need to strengthen coordination with stakeholders to ensure effective and efficient monitoring and reporting on the SDGs, more importantly on monitoring drugs and equipment in all health facilities.
- e.** Implementation of the instruments has been poor. Health structures are not adequate in rural areas; forcing citizens to travel long distances to access treatment. There is slow progress on sexual and reproductive health of Adolescents and young people as it is more of personal responsibilities and choices. Most interventions lack better monitoring and evaluation systems as well as community support and engagements in order to instill responsibility in the people. The sector is largely hit by corruption and pilferage of medical

equipment and drugs. The absence of medical insurance for majority of citizens and user fees make attainment of universal health coverage a tall order. Despite this laxity, there are other initiatives which are being implemented fruitfully especially those involving HIV, Vaccines, malaria, TB and some Cancers.

- f. Theft of already insufficient resources in the health sector and corruption in accessing of public health services especially treatment emanate from lack of transparency and accountability in the sector. Drug theft is on the increase hawked by syndicates and cartels on the supply of drugs. Further, most of the personnel in the health sector are operating

their own businesses which eventually benefit from the poor transparency mechanisms in the sector.

- g. The sector has highly trained personnel with necessary capacities, but it is let down by a huge vacancy rate to the extent that the ratios of personnel to citizens are appalling i.e. doctor-patient ratio is over 88,000 against World Health recommended 1,000 patients; while nurses-patient ratio hovers around 34 nurses for every 100,000 patients instead of WHO's recommended 500:100,000. There is also less knowledge of the universal health coverage and poor capacity building for citizens in communities on their health rights.





SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities

SDG 4 - Scores



a. Communities viewed quality and access to basic primary and secondary education as requiring more planning to achieve intended purpose, hence the 36% average rating. The number of children enrolled in the schools is enormous compared to the number of school blocks available, which makes them crowded and concentration difficult. The teacher-pupil ratio is appalling in the sense that some of the classes have more than 80 children, against the recommended 40. Due to inadequate teaching personnel, some teachers teach all subjects for a class. Only few teachers are accommodated at the school campuses, others rent far away from school which prompts them report for work late. Learning materials are not adequate for pupils / students, implying they lack access to school content that is examinable. Distance between schools is mostly wide and some pupils and students have to travel long distances to reach a school. The long distances affect girls more as they have to combine chores at home with walking long distances and studying. This makes them fatigued leading to poor concentration in class. The new Government policy that is prohibiting part time has brought positive and negative effects on the education system in primary and secondary education. The positive effect is that teachers will be induced to teach and dish out their best during the regulated time. The negative effect is that the teachers' salaries are considered low and they were using part time to meet their basic needs by charging fees, in other cases exorbitantly to the guardians in the rural communities. Discouraging part time has therefore demotivated other teachers who will eventually be forced to dedicate their time elsewhere outside their designated schools. Boys in primary and secondary schools feel they are being left behind compared to their female counterparts who are seen to be enjoying financial and material support from several well-wishers.

b. With the foregoing, quality and access to

education cannot be guaranteed. Government should hence intervene by considering raising teachers' salaries, building more school blocks and teachers' houses; consider universal secondary school; recruit more teachers; construct more girls' hostels; construct boarding schools for girls; and avail bursaries where necessary. Guardians in rural areas need awareness on the importance of sending the girl child to school. The communities observed that the girl child comes second if she has a brother in a family, regardless of her intelligence. With constrained resources, most would rather pay for the boy child at the expense of the girl child.

c. National Development Plans and Strategies for the education sector include the National Educational Sector Plan (NESP), the Revised Education Sector Implementation Plan (ESIP), Girls Education Strategies and the Child Friendly Schooling Strategy. Financing for the education sector remains inadequate. The education budget provides very little for development as over 80% represents statutory obligations. The sector was allocated 21% of the national budget (for the 2021/22 financial year) meant to address the pupil qualified teacher ratio in primary schools, pupil permanent classroom ratio, transition from primary to secondary schools, special needs education in secondary schools, youth unemployment and achieve 10,000 university enrollment capacity. These tasks are enormous but doable; hence the need to ensure attention on these is not diverted. It is also important for the Ministry to address emerging issues such as teachers' strike and COVID 19 for education institutions to remain safe for both teachers and pupils.

d.

e. Generally, Malawi has a supportive domestic policy framework for the education sector. Firstly, SDGs are aligned to MIP 1. This development blue print places education as one of the priority sectors. Secondly, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST)



developed the National Educational policy (2016) which champions specific indicators within the SDG. Thirdly, the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2017) and the National Education Standards (2016) seek to provide equitable, inclusive quality education and life-long learning for all. Fourthly, Malawi has the National Girls education Strategy (2018) which aims at ensuring that girls have equal access to quality education in Malawi. There are also good policies and regulations on the ground, which propel the sector to better performance. Some of the Government Agencies include the Ministry of education, Science and Technology; public universities and public research institutions.

f. Although Government uses the Education Standards and Service Charter (2016) guidelines to monitor progress, the process is tailor made to paint a good picture. The Joint Sector Reviews (JSR) that Government undertakes each year are not consultative enough and civil society is not involved. While Government maintains the Education Management Information System - EMIS which provides data in different areas of education (enrolment, dropout, retention, completion etc.); the information does not reflect the reality on the ground. In addition, the information is collected by the Central Government with less involvement of the local councils. The local councils' roles are limited to the validation of the data that is captured. Inspite of good policies and strategies, implementation remains the biggest challenge as evidenced by more primary schools learners still learning under the tree while some in grass thatched

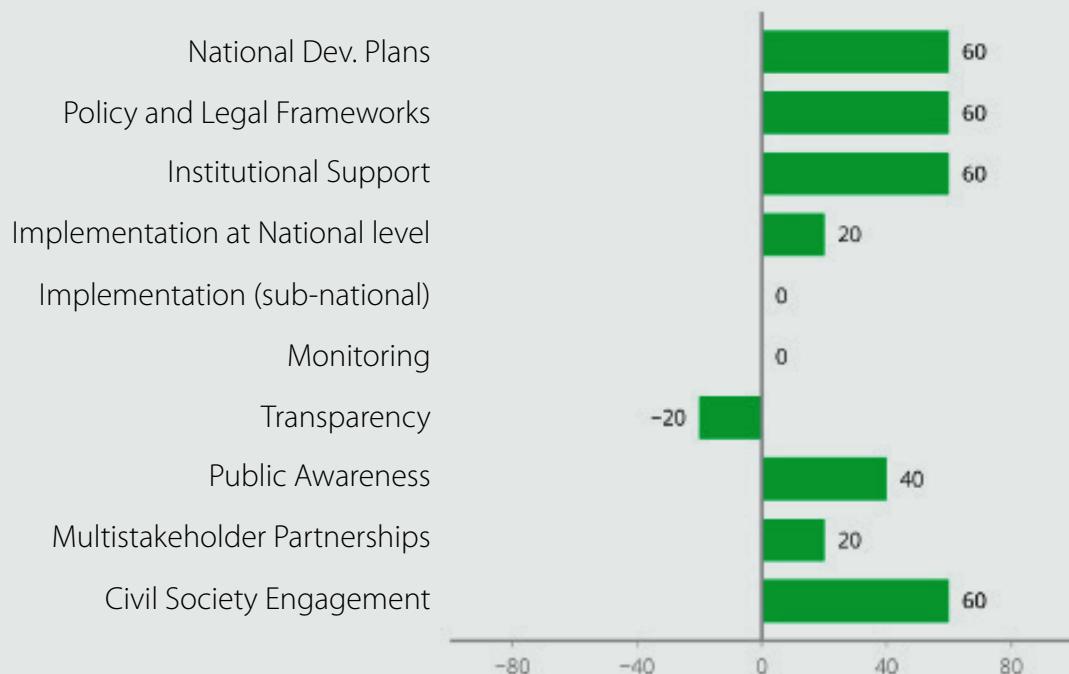
classrooms. Lack of child-friendly schools, materials and infrastructure (teacher houses and classrooms) in most schools has led to poor education standards.

- g.** The sector is hampered by poor transparency and accountability on reporting. There is little to no involvement of the civil society in the JSR and EMIS processes. MoEST rarely consults other stakeholders especially the CSO in budget formulation. Disclosure of finance or budget information does not usually happen. Further, most of recommendations by the Parliament Committee on Education are either not taken on board or are deemed irrelevant. This challenge undermines the oversight function of the Committee.
- h.** On public awareness, most of the capacity building initiatives are limited to Government agencies. It does not embrace that of non-state actors and decentralized structures such as School Management Committees (SMCs), Parents Teachers Associations (PTAs), Mother Groups, Village Development Committees (VDCs) and Area Development Committees (ADCs). Inadequate capacity is also an outcome of the weak coordination within Government agencies. Consequently, non-state actors are not fully integrated in Government's capacity building initiatives. Donors too are doing very little to enhance the capacity of non-state actors. The shifting system reflects lack of forward planning and incompetency of technocrats due to poor selection criteria to the positions (unskilled). Most of the technocrats lack analytical skills.



SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

SDG 5 - Scores





- a.** Citizens recognize gender equality as key to achieving the SDGs, but most fell short of understanding what it entails to implement it at local level (i.e. the average rating of 30%). The communities noted that participation of women (not girls) has improved as more are represented in local development structures such as the VDC and ADC. They sadly noted that the level of participation is low as most of the committees achieve less than the recommended 40% of women representation. The communities however, appreciated that gender equality is a crosscutting issue which needs to be seriously considered when formulating development plans, implementing development initiatives and conducting accountability exercises. The communities further noted that women sometimes exclude themselves from important processes such as monitoring infrastructure and other facilities; and sometimes women look down on fellow women leaders in local community structures. If this is not addressed, the communities feared that rural women and girls will continue to suffer from discrimination, with the likelihood of being left behind. The communities observed that women and girls have been pivotal to agriculture, environmental sustainability, health well-being, education of children, and water and sanitation, just to mention but a few. As such, their participation in development is critical as enshrined in a number of instruments including Gender Equality Act (2013), Principle 20 of the 1992 Rio Declaration and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
- b.** Some off the national plans and strategies in the sector include the National Gender Policy of 2015, Malawi National Social Support Programme II (MNSSP II) (2018–2023), National Strategy on Ending Child Marriages (2018–2023), National Action Plan for Women Economic Empowerment (2016–2021) and the National Plan of Action to Combat Gender- Based Violence in Malawi (2014–2020). However, Government allocates limited finances to Ministry of Gender. Being a cross cutting issue, more resources were anticipated in order to address all the gender related gaps in public institutions. Some of the

instruments in the sector include Deceased Estates Act (wills, inheritance and protection); Gender Equality Act; Gender Policy; Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act; HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Management) Act (2018); Land Act (2016); Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act (2015); Trafficking in Persons Act (2015); Disability Act (2012); Deceased Estates (Wills, Inheritance and Protection) Act (2011); Child Care, Protection and Justice Act (2010); Prevention of Domestic Violence Act (2006); Chapter XV of the Penal Code: Offences Against Morality (1930); Witchcraft Act (1911); National Social Welfare Policy Promoting Social Inclusion and Human Dignity (2018); and National Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy.

- c.** Despite availability of these instruments, not much progress is being made as evidenced by domestic violence and limited presence of women in positions of influence. As such, Ministry of Gender should demonstrate more commitment towards achieving gender related targets. The Ministry should also embrace various partners from the local to the national levels. There is need for Government to promote monitoring and evaluation and reporting of programmes.
- d.** Challenges related to implementation of the programs on gender hinge on poor commitment from Government to resource the Ministry of Gender as most of the financial support comes from donors. Consequently, most grassroots CSOs fail to effectively support the Government due to resource constraints. Linked to this is the inadequate transparency and accountability on programmes that have an aspect of promoting gender equality and equity like the Social Cash Transfers; Safety Net Fund on COVID 19 for women doing business (amounting to MK 2 billion); Economic Empowerment Fund for women and girls; and other social protection programmes that the Government is implementing. To date, there is no disability fund although the Government has been mentioning it in its plans and statements. Further, the ministry usually gives reports on the donor finances they use, not funds from mainstream Government.



SDG 6: Ensure Availability and Sustainable Management of Water and Sustainable Development

SDG 6 - Scores





- a.** Citizens recognized efforts in the sector by giving the SDG an average rating of 58%. Despite clean water and sanitation being pivotal to a healthy population, quality of and access to water in rural areas of Malawi remain a challenge. This view is triggered by limited portable water points and the prevalence of unprotected water sources in rural communities. Other communities are saturated with safe water sources while others are deserted. Key reasons mentioned for such uneven distribution of portable water sources were politicization (i.e. politicians sink boreholes in areas they got more votes from), failure to follow ADP and DDPs, and poor coordination between councils and ADCs. Such discrepancies have resulted in majority of citizens in rural areas accessing water in unprotected wells and contaminated rivers.
- b.** Citizens indicated that sanitation is still a problem, as most families do not use credible and reliable facilities such as toilets, tools for keeping stored water safe and tools for cleaning utensils. The communities hence requested Government to ensure communities have sustainable WASH facilities for healthy citizens at all levels. The National Sanitation and Hygiene Strategy (2018 -2024), the National health Sector Strategic Plan (2017- 2022) and MIP-1 are some of the plans and strategies which Government formulated to govern the water and sanitation sector. The policy and legal framework for the sector include the Water Works Act of 2005, Water Policy of 2005, Sanitation Policy of 2008 and the Water Resources Act of 2015. However, most of the instruments that regulate the management of water resources and infrastructure are deliberately flouted or hardly adhered to by various stakeholders, including Government.
- c.** Leadership for sanitation and hygiene is loosely provided for across two ministries and there has been a standoff between the two ministries for several years now which has affected sector progress. While the National Sanitation Policy clearly states who the policy holder is Ministry of Agriculture (where water responsibilities are annexed), leadership for sanitation has been a source of contention between the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture. There is need to empower District Water Officers to effectively play their gatekeeper/coordination role in the districts.
- d.** The sector should be applauded for initiatives such the joint sector review process and development of a sector improvement plan; review of sector headline indicators to ensure alignment with SDGs; and national mapping of water points. However, commitment by the line ministry to ensure that these inputs and processes yield full results seems to be lacking. There is no urgency to implement recommendations from such processes to develop the sector. Further, the sector is mired in data management challenges, which in most cases, does not match with the situation on the ground.
- e.** Poor implementation has characterised the sector. Majority of citizens use water from unprotected sources, despite sinking boreholes in most areas. Some of the boreholes are not functioning or are sparsely allocated in some areas. On sanitation, not all citizens are using latrines. Hence, they resort to open defecation. This signifies poor implementation of programmes and poor adherence to guidelines and regulation. NGOs have come in to provide the much needed support in the sector by sinking boreholes and empowering communities to practice hygiene and sanitation.
- f.** While sector coordination and accountability frameworks and structures exist, accountability processes, especially for sector performance are weak. There is limited functionality of a national coordination, monitoring and accountability system, which every stakeholder should use. There is no meaningful implementation of sanctions or rewards to ensure satisfactory performance of public officers responsible for ensuring functionality of

coordination, monitoring and accountability structures. Moreover, there is political interference in the management of utility companies, which compromises functionality and makes the utilities not accountable to the citizenry. Additionally, there is lack of access to information on the sector's performance areas.

- g.** There has been no meaningful action to raise awareness to the general public and capacitate the Directorate of Water Supply and

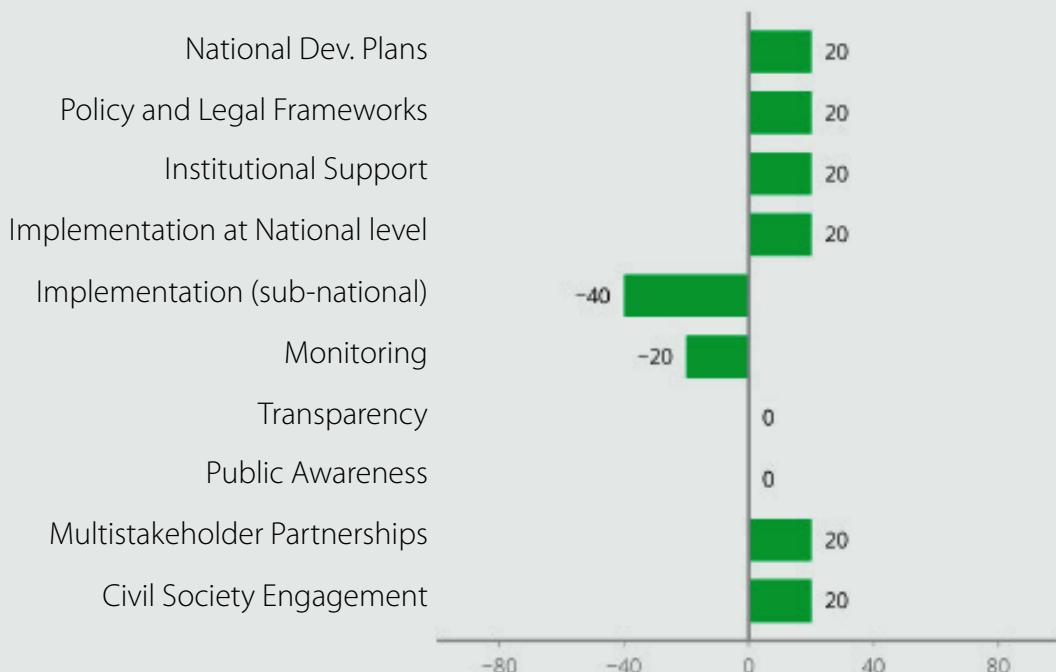
Sanitation in the (then) Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development. A window which Central Government opened for capacitating district water offices by employing Water Monitoring Assistants (WMAs) was not fully utilized, ending in blame-game as to who is responsible or mandated to recruit the WMAs. Further, there are few experts in the sector, which makes it challenging to reach out to every household.





SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, And Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

SDG 7 - Scores



- a.** More than 98% of Malawian households use biomass (wood and charcoal) for cooking, hence the average score of 6% for the SDG. The bulk of the biomass used in the communities includes wood, charcoal and agricultural waste including maize stalks. Wood was rated the biggest source of energy in the communities for cooking. The supremacy of wood energy in the communities is derived from the view that it is readily available to any household regardless of the poverty situation. The wood is sourced from family woodlots, community forests and protected forests. Households without access to these sources indicated they are able to afford it compared to other forms of energy such as electricity and solar which are deemed expensive. Charcoal is rarely used for domestic use in rural communities, instead it is sold to urban households where it is becoming a dominant source of energy due to failing electricity. The growing urbanization poses a risk to the biomass as the country continues to lose vegetative cover at an alarming rate.
- b.** Majority of the communities cited torches as the dominant source of lighting. About a decade ago, majority of the people used paraffin (oil) lamps, but the trend has changed as the fossil fuel has become expensive and is no longer readily available in the country's fuel stations. Paraffin emitted greenhouse gases which were dangerous to health and contributed immensely to climate change. The coming in of affordable torches or lanterns has provided citizens with a cheaper alternative to paraffin. The use of torches has not only offered communities with affordable lighting, but also assisted communities to access clean form of lighting, saved lives from health hazards, and reduced greenhouse emissions. It is imperative therefore, for Government of Malawi to consider removing all taxes surrounding importation and distribution of torches (whether using solar or cells) to all Malawians.
- c.** The quality and access to clean energy in the

communities is perceived to be worse. This rating emanated from the understanding that majority use biomass for energy in the households. The biomass emits smoke which has long term respiratory health effects on the citizens. The communities hailed Government for the MAREP Programme, but indicated the programme is moving slowly and might take decades for most communities to access electricity. The citizens implored Government to consider establishing district or Area Development solar power stations where the villages can tap clean energy from at a heavily subsidized rate. The citizens lamented that failure to do so will mean continued usage of biomass which is receiving pressure due to the increasing population.

- d.** Ambitious investment plans remain on paper and unfunded, for example the Malawi Renewable Energy Strategy, Sustainable energy for all, 2017- 2035 Integrated Resource Plan and Malawi Rural Electrification Programme (MAREP). Malawi has high potential for solar and new hydro technologies that can enter into the power market. However, as a major donor recipient, the energy sector has perennial challenges including non cost-effective tariffs, access to finance, and the off-grid sector strategy which discourages new investors in the sector. For policy and legal frameworks, Malawi has a National Energy Policy (2018), Water Resources Act 2013, Environmental Management Act 2016, Water Resources Act 2013, National Forestry Act 1997, Independent Power Producers (IPP) Procurement framework, and Energy Regulation Act (2004). These create a conducive legal and policy framework capable of guiding investment and services in the energy sector. However, many Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) have been signed with no serious movement towards Independent Power Production (IPP). Unfortunately, critical stakeholders in the sector are advancing challenging demands on Malawi Government towards increasing its electricity tariffs for any Independent power

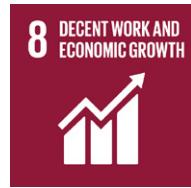


producer to make profits as at the current rate. The IPPs claim they will operate at a loss hence, less interested producers to take up the opportunity.

- e. Although there is strong investor interest and political will for Independent Power Producers (IPPs) to enter the market, ESCOM and EGENCO, MERA and MAREP remain highly controlled by Government. These entities require huge capital injections which Government has not provided resulting in the firms engaging in huge borrowings. Hence, commitment to attain the SDG is low, as interference by the political elites hampers progress in the two entities. More work needs to be done to enhance monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in the energy sector. The public is not fully aware of the current plans and progress in the sector. As such, the contribution to the sector is very limited.
- f. The incentives to attract investors and make them stay remain weak. Most Investors have stiff conditions not favourable to the people of Malawi i.e. the desire for the electricity tariffs to be increased to above MK250 per kilowatt as opposed to the current one, i.e. MK95.10 for domestic use and MK132.28 for business entities. Power Africa is actively engaged in the development of the Malawi's power sector and has signed an MOU with Government and other players to increase the generation and supply of electricity. Malawi is implementing the Malawi Rural Electrification Programme (MAREP). On the other hand; the Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority (MERA) evaluated ESCOM's tariffs and revised them upwards September 2018. The revision to an extent puts the country in a better position

for attracting investors in the sector. On transparency and accountability, The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) supported the development of the procurement framework that has increased the trust and confidence in firms working in the energy sector among the donors and other stakeholders. The involvement of Anti-Corruption Bureau in the procurement processes and other operations has increased transparency in the firms.

- g. Malawi's capacity to attain the desired goal remains farfetched. There is installed capacity of 439 Mega Watts (MW) (Hydroelectric: 384 MW and Solar: 55 MW) against a demand of over 720MW resulting in huge load shedding. The effect of Cyclone Anna in 2022 on the outage of Kapichira Hydro-Electric Power Station (128 Mega Watts) cannot be overemphasised as blackouts have become intense. Environmental degradation remains high thereby affecting investments and sustainable provision of energy resources to Malawians. There is, however good will from USAID-funded activities that complemented the \$350 million Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Malawi Compact, as well as broader U.S. Government electrification efforts. ESCOM and EGENCO remain priority entities that need to be freed from Government to promote independence and free programme implementation strategies to meet the gap. Issues of energy in terms of technology; policy; legislation; and commitments at national, regional and global levels are going through rapid changes. It will therefore be very important to continue reviewing the policy periodically to ensure it remains relevant and keeps pace with those developments at all times.



SDG 8: Promote Sustained, Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth, Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All

SDG 8 - Scores





a. The 38% average rating for the SDG is benchmarked on scarce employment opportunities for the youth and other groups. Majority of the people in the communities are constituted by the youth, but few of them are working in formal jobs. There are limited employers in the communities, a situation which does not give hope to the youth. Self-employment was considered an option, but citizens were quick to observe that most of them are not skilled. As such, it might be crucial for the Government to establish (community) technical colleges at Area Development level to ensure youth from surrounding communities get important skills for their own economic growth. Citizens also highlighted lack of institutions that provide start-up funds for businesses for free targeting youth in poverty. On getting loans for starting up businesses, the communities indicated that the demands for qualification are almost unattainable i.e. they need to have 30% (e.g. Agricultural Commercialisation –AGCOM Project) of the funds needed for the business and the high interest rates which drain the profits.

b. Main causes of unemployment and underemployment were cited as follows:

- 1.** Limited job opportunities: there are limited formal job opportunities compared to the number of youth that have at least a Malawi School Leaving Certificate of Education or a Degree. The limited job vacancies entail huge competition for the few opportunities available. With the limited informal opportunities, majority of the youth are left jobless and prone to vulnerability.
- 2.** Limited education levels: Majority of the youth in the communities are school drop-outs. Some dropped at primary school level while others at secondary due to poverty and early marriages. Majority of the affected are girls without a reliable source of income. Since most of the employers look for individuals with some level of education, most of the youth do not make

it to formal employment. In the end, the resort to informal and indecent jobs.

- 3.** Increasing population: the communities observed that Malawi's population growth is outpacing the number of jobs being created. As such, more youth are bound to be unemployed. The communities authenticated this by referring to some youth with degrees who are yet to be employed.
- 4.** Inadequate skills for majority off the youth: most youths lack technical skills for the jobs. Most employers look for several years of experience for one to be considered for a post. To ensure the youth access opportunities, the communities called for mobile skills training for the youth to gain skills for their own personal growth. They further called for extension of internship programme to the youth who attained secondary education.
- 5.** Low paying jobs: some of the employed youths are underpaid, which frustrates the other youth pursuing employment. Some employers pay less at the expense of making more profits i.e. tobacco farmers, hospitality industry, security institutions etc. Such low salaries make the youth to live on hand-to-mouth, hampering their dreams to succeed.
- c.** National development plans and strategies in the sector include the Malawi Decent Work Country Programme, a mandatory Pensions Act, Decent Work Monitoring and Evaluation plans, the Malawi Investment Forum (MIF), Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund, National Economic Empowerment Fund (NEEF), and Industrial Research and Technology Development Centre. Malawi has conducive labour laws, notably the National Employment and Labour Policy launched in 2018, National Gender Policy, Workers Compensation Act (2000), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Workplace Policy and the Progressive Employment Act amended 2010. The Ministry

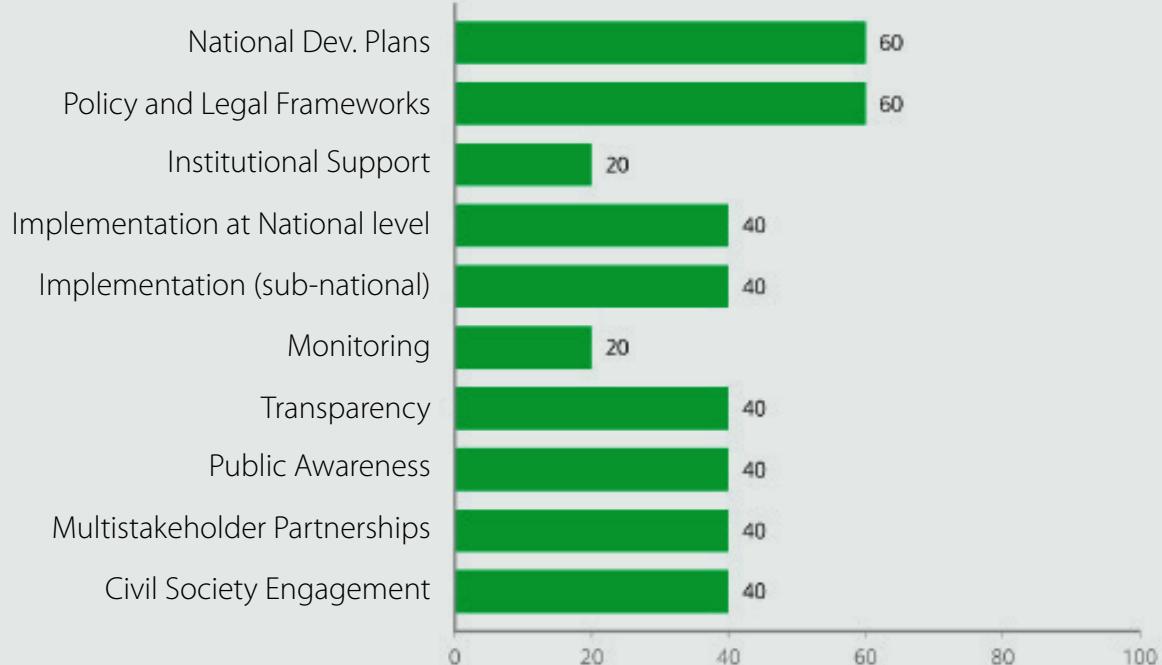
- of Labour takes charge in providing policy direction for attaining SDG 8. Malawi also has Industrial Relations Court that handles many disputes related to employment and labour, Workers compensation Directorate under the Ministry of Labour, Malawi Economic Planning and Development, Malawi Investment Promotion Center – MITC and Department of Value Addition.
- d.** On monitoring, evaluation and reporting, the Ministry of Labour, employers and trade unions have not effectively built the capacity of stakeholders on SDG 8. Global economic trends coupled with COVID 19 pandemic have reduced the support from developed countries to build the capacity of institutions, workforce and stakeholders. Inadequate staffing at all levels slows the delivery of services for the promotion of decent work and full employment. Likewise, youth capacitation programmes are riddled with political interference. These programmes are either selective or restrictive such that not all youth can access the services let alone finances to enhance capacities. As such, there is a need for capacity building and a stronger human capital policy to support technological innovation and entrepreneurship amongst employers.

e. Nevertheless, some jobs are yet to be decent and employee rights at work are not fully recognized in some workplaces. Effort to implement labour inspections is not adequately executed. There are numerous work place related injuries due to unsafe working environments. The afflicted workers do not get relief in time due to delays in accessing justice in the courts. Access to health remains a challenge as there is no universal health coverage. Poor coordination among agencies and departments result in increased lawsuits by workers against Government entities. Moreover, there is inadequate support to promote employment creation, and to reduce dependence on donors for economic support. The Ministry of Labour is trying to share programmatic areas of the agenda, but is restrained by scarcity of resource. Social dialogue forums used to be intense because of donor support. However, since Norway withdrew its financial support, interactions between the social partners remain ad hoc. As a result, it takes the Unions or Employers to issue statements of condemnations on matters affecting labour for Government to respond as opposed to round table, open and transparent sessions which used to take place.



SDG 9: Build Resilient Infrastructure, Promote Inclusive and Sustainable Industrialization and Foster Innovation

SDG 9 - Scores



- a.** Citizens are not impressed with the quality and access of majority of the roads and infrastructure in the country. As such, they gave the SDG an average rating of 40%. The communities recognized road infrastructure as a fundamental determinant of economic growth as they rely on roads to access markets and other public services such as health facilities and educational institutions among others. The citizens indicated that there are other communities which are not accessible by motor vehicles, except for bikes. People living in such areas spend almost whole day to access services at district councils. Additionally, most roads have not been upgraded, making them impassable during the rainy season. There are also several roads without bridges. Under such, citizens, including children fail to access public services.
- b.** Due to poor road network (generally unpaved), transportation is expensive. There are private transport operators who charge exorbitantly for trading on bad roads. The preponderance of motor bikes in most rural communities has assisted in cushioning the costs. However, the costs are still exorbitant for hard to reach areas, entailing other citizens cannot access important public services.
- c.** To address some of the infrastructural challenges, Malawi launched the Financial Sector Development Strategy II (2017-2022) which increases the agricultural productivity and enhances expansion of small, medium and micro enterprises. This will eventually create employment, increase household income and consumption. MIP-1 has provisions to transform the country in the long and medium terms. These include provisions on infrastructure development and industrialization. Big chunk of the budget allocation to the sector goes to roads construction neglecting other infrastructure initiatives. This means less allocation to the SDGs in favour of other imminent issues requiring redress. Access to loans is restrictive, starting from collaterals, interest and other conditions, which make local investors fail to boost their industries and delivery of good quality infrastructure projects. Introduction of SMEs policy which caters for registration of companies; Malawi 2063 Agenda; mechanisms for increasing access to safe, affordable and sustainable transport and ICT; and the National Development Planning Framework are expected to contribute towards attaining SDG 9.
- d.** The National Planning Commission (NPC), Ministry of Works and Transport, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development are in the forefront championing this SDG. There are also supporting agencies such as The Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET) Authority (TEVETA), Roads Authority, City Councils, town councils, district councils, Malawi Housing Corporation and Ministry of Lands. Outside these agencies, ruling political manifestos guide infrastructural programmes.
- e.** On infrastructure or industrialization there is little or no monitoring. The public needs to know how much money is collected by councils and how it is used. The same applies to all infrastructural projects. There is need to deliberately monitor factors that are hindering growth in the sector i.e. access to finance and access to markets. It is also imperative to develop frameworks that would assist in policing and regulating the sector. Such lack of frameworks has resulted in mushrooming of projects not approved by relevant authorities. The relevant officers move in too late to restore order in the sector, which is unfair to the public. The sector further needs robust research, which could contribute to monitoring parameters.
- f.** Most of the country's infrastructural programmes remain sub-standard. Most companies are closing down; an indication that the country needs to improve on taxation policies and investment. Further, most manufacturing companies are not owned by



indigenous Malawians, which results in externalizing profits. Some campaigns to promote Malawian goods have not fully picked up due to poor quality of the products. Additionally, there is no strategy to empower Malawians on industrialization or innovation. Contracts with smaller amounts are given to indigenous Malawians while most with big sums are given to foreigners. In this regard, Government should ensure such foreign institutions partner with local companies. Corruption has marred the infrastructural sector. Therefore, PPDA and ACB need to address all concerns for the country to make progress on the SDG.

- g.** There is little or no transparency and accountability as plans in districts and cities are largely known by public officials only. Continued keeping of plans under wraps is not consistent with modern development as it excludes citizens from participating. Due to such secrecy, the sector is associated with shady deals which result in substandard work. Generally, it is difficult to access information from Government especially on budgets on infrastructure and industrialization despite having Access to Information Law.



Citizens are required to have improved and sustainable dwelling units by 2030.



SDG 10: Reduce Inequalities Within and Among Countries

SDG 10 - Scores





- a.** The communities observed that the level of inequality between the rich and the poor is worsening, particularly among women and girls, hence the 40% average rating for the SDG. They attributed the situation to poor economic governance which favours the rich; less emphasis on education in rural areas; the rising cost of producing maize, the staple food; and lack of manufacturing companies at district level. According to the communities, closing the gap is therefore an impossible task, but not insurmountable if Government comes to the rescue of the most vulnerable citizens. The citizens exemplified their view that the rich in their communities keep getting richer while the poor continue to struggle.
- b.** To reverse this trajectory, the citizens suggested empowerment to enable them demand equal rights in accessing social and economic services. Curbing the disparities would further involve providing equal opportunities to citizens, particularly women, the most vulnerable groups in villages in all sectors including education and employment / businesses. They noted that modernizing agriculture through mechanization; increasing livestock production; and reduction in population growth would contribute significantly towards closing inequalities.
- c.** While indicating that there is no marginalization based on age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, economic or other status in the communities, it was noted that institutions that give out loans favoured women more than men on the basis that the latter default. Additionally, refugees plying trade in the communities are not considered for economic opportunities that come to their areas as they are not considered permanent.
- d.** To address the foregoing challenges, Government is implementing the National Social Support Programme II (2018-2023) which has seen the expansion of social support provision in the country with mechanism for reducing inequalities. Other sector specific interventions on gender, disability and promoting girls' education have assisted in making strides in the sector. The Constitution of Malawi (including Bill of Rights), Penal Code and sector specific instruments such as gender aim at ending inequality among Malawians. However, there are still gaps to protect the poor from being exploited. If the country is to achieve equality, policy and legal frameworks should be developed to ensure those left behind due to such inequalities are targeted. Some of the Government entities include Ministry of Finance Economic Planning and Development; Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare; and Ministry of Foreign Affairs which works on strengthening bilateral relations for reduced inequalities among countries.
- e.** Socially, Malawi has increased efforts towards the elimination of violence at all levels more especially violence against women and children through interventions such as the Spotlight Initiative where girls and women that are at risk of violence are able to access essential services including sexual reproductive health. However, most institutions lack capacity to monitor i.e. National Initiative for Civic Education – NICE, Ministry of Civic Education and district councils. The National Statistical Office (NSO) needs further empowerment on collecting data around inequality to enable the country draw lessons and implement programmes towards reversing inequality. So far, most of these monitoring initiatives are sponsored by bilateral / multilateral institutions.
- f.** Social Support programmes such as Social Cash Transfer, Public Works Programme, School Feeding programme and Village Savings and Loans are aimed at reducing inequality. However, these initiatives are only reaching out to 10% of the population. With over 20% living in extreme poverty, not all are targeted with the interventions. Additionally, the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and the

increasing cases of domestic violence allude to the indication that minimal positive results are being yielded from the initiatives stakeholders are implementing. Public services which are accessed by poor people are not of good standard, which prompts Ministers, Members of Parliament and high ranking civil servants access their services from private institutions. As such, they care less on the status of public institutions providing services in some sectors i.e. education and health etc. There is also a very huge gap in promoting rights of a boy child. The full focus in this sector is on feminist point of view making the boy child suffer in silence. Thus, there are no equal rights for boys and girls. Much of economic information which is very important to the local people is

not disclosed despite existence of the Access to Information Law. However, there is more information on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, which has resulted in successfully tracking perpetrators of domestic violence.

- g.** Heads of State and Government agreed to combat inequality by empowering citizens and promoting basic fundamentals of human rights. However, there is limited effort in the sector in Malawi. Citizens have to be empowered to demand their rights in all sectors. All institutions in the sector require capacity building to reverse the inequality.

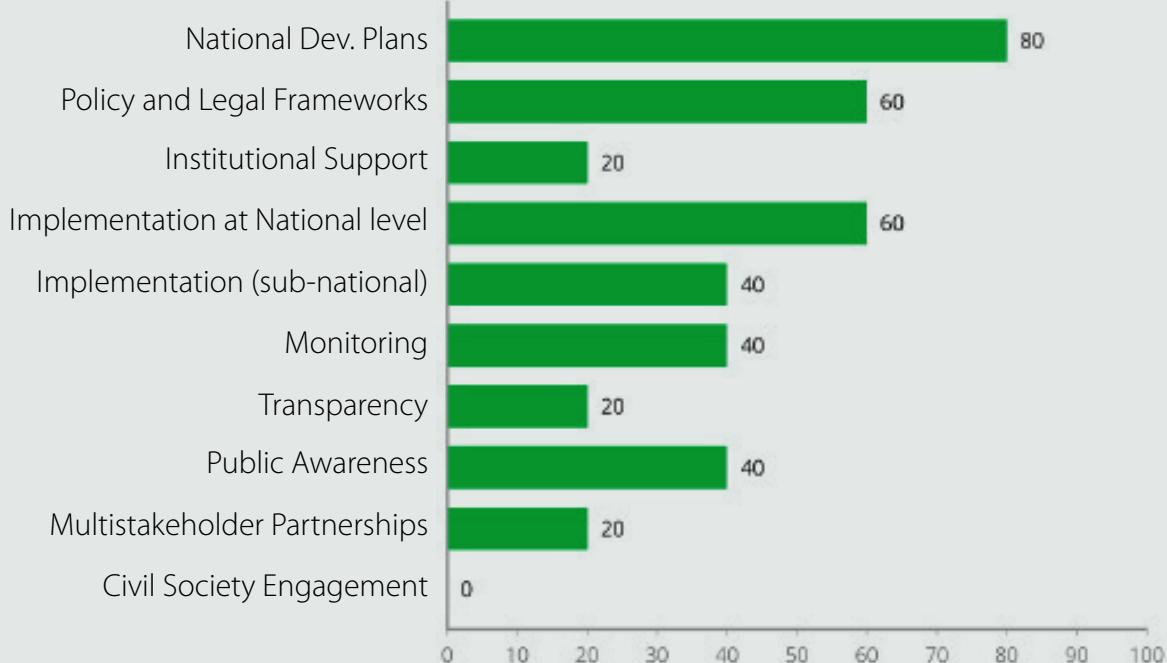


Government and stakeholders should improve quality of education.



SDG 11: Make Cities and Human Settlements Inclusive, Safe, Resilient and Sustainable

SDG 11 - Scores



- a.** The level of adequate, safe and affordable housing in rural communities is generally worse as majority of houses are not built using cement and roofed with iron. Most citizens cannot afford a decent house. Instead, they live in substandard homes or village huts. The walls are built using mud bricks or clay while the roofs are thatched with grass. With such construction materials, the dwelling units require frequent servicing or repairs. Unfortunately, grass is becoming scarce, requiring families to use less grass than required on the roofs. This means the roofs become leaky during the rainy season. Those who can afford use plastic sheets to minimize the leaking. The floors are made of clay which easily disintegrates attracting frequent application of new clay. During the rainy season, the floors become damp. Since the walls and floors are not cemented, insects such as ants and termites cause havoc to inhabitants by bringing discomfort and transmitting diseases. It was based on these issues that the citizens gave this SDG an average rating of 38%.
- b.** While construction of the houses is mostly done by men, the general cleanliness of the houses rests with women and girls. This work is cumbersome, yet men and boys refrain from taking care of the homestead. With the increasing population, land has become scarce, so are communal places where citizens can cut grass for roofing. With these challenges, the citizens implored Government to embark on constructing decent houses, starting with child headed and female headed households. The communities indicated that the current level of rural housing is prone to disasters and poses a huge risk to survival of citizens, particularly during the rainy season. The District Councils do not monitor construction of these dwelling units. As such, the houses are susceptible to disasters during the rainy season. Previous efforts on community housing such as Mudzi Transformation and Malata-Cement Subsidy were commended, but criticized that few people were targeted and choice of beneficiaries was shrouded in politics.
- c.** The sector has several players guided by their own plans and strategies. The National Urban Policy (2019), which seeks to create an enabling environment for the attainment of sustainable urbanization; advances good strategies, which once implemented, would address some of the major challenges associated with urban development and management in the country. However, due to poor coordination, the players in the sector compete. Despite recognising human settlement and physical planning as key focus areas in local instruments, positive results are hard to come by as Government agencies are not working as a team. The sector is self-sustaining as citizens make some proceeds from land sells. However, Government should allocate adequate funds to urban planning and monitoring to enable the agencies implement instruments in the sector. Such Government support would assist in sanitizing the sector resulting in improved construction across the country.
- d.** Existing instruments for district, town, municipality and city planning promote partnerships between and among Government, the private sector, research organization's and the community to build resilient and urban structures. These are expected to boost capability of urban communities to absorb the migration rate from rural areas to urban centres. Malawi has Department of Urban Development within the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development which provides Policy guidance and institutional framework for urban development in the country. Others are City Councils, Municipal Councils, District Councils and Malawi Housing Corporation.
- e.** Although only 15% of Malawi's total population live in urban areas and cities, there are so many problems in cities resulting from poor planning. Of late, perennial flash floods have hit cities of Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu due to compromised construction. Under



the watch of cities, citizens have constructed along river banks and hilly areas. If Government agencies were monitoring such construction, construction of such houses could not have taken place. Such lack of monitoring emanates from lack of efforts to construct resilient and sustainable dwelling units. The evidence of numerous land wrangles is a clear testimony that Government agencies have lost control of making urban centres sustainable. Some of the wrangles are even perpetrated by employees of relevant Government agencies. Eventually, there is no reporting to the general public on the efforts being done by the Government agencies. Such slackness has led to citizens paying twice for the land they procured privately from individuals, and then to the Government agencies. Evidence of land corruption attests to the view of relaxed or lack of stringent rules that govern land in Malawi. These land settlement cartels need to be banished if Malawi is to make progress on SDG 11. The 2022 land laws amendments are expected to clean up the sector. More sensitization is required on the amendments to enable citizens benefit.

- f.** Implementation of the existing human settlement plans across Government agencies does not give hope to the sector. Buildings are mushrooming all over the place under the watch of regulatory agencies. They move in so late after citizens have already haphazardly constructed. This affects road network as well as electricity and water plans. The coming in of private institutions, which acquire land to sell to people, has made urban planning worse. It may be challenging to stop private entities from planting manufacturing companies in these dwelling units, which might expose citizens to some hazards. With an annual growth rate of 3.8% for urbanization, well planned cities or towns are required. Construction of ware houses all over the place is a result of poor planning. Some of these structures are owned by foreigners who keep acquiring land dubiously with support from public officers. In

this regard, land laws should be reviewed to protect land from being grabbed by foreigners. Speedy implementation of the National Urban Policy is required to address some of these concerns.

- g.** There is limited transparency and accountability in the allocation of land and monitoring of projects. As a result, cities are sodden with substandard buildings that cannot withstand natural disasters. If citizens follow the right procedure to procure land from the Government agencies, they wait for a long time in excess of 10-20 years before they are formally given land, or they never receive feedback on what has happened with their application. This is caused by corruption. Those that bribe or those that have positions of influence in society get the land faster, at the expense of prudent land applicants.
- h.** All Government agencies are not doing the best for the country on making cities or towns inclusive. This is a clear sign that they lack capacity to seriously implement the instruments at their disposal. There are cases where Government agencies disagree on who should take lead. For example, the Lilongwe Sanitation Project Saga where Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Sanitation disagreed on which ministry should take the project. An opportunity has arisen through the Malawi 2063. The National Planning Commission should move towards building capacity of Government agencies and traditional / block leaders in the sector for them to pursue instruments in the sector. This will curb construction of sub-standard structures and development of unplanned settlements governed by traditional or block leaders. These institutions should plan in advance and act faster than they do i.e. awaiting citizens to settle first before they act.



SDG 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Productive Pattern

SDG 12 - Scores



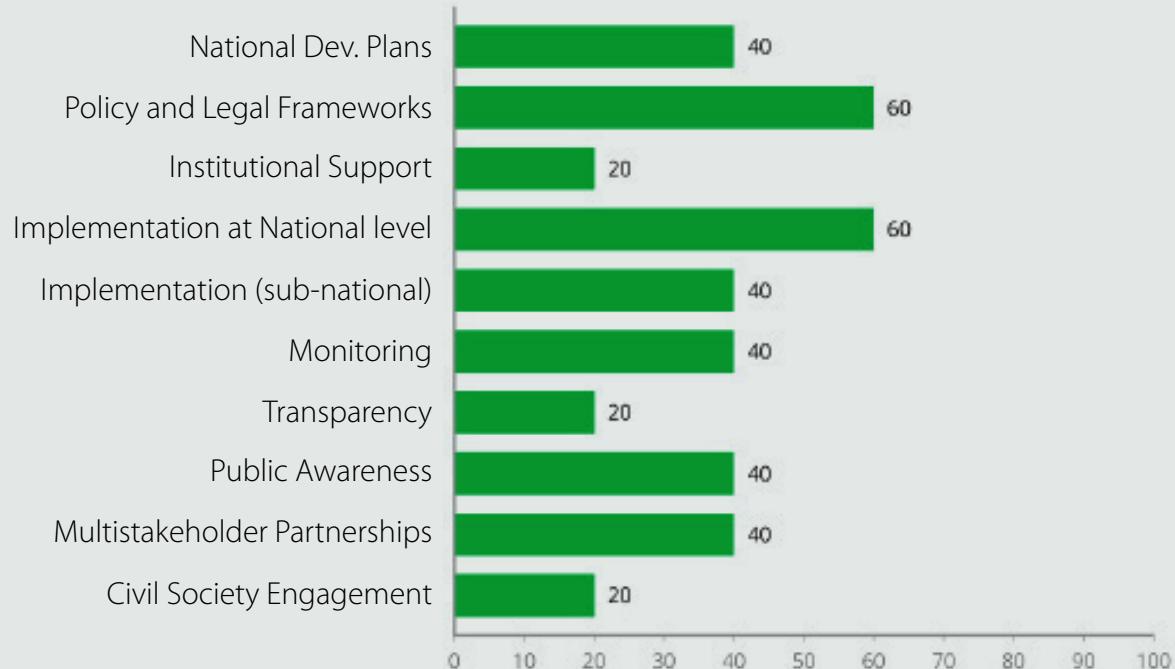


- a.** Malawi developed the National Resilience Strategy to ensure sustainable consumption; Buy Malawi Strategy to encourage production and consumption of locally produced goods and services; and Value Addition Strategy to promote value addition for both traditional and non-traditional crops; which improved an average rating of 46% for the SDG. However, the quality of the products is not very good, which induces people to buy items produced in other countries. The fees collected by the institutions in the sector might not be adequate to meet all their obligations. Further, Government does not invest much in the sector amidst various priorities. In this regard, Government should deliberately empower agencies in the sector with adequate funds to enable them carry out their mandates.
- b.** Some of the instruments include Malawi 2063, Framework on Sustainable Consumption, National Forestry Policy and Forestry Act 1997. Although such instruments exist, there is need to review them to accommodate new challenges engulfing the sector i.e. Cannabis production and consumption. Notable agencies include Department of Forestry, National Planning Commission, Department of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Malawi Bureau of Standards and Competition for Fair Trading Commission. These institutions contribute to responsible consumption and production. However, some of their activities are tied to urban areas. They need to reach out to all communities to protect Malawians from consuming items brought into the country using unchartered routes. They further need to focus on waste and sanitation marketing, collection and recycling.
- c.** There is no clear coordinated approach to monitoring, evaluation and reporting on developed strategies. Data remains low or unavailable making reporting for the SDG difficult. Government agencies need to develop monitoring indicators for consumption and production patterns to inform future productivity and consumption.
- d.** Malawi is poorly implementing a 10 year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production, which if implemented properly, could have improved waste management, improved resource efficiency and encouraged sustainable consumption and production patterns. Although Malawi is supposed to increase demand for recycled goods and waste through investment in waste-to-energy projects, the opposite is true as the country's 90% of waste is not recycled. Perhaps more policies and strategies are required to address issue-specific components of the sector.
- e.** The sector is largely operating in secrecy. Citizens need information on how they are affected by production and consumption patterns and how they can participate in controlling the same. The institutions entrusted with this agenda need to have their capacity built for them to reach out to all citizens with important messages on production and consumption. Indicators for the SDG need to be internalized by reviewing relevant instruments governing the sector to enable the country report on progress.
- f.** There is limited capacity in Government agencies to address production and consumption. The country depends much on subsidies and free products, hence, when the prices of very important items like fertilizer get hiked the production in agriculture sector goes down. More capacity is needed in waste management, which has remained a big challenge for most of the urban centers in the country. Duty bearers in the sector need to be capacitated with recycling equipment. Additionally, citizens need capacity on how they can manage waste in their localities. The sector further requires coordination and collaboration to reach a production and consumption balance.



SDG 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and Its Impact

SDG 13 - Scores





- a.** Citizens gave an average rating of 38% for the SDG. All citizens indicated that they have been affected by climate change related hazards and natural disasters. The level of being affected was rated worse. The communities cited wanton cutting down of trees, land degradation due to the growing population and poor farming practices as key in poor performance for the sector. These practices have affected Malawi's rain-fed agriculture. Several rivers in the communities are drying early than they used to as a result of soil erosion, with the flow of water getting slower and slower due to heavy siltation. People fear this will push groundwater downwards and WASH initiatives might be affected in the near future.
- b.** With almost all citizens in the communities practicing subsistence agriculture, they have experienced significant changes in weather patterns which have affected crop yield. Some of the changes are associated with heavy down pours accompanied by strong winds and flash floods; start and length of growing season; and regular occurrence of climate-induced-disasters such as flooding along rivers and in areas where flooding would normally never occur. The communities also shared experiences on crop pest outbreaks such as stalk borer, army worms and locusts; and disease outbreaks on both maize and bananas among others, which affect crop yield. Weather patterns have become unpredictable to the communities which affects their farming plans.
- c.** Citizens acknowledged their role in mitigating climate change effects. Some of the mitigation measures mentioned included diversification of crops; raising livestock to broaden sources of income and improving nutrition at household level; planting more trees every year at household and community levels; avoiding cultivation along river banks; and organising agricultural field or open days where farmers can learn from each other on crops or livestock that are performing better. The communities encouraged Government to continue with tree planting initiatives, drilling boreholes, giving poor households subsidized inputs and giving maize to disaster prone areas to cushion the effects.
- d.** Some of the policies and strategies that guide implementation of the SDG include the National Environment and Climate Change Communication Strategy (2012); Malawi's Climate Change Learning Strategy (2012); National Climate Change Investment Plan (2014); National Adaptation Programmes of Action (2015); Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (2015); and National Adaptation Plans (being developed), National Disaster Risk Financing Strategy, establishment of the National Climate Change Management Fund and National Resilience Strategy 2018–2030. Malawi also developed the National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (DRM, 2016) in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in June 2015. However, formulation of most strategies in the sector has been supported by donors, which may have a bearing on their implementation. Development partners and civil society have been key financiers of interventions in the sector. It is high time Government started taking the sector seriously by providing adequate funds which can be supplemented by what donors and civil society give. The funds that District Forestry Officers get for environment and climate change are not only meager, but also unrealistic. Government needs to show serious commitment towards environment and climate change beyond paying salaries for officers in its agencies.
- e.** Government formulated the Environmental Management Act (2017); National Climate Change Management Policy (2016); National Disaster Risk Management Policy (2015) and National Environmental Policy (2004). These have been guiding the nation in protecting the environment and reversing effects of climate change. However, the Government still relies on the old Disaster Relief Act of

1999 to manage disasters including climate related disasters which advocates for reactive approaches of response rather than proactive approaches of risk management. The Government has also not developed a climate change management act despite adopting a climate change policy in 2016. Key Government agencies include Department of Climate Change and Metrological Services (DCCMS), Environmental Affairs Department, Malawi Environmental Protection Authority and Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA).

- f.** Some improvements have been noted as Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services has been providing climatic change information such as effects and how they are impacting sectors i.e. how it is affecting agribusiness, agricultural production and households. Additionally, Malawi is among few countries in Southern Africa producing reports in line with the Sendai Framework with tangible figures attached. Still, there is need to coordinate activities in the sector for improved monitoring. Harmonized reporting will ensure all data is captured.
- g.** On implementation, the agencies have concentrated more on the prevention of degradation of the environment in districts, which has left the population prone to effects of climate change. Mitigation measures have not been seriously internalized. A good example is the tree planting season, where more trees are planted, but looking after them is a challenge. Other failed strategies include the Polluter Pays Principle, which has faced implementation hiccups. The polluters are still polluting rivers and other water bodies without sanctions. Failure to operationalize the National Climate Change Management Fund by capitalizing it using the established carbon levy is compounding the problem of low level

of resourcing from national budget towards implementation of crucial environment and climate change programmes aimed at reducing emissions and supporting adaptation. When disasters strike, citizens see more of a reactive approach rather than a proactive one. There is need for serious localization of early warning systems to avoid loss of life and property. Poor implementation of initiatives in the sector can also be attributed to lack of proper coordination, collaboration and networking among players in the sector. The agencies require an entity to properly guide them on actions in the sector, including those done by civil society and private sector. The saga of thin plastic bags is still raging on. Presence of thin plastics on the market denotes Government failure to impose a thin plastic ban. As companies continue manufacturing the thin plastics, extreme damage is being caused to the environment.

- h.** There is poor transparency and accountability in the sector. The country needs to adhere to assessment findings before embarking on projects that are likely to impact on climate change. An example is that of Kayerekera mining, which revealed that the project was not viable due to its environmental impact; but Government went ahead in favour of the money it foresaw. Everything associated with the environment should be clear to all stakeholders, including citizens for them to take appropriate actions in a responsible manner.
- i.** Capacity building in areas of climate change adaptation, risk assessment, project prioritization and monitoring and evaluation, which reduce capacity challenges being faced at the local government level, has improved in recent years. However, citizens deserve more capacity building on Climate Change mitigation, adaptation and resilience as they face the effects.



SDG 14: Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resource for Sustainable Development

SDG 14 - Scores

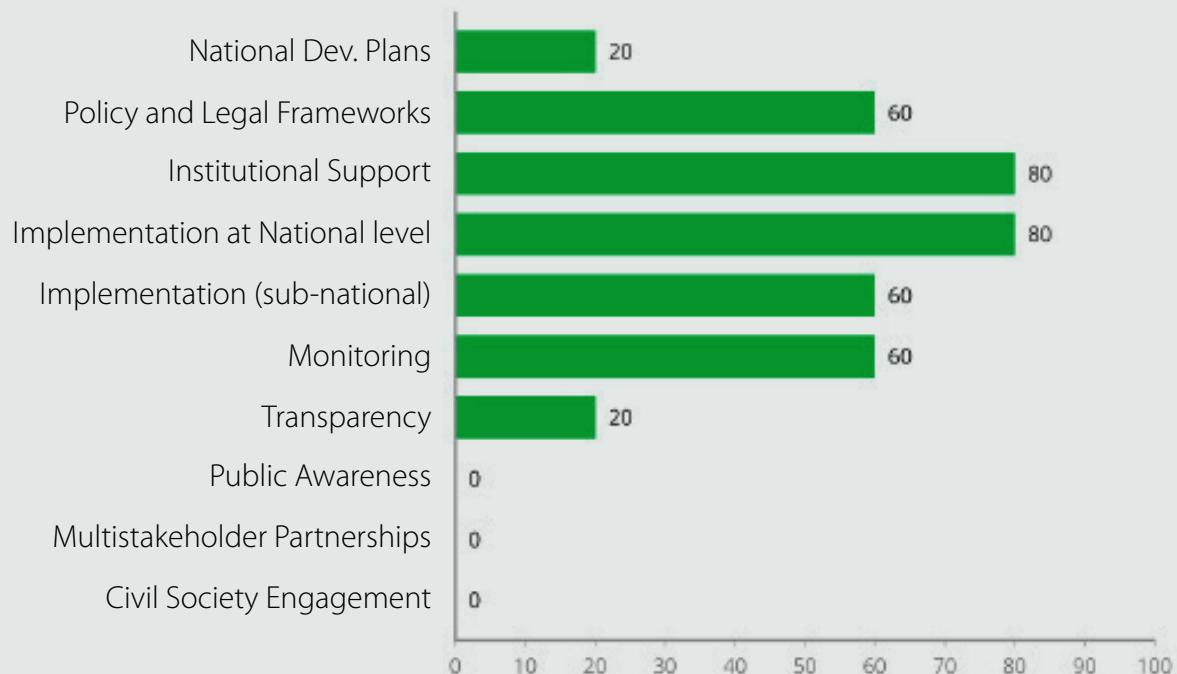


- a. Malawi has the National Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Agenda to guide local and international researchers, the National Fisheries, Aquaculture Communications Strategy to help guide the spread of messages to fishers, and the Participatory Fisheries Management Sub-Policy which promotes fisheries, training, enforcement and riverine and floodplains management. Malawi has also adopted the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan II (NBSAP II), in response to management of biodiversity and/or environment. Among others, strategies and plans in NBSAP II address the management of marine resources for sustainable development. Malawi also developed the National Resilience Strategy: Breaking the Cycle of Food Insecurity of 2018, which has components that focus on expansion of fisheries for commercial purposes. Insufficient budget allocation to the sector makes it difficult to implement programmes efficiently. Government agencies are not committed to sharing challenges which can trigger partners to contribute funds towards the plight, hence the average rating of 38% for the SDG.
- b. SDG 14 is domesticated through the MIP-1, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy (2016), Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (1997) and Water Resources Law (1969). Key agencies include Department of Fisheries under Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development and Department of Marine. Academic institutions such as the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources have further taken a leading role in the sector as it has launched The Africa Excellence in Aquaculture and Fisheries Science Centre. Other institutions include the World Fish Centre, which provide input into fish production and protection of their habitat. Other private institutions such as MALDECO Fisheries under Press Corporation have come in to support the sector. However, there is not much on protecting the water sources such as rivers and lakes. There is rapid siltation which has led to seasonal drying of rivers and lakes e.g. Lake Chilwa. This implies the lakes are becoming shallower and shallower each rainy season.
- c. There is minimal monitoring, evaluation and reporting on marine resources, related research, stories and other important information. Fisheries Department lacks enough resources to monitor activities carried out in Malawi's lakes. There is limited attention to monitoring unnecessary deposits into the national waters, to the extent that dead fish were seen floating on the lake.
- d. On implementation, Lake Malawi is being polluted with plastics and other insoluble substances, which tarnish the image of the Lake Malawi as a World Heritage and tourism attraction site. Worse still, it affects marine life, resulting in reduction of forex earnings through tourism and low production of fish respectively. Had it been the laws and policies were adhered to, the effect of human activity on the lake could have been minimal. Department of Fisheries disseminates regulations through meetings and radios. However, there is high non-compliance of rules and regulations by fishers and lake users. There is inadequate and ineffective coordination among relevant players and departments in the sector such as the Department of Police Service (Marine), Department of Forestry, Department of Fisheries and Beach village Committees.
- e. Lack of systems and strategies to track progress in the implementation of SDG14 in Malawi provides a challenge in monitoring progress. The situation is worsened by corrupt practices by officials from Fisheries Department, who demand money from fishers to allow them fish during off season. Through the 2021-2022 National Budget, the Government motivated fish farmers by removing taxes on fish feeds and fish production machines. Effectiveness of these tax measures is yet to be gauged. This is a direct response to inadequate capacity to promote and sustain aquaculture as evidenced by unavailability of hatcheries or bleeding grounds for fish, which affects the availability of fingerlings needed for ponds. However, there are problems of capacity to monitor compliance among fishers in the lakes.



SDG 15: Protect, Restore and Promote Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems, Sustainably Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and Reverse Land Degradation and Halt Biodiversity Loss

SDG 15 - Scores



- a.** Protecting ecosystems on land and water has not been taken seriously by Government agencies, with minimal partnerships in the sector. There is little commitment to life on land and water, or at least the agencies are overwhelmed by the work they are supposed to do, hence the average rating of 38%. Forests continue being ravaged, including protected forests while life in water continues to be threatened to the extent that Malawi is struggling to have enough and affordable fish. The drying of Lake Chilwa a couple of years ago alludes to this predicament. Forestry officers snatch bags of charcoal from those selling it, instead of engaging the citizens that are producing the charcoal illegally. Further, the officers are expected to encourage communities to establish family woodlots as it used to happen before 1994. Government should scale up dissemination of policies and instruments governing land, environment and water bodies through television, posters, radios and meetings.
- b.** Plans and strategies for SDG 16 include the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy III, National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Ecosystem and Biodiversity Plans, and Land and Lakes Strategy. However, these plans and strategies are not popularized. Malawi also developed the National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy, which provides ways of implementing the aforementioned policies.
- c.** The SDG is one of the least funded. To address challenges in the sector, Government removed electricity connection fee for rural and semi-urban residents through 2021-2022 budget. This will enable more people to be connected to electricity, although chances of them using electricity for cooking and domestic chores to serve the environment are minimal due to high electricity tariffs. However, not much is done to protect water bodies and their products. The boats for patrolling unscrupulous fishermen are not adequate.
- d.** Some of the policy and legal frameworks include the National Forestry Policy 2016, National Climate Change Management Policy 2016,

Environmental Management Act 2017, Malawi National Environmental Policy, Environmental Act 2017, Natural Resources Policy, Carbon Tax Policy, and Solid Waste Management Policy. The SDG is being championed by the following Ministries and Departments; Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Lands, Department of Wildlife and Environmental Affairs, Climate Change Department, Fisheries Department, and Department of Forestry. Despite the fact that there is high non-compliance to adhere to rules and regulations in the sector, Government through its relevant departments is trying to monitor implementation as evidenced by a number of people being apprehended due to ivory, being found with protected species of animals and transporting Charcoal and other forests products.

- e.** There is minimal stakeholder involvement in the sector, which makes it challenging for citizens to know more about what is going on, and how they can make leaders account for the actions in the sector. There is inconsistent sharing of information which leaves out stakeholders in reversing the side effects that are being observed on both land lakes. Other than sporadic apprehension of those found compromising the laws and regulations, there is not much the agencies are doing. Materials to enable the agencies carry out their tasks are seriously lacking. As such, Government should ensure that all agencies are well equipped with materials to enable them carry their work on both land and water.



SDG 16: Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development, Provide Access to Justice for All and Build Effective, Accountable and Inclusive Institutions at All Levels

SDG 16 - Scores



- a.** Citizens feel their state of security in communities is compromised, largely attributed to poor partnerships for the SDG. Due to limited presence of Malawi Police Service in their communities, the task of ensuring security rests with families and villages, hence the average rating of 40%. Police stations are few and their support to community police has dwindled over the years. The support was in form of torches and reflectors for community policing groups. The communities realize that security and peace go together and they impact on social, economic and political impacts at local and national levels. As such, they promote dialogue at Village and Area Development levels for peaceful coexistence.
- b.** To cement security and peace in the communities, the citizens asked Government to consider placing more police units in rural areas, establish more traditional courts and institute community based dialogue mechanisms which can be responsible for promoting peace and security.
- c.** The Malawi Judiciary Strategic Plan (2019-2024) targets an Expanded, Inclusive, Accessible and Speedy Justice for All. Other than the general strategy for the Judiciary, individual entities have their own strategies which strengthen the delivery of justice. The Malawi Constitution, The Corrupt Practices Act (Cap 7:04), Ombudsman Act, the Penal Code, Malawi Police Service Act, Gender Equality Act, Malawi Prisons Act, Employment Act, Disability Act, the Malawi Human Rights Commission Act and the Marriage, Divorce and Family Relations Act are some of the legal instruments that protect citizens and promote justice and Rule of Law. Government agencies in the sector include Office of the Ombudsman, Malawi Human Rights Commission, Courts, Legal Aid Bureau, Malawi Police Service, Registrar General, Anti-Corruption Bureau and Malawi Prisons, among others.
- d.** Monitoring, evaluation and reporting is very poor as evidenced by reports that some prisoners are remanded for many years without facing justice. The coming in of civil society is assisting in generating data for the sector. For example, Monitoring and evaluation is being done regularly by special agencies

and organizations. For example, Tilitonse Foundation in collaboration with European Union and Norwegian Embassy supported Find your Feet to do an end line evaluation on promoting participatory and inclusive development in Likoma and Rumphi. The report captures issues on rights of people and access to justice.

- e.** Despite the existence of a robust justice system in Malawi, many Malawians are still denied justice, or at least have their justice delayed. There are several people in Malawi prisons yet to be served with justice. The courts have been overwhelmed by backlog of cases, which in principle allude to the fact some people are being denied justice. The access to justice in Malawi, more especially for the poor is a challenge. Prisons are congested with remanded citizens (most of them poor) because they are still waiting for the courts to intervene. Money is required for the case to go to court. The coming in of paralegals in the sector is expected to address some concerns on backlog cases, though their proposal is facing hitches. The Chilungamo Project has also contributed a lot in the sector to ensure the judiciary responds to the challenges being experienced.
- f.** With several citizens having justice delayed and denied, the sector lacks transparency and accountability. Mechanisms should be put in place to clear the backlog of cases. The Judiciary is also associated with corruption, which favours the rich. Most of the cases involving high profile people are quickly concluded, while those involving poor people are delayed or untouched. The backlog of cases is an indication that there is limited capacity to handle them. As such, there is need to build capacity for all justice systems to ensure citizens are served with justice timely and adequately. The sector also requires more human resource so that costs can be affordable to citizens, even those from poor background. Traditional justice systems should also be strengthened to ensure fair delivery of justice. Most of the people presiding over cases in villages are not familiar with judgment processes. Hence, there is need to regularly train them on justice delivery.



SDG 17: Strengthen the Means of Implementation and Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

SDG 17 - Scores



- a.** Malawi has established Country Development Cooperation Strategy to strengthen partnerships, which has contributed to an average score of 54%. However, the SDG is not given adequate funds. More funds are required to allow other partners monitor partnerships with various stakeholders and assess their impact on the lives of Malawians. However, initiatives such as the Duty Free Week introduced by Government in the 2021/22 budget are expected to boost trade among SMEs as they will be allowed to import goods worth US\$3,000 duty free. Malawi's readiness to the goal is concretized by the Country Partnership Framework which was launched in April 2021 and Malawi 2063. Key agencies include the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Finance, Reserve Bank of Malawi, National Planning Commission (NPC), Embassies and Malawi Revenue Authority
- b.** On monitoring, evaluation and reporting, data from National Statistical Office (NSO), Reserve Bank of Malawi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Parliament reveals the extent to which Malawi is cooperating with other countries in terms of financial, material and technical support. Most of the cooperation is in form of loans and grants for specific projects. However, monitoring, evaluation and reporting remain problematic as outcomes from these processes are not easily accessible to the general public. There is need therefore, to make such information available backed by the Access to Information Law. CSOs should also be involved in monitoring the partnerships, specifically those involving ODA.
- c.** The partnership is still weak as it does not generate enough resources to augment the national budget. Still, there are positive results from the partnership Government has entered into with development partners, private sector and civil society in the delivery of public services. Government needs to create a conducive operating environment for the partnership to grow and yield

more results. Government should lead in the implementation of frameworks, rather than waiting for donors to pump in more resources. Partnerships with neighboring countries need to be enhanced, particularly on trade. For someone to transport commodities from one country to another, they are subjected to various taxes, instead of harmonizing the taxes. The coming in of COVID 19 has worsened things due to the persistent tests one has to take. With effort to show commitment towards this SDG, Malawi uses Debt and Aid Division (DAD), which is under Aid Management Platform (AMP) to store financial information from different donors or funders. This is a good system, which is planned to allow donors access and follow the way finances are being managed. However, there is little publicity for the information, which presents a problem to engage donors that are not aligning their support to existing development strategies.

- d.** The Goal lacks commitment from Government to ensure that global partnerships benefit Malawians. Most partners or donors are not preparing local implementers on how they can continue with the implementation upon expiry of projects. The learning visits undertaken by public officials should translate into tangible actions that seriously benefit Malawians.

6.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are being made to various stakeholders to assist Malawi achieve SDGs:

- a.** NPC, district councils and civil society should popularize SDGs in rural communities to enable them understand their role in achieving them, including monitoring. As NPC raises awareness on the MW2063 and MIP-1, deliberate action should be taken to share similar notes on SDGs.
- b.** Local Development Financing should hinge on VAPs and ADPs to motivate citizens develop relevant programmes. Currently, not much is financed on VAPs and ADPs due to politics and different priorities at central level. Allowing citizens to only plan for funds that would be available would make it more practical than the current arrangement where local structures do planning only to have less than 10% of the plans financed. As pointed out by one of the respondents, the current scenario is like 'a rich person asking a poor person to do a budget on everything they need as a household, only to informed by the same rich person that what they are able to provide is a bag of maize only'.
- c.** As more people have become vulnerable due to COVID 19, the 25% devaluation of the local currency and the war between Russia and Ukraine, Government should consider extending social support to more citizens in rural areas. More people can no longer sustain their livelihoods due to rising cost in basic items the families require.
- d.** There are unfinished projects in communities which cannot be completed by incumbent duty bearers for the simple reason that the ones who started it belonged to a different political grouping or ideology. Councils should take lead in finishing such projects.
- e.** Politicians have been interfering with local development for a long time, in so doing impoverishing the communities. They use alternative ways of identifying and financing projects rather than referring to VAPs and ADPs. As such, Government should consider making VAPs and ADPs law so that whoever ignores them is criminalized for failure to abide.
- f.** Government should consider making college and technical education free so that students from poor background are able to enroll and complete their studies. The fees are making other students to be left behind, in the process killing hopes of survival for their communities.
- g.** Enrolment requirements for technical colleges are considered unrealistic with the situation in Malawi where majority have not accessed formal education. If the initiative is meant to enhance skills for the youth, then enrollment should start with those possessing Primary School Leaving Certificate of Education. This will ensure that majority of the youth get much needed skills for economic and social enhancements.
- h.** District based funding streams should be combined (including CDF) and call for plans from ADCs, which will inform the programmes to be implemented. Corruption during procurement will have to be guarded against if this route is taken, by ensuring that community leaders are involved in all processes and that citizens are monitoring it.
- i.** Lending institutions should consider reviewing interest rates and demand for security when people from rural areas seek loans. Deliberate packages can be developed for the communities in rural areas to enhance their participation in economic growth activities.
- j.** The youth that are known to be innovative should be supported. There have been cases some youths have come up with some innovations, but lack capital to enable their

- technologies reach more people. Government should take special interest in them and assist accordingly
- k.** Training bases should be re-introduced for the youth to gain skills in farming and technical skills, specifically for school dropouts to guarantee a better future for the communities.
- l.** The small businesses are subjected to various fees charged by the local councils / assembly, MRA and insurance companies. Communities are of the view that they should be considered to boost their businesses.
- m.** MW2063 and MIP-1 should be supported and inform national budgeting for the country to make progress. Parliament should make them laws so that they are not defaulted by any politician.
- n.** NPC in partnership with Ministry of Civic Education should raise awareness on citizen entitlements, laws and policies for them to demand accountability from duty bearers
- o.** There are more public officers in urban settings such as towns and cities. Government should ensure a policy is put in place that rural areas get enough public officers i.e. schools, health facilities etc.
- p.** NPC should ensure that all expired public policies and strategies are evaluated to ascertain their effectiveness and inform subsequent documents in line with Malawi's priorities.

7.0 Conclusion

The community consultations exposed gaps that Government of Malawi, civil society, development partners, business community and the citizens themselves have to address for the country to make remarkable progress in achieving the SDGs. More citizens are not aware of the SDGs, a situation which can incapacitate their fruitful participation in their realization. So many sectors are lagging behind in the rural areas, requiring more action if citizens in the rural areas are to be transformed. More financial, technical and materials resources are required to ensure vulnerability is reduced in the communities. Politicians should perform their tasks as stipulated in the policies and laws as interference with local development structures has not yielded anything productive. Corruption is dragging development progress at local level requiring urgent action from Executive, Parliament, Judiciary, CSOs, private sector and citizens. Those found to be corrupt should be given stiff punishment. Citizens in rural areas are tired of poverty and they need help ranging from empowerment to demonstrating seriousness in development planning and implementation.



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